

themselves with a first-class work on veterinary cultural, and general subjects. But we caution our readers not to expect too much of the service of the question and answer column. A paper gotten up in the form and style of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE and with its extensive circulation requires several days from the time the reading matter is all prepared until it is in the hands of its readers, hence it is not wise to write for treatment of a case that requires urgent attention.

As for our market report we can scarcely understand what our correspondent means unless it is that he would like to have a report of the markets in other cities than Winnipeg. If it is this we are afraid we cannot accommodate him for the reason that Winnipeg is practically the only wholesale market for farm produce in Western Canada, and prices in other centers are regulated more by local demand than by actual market requirements. If our correspondent has overlooked our weekly market report we are sorry that he has missed so interesting a column in his paper for without a doubt we are giving the most concise, reliable, and readable weekly market report that is presented the public.

We would like to suggest that readers of the ADVOCATE look carefully over every page before discarding a copy. The material for the paper is selected on account of its applicability to certain conditions that prevail in the country over which it circulates. Articles upon agricultural problems which prevail in British Columbia can be just as well printed in Winnipeg as in Vancouver, and, besides, the agricultural press discusses principles that apply with equal force in any locality.

For the convenience of our readers we have adhered to a style of "make up" in our paper that is distinctive and that enables one to find the thing he is looking for without much delay. Throughout the paper there are departments. The editorials on the first page reflect public opinion as we interpret it, and discusses live agricultural topics; the horse department consists of articles upon that particular subject, and so on through each issue. We would suggest a systematic method of reading so that nothing of interest be overlooked, and especially do we commend the story which has just begun to run as a serial.

HORSE

A Tribute to the Mule.

Zoologically, the mule is a simple proposition. He is a compromise between the horse and the donkey, and we are informed by scientists that he is of modern origin. He had no place in Eden, and was excluded from the ark; but his character is complex and comprehensive, and he who aspires to analyse the physiology of the mule and search the motives that actuate him, undertakes a problem that no man has yet solved. His usefulness to civilization has been exceeded only by the pioneer representatives of the human race, whose endurance he has shared and whose patience and enterprise he has surpassed. I have often heard his character and peculiarities discussed by teamsters and others who are accustomed to handling them, but it requires a special vocabulary.

The superiority of a mule over a horse lies in the fact that he has greater strength and greater endurance, and will do more work with less food, less water and less care, under conditions where horses would absolutely fail. The amount of fatigue, exposure and abstinence that a mule will endure is marvelous. Making long marches across dusty and shadeless plains, going for days with little water and less food, pulling heavy loads over rocky roads and through heavy sloughs, subject to cruel treatment and neglect, the life of a mule is miserable, and it is no wonder that his soul is soured by his treatment. He is worked until he is worn out, and then he is thanklessly turned in with a herd of broken-down animals that furnish as melancholy a sight as one can ever see among animate things. It is a moving bone-yard. Gaunt and lean, with drooping ears, disconsolate tail and a woe-begone visage that would frighten an inexperienced ghost, the abandoned mule is a picture of desolation.

There is a popular tradition that no mule, like a cat, ever died a natural death, and he is cer-

tainly a hard animal to kill. On the mountain sides, burdened with a heavy pack, or bearing a trustful rider, his foothold is as firm and as sure as the earth on which it rests; but when the earth gives away, as it sometimes does, and the mule goes rolling over and over down the precipice, he has lives enough left to secure him a ripe old age. I have seen a mule fall into a trench and become buried under a heavily-loaded wagon, yet, when the wreck was removed he got up, shook himself, and began looking around as unconcerned as if nothing had happened. He seemed to be the only person that was not amazed at his escape.

