

THE HORSE.

Handle the Colts During the Winter.

During the winter months no more profitable or enjoyable recreation can be found for the boys on the farm than handling the colts; profitable because it enhances the value of the colts, and at the same time tends to make the boys proficient horsemen; enjoyable because it affords a pleasant pastime for the boys, provided, of course, they are naturally fond of animals, and horses in particular; and to none other should the handling of colts be entrusted.

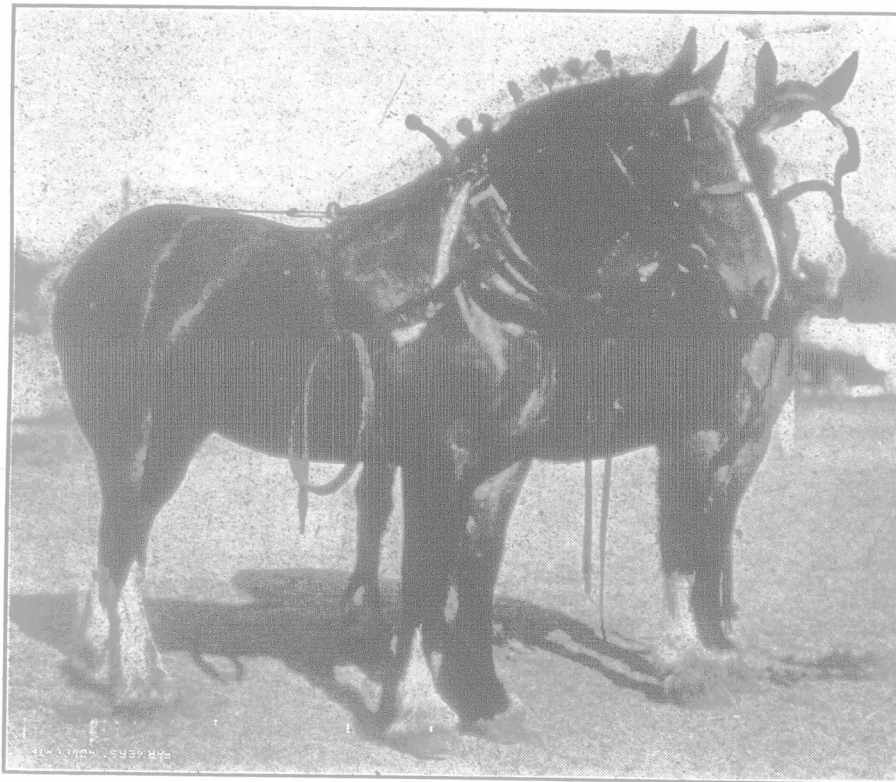
To the boy, large or small, who likes a horse, it is a source of pleasure to handle a colt, and observe him day by day, as his education advances, because more and more tractable and obedient. To the man or boy who likes horses, it gives greater satisfaction and pleasure to handle a green or partially green one, in either harness or saddle, and to daily observe improvement, than to drive or ride a thoroughly handy one in whom we do not look for improvement. In the first case he observes the fruits of his patience and often of his labor, which encourages him to increased efforts; while in the latter he neither looks nor tries for improvement, and while he may thoroughly enjoy his drives or rides, he does not feel that his skill or efforts are accomplishing anything in the way of improvement, hence it does not give him the same degree of pleasure as the handling of one in which improvement is not only possible, but necessary.

When boys commence to handle colts they should do so under instructions, as while the average boy no doubt will in time be able to learn from experience the right and wrong methods of doing it; he is liable to get both himself and the colts into bad habits during the process, hence the father or older brother, or some one who has had experience, should teach the boys how it should be done. There should be a method. There are many good methods and more bad ones. Above all things kindness but firmness should be practiced. Conflict or differences of opinion or inclination between the boy and the colt should, if possible, be avoided, but when such occur the boy should always be in a position to gain the mastery without the use of violence or cruelty. This can be accomplished only by strong and proper appliances, such as cannot be broken by the colt, and with which, by the aid of the skill and activity of the boy, the superior strength of the colt can be overcome.

