

HORSE

Study the Colt's Foot.

Dr. Harold Leeney gives the following pertinent advice in an English contemporary, which is well worth taking cognizance of by our farmers, who are engaged in the interesting and profitable work of horse breeding.

"The structure of mechanism of the foot is such as to be easily injured by the risks to which it is constantly exposed. It should be our care from the time of the foal's birth to old age. Horse breeders alone have the opportunity of moulding the foot; other owners of horses may be judges enough to reject animals on account of misshapen feet, but the majority will have to take them 'with all faults and errors of description,' only acquiring a knowledge of their defects too late. Too generally, even among breeders, it is assumed that the blacksmith is the sole enemy of the foot, and up to the time of being shod the colt's foot will be all right. The more careful observers reap advantage by having cast off such prejudice, and take care that the soft jelly-like fibres of the foot of the new-born foal shall have a 'first impression' from a good level sound floor.

If any reader has not seen the under-surface of a foal's foot immediately after birth, he should not let the coming season pass without doing so. He will then possess for life a better knowledge of how the foot is constructed than can be obtained from all the books and illustrations ever published. He will also believe that the tread and the attitude of the limb towards the foot will be influenced for life by the conditions under which it is used during the first few days. If the first few days are spent in a loose box it should not be bedded with moss litter or sawdust; if with straw, this should be cut short, and the quantity of bedding should not be excessive. The moist soft undersurface has to harden off, and should not receive rubbish in its open fibres; long straw is liable to get twisted round the clumsy youngster's legs and give him a fall, or likelier still, cause him to be trodden on, because not able to get out of the way of a careless dam.

One cannot advise early attention to the feet unless the owner is first impressed with the importance of gaining control by the halter; this must precede any attempt at examination of the feet. The feet need to be kept regular in length, and this should be done with a rasp. One side is apt to grow longer than the other, and this gives rise to malformation of the limbs. While the plantar surface of the foot is being picked over and cleaned, and the animal taught to give near fore, off fore, near hind, off hind, all from one side, as he will be expected to do in later years, he should be accustomed to the tap of the hammer.

Such preliminary training prepares him for the smithy, where there are always sufficiently alarming sights and sounds. He should not be expected to learn the art of being shod in one lesson; nor is it fair to the blacksmith to bring big colts to be shod that have had no previous handling.

It may be said that

THE FOOT IS ALWAYS CHANGING

during the whole of the horse's life, although in the middle period it is not so noticeable. "Colts-foot," as a name given to a plant, shows that the difference was once well known between the shape of the young and that of the adult. The broad and somewhat "flat" foot which we should deem normal in a yearling or two-year-old would be quite inadmissible in a five year-old animal offered for road labor. Extremely old horses may often be recognized by the very upright if not narrow foot. This is not always the case, however, and the influence of shoeing has to be taken into account. Wild horses have much stronger and wider bars and less sole than domesticated ones; a formation most favorable to the avoidance of injury. Probably to domestication we owe not only the excess of sole to bars, but the softness of the hoof generally, and the tendency to decomposition of the frog (thrush). Too broad and spreading feet may also be attributed to an easy life on rich pasture, for the conditions are reversed among the mountain breeds of ponies, whose blocky feet prove more serviceable under all conditions of work.

THE SIZE OF THE FOOT.

We like a big foot, because we see so many evil results from feet too small, side-bone being

especially likely to result in the draft breeds but we can have them too big. The big spreading foot is disposed to have a low heel, and to be weak and prone to founder (laminitis)."

(This is a feature that many of our live stock lecturers have not thoroughly understood, and in many cases they have preached—large feet—without qualifying their teaching—size without quality is of no use, and the size must be proportionate to that of the animal standing on the foot. They have been led into this error by accepting unreservedly as the type of a model draft horse, almost any Clydesdale seen. The Scotch draft horse as a class is undoubtedly the superior in feet, fetlocks and cannons of any of the draft breeds, but while that is the cause, the individual must be studied.)

"It is to be regretted that too little importance is attached to the shape of the feet of a stallion even now, save by the few who will find nothing in this article that they do not understand as well as or better than the writer.

To young readers I would say, examine the ground surface of colts' feet at all ages. You make them handy by doing so and get a full knowledge of what a healthy surface should be. You note how sole and bars and frog are all flattened out, and are so hard in the summer-time that a nail will very likely fail to pierce, although standing upright in a piece of wood, or in a cast shoe.

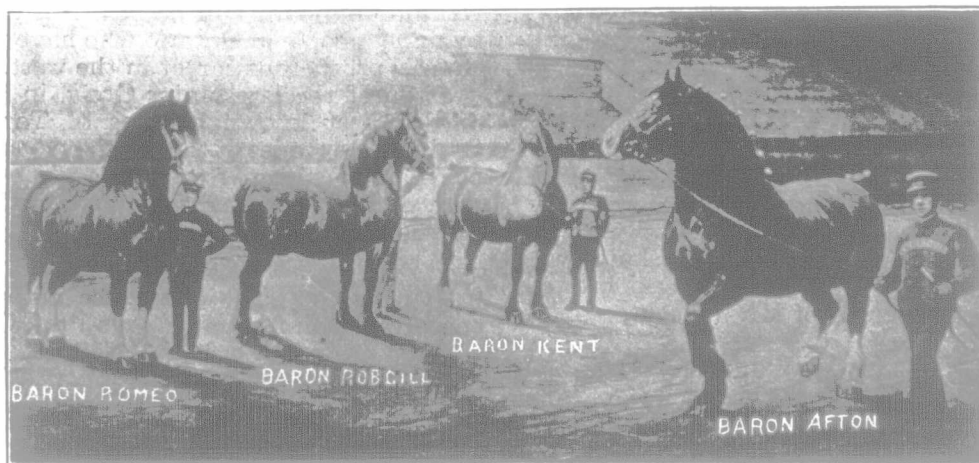
If you consider this natural condition, and then think of the stable custom of stopping the feet with cow-dung and other softening compositions, you will pause to ask yourself if it is right.

