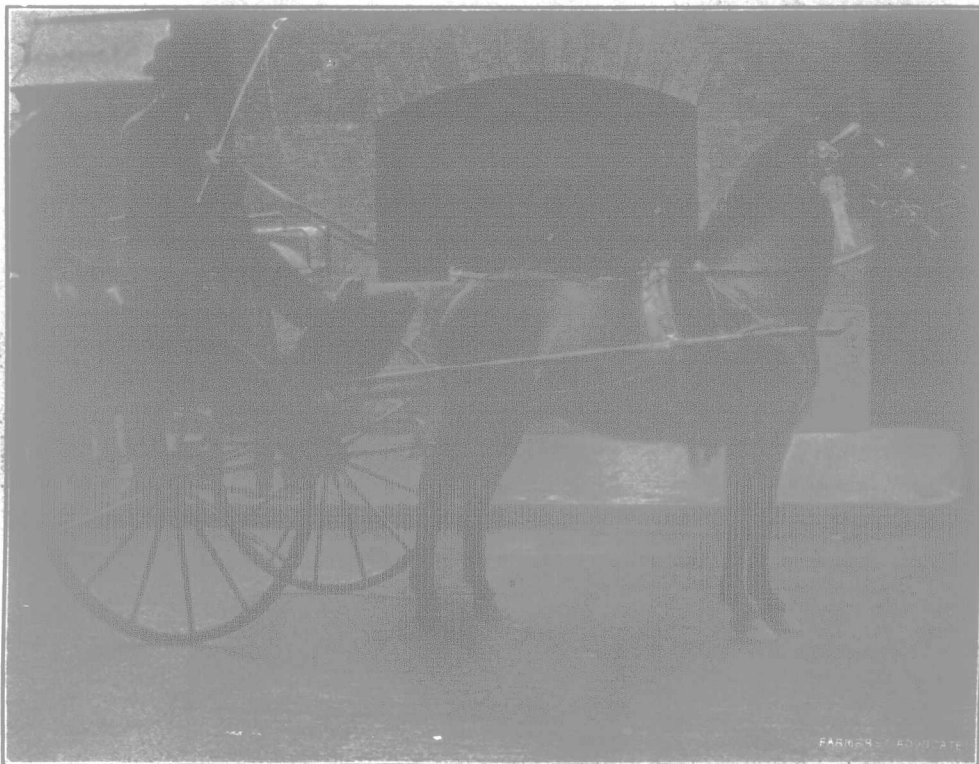


HORSES.

The General-purpose Horse.