Colts should be handled when quite young, and their education yearly continued during the winter months, and then little or no trouble is experienced when their services are required in a team, in single harness or under saddle. In many cases the early handling or education is neglected, and "breaking", as it is called, and in these cases properly called, does not commence until the animal is required for work, and then it is done all at once. While such treatment often makes good and well-mannered horses, we cannot expect it to give as satisfactory results as where the education was commenced early and consequently was more gradual and thorough. When there are unhandled or green colts whether or not of the same age, allow the boys to begin to give them lessons. The yearlings should be taught to lead and stand tied; should be led beside a saddle horse or behind a sleigh or cutter. The exercise is good for the colt and the education invaluable. They should be frequently handled all over; their feet lifted, and if necessary (which often is the case) rasped or pared down to the normal shape. They should be kindly but firmly spoken to and treated, and when they are being petted many and variable words may be used, the significance of which the colt is not expected to understand, but he understands from the tone and actions of the person that he has nothing to fear. But when a lesson is being given few words should be used, each word of command should be pronounced distinctly and should indicate a specific action, and, of course, the same word should always be used when a certain action is demanded.

For instance, we say "whoa" when we want the colt to stand still, "back" when we want him to step backwards, "go on" when we want him to go forward, "steady" when we want him to slacken his gait, etc. We should avoid the use of the same word to express different ideas or demand different actions. How often do we hear drivers say "whoa" or "whoa, back" when they simply wish the team or horse to go more slowly; use the same words of command when they

really want the team or horse to come to a stand, and again when they want them to back. The indiscriminate use of words of command must confuse a horse, and while horses so driven are often handy and well-mannered, it is because they have become so accustomed to it that they associate certain wishes on the part of the driver with certain tones of voice, or with the degree of pressure exerted upon the bit, even though the same words of command are used for each action. This we claim is wrong, hence it is wise to be careful in the words of command we use when handling either colts or older animals. The yearlings, two and three years old, if not already halter broken, should be treated as yearlings, and these should be "given a month" or, in other words, should be "bitted." This should not be done by driving or riding, but by putting a light bridle with an ordinary snaffle bit on the colt and leaving it on for a few hours each day until he ceases to "fight the bit," after which gentle pressure of the bit should be given by the use of a check rein attached to a circingle, and the pressure gradually increased day by day by shortening the check rein until he will hold his head in about the position we want. This teaches him to hold a good head and at the same time yield to pressure by the bit; his mouth becomes accustomed to it, and we thus avoid the sore mouths so often seen in colts, when they are driven or ridden without preparatory training. Then a set of harness should be set on and the colt allowed to run in a large box stall or a paddock for a few hours daily until he becomes accustomed to having the harness put on, to wearing it and having it removed without fear or nervousness. He is then ready to be driven, which may be done either with a well-mannered mate or singly. We do not consider it wise to drive a pair of colts together until they are somewhat handy. In fact, the writer prefers teaching the colt to go singly at first, and then there is seldom trouble when he is hitched with a mate, but many prefer training him with a good-mannered, prompt



First Prize Clydesdale Team in Harness at the Western Fair, 1918.
Exhibited by W. W. Hogg, Thamesford, Ont.

old horse as a mate. Which ever plan is adopted it is wise to drive him for a few times with the harness alone before hitching to a rig or implement. He should be taught to stand, go on, back, etc., at the word of command, and to see all sights he will be likely to see, before hitching. When hitched it should be with harness and to rigs that are strong. The idea that "any old thing" is good enough to hitch a colt to is entirely wrong. The "old thing" may break and the colt injure himself or run away, and thereby learn habits that he is very slow to forget. Have things so strong that they cannot be broken, and always be in a position to conquer him without violence or harshness if he act badly, as some colts will, notwithstanding all our precautions. When driving singly it is wise to wear a "kicking" or more correctly speaking, "an ante-kicking strap" for the first few times. When tied while hitched a strong rope should be used around the neck, then passed through the bit ring and tied to a fence, building or other object which will prevent him from going either forwards or around, as can easily be done if tied to a post. This is very important as if he should succeed in breaking his tie or getting into trouble he will learn bad habits, while if securely tied at first he soon realizes that he must remain there until released, and after a time he can be safely tied to post or other object with an ordinary tie strap. He should be driven a little every day (not necessarily on Sundays). We think that frequent short drives are preferable to few long ones, as they do not tire him and at the same time teach him more quickly to stand when being hitched or unhitched. If he will be required for spring work, this training will gradually and if he will not be needed for work he will have had lessons that he will never forget, and will be handy when

we commence to handle him at a future date, or if he be for sale he can be hitched and shown to the prospective purchaser. If he be a colt of saddle breeding or pattern he should be taught to go well under saddle as well as in harness. It is a pity so little attention is now paid to this mode of travel or recreation in country districts. Saddle work is both healthy and delightful and, in our opinion, both the boys and the girls on the farm should practice it, but we have not space to enlarge upon this point at present.

