

HORSES AND CATTLE.

BLANKETING HORSES.

There are many farmers who almost wholly neglect the use of horse-blankets, while, on the other hand, there are many others who seem determined to lose no opportunity to get their horses covered with blankets. As the truth in argument is frequently found between two extremes, it is also probable that in this matter an intermediate course is to be desired. The proper uses of a horse-blanket are to promote the comfort of the horse and prevent it taking cold. That many people keep their horses covered in order to keep their hair smooth and make them look a little better than they otherwise would the writer does not question. But this is hardly a proper use of the blanket, and certainly is not to be recommended.

Too much blanketing is almost as bad for a horse as too little. Nature provides a covering for the horse, and any interference with its provisions should be judiciously made. When horse owners go to such lengths as to shear their animals, they may well be allowed to blanket them; but it does not seem as if it would promote either the health or comfort of a horse to have his hair removed and then be covered with a blanket. If any horse-owner thinks differently, let him have his own hair cut close to his head, and wear a hat when not at work. One practical trial of this nature will be sufficient for a lifetime.

However, as but few farmers have their horses sheared, it is not necessary to dwell on this point. The question concerning which farmers are most interested is whether, during the cold season, ordinary farm-horses need blanketing. If the stables are boarded as closely as they should be, it does not seem at all necessary to blanket a horse, unless he has been at work. While he is merely standing in the stable he does not need a blanket, any more than a cow needs to be covered. If the barn is so loosely boarded that a horse cannot keep comfortable while standing in it, the owner ought to repair his building. His call is to furnish boards rather than blankets.

When the horse has been driven any distance or has got warm while at work, he should have a blanket put on whenever and wherever he stops. Even if the stop is to be but a short one he should be covered. Many a horse has been seriously injured by standing a few minutes in the cold after having been driven.

When put into a stable, unless both stable and weather are quite warm, a blanket should be put on for a short time; but should not be allowed to remain a great while. When a horse has been exposed to a cold rain or has been out in a snow-storm he should be rubbed dry with straw or hay, and a blanket put on for an hour or two. But, unless the horse has long been accustomed to it, there seems to be no possible advantage in keeping him constantly covered with a blanket while he is doing nothing but standing in a barn.

Judgment is needed in selecting blankets as to thickness. With the design of getting the best one I could find for a reasonable price, I once bought a very thick and heavy blanket. I have often been sorry that I bought one so heavy, since during much of the time it is wholly unsuitable. In the spring and fall, when the weather is not extremely cold, and also when the horse is in a warm stable, the blanket is very much too thick and warm. If I put it on when the horse is sweaty or wet with rain or snow, he does not dry off well. There are but very few times in the course of a year when this heavy blanket is just right. While a very thin and light one is not desirable, yet one of medium thickness is much better than one which is extra weight. *American Cultivator.*

STALL-FEEDING CATTLE.

In a long article to the *New York Tribune*, Mr. Henry Stewart says that it is everywhere admitted by stockmen that the profit gained in rearing cattle for market is seldom less than 40 per cent. yearly, and figures are given to show that 75 per cent. is often realized. This is the result of feeding cattle from birth to maturity. There is a still greater profit in feeding a thin steer, costing 5 cents a pound alive, until it is worth 7 cents a pound; because there is not only a gain by the increase in weight, let us say of 200 to 800 pounds in three months feeding at 7 cents a pound, but also upon the 2 cents a pound of the whole weight of 1,000 pounds or more. This is, on the whole, equivalent to a much greater profit than could be gained from the sale of the crops that are fed. Many crops are costly, but costly crops cannot be produced under any other system than that of stall-feeding. Pasturage is not required, and as one acre of roots, with straw and linseed and cottonseed meals, will feed five head of steers for 150 days, the economy of land is very great, and root-growing is the key to the whole business. The bulky and least saleable crops are changed into valuable concentrated products, and at the same time there is returned a large quantity of valuable manure. A calf represents really more value per pound than an animal two or three years old, because it contains the initial force, so to speak, which brought it into existence, and a pound of flesh can be put into a calf at less expense for food and care than upon an older animal. It should follow, then, that these calves are disposed of by their first owners at considerably less than their value, and could be fed and reared to maturity with profit. Stall-feeding is applicable to the home-bred or purchased animal, and filling the stalls with either, and feeding to them straw and corn-fodder, which would be otherwise wasted, represents for each ton so many pounds of valuable flesh or fat, or, at least, so much heat and life-sustaining elements as will release the richer foods from the duty of merely sustaining life, that they may be devoted to the more productive effect of making flesh and fat. Winter feeding of stock gives employment to labourers who would otherwise have but little to do, and the preparation of cutting the feed and cleaning the stalls, entail but a small cost on that account. The system is thus more economical than might be supposed.

