

is held to be as paramount importance to the animal's riding or going in such a form as is pleasant to his rider. A horseman by simply carrying his eye over the horses' shoulder, and placing his hand upon his withers, determines at once his qualifications. We see horses with oblique shoulders, and with straight or upright shoulders; and we shall find that the blade bone varies in its degree of inclination very materially in these two cases, and that this variation constitutes an especial point on which depends the goodness or badness of the horses' shoulder.

The length, as well as the obliquity of the shoulder blades will have an influence on the action of the shoulder: it being manifest that a body revolving upon its own centre, must describe arcs or sweeps great in proportion to its length; hence the value of a deep shoulder; though as regards the back bone itself, the muscles attached to and moving it, will necessarily be short, in a case where the bone is disproportionately long, and vice versa.

When the shoulder blade is nearly upright, or is of disproportionate shortness, there cannot be that extent or freedom of action in the shoulders, neither can there be that projecture of the limb that there is in opposite conformations. A good shoulder not only possesses depth and obliquity, but to complete its perfection "be well into the body."

A shoulder then that possesses depth, obliquity and uniformity, is said to be good; and for the purpose of those springy actions and paces which are most agreeable to and admired by the rider; good, it most unquestionably is; it is good for action, good for speed, good for spring, and as a point of beauty is veritably indispensable. Still though this be confessedly the prototype, we are not to set all other kinds and description of shoulders as faulty and objectionable; for the carriage of heavy burden and for heavy draught, I believe a straight or upright shoulder, provided it possesses the necessary substance or muscularity, to be advantageous. Laborious draught does not admit either of a horse taking long steps, or of going at any but a slow pace; and on abstract mechanical principles, a horse whose shoulder is short and upright is capable of supporting more weight upon his fore limbs, than another in whom it is lengthy and oblique. A horse, therefore, with a short upright shoulder, is actually stronger in his fore parts than one possessing what we might call a good or handsome shoulder. Here in fact, as in many other instances that might be mentioned, we have on the one side, action—and with it spring; on the other strength, and as I said before, where draught is required, the short and upright shoulder is to be preferred to the lengthy and oblique structure.

We will now consider the thick and the thin shoulder. A notion very prevalent among horsemen is, that the shoulder cannot be too thin or fine, and that a thick or loaded shoulder is only fit for draught. We will investigate systematically, what constitutes this thickness and thinness—to what kind of conformation the terms are applicable, or what they are commonly used to denote.

You grasp the withers of the horse with your hand, and at once pronounce his shoulders thick or thin: should the withers stand high, and can be included between the finger and thumb, thin: should the withers appear bruised between the shoulders, or be so broad across that the span of the hand can scarcely grasp them, thick. In the former case, we grasp nothing but the spinous process, in the latter we appear to include the shoulder blade as well; hence the thinness in one instance, the thickness in the other.

The sway back, is the most remarkable instance of inordinately long spinous process, and this is commonly combined with obliquity, and consequent lowness of the base of the shoulder blade, presenting an example of a fine shoulder, though of one that often proves to be strangely deficient in substance. These sway backs and fine shoulders, are frequently seen in very old horses; the interpretation is that the shoulders participate in that general process of absorption which is known to pervade the animal frame during the decline of life. A colt may have thick, clumsy shoulders, in consequence of his back bone reaching as high as the top of the spinous process; we examine them when grown to a horse, and find him with finely formed shoulders, with blade bone no higher than it ought to be, and withers admirably raised. A fine shoulder is apt to be too often misapplied; because a horse happens to have very great depth and obliquity in his shoulders, with high tapering withers, he is often said to possess fine or perfect shoulders, when in reality, he probably lacks in them the very property of more consequence than others we have been considering and that is muscularity. Muscleless, and consequently weak, as such shoulders are, horses having them often are endowed with brilliant action, but they never can turn out of any value, unless they happen to have—which is seldom the case, extraordinary powers in their arms, and hind quarters, and width in the chest.

But when the reverse of this accompanies the thin and fleshless shoulder, however deep it may be, however oblique, however fine upon the withers, for all purposes where stability, strength and endurance are required, it is absolutely inefficient. Many blood horses have what we should call anything but perfect shoulders; their good qualities are amply accounted for in their round, fleshy loins, and lengthy muscular hind quarters; on the contrary many possess as handsome and well formed shoulders as can be desired; and when this occurs along with the requisite strength and length in the hind parts, surely it must be regarded as a great advantage, providing the action be fitting and commensurate.

PEDIGREE OF AYSMERS—We have received through the hands of the Secretary of our Board of Agriculture, S. L. Goodale, the following circular from the Association of the Breeders of Thorough-bred neat stock.

The object of this association is to promote the breeding of thorough-bred neat stock of all kinds, and by the collecting and recording in appropriate herd-books the pedigrees of such cattle. These records or herd-books are vouch-