

It is, indeed, a little unfortunate that the requirements of direct contractors are not studied, a little more than is at present the case, farmers either going by their own plough and cart standards, or the wealthy foreign or colonial merchant, who wants great weight of bone, in numerous cases altogether regardless of its quality. The frequent quotations in the stud columns of the agricultural press have in numerous cases another bad effect, viz., the stimulation of the hopes of farmers who do not possess the proper sort of brood mares for raising big, strong, and high-priced stallions, to put them to high-priced fashionable sires. The result in many cases is naturally the very reverse of what was expected. A small, compact, clever little mare is put to a great big horse, instead of an average sized one, and the produce is a leggy nondescript. Thin-legged mares are put to thick-legged stallions, and the happy medium is expected in the very first cross, as if Nature is to be bribed to go out of her course with a big service fee and a tip to the groom.

The size of the mares, the soil, also the climate, should be considered in selecting a stallion. If the mares are small and well suited for farm work, then the breeders should not try to catch the city dealer all at once. Small compact horses are increasing in demand every day, and the market will form quicker for the breeder of such, and readier than he will form his stock for the market. For most farm purposes, too, the dray-horse is too heavy; and a medium-sized agricultural horse, suitable for "chain" work in streets, is a class which is bound to be formed in time, so soon as the mania for breeding heavy horses subsides.—*ARGUS*.

The Walk of Agricultural Horses.

I return now to my letters, and find that a great authority both on Suffolk and Shire horses, writes:—"Pace and action are very essential, especially *walking*. To obtain this, I think the length of the fore-arm and pastern has much to do with it—quite as much as the shoulders. Whatever height the animal may be, the knee and fetlock, hock and fetlock, cannot be too close together; the length of the leg should be in the arms and thighs, which should be well developed and full of muscle—the pasterns oblique (not upright and short, nor *too long*).

The shoulders should be fairly back, down well to the chest and full of muscle to the withers, which should be low, and not fine and narrow. A horse thus formed can both move and draw, I think.

Next I find the ideas of two rare practical judges, ex-masters of fox-hounds. (1) "Cart-horses with straight strong shoulders are good as timber horses—to start a heavy load or to pull a railway truck. They cannot travel on land or road at a very good pace, and go safely in ruts. But a strong short backed and well ribbed-up horse is of more consequence than a good-shouldered horse for farm work. Straightness of shoulder produces all sorts of lameness in riding or driving horses; but it does not produce the same lameness in cart-horses. From having sudden weights in heavy soils, &c., to draw, nearly all their lameness is behind, from weak back and loins throwing undue weights on the hocks. Of course I am not speaking of horses with brittle feet or bad feet, which go lame with straight or with good shoulders equally. Another thing which affects straight shoulders is the difficulty to fit collars so as not to chafe. Of course all straight-shouldered horses have in a certain degree short necks, which rather favour the existence of extra power in draught work. Upon the whole, fine shoulders are more suited to horses engaged in road and street work than for agricultural horses, and are more necessary."

HEAVY SHOULDERS

(2) "I have heard people argue about shoulders in cart-horses, and when I farmed largely I noticed most clearly to

my own satisfaction, that upright shoulders were no advantage and always found that right action was as needful to a draught horse as to any other, both in lasting endurance, and in getting over the ground. *Walking* is the pace to look for in a cart-horse. Judges are too apt to look to trotting action, and overlook the walking. Strong muscular—what hunting men call heavy—shoulders are wanted, but the more laid back the better."

A rare good judge, and one who farms largely himself, says:—"I do not believe in steepness of shoulder being conducive to draught, and if the animal who has it does have knee action it must be of the pounding sort. A cart-horse must have a strong shoulder, but I consider it should be a sloping one, and then the action (the more in reason the better) will not only be free and good, but will in any pace get over more ground than the steep shouldered horse. I am sceptical about the advantage of enormous heavy-heeled horses for tilling the land. I like to see a nearly clean heeled horse with short cannon-bone. In fact, the nearer a cart-horse can keep to an enlarged cob the better."

GOOD HIND LEGS.

Another great successful breeder writes (once a Suffolk man but now long resident in *partibus infidelium*):—"A horse with upright shoulders will not compare in *walking* with a big load on the roads (with ease) with the strong and sloping-shouldered horse. Horses with thin and upright shoulders may be better for farm work, on soils not too heavy, than heavier horses; but they sadly want *activity* to lift along a load. Depend on it, no horse can be active with bad shoulders, nor with good ones, if his hind-legs are not well formed. They are all the secret of comfort in riding, pace in driving, and power in pulling."

Next a Clydesdale breeder "approves of the oblique shoulder in the draught-horse, as it gives freedom of action, and does not interfere with his drawing-powers in any kind of work.

There is another point in the draught-horse that the majority of English and Scotch men do not agree about, and that is the pastern. The most successful exhibitors and breeders, however, in England and Scotland are of the same opinion, that it is one of the most important points. They should be lengthy, with a proper slope, springy and strong. My reason for using the term lengthy is, that I hardly ever saw them too long, especially in England. As a proof of the difference of opinion about the draught-horse in England and Scotland, I believe that there were very few, if any, that gained prizes singly at the Royal at Carlisle would have gained a prize at all at the Highland Society or any of the leading shows in Scotland principally on account of their short, stiff, upright pasterns."

OUR ENGRAVINGS.

Hampshire-down ram: of this useful breed I have so often spoken, that I will only say that the legs of our model are rather longer than they ought to be.

English dog-cart horse: a fine specimen of the useful and lasting Norfolk type—the horse from which our engraving was taken was 15 years old when he stood for his portrait.

Shotover: winner of the Derby of 1882. The mare is the property of the Duke of Westminster, who won the same race in 1880, with Bend Or. The course is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and the horses carry 8 st. 7 lbs. = 119 lbs. Only two mares had previously won this great race during the century which has elapsed since its establishment.

Poland—China Boar: probably a mixture of China and Berkshire and Chester. White; good fatteners, but lean-meat is wanted now-a-days, and the Berkshire fattens quite quick enough and distributes its fat and lean more equally.