LIVE STOCK.

When you get a good sire don't be in a hurry to part with him.

The scrub animal is an economical waste. The best stockmen do not keep it in their herds.

The better bred the feeders are the more economical gains they will make, and they will command a higher price next spring than will the lot which are of non-descript breeding. Blood tells every time.

At the Caldwell sale of Angus cattle, at Burlington Junction, Mo., an average price of \$934 was realized for 55 head. Blackcap of Alta 4th topped the sale at \$4,000, and several animals brought over \$3,000.

If you neglect to properly feed and care for the young stuff you cannot reasonably expect them to reach your ideal as mature animals. Too many, especially beginners, in the live-stock business make this mistake.

Before purchasing that stock bull you were thinking of, make a careful study of your breeding females, noting outstanding weaknesses, then endeavor to get a sire that is strong in those points where the females are weak.

Those in touch with the stock yards claim that practically no good breeding ewes or ewe lambs are being slaughtered. Commission men have orders for breeding stock, and what good stuff is marketed is shipped to districts where sheep are in demand.

It is not advisable to breed the ewe lambs. Wait until they are about a year and a half old and there will be less danger of your flock degenerating. It is unreasonable to expect a lamb to raise as many or as good lambs as a mature ewe. The practice of breeding ewe lambs has proven detrimental to more than one breeder.

Net Returns Not Always Indicated By Sale Price.

Stockmen who have reached the three-score years have seen remarkable changes in the live-stock industry. Recently we had the opportunity to glance through a diary which had been kept since 1885. Following the trend of prices from that date to this there has been considerable variation, but always when the stock market was low the price of feed was low, and vice versa. In 1886, a cow and calf of average quality was purchased for \$35, while the following year, in the month of April, a fresh cow brought \$33, and a litter of pigs sold at \$5 a pair. Oats and barley were less than a cent a pound, and bran and shorts were a drug on the market. In 1900 finished steers averaging 1,300 lbs. brought \$4.80 per cwt.—now, more than three times that price is realized, but then feeds and labor are correspondingly high. In January, 1901, choice hogs were worth \$6.35, while the following month of the same year they were sold at \$5.75 per cwt. In place of having to pay from ten to twelve dollars per cwt. for feeders, they were plentiful in the fall of 1901 at \$3.80. On the face of it one would naturally think that the net returns to-day from the farms would be considerably greater than they were a score or more of years ago. However, when price of millfeeds, the cost of growing crops, the outlay for machinery, labor and living, are considered the high prices of farm produce nets the producer little more than when his products sold for a third less. There has been a rise in the price of practically everything, thus leaving the net results much the same. Several farmers have informed us that they made as much twenty years ago as they are making now. The man who is raising and finishing his own stock is better off than those who have to purchase it. The men established in the pure-bred business have experienced a big demand at satisfactory prices.

Market Receipts.

During the month of September the total receipts of cattle at the Toronto Union Stock Yards were 38,901, as compared with 19,649 for the month previous. The top price was \$15.25, as compared with \$11 for the same month a year ago. The calves totalled 3,857 for the month, with the top price at \$17.75. On the same market the receipts of hogs were 19,346, as compared with 20,266 for the same month in 1917. The top price was \$20 per cwt., which was \$1.75 per cwt. higher than for September, 1917. The number of sheep totalled 28,409, as compared with 34,072 for the same month last year. The top price was \$18.65, for good lambs, which was nearly \$5 per cwt. less than that received in the month of August. The other markets of the Dominion showed a fairly heavy run of all classes of stock. On the Winnipeg market 39,081 cattle were offered; in Calgary, 13,339, and at the Edmonton market 7,294 during September.