I have noticed several short letters in recent numbers of the "Advocate," on "What constitutes a general-purpose horse." In these articles the writers appear to consider that weight classifies; that a horse between 1,250 and 1,350 pounds is eligible for the class, but those either under or over these weights should be sent to the barn, if in competition. Now, for show purposes, where the conditions distinctly state that horses of this class shall be of a certain weight, of course the judge has no option, but must disqualify those that are either below or above the stipulated weight. In my opinion weight has much less to do with the classification than type and general characteristics. Just what constitutes "a general-purpose horse," depends, to a considerable degree, upon the individual tastes of the owner, and upon the different kinds of labor he wants him to perform. However, to establish a uniformity of opinion of the necessary characteristics of the class, it is necessary that some definite type be recognized. The "general-purpose horse" is commonly understood to be an animal that is essentially a farmers' horse, and in order to avoid confusion, and explain to probable exhibitors what shall constitute a horse of this kind, where prizes are offered, the society offering the prizes usually define him in some such words as these: "A general-purpose horse is one that is suitable to go in a plow, wagon, carriage, buggy, or under saddle." In some cases weight is designated; in others not. I think it wise to mention a minimum weight, as a horse under at least 1,200 pounds certainly has not the necessary strength to give satisfactory service to a plow in heavy land, or hitched to a loaded wagon; but I do not think the maximum weight should be 1,350 or even 1,400 pounds. So long as the horse has the desired characteristics as regards type, action and manners, it is hard to limit the weight at which he ceases to be a general-purpose animal and becomes a member of another class. Neither are we justified in classifying all horses of 1,250 to 1,350 pounds as general-purpose horses. We frequently see Standard-breds, Hackneys, carriage horses, coach horses, and not infrequently Thoroughbreds, that weigh more than 1,250 pounds, and we cannot, by any system of reasoning, classify a fairly typical animal of any of these classes as "a general-purpose horse." On the other hand, we occasionally see a horse of the draft type—it may be Clyde or Shire, Percheron, Suffolk, or other draft breed—that does not weigh more than 1,350. As with the lighter classes, we cannot classify these as "general-purpose." The objection to this argument may be taken, that a horse of the draft type that does not weigh more than 1,350 is not typical. We admit that as regards weight, but in some cases he is typical in other respects, and while too small for his real class, it would be utter absurdity to call him "a general-purpose horse." Again, we may have two horses of the same type—the type we accept as correct—the same breeding, probably full brothers, one weighs 1,350 and the other 1,400 pounds. Are we justified in a case like this in disqualifying a team of typical horses because one exceeds by 50 pounds the maximum weight of 1,350? I do not think so. In such a case what class does he represent? He certainly is not an "agricultural horse," even though he be within the designated weight; he is not of the agricultural type, which is essentially the draft type. In my opinion, the agricultural horse is one with all the characteristics of the draft horse except weight. If we might be allowed to use the term "light draft" in contradistinction to "heavy draft," I think it would express what we want in the agricultural horse. The question then arises, "What shall be the maximum weight for the general-purpose class?" This is not an easy question to answer, but I think at least 1,400 pounds, or even more. A horse of the desired type, but overweight, does not then become an agricultural horse, but is simply (like many horses of different types) a horse that, while probably a useful and valuable animal, does not belong to any recognized class. Of course, agricultural societies should not try to make classes for horses of all kinds, but on the other hand should make classes for the marketable classes, and hence endeavor to encourage breeders to produce such animals as will be valuable both for show purposes and for the market. This reasoning raises the question, "Should societies recognize the class under discussion?" Is he a special type or a misfit? Can he be bred with any degree of certainty, and if so, how? He is of necessity of composite breed, and when we try to produce him the progeny may partake of the special characteristics of either dam or sire, or of some progenitor on either side, more or less remote, and be an animal of a type essentially different from what we expected. Notwithstanding all that may be said pro and con, as to the existence of this class of horse, or as to the advisability of his recognition as an animal of a special class, the fact remains, if we are going to

recognize the class, we should endeavor to establish some uniform conception as to the characteristic type, form and action desired. In my opinion, he should be a horse of the blocky type, between 15½ and 16½ hands, about 15½ most desirable, not less than 1,200 pounds in weight. The maximum weight to, at all events, be not less than 1,400 pounds. His bone should be flat, and of quantity corresponding to his weight, and there should be an absence of feathering; a tuft of long hair on the fetlock pad not objectionable. The reason there should be an absence of feathering is not because a reasonable amount of hair would interfere with his usefulness, and while we want it in the draft horse of the Clydesdale or Shire type, the "general-purpose horse" being required to perform so many and varied functions, looks must be a prime consideration, and while many horses with considerable feathering have very good action, when we see one hitched to a light carriage or buggy, or used under saddle, he looks entirely out of place, as we associate hairy-legged horses with heavy loads, and while he may be as active and light-footed as one without the hair, his looks should condemn him for the class under discussion. He should be rather a stylish horse, neat head and ears, well carried; neck rather long, but very well muscled; withers high and not too broad; shoulder of medium obliquity; back rather short, and loins strong; croup long, and not too oblique; tail well haired and well carried; the forearm rather long and strong; knee strong and straight; cannon broad, strong and clean; pasterns of medium length and obliquity; feet rather round, of medium size and good quality, and he must stand straight on them. The



Hillhurst Sensation —58—.

