

broad over the top. This influence is so sure in its operation that the observing horseman can see its signs in the four-year-old from Standard-bred on both sides, if the colt has run and fed on the prairie from birth, and has had no "manage." There may be exceptions, but the tendency is general.

Then take the form of the neck and head. The manger horse is forced into an arch, heavy towards the shoulder, by which the head and neck are most economically carried on the species of shoulder most advantageously formed for easy movement. The horse that eats off the ground has his neck bent the wrong way. It is short on the upper side and long on the lower side. His ears hang over, and the constant stretching of the lower part of the neck after grass gives him a thick, throaty appearance when his head is even moderately raised. The same thickness shows even in well-bred colts at the summer's end, though they may be kept inside in winter. The approved form of neck, shoulder and head is not a whim or fancy, but it is economical and desirable. The pattering cayuse may have his share of good wind and constitution, due to constant exercise and dry feed, but he needs remodeling for modern uses.

Apart from considerations of work, the low-feeding habit is not good for any horse. It affects the whole anatomy. The drawing forward of the withers gives a long, flat rib. The back becomes longer, the kidneys lower and the waist tighter. The paunch room is generally big enough, but it does not arise from the ribs being properly turned from the spine, but from the lengthening of the back ribs. The prairie horse has been said to be right for the artist, but his only attracting feature is his wildness and sharpness of instinct. Men who are using the great prairies for horse-raising, should combine liberal training and stall feeding with grazing. Light horses, especially, depend very largely for their value on the way they act and appear in action. Using the native prairie horse for illustration is perhaps taking an extreme case, for he has not had the benefit of transformation by selection, but, on the other hand, his features may be more distinctly ascribed to environment.

ALBERTA HORSEMAN.

### Draft Horses: Origin and Characteristics

#### THE SHIRE HORSE.

The Shire, the draft horse of England, doubtless originated in England in much the same way as the Clydesdale did in Scotland, viz., by crossing the native heavy mares with stallions imported from European countries, notably Normandy and Flanders. Considerable evidence exists to show that large horses existed in England before the Christian era. There are no plates or drawings in existence to show the type, and we can only surmise that they were of considerable size, because their descendants were large, and bore considerable resemblance to the Shire of to-day. It must be remembered that the horse of a certain period is naturally moulded so as to be suitable for the requirements of the times, and that in the early history of England the majority of the inhabitants were warriors, and this created a demand for horses of sufficient size and strength to carry an armored man, weighing (with his armor) probably about 400 pounds, much if not quite the same condition as existed in Scotland about the same time; hence the horses must have had considerable size and weight-carrying capacity, while those used in harness were required to draw heavy chariots over rough and heavy roads. Besides weight and strength, these horses would, of necessity, be horses with considerable activity. History supports these suppositions, as Caesar recounts the methods of warfare carried on in Great Britain in those days, and mentions the chariots full of warriors that were drawn at a rapid pace over rough and uneven ground. These horses, while doubtless not approaching the modern Shire in quality, and probably not in size, were doubtless the foundation stock of the high-class modern Shire.

An extract from a work written by Sir Thomas Blundeville over 500 years ago, reads thus: "Some men have a breed of great horses, meet for the war and to serve in the field; others tried ambling horses of a meane stature for to journey and travel by the way. Some, again, have a race of swift runners to run for wagers or to gallop the bucke; but plane country men have a breed only for drafts of burden."

This passage affords strong evidence that in England at that time existed the different classes or breeds much as they exist to-day. They evidently had the race-horse, the carriage horse and the draft horse.

From early cuts of the English cart horse or Shire, we learn that there were some differences in type, one of which was endowed with peculiar appendages of hair, as a mustache on the upper lip,

a long lock of hair hanging from the front of the knee, and one also projecting from the back of the hock, and the back of each leg, below the knee and hock, was supplied with long hair in great profusion, while in other strains there was an absence of the mustache and locks mentioned, and a general lessening of the quantity of hair on the posterior border of the cannons. The latter strain doubtless had an infusion of light blood of some kind, but whether this was derived from foreign ancestry is not certain. While doubtless there were very early importations of both sires and dams from European countries into England, to cross with the sires and dams of that country, the first recorded importation took place from Flanders in the year 1160, and this was followed by many others. In the meantime, there were doubtless importations from Scotland, and exportations from England to that country. In this way, we may say that there was a more or less constant infusion of foreign blood, both from European countries and from Scotland, in the English horse during the years in which the Shire horse was being improved. This infusion continued until the introduction of the Shire Horse Studbook in or about the year 1877, since which,



Severn Cramer.

