

Handling the Balker.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate."

One day, while passing along a country road, I overtook a team of horses with a load of lumber. They were well matched except in color, one was a fine gray while the other was black. The gray was true to draw when put in the team some weeks before; but the black horse was a confirmed balker, and when they came to the foot of a small hill the black, of course, refused to draw, and the gray followed his lead. At first the driver tried to start the horses by speaking in his usual tone of voice. The gray made an attempt to pull, but the load, though a reasonable one for a team, was yet beyond the strength of one horse, and he had to give up. As the driver's patience was ebbing fast his voice was rising, till at last, losing control of his temper, he fairly roared at the horses, but it was of no avail. Then the whip came into evidence and the poor gray came in for his share of the beating, although he did his best to start. The black horse stood in sullen silence, his ears laid back on his neck, making a great show of indifference, though at every stroke of the whip his flesh quivered. It was pitiful to watch the poor gray start at every stroke of lash, and strain with all his strength at the load. The whip came down like a knife on the flanks and sides of the gray, so great was the blind anger of the teamster that he made no distinction between the guilty and the innocent.

An eye-witness of the scene told me that he was acquainted with the man who trained the black horse when a colt. And it was on his first trainer that my friend laid the blame of the horse's present condition. When the horse, as a colt, was first driven in harness, he, of course, stopped at every strange object which appeared to his view. If left to himself the colt would cautiously approach the object, and, after smelling it, would pass on. But the trainer, not understanding his charge's thoughts, attempted to force him past. While his whole attention was rivetted on the object, slash came the whip on his flank. The horse associated the pain with the object of its fear, instead of with a whip in the hands of the driver.

If the colt could think of two things at once it would reason things out afterwards, but since the slash of the whip is associated with the object, the colt attempts to get away from it as quickly as possible, and in time becomes a confirmed shier. Once when this horse was four years old he was too heavily loaded, and when he came to a rather steep hill the load was beyond his strength. The whip was freely applied, and this one load was the cause of spoiling not only the horse himself but also every horse afterward put in team with him, unless handled by a humane and experienced teamster.

This man became the cause of many horses shying by making certain nervous movements of the lines whenever he would see an object which the horse was at all likely to shy from. The horse took the signal, and immediately looked about him for some frightful object. Thus, after a time the horse would look for these signals from his driver. The driver was all unconscious of his effective spoiling of his horse.

Facts given by many experienced horsemen go to show that the best way of starting a balky horse is to direct his attention from the load and balking. This was proved in the case mentioned heretofore, for after an hour of futile whipping, shouting and swearing, the horses were exactly six feet further ahead of where they balked. Then an incident happened that had the effect of starting them. Two strange dogs came along, and immediately made the air ring with a chorus of yells and growls. During the course of the fight, the combatants rolled under the horses' feet. This served to take the horses' attention from the load, and, at the first word from the driver, they started up the hill.

There are innumerable methods of starting a balky horse—good, bad and indifferent, but one thing is certain, cruelty never pays. You can never conquer evil with evil. Kindness is more powerful than brute force with animals as well as with men.

Whipping or other abuse only makes a horse more angry and stubborn than before. Just as it would if someone would try and compel you, in that way, to do something which you were not disposed to do. It seems as if you might find among the following methods something to cure almost any case of balking.

A certain horseman suggests that if you suspect your horse of balking to pull him up with a sharp "whoa." Make him think you wanted him to stop at that particular time. Get out of your wagon and pretend to examine some part of the harness to assure him you wanted him to stop just then and there. Then climb in, give the reins a shake, start him with the word of command in your ordinary voice, and, nine cases out of ten, he will go without any more trouble.

