



Training the Working Horse*

The training of the colt which has just become passably accustomed to the bit and to the double and single harness depends altogether upon the character of the service that will in future be expected of him, and the extent to which he will be adapted to the style of his work will depend far more upon the manner of his handling than it will upon his own peculiar temper or disposition.

In the working horse the first essential is the ability to perform the greatest amount of work with the least waste of strength or energy, to obey commands with a moderate degree of promptness, to put his shoulder to the collar, and to pull, when necessary, to pull his best, without undue haste or fretting, and when a load is started to go at a steady gait that will take every advantage of the load's own momentum, without wasting strength by sudden rapid pulls or turnings. After this it is altogether commendable that the driver or trainer of draft teams should pay all the attention he desires to the development of handiness, style and good appearance of his team. This should never, in the case of the work horse, go to the length of any attempts to develop a high carriage of the head or the performance of a

*This is the second of a series of articles by Mr. J. W. Sangster, of THE FARMING WORLD staff, on the training of the horse. Other phases of this important topic will appear later.—Editor.

stylish turn at the trot. Everything that will make the horse pay a better return for the price he will cost, or the feed he will eat, should enhance his value, but the things which go to make the lighter horse valuable will only diminish this in the worker.

GAIT AT THE WALK

Next to coolness and sobriety of conduct there is perhaps nothing that will pay better for a little development than the horse's gait at the walk. In the working team the pair that will, when the driver "takes up" a little hold of the bit, and speaks to the team, immediately step up together and move off at a brisk pace of say four miles an hour, and many can be handled to even beat this with a light load, have considerably the advantage of the pair that will break into a dancing sort of trot, and respond to all attempts only with exaggerated behavior.

To teach this, it is well to remember what has already been said about the use of the bit, and that a light hand on a sensitive mouth always means a saving of energy, a saving of appearance most of the time, and a lessening of the danger of the team becoming unmanageable, or, if terrified out of their wits, of their getting beyond the driver's control. A story is told of a doctor who was once called to visit an inebriate driver who was suffering from the results of his debauchery in an attack of delirium tremens. Though the man seemed generally no worse than he had often appeared before, the doctor pronounced

ed less hopefully than previously, and afterwards assigned as his reason for this, that while on other occasions, when the patient had usually, in his ravings, appeared to imagine himself mixed up with frantic horses, he had always before entertained the impression that he was able to control them, but on this occasion they were either running away or else backing him into dangerous places in spite of his efforts to prevent. To have horses which were not dependable was quite in keeping with his character as an inebriate, and the man who would reach the highest degree in horsemanship must be able to control a man himself, able to control himself first, and, doing this wisely, he will be enabled to wisely control lower animals also.

In order to gain this end then, of teaching the horse to walk off smartly

DO NOT LEAVE THE LINES SLACK,

and by a general policy of "chasing" him a little try to get him to differentiate between your manner of making him trot and walk fast. Take a light hold of the reins and give a smart order to move along. Then teach him that when this is done he must not break into a trot. A few lessons usually have this effect, but it will be some time before he will always remember. Such lessons as this, always given when the horse is at work, will soon produce fine results, and the horse will only need to be told once to move along, when he will assume a brisk walk. He has further learned to quit the objectionable prance, to save his strength and get quietly down to business. Care must be taken, however, that the driver always remembers the lesson which he himself would teach, as just in so far as he fails to do this, just so far will he fall short of perfect results. In teaching the horse new ideas it is always well to remember to let the first few lessons be sharp ones. After the horse has caught the idea that is wanted, energy may be seasoned with mercy; the severity may be, and in most cases must be, relaxed, but always work for results.

TEACH HIM TO BACK PROPERLY.

This can be done by pulling firmly on the bit and uttering the word "back" until he comes to associate the word with the act. Instances are not wanting where the horse failed to grasp the idea, and if he fails to do this at first he is very apt to get some other wrong impression in place of the correct one, in which case continuation of the lesson only confirms



A well-trained six-horse team.