er indicated, won the highest honors with Grand Duchess. At the Shire Horse Show of 1901, Messrs. Walwyn, also tenant farmers, won the championship with their two-year-old colt Bearwardcote Blaze, which was afterwards sold for a very high price to go into Lord Ellesmere's stud."

The Height Limit for Ponies.

Looker-on in Mark Lane Express says:

"There seems likely to be considerable controversy in pony breeding about the suggested increase in the size of Polo ponies. An advocate of retaining the present conditions points out that if the height limit is raised there will be a difficulty in maintaining the pony type, and that the horses bred will be horses, as distinguished from ponies. He points out that it does not matter whether polo players play on ponies or horses, but it does matter very much if we lose the pony characteristics in our riding ponies. Which reminds me of a man I knew many years ago who had one of the smartest ponies it was ever my lot to see. He could gallop and jump and stay, and carried his 11 stone master through many a good hard day. And you could not insult that worthy sportsman more than by speaking of his pony. 'My little horse, sir!' he would thunder out. And he was right, he was a veritable mule in parvo, standing under 14 hands 2 inches. Breeders say that they have considerable difficulty in breeding Polo ponies big enough. They want them as near 14 hands 2 inches as may be, and they find they breed too many at



A QUARTETTE OF CLYDESEALE CRACKERS.
Imported by Alex. Galbraith & Son, Brandon, Man.

Buy Mares, Breed and Work Them.

Many a farmer this spring will be purchasing a few horses for working purposes and when so doing he cannot do better than invest in a registered brood mare, three-year-old, or even a growthy two-year-old filly and breed this season. Horses are high in prices, and are likely to be, with so much new land to be broken, and railroad construction under way.

The following excerpt from an Old Country exchange, while it refers to Shire horse breeding is just as applicable to the other draft breeds, and if good advice in a country where the motor is a strong competitor it ought to be more so here.

"The various stud-companies or horse-clubs throughout the kingdom incorporate a large number of farmers who find it profitable to have young, stalwart mares in their teams capable of performing their share of the farm work and of breeding foals likewise. To have the latter as valuable as possible, the farmer, by becoming a member of the nearest stud company, can have his mares served by a stallion of the choicest blood. Doing this, he would often be able to realise excellent prices for his foals should he choose to make sale of them, which, however, would not be exactly his wisest course to pursue. By rearing his filly foals to take the places of his oldest mares when fully grown and making sale of the latter instead, he would gradually raise his entire stud to higher stages of value which in the end would prove far more profitable. The late Mr. Sexton was accustomed to declare from his rostrum that he had often known a small farmer in the Midlands pay his rent with the price of the foal his mare had bred during the season; the mare being, of course, of the right stamp, and he having been able to mate her with a high-class stallion belonging to his landlord. In 1869 a two-year-old filly was sold by a tenant-farmer for 1,000 guineas (£5,000). This was at Peterborough Show, where Mr. Griffin, the farm-

14 hands and 14 hands 1 inch. Now a great many polo players ride from 13 st. to 14 st. 7 lb., and it is obvious that a 14 hands pony can scarcely carry them as they want carrying, and even on a pony standing 14 hands 1 inch they are heavily handicapped. It stands to reason, then that the pony just 14 hands 2 inches is the most valuable, and in trying to breed him the breeder either falls short of size, as already indicated, or succeeds only too well, and gets a fine pony over the height limit. There would therefore seem to be good reason for increasing the height limit by an inch. At any rate, I have not seen any reason brought forward yet which seems strong enough to prevent the alteration being made. I would not, however, go quite so far as to raise the limit to 15 hands. But as there are undoubtedly now, owing to the rules respecting measurement, ponies which, if not 14 hands 3 inches, are at any rate above 14 hands 2 inches playing polo, I see no reason why 14 hands 3 inches should not be the standard. It would certainly be a fairer standard than the present one, under which some ponies over-sized get measured and can play, whilst others cannot, and there really does not seem to be any reason to fear a loss of pony type and characteristic.

The Change in Hackney Type.

Dame Fashion has played some curious pranks in her time, and none more curious than that of turning the Hackney into the fashionable carriage horse or harness horse of the day. The increase of the size of the modern Hackney has been accompanied to a very considerable extent by a loss of type; and even the action, though stylish and extravagant enough, lacks something of the exquisite finish which used to distinguish the action of the Yorkshire Hackneys of the olden time. The Hackney as I first knew him, long before the days of stud books, was to all intents and purposes a riding horse; but, on the principle