

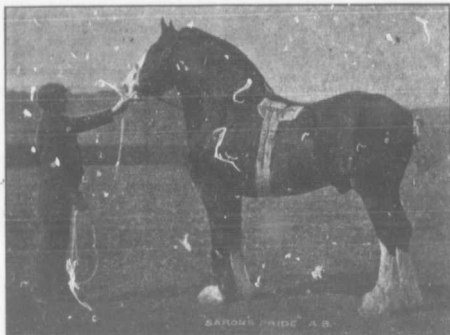
The Great Clydesdales of To-day

By Archibald MacNeillage, Secretary of Clydesdale Horse Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

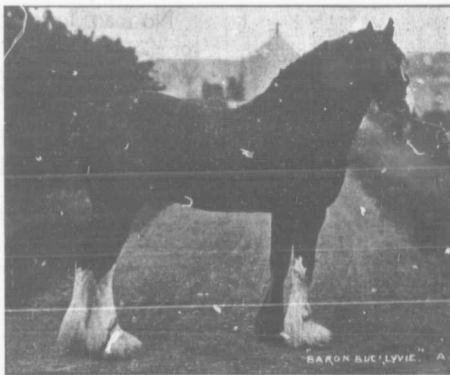
The text has not been chosen by me but I am very willing to take it up, and endeavor, in the interests of the Clydesdale breed, to discourse upon it for a spell. The Clydesdale of to-day is not the Clydesdale of 25 years ago; he is a better draught horse—that is, he is a horse in which the essential characteristics of a draught horse are better illustrated, and with less alloy, than in the horse of the past. One seldom hears now-a-days of a Clydesdale stallion becoming unable to travel on account of "founder," in the forefeet, technically "laminitis." A quarter of a century ago such disorders were not uncommon, and few old stallions, that had been fed for showing, came on the road without symptoms of being "down in their heels." The disorder has passed because the breed has been improved in respect of staminal, soundness of feet, cleanness of bone, of pith and vim, of action close and straight. Crooked hocks, that is hocks formed like a sickle, are rare, if not unknown, among the show horses and breeding sires; whereas at intervals during the quarter century under review they were rather common in one tribe, while in another the opposite defect, straightness of hocks and wideness behind, were not at all unknown. By wideness behind I mean the action seen in a horse which, when leaving you, turns the points of his hocks outwards, with an inevitable tendency to loss of leverage in propulsion. Pasterns are not so long and "dog-like" as they were in one or two of the noted show horses in the early eighties, yet never were Clydesdale judges more exacting in having the pasterns at the oblique angle which secures elasticity of movement.

In the early eighties Clydesdales were fancied in the show ring that were big, weighty, and rather disposed to be gross in bone and hair. During the nineties the swing of the pendulum was, if anything, the other way. The Prince of Wales-Darnley cross was then in the ascendant, producing a beautiful animal with matchless quality of feet and legs, nicely moulded top, and first rate action—but, in many cases, rather deficient in size. For the past five or eight years we have been working into a bigger horse, having the same quality of bone and hair; the same, if not a better, class of feet and pasterns, and quite as good action; but, withal, a bigger horse, truer to type and character, and of greater usefulness all round, if not good enough to score in the showyard.

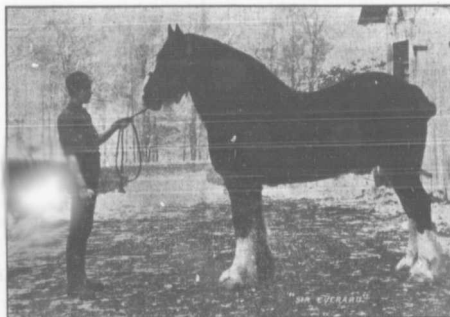
The elements that have gone to effect this change have been various. The death of Darnley 222 in the autumn of 1886, and of his great contemporary, Prince of Wales 673, in the autumn of 1888, left the way open for a new combination, and the blending of groups and strains that had rather been passed over during the period of the domination of these great sires. Prince of Wales was foaled in 1866, so that he was in his 23rd year when he died. Darnley was foaled in 1872; his career was, therefore, ten years shorter than that of Prince of Wales. Both were the produce of Highland Society first prize, if not champion mares, and both were extremely impressive sires. The horse whose appearance marked the beginning of the new era was Sir Everard 5353, foaled in 1888. He died in August, 1898. His breeding was a combination of the two strains named,



BARON'S PRIDE 9122.—Dark Brown. Foaled 1880. Bred by R. & J. Finlay, Balleston, Lanarkshire; property of A. & W. Montgomery, Netherhall and Banks Kirkcubright. Photo by A. Brown & Co., Lanark.



BARON O' BUCKLYVIE 1123L.—Brown. Foaled 1890. Bred by Wm. McKeich, Woodend, Bucklyvie, Stirlingshire; property of William Dunlop, Dunure Mains, Ayr. Photo by A. Brown & Co., Lanark.



SIR EVERARD 5353.—Dark Brown. Foaled 1888. Bred by Mrs. Lamont, Tomard, Argyshire; property of William Naylor, Park Mains, Renfrew, Scotland. Photo by C. Reid, Wishaw.