Another method when the horse balks is to get out of the carriage, lift up his front foot, give the shoe a blow with a stone as if it was

the most interesting of entertainment. Then go back to your seat, and you will find that the interest he felt in your proceedings has driven all thoughts of balking out of his mind. Another good way is to provide yourself with a strap long enough to fasten to his right fore leg close to the body, and to be passed over his withers and brought down on the left side to lift up his foot and hold it close to his body. If this is done when he balks, the novelty of standing for half an hour on three legs will cause him to forget all else. After a while the sight of the strap will be enough to start him again.

Patience and kindness should always be used towards all animals. A quick-tempered or cruel man is not fit to have any creature in his power. Just consider how you would feel if compelled to work all your life for another's profit, receiving for it only what you eat, and cruel treatment. If a horse is too heavily laden when being trained to work, is he to be blamed for getting discouraged and even balky?

Cape Breton, N. S. JOHN H. MACDONALD.

LIVE STOCK.

Fitting Sheep for Show.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate."

The new beginner or amateur exhibitor is very likely to make some mistakes, in fact, we all make some. Possibly one of the most serious of these is in not starting what we call "fitting" soon enough. After spending twenty-two years in the business with reasonable success, I have come to the conclusion that as soon as the present year's shows are over it is time to start in for the next year. First, select from your flock the most typical of the breed, sheep that should finish as alike as peas, and not as is too often done, select the coarsest and largest ones which, when finished, lack quality, and only have size to commend them. Of course, I would prefer to get all the size possible, so long as quality was not sacrificed. Now, having selected the goods, give them the necessary foods and exercise to develop plenty of bone and muscle, and build up a strong, vigorous, and healthy animal, avoiding fattening foods until about three months before the commencement of the show circuit. Even then very little heating grain food is necessary if there is plenty or a variety of green foods, such as rape, vetches, alfalfa, cabbage, kale, etc., supplied for them. Very many good show animals are literally burned up with too strong feed by the over-anxious exhibitor, who perhaps did not start quite soon enough to get his stock into fine form without over-

country, but I am satisfied that the same money spent on importing fitted stuff would do Canadians vastly more good if it were spent on field stuff (bred if you like before being imported), besides it is much more creditable to win on sheep of your own breeding and fitting than on the experience of others for which we too often pay dearly.

Another mistake, or what looks to me as a mistake, that is too often made is shearing too early, or perhaps in some cases not shearing at all, but just blocking out as it is called. I think it is a mistake to have more than six months' wool on any sheep at the commencement of the exhibitions. While a lot of wool may deceive the eye of the amateur judge, that old dead fleece has no weight with the judge who knows his business. Indeed I think the tendency is to turn such sheep down and give the preference to sheep which handle fresher.

Now, as show time draws near it becomes necessary to put the finishing touches on with the shears, or perhaps with colors. I know men and women too, who claim this is wrong. I claim it is perfectly legitimate. You have just as good a right to put your sheep into the best appearance possible as a man has to shave, or a woman to curl or bang her hair. Personally, I prefer sheep shown clean and white, yet I like them to be slightly colored, so as to make the exhibit look uniform rather than to have them more or less mottled with dirt, etc. The wool trimmer can certainly improve their appearance.

Show sheep should be kept in during the very hot part of the day, and out of heavy rains, in order to have their wool in the best possible condition. After doing all this and putting your flock into first-class condition, you may go into the showing and get beaten. Perhaps not by your opponent's sheep, but perhaps by a judge who does not thoroughly understand his business. Sheep are perhaps the most difficult class of stock to judge, and a few days of a short course will not make competent sheep judges.

Middlesex Co., Ont. R. H. HARDING.

