

THE CANADIAN BREEDER AND AGRICULTURAL REVIEW.

Weekly Paper published in the Stock and Farming interests
of Canada.

SUBSCRIPTION, - - \$2.00 per Annum

ADVERTISING RATES.

Per line, each insertion, 20 cents.
(Nonpareil measurement, 12 lines to one inch.)
Breeder's cards, five line space, \$20.00 per annum; each additional line \$5.00 per annum.

Condensed advertisements under classified headings, one cent per word, each insertion, for which cash must accompany order, as accounts will not be opened for them.
Contract rates on application.

All communications to be addressed to

CANADIAN BREEDER,

COR. CHURCH AND FRONT STS.
TORONTO.

S. BEATTY, MANAGER.

Toronto, Friday, March 20th, 1885.

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COLD WEATHER AND RANCHING IN THE NORTH-WEST.

Though this has been a winter of altogether exceptional severity from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic coast, and though early in the season we were treated to a great deal of gloomy prophecy concerning the probable losses of cattle on the great ranches of the north-western States, and particularly in the Canadian North-West, the winter is wearing to a close without bringing us tidings of any very calamitous losses in those regions where losses were most confidently looked for. The severest weather ever known in those localities has this year visited Calgary, McLeod, and Pincher Creek, and still no alarming reports are reaching us. True, alarmists who know nothing of the country were writing east early in the season to the effect that the heavy snow falls and intensely cold weather that were being experienced in the North-West must cause an exceptional mortality among the range cattle, but it seems that these dismal forebodings have not been fulfilled. Those who have been in the habit of decrying our own range country, and shouting for Kansas, Texas, and the south-west generally, have had a severe backset this winter, and one that will not soon be forgotten. In time ranchmen will learn that it is not temperature alone that decides whether a range will winter stock or not. Water and feed are most important factors, and unless there are plentiful and unfailing supplies of these the warmest climate to be found between the tropics would be of no avail in maintaining cattle through the winter. In some of the western States the want of water has been the cause of very serious losses, but, singularly enough, in our own country, where the heaviest losses were anticipated, we hear of none. There can be no doubt that this winter has been a very severe one in our territory, but it must be remembered that on the Canadian range grass of the very best quality is so abundant that the range cattle always begin the

winter very high in flesh. As a rule they go on gaining in weight till spring, but even when they do not, the excellent start with which they begin the winter serves them a good turn. Then the pasture is so rich and so plentiful that a few days of favorable weather will enable horses and cattle to rapidly fortify themselves against the cold weather that may follow. Even when the weather is intensely cold and the snow deep, there are always some grassy hillsides where the range animals can feed for at least portions of each day, and only an hour or two on a strong growth of good nutritious grass each day will easily keep these animals in a robust, healthy condition. The time is not far off when people will come to understand what a rich heritage we as Canadians have in that great belt of beautiful hills, fertile valleys and plains, and cold, limpid streams that nestles in the shadow of the snow-clad Rockies, and when that time does come there will be many a capitalist who will bitterly regret that he did not sooner know of, and believe in, the great mine of wealth that lay undeveloped in the broad pasture ranges of Alberta.

MR. WALLACE'S LETTER.

It is hardly necessary for us to comment on Mr. Wallace's letter which appears elsewhere. If by "mongrel" the writer simply means a cross-bred animal, he will find very few horsemen who understand the term in the sense in which he uses it. He probably knows as well as anyone else that horsemen apply the term "mongrel" to horses that are coarse and characterless in their make up, whose breeding is unknown or nearly so, and which are regarded as just the opposite of the thoroughbred. If he calls Clear Grit a "mongrel" what is a half-bred horse?

The quotation which we omitted from the original editorial, and which Mr. Wallace includes in his letter, though perhaps "taking" with novices, is hardly the doctrine that the most skilled and experienced breeders would recommend. He says for example: "If they want what is sometimes called 'a horse of all work,' tell them to find the best of that description, help them to find him, and when found, breed to him. In short, let every man breed to what he wants to get. This is the whole problem in a nutshell." If every one thought as Mr. Wallace does on this subject, horse-breeding would remain pretty much at a standstill. We have always thought that in selecting a stallion for producing a certain class of horse, due regard should be had for the character and conformation of the mare to which he was to be bred. I want a saddle horse or heavy-weight hunter, and my mare is large and strong but somewhat dull-tempered and cold-blooded. Shall I look for a half-bred horse, an animal that was himself bred for a saddle horse, to breed to such a mare, in the hope of getting my heavy-weight hunter? or shall I go to just the class of horse I do not want, a high-mettled race horse, and by crossing him on my big dull-tempered mare secure what I want, an active, intelligent, and tractable weight-carry-

ing hunter? We do not at all times breed to just the sort of animals we wish to produce, but rather to those which, when coupled with such mares as we have, can be reasonably expected to produce what we want. The merest tyro in breeding knows that one of the first principles of the science is that if we breed to the result of recent crosses the produce will be quite as apt to resemble one or other of ancestors thus united as to resemble the sire himself. This is why it is desirable, as we said in a previous article, for breeders to "collect all the available trotting material that is first-class, get their type of trotters as near to perfection as possible, and then endeavor to crystallize that excellence and make further improvements by a judicious blending of the different families within the circle." The "judicial decision" regarding Pilot Jr's. breeding does not carry any weight with it except so far as certain theorists who have a holy horror of running blood are concerned, and this reminds us of the absurdly extravagant statement that 25 per cent. of running blood is all that is claimed for Maud S. And again, he tells us that Johnston is not known to have any running blood. Such statements as these cannot deceive any but the most superficial horseman, and we regret that it becomes our duty to refer to them at all. Mr. Wallace surely does not deny that both Maud S. and Johnston trace back to imported Messenger through their sires, and will he tell us that this imported English race horse, the grandsire of "American Eclipse," is not to be recognized as a source of running blood?

The statement which Mr. Wallace reiterates regarding the Narragansett pacer is dealt with by "T. C. P." in this issue, while any of those who ever knew anything of the Tippos need not be told how absurd it is to attribute any pacing origin to them.

ARE SHORTHORNS DETERIORATING?

When the prices obtainable now for first-class Shorthorns are compared with the prices paid by Albert Crane for three of Hon. M. H. Cochrane's Airdrie Duchesses in 1875 and 1876, one is too apt to jump at the conclusion that Shorthorns are not what they used to be. In 1875 a heifer calf brought \$18,000, and the following year two cows of the same family brought \$21,000 and \$23,000 respectively. Such prices are not to be had now, but that does not prove that there are no more animals in the country as good as those cows were. It proves that Mr. Crane and two or three others on the ground were willing to pay more for Duchess cattle than they were worth, but so far from showing any falling off in the character of this grand breed it has a tendency in the opposite direction, for it is now found that there are other families among the Shorthorns besides the Duchesses in which the beef-producing and early maturing qualities are sufficiently well developed to render them quite as valuable to the breeder who breeds for the butcher's block as are these hitherto fancy priced patricians. It is not want of excellence,