

CLYDESDALE MEMORIES.

In a series of reminiscences of the history of early and less early individual Clydesdale breeders and horses, written by Mr. Thomas Dykes, of Edinburgh, and published in the recently-issued volume of transactions of the Highland & Agricultural Society of Scotland, we find the following notes, which will doubtless be of interest to draft-horse breeders and admirers generally:

MERRYTON—PRINCE OF WALES AND MARY.

Previous to the first auction sale, in 1875, we visited Merryton by appointment with Mr. Lawrence Drew. This was shortly after we had gone over the Knockdon stud of Mr. James Nicol Fleming, where was still to the fore, though getting worn out, and not fully equal to the full round of farm work, Darling, the dam of Prince of Wales. Acting on a suggestion we threw out at the time, Mr. Craig, some time after, with the consent of Mr. Fleming, sent her through to Merryton, where she might prove a breeder's object lesson when seen in company with her distinguished son. At Merryton she ended her days pulling about meat-coolers, her legs remaining fresh to the last. As is well known, Prince of Wales got his straightness of hocks, about which there was so much cavil, from his dam, who inherited it from some ancestor on the dam's side, as General, his sire, like Sir Walter Scott, the grandsire, and Samson, her sire, had nice, well-bent, well-set hind legs.

The big, full-sized, gold-and-brown effigy of Prince of Wales, painted on wood, had not yet surmounted the archway which led into the courtyard behind the dwelling-house, and there was nothing particularly remarkable about the place save the large, substantially-built and commodious stable, generally alluded to as "the Long Stable." Here were generally stalled all the best mares, the numerous prize tickets above their heads readily enough betokening the champions. On the occasion of our visit, the stud comprised thirty-five mares and fillies, three years old and upwards, with a number of younger colts and fillies in the adjoining outhouses. Mr. Drew had not at that time gone very extensively into the system of crossing Shires with Prince of Wales, and there were many mares like Hawkie, Old Loudon Maggie, and Young Loudon Maggie, her daughter, subsequently knocked down to our own bid of 335 guineas at the sale for Mr. J. Stewart Hodgson, Haslemere, Surrey. She was in foal to her own sire, Prince of Wales, at the time, and there was a buzz of comment at the ringside when this little fact was mentioned. Mr. Drew, always afterwards down on the Clydesdales for being "far too sib," was certainly not against inbreeding at that time. His first brood mare then was the big chestnut, Mary, the dam of Lord Harry, by Prince of Wales, which had the previous week won the first prize for yearling colts at the Glasgow Show. This mare had undoubted Shire characteristics, but of her breeding nothing was known. It was the statement that the first-prize two-year-old colt at Aberdeen (King of the Princes) was out of a full sister, which led to the fierce correspondence that ultimately culminated in the formation of the Clydesdale Horse Society, already alluded to, and the publication of the Clydesdale Studbook. As some little extra interest attaches to Mary on that account, we shall give our remarks as made in our article written at the time from notes taken in the presence of Mr. Drew and the mare herself.

The first on the list is Mary, the big chestnut mare, which took first prizes this year at Ayr and Glasgow in the brood-mare classes. She is undoubtedly an exceedingly well and proportionately-made animal, of great substance and strength of bone, points which she combines with well-sloped pasterns and uncommonly good feet. When recently exhibited, she was in very high show condition, and many were suspicious of her fine appearance; but her strong supports are only seen to advantage under a heavy top. If she lacks anything that an animal of her kind wants, it is a little more fulness of hip above the hock, for, though not so bad as Mr. Hardie's filly is in that way, her quarters perceptibly round in a little too much. Some people are of opinion that she is not a true Clydesdale, and certainly her fore shapes are not quite those of the home-bred, but if her strain is not clear, it is an improvement, and will be worth working upon. She was originally purchased as a yearling in Dumfries market, but unfortunately her pedigree was unknown. Mr. Drew, however, did not get her until a three-year-old, when she was with foal.

Except to say that, though her pasterns were well set, they were short, and to explain that Mr. Hardie's filly was Rancee, the property of the late Mr. Hardie, of Bo'ness, Linlithgow, a very popular showyard winner, there is nothing to add to the above thirty years afterwards. The colt foal was sold to go to America, and nothing is known of its subsequent history. It most likely was sired by a Shire horse. Drew did not concern himself much about it, his great idea being to get a foal from Mary to the Prince of Wales. This, however, did not prove so easy as it would look on paper, for the famous son of General resented

with much temper all efforts toward an alliance, and it was only after a desperate stratagem that the horse and mare were actually mated. The famous colt, Lord Harry, the Glasgow winner alluded to, was the result. Though subsequently a disappointment at stud, he was one of the most noted colts ever seen in an agricultural showyard, though always run hard by another Prince of Wales colt, Prince George Frederick, of the Auchendennan stud of Mr. John M. Martin (who bred him), and latterly the property of old Sandy Weir, of Newhouse Mill.

