

able, however, as such stand-still action may be in a back, I should prefer it in a brood-mare to the opposite defect.

The great reason why action in a mare is so essential is, that she having the roadster blood ought to supply it; whereas, it is not always possible to find it in a stallion; it is, indeed, very rare to see a thorough-bred horse whose action is such as would be desirable in a park hack, the roadster, or the hunter. The racing man cares not, provided his horse's head is first seen at the winning-post, in what form he moves his forelegs. The qualities which win fame for the racer are speed, endurance, and pluck. The conformation most conducive to speed depends more on the back, loins and hindlegs, than on the forelegs; it is therefore by no means uncommon to find horses, whose performance on the turf have been above mediocrity, with forelegs such as would not wear for three months on the road, and with action such as no man would willingly endure in his hack or his hunter. Thorough-bred horses, with every point such as the breeder would desire, combining power and beauty, equally excellent in their forelegs, their ribs, and their hindlegs, are not to be met with in every neighbourhood, and even when found will seldom cover half bred mares at all, and then only at exorbitant prices. These are the magnates of the stud that will not condescend to mates of descent less illustrious than their own. If, then, you cannot secure their services, you must avail yourself of the best within your reach. Supposing your mare has the forelegs of the action which I have recommended, you may safely put her to a horse which has tolerable forelegs, provided he is in general power, in pedigree, and in performance such as you desire. I mentioned, in a former letter, that I once put some mares of my own to "Tom-boy;" his forelegs were by no means first-rate, and his front action was decidedly scrambling and bad; but my mares being excellent in both these points, their stock showed no traces of their sires deficiency. To breed colts with bad forelegs and insufficient bone, is to encumber your land with stock neither useful nor saleable. With mares of first-rate excellence in that respect, you greatly extend the range of stallions which it is safe to put to them.

I shall not enlarge upon other points of the mare in detail, for the reason that their selection may be in general be left to the discretion of the breeder; and also, because there are many of them which in practice will be more frequently supplied by the horse than the mare. I must say, however, that I should not like to breed from a mare with a bad head or small eye. Natural soundness especially in the feet, is very important, and so is good temper. With mares, as with cows and ewes, there is a certain character difficult to describe, but which the experienced breeder knows by instinct, as belonging to those likely to produce good stock. It is not the largest, or the most showy, but those which have a certain refinement of form, and a gracefulness of outline (which are as characteristic of the well bred female, as power and muscle are of the male,) which will most faithfully reflect, in their offspring their own merits, and those of its sire. Many a large showy mare, on the contrary, will be provokingly

uncertain in her produce; one year bring in a foal as much undersize as next year it is overgrown. Such a mare ought to be discarded at soon as possible.

By observing the course which I have recommended, farmers who exercise ordinary judgment will make as safe an investment as they would in the breeding of any other kind of stock. Their colts will make either hunters, carriage horses, or hacks of a useful and powerful kind.

There is a class of mares much higher than that which I have described above; I mean those which combine great power with a pedigree little short of thorough-bred—mares which have in their youthful days been foremost in the hunting-field, and contended, perhaps not unsuccessfully, in the steeple chase. Such are the dams of the cracks of the Melton field and of the victors at Liverpool and Leamington. But they are so difficult to buy, and so rarely in the market, that the majority of breeders have but little chance of trying their luck with them. Their owners naturally desire to secure a foal, when it may be a great prize, won at a small cost, and will therefore seldom be disposed to part with them. It requires, moreover, a more ripened judgement, and more mature experience, to select mares fit for the production of first-class hunters and steeple-chasers than for the rearing of a less ambitious character of stock. The stallion to which they are put ought to be one of superior class to the majority of the itinerant animals which secure the custom of so many farmers, simply because they save them the trouble of further enquiry. It may be laid down as a general rule that the horse ought, if possible, to be a better animal than the mare. Then there is the difficulty, even when a horse of tried excellence is found, of discovering whether his points and his blood suit the mare. The art and the science of breeding first rate horses, are not to be mastered without much thought, trouble and research. There is no royal road to it. He who is wise, in spite of every obstacle, to attain golden results, must adopt a course the very antipodes of the too common one, of putting some mare, because he happens to have her, to some horse, because it happens to come into his yard. He must never breed from a bad mare or a bad horse; nor must he grudge a few pounds spent in securing the best of either sex within his reach. A judicious outlay of capital will here assuredly not fail to reap the reward which has attended the improvement of every other description of stock.

GROUND OATS.

The Drought which has prevailed for many weeks up to the present time, will cause an upward tendency in the price of fodder; consequently, every farmer and yeoman must study practical economy in that important department of husbandry termed feeding and rearing.

The first experiment we shall advise them to make in view of feeding and rearing horses, is, to have their oats ground. Ground oats furnish more nutriment, and keep the bowels in better condition, than when served out whole. By grinding the oats we separate them into a myriad of particles, and pre-