

HORSES.

SELECTING AND BREEDING THE MARES.

[Second part of address by H. G. Reed, V. S., at the Ontario Winter Fair, December, 1907.]

A weak point with too many Canadian farmers is that they are not particular enough about the brood mares. I have known farmers who used mares for breeding purposes simply because they could not use them for anything else. I have known mares so vicious that they would kick you off a load of hay, and they were used for brood purposes. I don't advocate that every man should provide himself with pure-bred mares, but don't breed at all unless you have a fairly decent kind of brood mare. There are some that never should be used for breeding purposes at all; they never should be allowed to reproduce their species. We have enough poor animals.

AVOID HEREDITARY UNSOUNDNESS.

First of all, we should look for reasonable absence of blemishes. There are certain blemishes that are well known to be hereditary. Take spavins and ringbone, and the most ordinary form of blindness and roaring; they are well known to be hereditary troubles. I am quite willing to admit that a horse might be spavined as the result of an accident, but I have no hesitation in saying that by far the largest proportion of spavined horses are simply suffering from these blemishes because it runs in the breeding. Perhaps most of their ancestors before them were spavined. It is transmitted from parent to progeny almost always, and we ought to see that our brood mares are free from spavins and ringbone. A very large percentage of the blind horses to-day have gone blind through the action of an hereditary disease. Repeated attacks of sore eyes will lead to blindness, and it is a well-known hereditary trouble. Again, a man may have a brood mare so sound that you would be justified in writing out a certificate of soundness, and yet she may be utterly unfit to use as a brood mare, because she is an animal of such poor conformation. I don't say that you should look for perfection in a brood mare, but if she is of poor conformation, don't breed her, because she will transmit to her progeny her qualities.

BREED TO PURE-BRED SIRES.

Sometimes we get stallions of no particular breed, and sometimes only half-breeds. You have all seen half-breeds that were pretty good animals, and if a judge went over him point by point, he might not be able to criticise the animal very much, and he might win in the showing because the horse himself is a good individual, and yet he is not likely to be a good stock horse. He lacks a pedigree. The man who wants to get the best results in breeding of farm stock of any kind will not do as well as he should if he doesn't make it a rule to breed always from a registered animal. Why do we emphasize this matter of breeding so much? We know there is a great natural law operating in all our breeding operations, called the law of reversion, and when we breed there is a tendency for the result of a cross to revert to the characteristics of some undesirable ancestor. When you take a half-bred horse—I don't care how excellent he may be—we know he has close up behind him, on his dam's side, 50 per cent. of mongrel blood. Take two horses, both good individuals, and one of them registered—an animal that has sprung from a long line of illustrious ancestors; put these two animals in the same section, and I will guarantee that the pure-bred animal will have a larger number of good colts than the ill-bred animal, because he will transmit his characteristics to his progeny. Therefore, I say it is of the utmost importance that you breed from registered sires.

GET INDIVIDUALITY, BACKED UP WITH PEDIGREE.

But don't be carried away too much by registration. Don't imagine that, because a horse is registered, he is a good stock-animal. Unfortunately, we have some registered horses that are poor individuals, and I would not breed to a poor individual, I don't care what his pedigree may be; but when you get a good individual, and behind the good individuality a good pedigree, I say that is the kind of horse to get good results from, and the farmer who sees to it that he uses the very best breeding mares he can get, and that he breeds to pure-bred animals every time, and sticks persistently to some breed, will find the profits of horse-breeding will very much increase. If farmers would start out and follow the advice given them this morning, before ten years had passed, the value of the output of horses in Ontario would be quadrupled.

DISCUSSION.

Q. Which generally gets the better stock in carriage horses, a Hackney over 15.2, or under?

A. If I were breeding Hackney horses, I would rather have them under 15.2 than over; but that is a matter of taste. The class of carriage horses selling for the highest price are horses 15½ hands

and under. Some of the highest-priced carriage horses have been under 15½ hands high. We are not looking for great size any more. If I were looking for a Hackney stallion, it would be quality that I would look for, rather than size.

Q. Is a smaller horse, 15 and 15.2 likely to be a purer-bred horse than one 16 or 16.2?

A. I don't think you can determine anything about the breed of horse by his size. Personally, I am in favor of the smaller Hackney horse.

Q. What do you consider a proper application to that word quality?

A. Dr. Greenside once wrote a long article in "The Farmer's Advocate" on that point. It is very hard to describe just what we mean by "quality" in a horse, but we always look for fineness and cleanness, and hardness of bone, clear-cut formation, and nice clean head, and a nice soft, silky skin. We may sometimes have a homely horse, and still have a great deal of quality.

Q. How would you tell a carriage horse from a road horse?

A. We want a road team to go reasonably fast, and we want, with the ability to go fast, the ability to go far. In a carriage team, we don't need that. Carriage teams have not to go very fast, and they never have to go very far. The best carriage teams are simply taken into the cities, and the rich gentlemen buy them up and take a little drive in the parks or on the streets. They are supposed to be very attractive-looking, and to have good action.