In discussing the breeding of draft horses generally in the well-known old back-parlor so familiar to the many from all parts of the world who visited Merryton, conversation turned on what the horse could give to the progeny, also the relative contribution of the dam. The suggestion being made to see the champion family group, Mr. Drew immediately gave his orders accordingly, and we adjourned to that portion of the stackyard which afterwards became the sale-ring or avenue (the first sale was in the old farmyard). Of what took place, we may here quote from the article alluded to as follows:

"I had an opportunity of looking at the horse (Prince of Wales) the other day when he was drawn up alongside of the big chestnut mare, and their produce, the big chestnut colt which was placed first at Glasgow. A more valuable trio I never saw before. The Prince was looking as well as ever, his grand contour round and sound, well-tapered feet and pasterns, and characteristic head, at once captivating the eye. His hocks are certainly straight, but his thighs are unusually powerful. The fullness above the hock joints on the inside was visible, but a well-skilled veterinary

man, and the bargain was very nearly struck. Mr. Drew's elder brother, Robert Drew, new home from Australia, after a short conversation with the tenant of Merryton as regards the horse's merits, chimed in, and the result was that, at £1,500 (there would, of course, be a luck penny), the horse remained in the Old Country, to the great benefit of the breed.

Lawrence Drew died in March, 1884, never having been seen at any agricultural gathering after the Glasgow Clydesdale Show, a fortnight previous to his decease. His funeral was largely attended, for though many did not fall in with his opinions, all recognized his worth and his pioneer enterprise in a good cause. The dispersal sale, so different from the initial one of nine years previously, drew breeders from all parts of Scotland and England. Again was his old stud horse, Prince of Wales, put into the market, and at £900 (a long price for a horse of 22 years old, which had descendants in nearly every Scottish parish and every corner of our Colonies), he found his way back into the hands of his owner when a colt, Mr. Riddell, of Blackhall. So long reserved for Shire mares, he proved a great and most welcome boon to all those who had mares and fillies by Darnley, and in his later years achieved as much success as he did in the younger days of his career, when standing at the almost prohibitive price of £40 per mare. The old horse dropped down dead in his stall on 31st December, 1888, literally going out with the expiring year.

ROYAL VISIT TO MERRYTON.

A historic event in Clydesdale, and indeed in draft-horse breeding generally, was the visit of his present Majesty (when Prince of Wales) to Merryton, in January, 1878. His Majesty, with the late Crown Prince of Austria (who was not at Merryton, however), and the unfortunate Prince Imperial, and a number of distinguished parties, were shooting-guests of the Duke of Hamilton, at Hamilton Palace. Though there was no stage rehearsal, Mr. Drew got through his parade in a fashion which would have done credit to an Astley or a Hengler, and some continental circus-like character was lent to the display by the appearance of the young "lassie grooms" in short gowns and petticoats, leading the various colts and fillies. It had been Mr. Drew's idea for some time previous to this, that in washing feet and pasterns, and preparing somewhat refractory colts for shows, the feminine hand and touch was found to be more tender than the masculine, and that, being also less harshly spoken to, the young stock were less nervous. With a large amount of young stock to handle, and not too many young male servants about the place,



Sir Everard (5353).

Clydesdale stallion; foaled 1885. Sire of Baron's Pride (9122). Sire Top Gallant (1850), by Darnley (222), dam Rose of Killellan (7437), by London Prince, by Prince of Wales (673).

surgeon, who has a great knowledge of the breed, at once declared it to be muscle, and, as such, a point to be reckoned in the horse's favor. Nor is his action a whit less free than it used to be, for he steps out before like a trotting stallion, and, standing from behind, you can see the soles of his feet clearly every time he lifts."

Prince of Wales was but nine years old at the time we wrote the above, and could make a really grand show of himself; indeed, no draft horse we have ever looked at, before or since, ever carried himself better—such grand spring and gaiety at the trot, and such steady, well-paced, extensive, regular and even action at the walk. He was a bit tempery, and it was risky for a stranger to go into his box, more particularly when feeding. Though he lived to a good old age, as Clydesdale horses go, he gave more than his share of concern in ill turns from the outset. He was Darling's first foal, and when it was seen at Drum-burle that she was going to have a difficulty, Willie Greenlees, of Campbelltown, then a page-boy to Mr. Fleming, at Kilkerran House, was quickly flung on a horse's back and despatched to Maybole for Charles Tennant, the local veterinary surgeon. Mare and foal in the end did well, and the latter's career after weaning was, if the Rantin' Robin defeat at the Dumfries Highland & Agricultural Society's meeting be left out, one of continued success. One market afternoon, in His Lordship's Larder, Glasgow, when he was four years old, he was on sale to an Australian gentle-

man, and there may have been something in this, and it was marvellous how tractable were the colts and fillies so groomed and handled. A dramatic incident was given to the parade through the Prince Imperial jumping on the back of Lord Harry and riding him round the yard. "Anybody ever been on his back, Mr. Drew?" was the Prince's query as the horse frisked and gambolled about, showing a good deal of spirit. "No one to my knowledge, your Royal Highness." This question to a draft-horse breeder was naturally quite unexpected. The next minute the Prince was on the horse's back, considerably to the astonishment of the company and the owner, who, speaking afterwards of the incident, said, "I was really glad to see him off, and to think what a guid thing it was Lord Harry and not the auld Prince himself." His Majesty, in congratulating Mr. Drew upon the appearance of his stud, said: "They are a grand lot of mares, Mr. Drew, but mostly Shires." "All the better of that, your Royal Highness," was the quick response. He afterwards presented to the Prince a filly by Prince of Wales, which was good enough to win the Clydesdale Horse Society's cup at the Royal, at Kilburn, in 1879. In the autumn of 1878 he sent seven of the best mares of his stud to Paris, in reciprocation of the honor conferred by the visit. To get them across the Channel and home occasioned him much anxiety. The Merryton trophies and Paris gold medals were all scattered by auction during the Glasgow Highland & Agricultural Show week of 1897.