First-prize high-stepping Hackney stallion, Canadian Horse Show. See report in last issue. Owned by Mr. A. Yeager, Simcoe, Ont., who was recently offered \$10,000 for him.

haunch, gaskin, hock, must be strong, well muscled and well defined; hind cannon to foot, same quality as fore. His ribs should be long and well sprung; deep through girth; breast moderately wide, and muscles prominent. In fact, he must be a low-set horse, with well developed muscles throughout. In action he must be a good walker; his tread must not have the weight of the draft horse, nor the lightness of horses of the lighter classes. He should trot well also, lifting both fore and hind feet fairly well from the ground; neither paddling nor rolling in front, nor going wide nor interfering behind. His manners should vary considerably. When at heavy work he should have the steadiness of the draft horse, and when hitched to a carriage or buggy, or when under saddle, he should assume, to as great an extent as his characteristics will allow, the manners of the light horse. In all cases there should be an absence of nervousness, fretfulness or excitability. He should be safe under all conditions; he must be suitable for his owner's wife or daughter to drive to market, or for pleasure; or for his little son to ride to the blacksmith shop or post-office, or to market with a basket. Under any and all these conditions he should so comport himself that the ordinary observer will not look and remark that "that horse is not in his proper place." Of course, we do not expect him to be typical of any particular class, but to perform the functions, both in appearance and work, of any class, in such a manner as to not be particularly noticeable under any conditions. Now, sir, you may say that I want something that cannot be produced, but there are many horses of this type, and this is my idea of what constitutes "a general-purpose horse."

"WHIP."

Weight of General-purpose Horses.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

In your April 7th issue, Farmer Exhibitor asks, "Is the horse of 1,350 pounds a proper general-purpose horse?" and says he is too light. My answer is that a horse 100 pounds lighter, of the right breed and quality, is better than a 1,500 pounds hairy-legged Clyde. If there is one thing above another in horse-breeding that should be kept in view it is compactness, as much goodness as possible in a small space, to enable him to do his work with ease to himself and pleasure to his owner.

F. E. admits that 1,350 pounds would not be too heavy for a saddle or buggy horse. Now, who wants a 1,350-lb. horse for a buggy when one of 1,100 lbs. would be better? Did Colonel Dent, when in Canada buying horses, want them 1,350 lbs. for either heavy or light cavalry? Certainly not. F. E. says, "If the farmer goes to market with any kind of a load he wants a horse of some weight." I don't know what he means by "any kind of a load." The stuff that farmers take to market generally is eggs, butter, and a few chickens. I don't think it requires a 1,500-lb. horse to draw that. At Toronto he "has seen good sound horses of 1,430 lbs. sent to the stable because they were too heavy, and a team getting the prize that never saw a plow or other farming implement." That might be, but at the same time they might be the very best horses when put to it. He says, "We don't need

judges so much to judge the qualities of the class as we need a good, honest weigh-master." I don't hold with that sentiment. If weight and not quality is the consideration, then pile on the fat, and let the scales in the hands of an honest weigh-master be the judge. I agree with him when he says farmers should be encouraged to exhibit their general-purpose teams with some hope of winning a prize, instead of giving the prize to horses sired by Thoroughbred and trotting stallions. I have no faith in the trotter—in the Thoroughbred I have. If Farmer Exhibitor had a slight admixture of the Thoroughbred in his horses, they would be stronger and more active if not 15 cwt. It

is well known that a slight admixture of the blood of the Thoroughbred horse has improved the heavy black horse of England. THOROUGHBRED. Elgin Co., Ont.

The Foal.

Foals are arriving now. Give the dams a bran mash, ground oats, clean mixed hay, with plenty of clover in it; plenty of pure water, and allow outdoor exercise on fine days. Do not be afraid to work in-foal mares right up to foaling time, but give them at least two weeks rest after foaling, so that the youngster may get a good start. If possible, give the mare two months run without work. Don't neglect to give the in-foal mare a light, roomy, clean box, and don't begin dosing the foal as soon as it arrives. Nature will, in most cases, set them right.

June Horse Shows.

Galt and Guelph, Ont., are preparing for horse shows next month. The dates for the Galt show are fixed for June 2nd, 3rd and 4th, and Guelph for 9th, 10th and 11th. Liberal prizes are offered, and it is safe to say the residents of Wellington and Waterloo Counties will have the privilege of seeing some of the very best horses of all classes at these shows.

Young Lady (to very new salesman)—"Have you a book called 'An Essay on Irish Bulls'?" Salesman—"No, miss. We haven't any works on live stock."