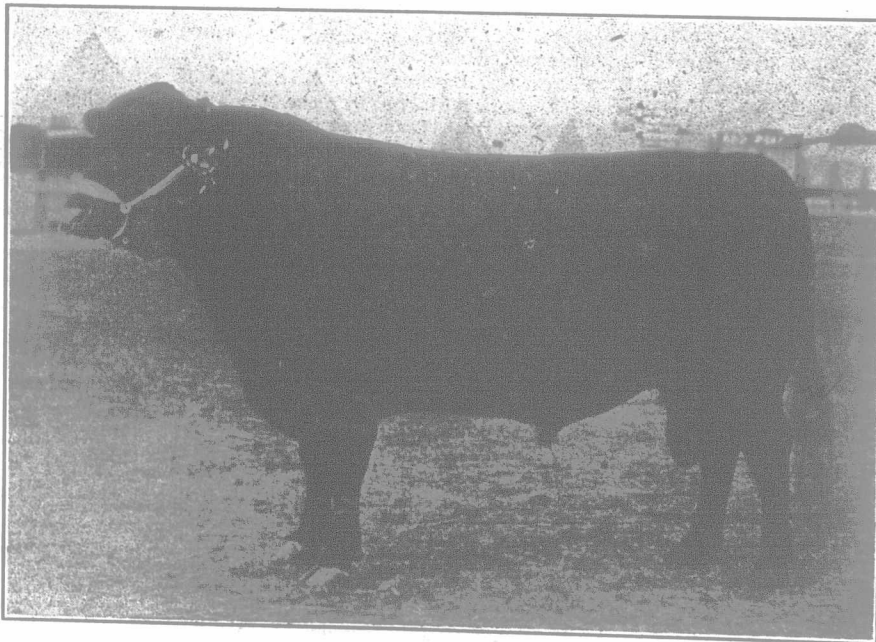
Our Scottish Letter.

While show reports in detail cannot possibly interest Canadian readers, a general impression of such an event as the Highland and Agricultural Society's Show at Paisley may prove useful. The balance of breeds is better preserved at this Scottish National Show than at the Royal Agricultural Society's Show. There in cattle sections the Shorthorn easily overshadows all other breeds—in fact the representatives of all the other breeds put together did not much more than equal the

total number of exhibits of Shorthorns. But at the Scottish Show the representation of all cattle breeds was much more evenly distributed, and seldom have all the breeds which find a home in the North been better represented. The overshadowing breed at a Highland and Agricultural Society's Show is the Clydesdale, and not for many years has a better show of these been presented in any show-yard.

Paisley, where the show was held, is the county capital of Renfrewshire. It is not nearly such an old burgh as the county town of Renfrew, situated on the banks of the Clyde, but in spite of being inland fully three miles, Paisley has far outstripped that ancient and royal burgh which gives one of his titles to the heir apparent to the British throne.

He is Prince of Wales of course, but also Baron Renfrew and Earl of Carrick in the peerage of Scotland. Paisley was formerly famous as a weaving centre—and during the earlier half of the nineteenth century no Scotch bride was regarded as fully equipped until she was made the recipient of a Paisley shawl. When the glory of the weaving departed a greater glory arose upon the town. It became the centre of the thread trade, and the three great firms of Coats, Clark, and Kerr pretty well shared its wealth among them. The combination of the two first-named has led to an accumulation of wealth in Paisley, probably without a parallel in Scottish story. Two members of the Coats' family have recently died—one leaving a fortune of one and three-quarter millions sterling, and the other of one and a quarter millions sterling. This is typical of the whole connection, and the two families vie with each other in their efforts



Red Poll Bull.

Champion at the Royal Show, Bristol, 1913.

crowding them. This class of fitting can usually be detected by a harsh, rather dead feeling in the wool, and by the fat slipping or falling away from the back or topline, and forming rolls along the underline, due, no doubt, largely to overcrowding with concentrated foods and lack of exercise, which is a natural consequence, as the sheep, being so heavily fed, have no desire to rustle around, and the fat being put on altogether out of proportion to the amount of flesh or muscle, there is really nothing to hold the fat in proper position.

Another thing that is important is fitting home-bred stuff, and I believe it deserves more encouragement than our exhibitions are giving it. I would like to see a larger proportion of our prize money given to home-bred sheep. I wouldn't, for a minute, attempt to discourage importing. I don't think there is nearly enough stock imported from Great Britain to this