Q. How would you judge them?

A. I would insist that a carriage horse went square, and that they did not straddle behind, and that they lifted their knees up well and showed a nice action; in judging a road horse, I would not look for that. I would not set a road horse back because he went wide behind. He



Margrave (12240).

Clydesdale stallion; bay; foaled June, 1902. Sire Hiawatha (10067). Property of John Pollock, Langside, Scotland. Winner of the Glasgow District £80 Premium.

might go so wide behind that his hind feet would go outside of the front, but in a pair of carriage horses I wouldn't allow that. Pacing would be all right in a road horse, but would not be tolerated for a moment in a carriage horse.

Q. Would you disqualify a draft horse with a bog spavin?

A. Certainly I would. We generally make a certain allowance for puffiness in a draft horse, but we would like to see them as clean as other horses. I might make allowance for a foal that had a slight puffiness in the hock, but if I thought it was a spavin, I certainly would not consider it.

HORSEMEN'S EXPERIENCE COMPETITION.

By John B. McGerrigle, Chateauguay County, Que.

As I have been a reader of "The Farmer's Advocate" for a great number of years, and have always taken a lively interest in all subjects up for discussion, or anything that would be beneficial to the farming community, I will give you my experience in breeding, feeding and selling Clydesdale and grade draft horses. In the year 1875 I bought a filly foal which cost me the small sum of \$33. She was sired by a registered Clydesdale, dam a grade mare. I bred her at four years old to a registered Clydesdale stallion, and she raised a fine filly foal. I bred her again to the same horse, and had another mare foal. The next two years she raised two more good ones. As I believe in working brood mares, and think

the foals are stronger for it, I worked the mare all through the winter, and also after the foals were about ten days old, always being careful not to allow the colts to suck when the mare was warm. The first two I kept for brood mares and to work, the other two I sold at good prices. The dam of these four mares worked up till she was twenty-nine years old, when she died. I kept raising one and two colts every year, up to the year 1885, when the most of the best Clydesdale stallions took a disease the veterinarians called pink-eye, and for two years there were a very small percentage of mares foaled, and of those that were a good few lost their foals. Having poor success for two years in getting mares to breed, I bought an imported Clydesdale stallion and mare—the best that money and judgment could buy—and have had no trouble since in raising colts, having two and sometimes three every year.

I have always bred to a registered Clydesdale sire, with the exception of one year that I bred one mare to a kind of half-bred blood horse. The result was the worst-looking horse I ever raised. As I have had a stallion in my stables for the past fifteen years, and have seen all classes of mares, I must say that there is no sire that will beat the Clydesdale to produce stock, to work, and to sell. The first winter I feed the colts hay, oats and a little bran, with a pinch of salt in nearly every feed, twice a day, and about twice a week a little crushed grain, leaving them out for a while every day that is fine for exercise, except when the ground is very icy, and always taking care that their feet are kept in right shape, especially before going on grass in the spring; and my experience has been that colts that have not been fed too high through the winter will do better and gain more rapidly when put to grass than those that have been pampered.

When hay is about eight or nine dollars a ton, I think twenty dollars will winter a colt nicely. And, for selling, I have sold them at all ages, but, with the exception of four three-year-old registered stallions and four three-year-old mares, I sold the largest number when coming two years old, very often in the month of December. The prices I got for these grade mares and a few geldings ranged from \$100 to \$135, and for three-year-old registered mares as high as \$375; and, as the stallion colts have to be kept in after two years old, they cost quite a bit, but when you get the right buyer, the cost is not so much after all. And I would say just here that there is no one animal kept on the farm that will make more money than a good sound grade brood mare.

The greatest loss I had was a six-year-old registered mare that rolled into a barbed-wire fence. She died four hours afterward, and I often wished since that the man that invented barbed wire had been either a Government expert or a lightning-rod agent, and I would advise farmers that are lovers of that noble animal, the horse, if they have any barbed wire, to burn it or bury it, and put up some brand of woven fence.

IMPROVE THE HORSE BUSINESS BY WORKING THE STALLIONS.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I noticed a few articles in your recent issues on the subject, "Stallion License and Inspection." This subject also received some attention in the discussion a year ago. Two reasons proposed in favor of the act are: First, it would improve the horse industry by putting out of business a lot of undesirable sires; second, it would enable owners of pure-bred stallions to do a more profitable business, and occasion better stallions being procured in the future. As to the first, there are other hindrances to the production of good horses besides the use of inferior sires which will prevail under any circumstances. Is not the treatment some horses receive capable of developing them into scrubs, be their breeding what it may? As regards making it more profitable for owners of pure-bred stallions—that is, those of the draft breeds—I would say that a great many of the owners incur extra expense on themselves by the method they follow of keeping