

The Outlook of the British Stockbreeder.

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I have not chosen this subject; it has been chosen for me. It is not a subject on which I can claim to have formed any new or independent opinions. It is a subject on which men may very well differ.

The outlook for the British farmer generally, at the moment, is very mixed. He had good grain crops, and the prospect of enhanced grain prices. In Scotland and the north of England, after a sunless summer, we had a warm, genial September, which ripened the crops slowly, so that we had a luscious but late harvest. October was to be the main harvesting month, and until this, its closing week, it has given us floods, and an almost constant downpour of rain. The heavy grain crops lie soaking in the fields, and to-day, Hallwe'en, much of the oat crop in Scotland is uncut, and about one-third of it is still in the stook, or, at best, the hand-rick or "hut." The potato crop is sound, and fairly heavy, and prices have rarely been as good (80s. per ton) at this date. But the farmer, wrestling with his derelict grain crop, cannot get his potatoes lifted, and is consequently prevented realizing what he might from the good prices ruling.

The outlook for the dairy farmer or feeding farmer is not cheering. Both make large drafts on the produce of the soil, and both, in normal seasons, have to buy feeding stuffs heavily. In a season like the present, with the prospect of short turnip crop, dear potatoes and wasted grain, both these classes of farmers must buy more heavily than usual. Feeding stuffs, in sympathy with wheat, are to be high-priced, so that the cost of bringing stock through the winter will be much heavier than usual. From every standpoint, therefore, the farmers' outlook is rather gloomy. There are one or two redeeming features in that outlook. Dairy produce is selling well—cheese as high as 66s. per cwt. of 112 pounds—and wheat has not been so high in price for

many years. Many farmers will have cheese to sell, and these will do very well; fewer will have wheat to market, but those who have will reap a harvest. Barley is a bad sample, and much of it will be used for feeding purposes. Where there is a good sample, a high price will be obtained. As I have said, the outlook of the cropping farmer is decidedly mixed. Had there been a good harvest—I mean in respect of weather—there can be no doubt that 1907 would have been a good farmer's year. I would not like to prophesy what sort of year it will be, should existing weather conditions continue.

MOTOR CAR VS. HARNESS HORSE.

The British live stock breeder has, on the whole, had a decade of good prices, with a healthy home and foreign demand. The only class of horses which has suffered a kind of eclipse is the Hackney or harness horse. The motor car has undoubtedly hit this breed pretty hard, not so much, or, indeed, at all, in the matter of the very highest class of harness horses, but in respect to the second-class and the misfits, the attractions of the motor have been rather serious. One gentleman who used to do a big trade in the medium class of these horses, said lately that, whereas he used to be able to sell any number of them at prices varying from £80 to £200 he could not now gift such horses or ponies. Gentlemen who used to be quite ready to purchase such animals now invested in motor cars. The only Hackney or harness horse for which the demand continues keen is the very highest class of animal, fit to win in any company and, when on parade in the "Row" during the season, sure to attract the eye of the passers-by. That kind of horse, the most difficult of all to breed, is in demand now, and, so long as there are men of wealth and leisure who want to own something that no other has, always will be in demand. For the second class of such animals, the outlook is not bright.

It is more difficult to understand, but it is the fact, that the motor-car craze has adversely affected the market for hunting horses. You cannot

follow the hounds in a motor car, but the new toy seems to occupy the time and attention of those who formerly spent much of their time in the hunting-field, and took a special pride in their hunting stables. No doubt this form of the motor-craze will wear itself out. Nature can always defy art, and it will always be more difficult to breed a first-class animal than to make a first-class motor car. The highest price will always be paid for nature's rarest gifts. But what is to be done with the necessarily large army of misfits, out of which the one perfect sample is drawn? Motor traction undoubtedly competes heavily with these.

THE DRAFT HORSE HOLDS HIS OWN.

The breeders of Clydesdales have been doing pretty well for five or six years. The colonial and foreign demand has been very brisk. The present year, 1907, although perhaps not as favorable as 1906, yet yields an export trade of about 1,050 Clydesdales. Taking these at the low average of £40 each, we have a revenue of £42,000 going into the pockets of breeders and middlemen. Whether this demand will continue, is a question which Canadians can answer better than Scotsmen. Very much depends on them. There is a strong likelihood that the demand from the Argentine will increase year by year. They have instituted a Clydesdale Studbook in that country, and in the past that has always tended to create, or where created, to sustain and increase, a demand. At home, Clydesdales are in general favor for draft purposes, and, given weight and substance, they can always sell for a good deal more money than many other sorts. The demand in street traffic is for heavier horses.

Continued on page 1875



A FORTHILL RANCH.