MISMANAGEMENT OF BULLS.

There are two very common mistakes, each about equally pernicious, one or the other of which will be made by a good many farmers who have resolved to raise a better class of cattle by the use of a thoroughbred bull which has been, or will be, bought at what is considered a tolerably high price. To one man, what is thought a high price may be \$50, and to another it may be \$500, but they will alike have a lively appreciation of the cost, and exalted opinions of what is to be accomplished by the new departure. One man will, with a generous spirit, take his new purchase home, tie him up in the barn, and provide him with the best the market affords—say plenty of corn-meal and good hay, in fact with every luxury except plenty of exercise. The result is the bull grows fat and sleek, but soft, sluggish, unreliable and without that hardy vigour he should possess if it is to be stamped upon his progeny. He will be fair to look upon, but the chances are that so many of the cows he has been regularly serving through the season will fail to have calves that the owner will be in much of a quandary as to whether the investment has really paid or the value of his herd been much

enhanced. Another man will turn his handsome young bull—perhaps descended from a long line of fine cattle that have been most carefully reared—on the range with the herd, to rough it as best he may, without grain of any sort, where his strength is likely to be exhausted much more in one day on a single cow than would be necessary in siring a dozen calves by one service at a time, at proper intervals. The result in this case is, the bull soon becomes a wreck in every way, while such calves as he gets are by no means what the owner expected, and a large percentage of the cows—like those bred to the pampered bull—do not have calves at all. To the farmer who has resolved to raise scrubs no longer, and for the first time invested a share of his savings in a thoroughbred bull, such an outcome is very discouraging; he fancies he has had experience with fine stock; that it is too delicate for him; in fact, "not what it's cracked up to be;" and after, perhaps, another year's unsatisfactory trial he is willing to take the best price offered for what is left of his "fancy" bull, and fall back on the use of one of the old sort, that he knows is tough, and sure as taxes. These mistakes, that are being committed all the time, have an immense influence in retarding the improvement of our cattle, and are all the outgrowth of mismanagement. A young bull should not be kept tied in the barn, and stuffed with meal and oil-cake, nor yet turned on the common, night and day, to run with a lot of cows. While he should have to eat and drink what will make him grow vigorously, he should also have plenty of exercise, and not be allowed to serve a cow more than twice, and, ordinarily, one service will be sufficient. If he can be kept in a pasture in summer, that is his proper place; but at all events he should neither be fed to excess nor starved; rightly managed, he will be capable of much valuable service, and return a bounteous interest on any reasonable cost.

We understand, of course, that the same systems that should be pursued by the average farmer are not wholly applicable to the herds and ranches of the western plains, and our remarks are intended more especially for the former.—*Chicago Breeder's Gazette.*

WHAT IS A GOOD PEDIGREE?

What constitutes a highly-bred animal, in the truest sense of the word? The answer will be: One with a first-class pedigree. What then constitutes a good pedigree? To this the only sensible answer is: One, all of whose ancestors for several generations back have been pre-eminently distinguished for excellence in the most desirable traits of the breed to which it belongs. The farther back this genealogy of good animals extends, and the more uniform the quality of the ancestry, the better; but the more immediate the ancestry in any given case, the more important does its quality become. Each immediate parent contributes one-half of the blood or pedigree inheritance of the individual; while each great-grandam or sire contributes one-eighth only; and the farther the removal the more unimportant does any given factor or cross become for good or evil in a pedigree. No pedigree can be a good one that does not usually produce good animals; no pedigree should be prized above other pedigrees unless it usually produces better animals. If, tried by this test, any pedigree fails, no matter how much it may have been idolized, its value is fictitious and its effect is hurtful rather than beneficial. The only true aristocracy of blood is one that brings superior merit, without this it is a delusion and a snare. No matter what it may have been eight or ten generations ago, if from a