Shire stallion, winner of first and champion prizes. Reserve for £800 premium of Shire Horse Society, at Crewe, 1906.

of course, no such infusion has been tolerated. In the first volume of the studbook 2,381 stallions were registered, all of which were born before 1887, and some as far back as 1770, thus covering a period of 116 years. It is hard to appreciate the labor it must have entailed to collect the names and breeding of all these horses. As no public record had been kept, details were obtained from breeders and records kept by families.

By careful selections of sires and dams, the breed has been gradually but surely improved; the general quality has been increased without sacrificing size and substance to too great an extent. The obliquity of shoulder and pastern, the quality of feathering and of feet, and the improvement in action have been the principal points which the intelligent breeder has aimed at, and so great has been his success that no better draft horse can be produced than the high-class modern Shire. In the points mentioned, the Shires that have been imported into Canada, with some exceptions, do not compare favorably with the Clydesdales, but the numbers have not been nearly so great, and the price of the high-class Shire in England is so great that the importer cannot purchase him with reasonable probability of making the investment a financial success.

The desirable characteristics of the modern Shire are identical with those of the modern Clydesdale. While many may take objections to the ideas I have given when comparing the two breeds, and may claim that the Clydesdale is the better horse, none, I think, will deny that if any difference exists it is merely in degree, not in kind, and when I say that "the desirable characteristics are the same," I am correct; and, as those of the Clydesdale were given in detail in a recent issue, it is not necessary to repeat.

"WHIP."

### The Medium-sized Shire Preferred.

That the cry for great size in Shire horses in England, at the expense of quality of bone and hair, is being overdone, in so far as the colonial export trade is concerned, is certain. Canadian horsemen insist on clean, flat bone, big, sound feet, and fine, silky hair, and will have no other. A writer in the Live-stock Journal, of England, indicates this requirement in the following sensible sentences:

"It will be generally admitted that, at the recent London Shire Show, the judges showed—and very properly so—a strong partiality for size and weight, but in so doing they fell into a lamentable error, and sacrificed quality to get that weight. I maintain, if we cannot get great weight and quality, we must have more quality and less weight. In placing some of the prize-winners at the head of their respective classes, I consider the judges have gone back twenty-five years in Shire breeding, years which should only remain a memory of what ought not to be. These horses had those thick, fleshy legs, and that

coarse, curly hair which denotes the rough legs it partially hides, which would, with two years' work on our Manchester streets, be pitiable objects indeed; whereas, other horses, with perhaps a little less substance, but more equally-balanced bodies on those fine, hard legs, draped with straight, silky feather, would, in six years' time, be still not only workable, but presentable. It ought not to be necessary to remind a judge that fat is not muscle, nor does it help to move the load. Without doubt, the class of heavy horses now seen in our towns is immensely superior to what it was even ten years ago, the credit for which, I believe, is almost entirely due to the Shire Horse Society.

"I do sincerely hope that at future shows the big, coarse and overfat horses will be put down where they ought to be, and that the active, clean type, which can walk on and wear long, will be put where it ought to be, viz., at the top."

## LIVE STOCK.

### Every Bite Now Means About Three Less Next Summer.

Here and there cattle may be seen roaming over the fields. A few were out in April. It is an excellent way to ensure short commons in summer. The young grass contains little nutriment, anyway, and allowing it to be eaten now is an indirect but certain way of shortening the fodder supply next winter, and the year after. We talk about keeping stock to build up the land, but one of the surest ways of running it down is late fall, early spring, and close summer pasturing. If dairymen and stockmen would only sow a few acres of oats and peas, and plant a patch of corn, or, better still, sow a few acres of lucerne for summer feeding, and then make a point of keeping stock out of the pastures till about May 20th, taking them off not later than October in the fall, and being careful not to let the grass get eaten down to the roots in August, they would soon find their pastures becoming more luxuriant, and the feed supply so much increased that early spring pasture would not be a temptation. Incidentally, a good many would be more inclined to spare their pastures if they had silos to provide succulent, palatable feed at this season.