The ordinary army team, which is imitated by other transportation outfits in the West, is usually composed of six mules, driven by a single line and a long snake whip, especially the whip. The line is attached to the left bit of the nigh leader, which may be considered the rudder of the team. The driver, or helmsman, sits astride of the nigh leader, and if he wants to "gee" he jerks the line savagely. It is a moral certainty that the nigh leader will turn his head away from it and take the rest of the team with him. If the helmsman wants to "haw," he pulls gently on the line, drawing the nigh leader's head around, and he goes "haw." The position of mule skinner in an army train or a caravan of "teamsters" is conspicuous. His chief requirements are to crack a black-snake whip and swear, and such swearing is never heard under other circumstances. On an ordinary trail the mule team jogs along quietly and sedately, while the driver snoozes in his saddle, but somehow or other he awakens involuntarily whenever anything goes wrong, or when a bad piece of road is reached. Then he "haws" and "gees" and yells, and cracks his whip, and jerks the line, and digs his spurs into the poor animal he is riding until he gets his team into position; then, with a few jumps and a few tugs, under a frightful torrent of oaths and crackings of the whip, like the rattle of musketry, the other side is reached, and, with a sigh of relief, they resume their way. When the road is particularly bad, when the hill is steep and stony, or when the "cooley" is full of soft mire, the ordinary "mule skinner" who rides the "nigh wheeler" is assisted by half a dozen gentlemen of the same profession, who dismount from their teams to encourage the crossing. They, too, have long black whips, and they have a better purchase for their feet than saddle stirrups, so they can whack harder and more frequently than he, and the majority of their blows, of course, fall on their "off-wheeler." These deputies, as you might call them, stand in the middle of the gulch of "cooley." The wagon goes down so quickly that the leading mules run under while their whips are in the air, but the "off-wheeler" comes just in time to catch the downward stroke, and the tug of pulling the wagon up the other side is so hard and slow that they might have time to whack him before he is out of trouble.

While a caravan of teams are waiting at the bad crossing, waiting for their turn to cross, you can always hear an occasional bray, about one-sixth as many brays as there are mules on the payroll. It comes from the "off-wheeler," and is a subdued protest against fate.

The mule is not the stupid animal he is often represented to be. His powers of observation and memory are remarkable. Old teamsters would tell you that a mule always remembers a man who has fed him once or who has done him an injury, and, like the ass in the Bible, he knoweth his

master's crib. For example, take a train of two hundred wagons, which is the usual number to carry the food and forage of a regiment of troops upon a march, and there will be 1,200 mules. The wagons are exactly alike. When the train gets into camp, the mules are unharnessed and turned out to graze. They are sometimes driven a mile or two away. When night comes and it is time to give them their corn, they are herded back to the train, and every animal will go straight to his own wagon. I have heard old teamsters say that they never knew one to make a mistake.

There is a great deal of human nature in a mule, and a great deal of hypocrisy, but his life is an uninterrupted struggle against adverse interest and cruelty, which naturally warps its disposition and awakens a desire for vengeance. When a mule is deprived, he finds a thousand opportunities to show his depravity. It is that which leads him to stand still when others desire him to move. It is that, also, which tempts him to encourage attention of people for the sake of getting a chance to kick their brains out.

The mule has the same ideas of justice as a savage, and is a believer in the doctrine of retribution. A veteran teamster will tell you that the ordinary mule will invariably visit upon others inflections he suffers himself; that is, if there are twenty mules in a line, and you kick the first one, instead of retaliating upon you, he will kick the mule behind him. The second will pass the kick along to the third, and the third to the fourth, and so on until the end of the line is reached, leaving the last mule unjustified for the time being. But you may be sure that sooner or later he will find an opportunity to enjoy his vengeance.

The pack mule is quite as much an institution as a team mule, and is absolutely indispensable in the mountains. Mule-packing is a fine art, and with a well-trained animal and a skilful packer, you can safely transport anything from a piano to a bag of oats. When the packer has finished his job in an artistic manner, the animal may buck, back, kick or rear, or roll, but he cannot rid himself of his burden, and he finally gives it up in despair. After two or three experiences, he will submit to his destiny, and fall into line with the rest of the train every morning to receive his load from the packer. A well-broken mule is always proud of his load, and if by any means it gets loose, he will step quietly out of line and wait until the packmaster comes along to tighten it.

While the draft horse, carriage and saddle horse have their purpose, and perform them nobly, and are in increasing demand, there is no doubt that in these prosperous times there is a great demand for mules. They are becoming more popular in places where a few years ago they were not used, and the demand is increasing for them, as work animals, to take the place of horses. The big public improvements call for more of them, and the developments are taking more of them right along. Farmers who are in a position to raise a few of them each year, cannot make any mistake by breeding up on them. He will become a very popular asset in the hands of the farmer, either as a working machine or as a speculative product. The mule has been tried in many ways, and seldom found wanting. In addition to his wonderful powers of endurance, he has been put to severe test, and has shown both patience and endurance. He has borne his burden well under the most torrid conditions.



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