

Three Rivers Notes.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

The district of land lying between Berthier and Three Rivers on the River St. Lawrence, consists of a very heavy clay extending back from the river for several miles, then ridges are found of a lighter loamy soil, and further back are ridges of a very lighter sandy nature, until we reach the base of the Laurentian range, where we meet with the cold sterile rock, said by geologists to be the oldest land on our globe. Everywhere are to be seen the marks of the glacial period; huge boulders which must have been transported by immense icebergs in those far-off ages of intense cold; *striae* on the precipitous cliffs and huge drifts of gravel. These mountains are covered with spruce—the pine having been nearly all removed by the lumberman—except far to the north—and innumerable lakes are interspersed, filled with trout and other fish. Truly a happy hunting ground.

The heavy clay portion, of which I have written above as lying adjacent to the St. Lawrence, is most admirably adapted to the growth of fine clear timothy. In the spring, owing to its lowness, it is very wet, and the overflowing water serves as a most perfect fertilizer, rendering the use of barnyard or artificial manures entirely unnecessary; in fact, it would be a complete waste of time and money to apply them. The crop is usually, as compared with other parts of the Province, very heavy, and in this neighborhood three tons is the annual average. The custom in harvesting the hay, is to bundle it for convenience in handling—the major portion of it being pressed and shipped to the American market. This year, owing to the cheapness of hay in the city of Boston, but little was shipped there; it was sent to Montreal to supply the demand of cattle shippers, and a considerable portion was also shipped to the Quebec market.

The pressing of this year's very heavy crop has already commenced, but prices range very low, being about \$5.00 and \$5.50 per ton. Owing to the wetness of last spring, in many localities there is a very considerable quantity of clover intermixed with the timothy, and this for feeding horses in cities is considered a deteriorating element—though I am inclined to think that it is rather an advantage; certain it is that it is an improvement for the use of fattening our dairy cattle. There is one thing in the harvesting of the hay in this district which I particularly noticed, and that is that but little attention is paid to the ripeness or rather unripeness of timothy at the time of cutting. Very frequently it is allowed to become too ripe altogether, thus increasing in hardness and extent of woody texture, thereby decreasing the nutritive elements and making it much more difficult of digestion by cattle or horses. No fact has been more frequently stated than this, and none has been more clearly established by scientific analysis. It should be cut when in bloom—but of course where labor is scarce, and a farmer has a large acreage to cut, he cannot succeed in securing the whole of his hay crop in a very perfect condition, but he can so average his mowing as to secure the greater portion in a prime condition.

It must be a debatable question for the intelligent farmers of this district, if it would not pay them better to raise and fatten beeves with their hay crop than to sell it at five or even six dollars a ton. They, however, seem to prefer to sell the hay crop, saying that there is less labor and expense, and that the acquisition of the manure is an item of but little moment to them. I am confident that they would make a much better showing by fattening cattle, as the demand for the latter must maintain itself for years to come. But in the Berthier and Three Rivers districts there is a very great necessity for the introduction of improved breeds, and a more assiduous application of manual labor. The agricultural societies have this duty in hand, and, speaking, or rather writing, without malice, I must say that judging by results, the societies have, in this district, not effected very great things. In excuse it may be said that they have an unambitious class to deal with and instruct. The agricultural colleges in the Province of Quebec have not by any means hitherto been successes; they have been failures. Let us hope that the one recently established by Mr. Whitfield, than whom no one is more enterprising, will meet with a different fate, and effect a very radical improvement.

The class of cattle in this district, as I have stated above, needs improving, and the same is to be said of the horses. The really good ones have all been picked up by American buyers, and the

unsaleable ones are kept on the farms for working or breeding purposes. Consequently the quality has year by year deteriorated until at present it is a very unfrequent sight to see a sound, useful animal. Thus a source of very considerable revenue to the Province has been removed, and immediate steps should be taken to remedy this. The class of stallion to be used should not be the heavy Clydesdale or Percheron, but should be one of a lighter build and more active organization. The Clydesdale and Percheron, while adapted admirably for heavy draught work in cities and elsewhere, are comparatively useless in the Province of Quebec, especially in our heavy winter snows, through which they sink and flounder most clumsily. An effort should be made to again have the round bodied, tough Canadian, so-called "pony," hardy, swift, docile and intelligent. Too much attention is at present given to the almost useless and always ugly "trotter"—breeding which is hazardous and frequently demoralizing. A good walking and general utility horse is more valuable in the long run, requiring less capital to raise, and much more readily sold, though, of course, at a lower price.

Selection and Care of Harness.

BY U. U. WOOD.

Harness is a necessity upon every farm, and of all the things used by the farmer it is used the most. In plowing and sowing, in reaping and mowing, day in and day out, the self-same harness is put to use. The wear and tear upon harness, therefore, must be exceedingly great, and it is no uncommon thing to hear of farmers buying new harness once in about every four years. The expense of providing himself with good harness, then, is one of the greatest disbursements to the farmer's financial pocket.

A large share of this continual expense is unnecessary, and in this article it is my intention to tell how I decrease it. Anything contributing to lessen the average farmer's expenses, ought surely to be hailed with delight; but in saying how I decrease them I do not wish it understood that I lay claim to originality, for I do not. I have learned both sides of the question from simple observation.

With harness, as with many other things, the best is the cheapest. I do not mean to say that fancy harness which costs a high price is the cheapest for the farmer, but what I mean is that well-made, sewed and riveted harness, of good, soft, well-tanned leather, is cheaper at twice the price than that which is poorly made from inferior leather. There is also another class of harness that the farmer should avoid buying; that which is made merely to sell, and which the maker will let you have at almost any price rather than not to have you purchase at all. The only good place to get reliable harness—for some of it is deceptive even to the experienced eye—is to buy direct from the manufacturer who uses the best of oak-tanned leather, and employs none but experienced workmen.

When purchasing your harness the team upon which it is to be used should be at the shop: especially is this necessary in order to get a perfect fitting collar. All farmers are not able to fit collars upon their horses, therefore it is of the first importance that the seller should be a competent judge, capable of fitting a collar upon any horse with the greatest possible comfort. A large number of horses annually are permanently injured by the want of a proper fitting collar. Naturally a horse's shoulders are the same in strength, shape and toughness, therefore a collar should be of the same shape and firmness on both sides. But many of them are not, and this is the chief cause of sore shoulders so prevalent among work horses. It often happens that one side of a collar is stuffed firmer than the other; and it is sometimes the case that the leather on one side is thicker or harder than on the other. Such collars should never be brought out of the shop.

After having fitted your horse with a good collar, the next thing is to procure a comfortable backband. The shoulders and back are most commonly the seat of sores among horses, although they need not be. In the selection of your backband—for there are innumerable kinds and shapes—a narrow, flexible, well-padded one—one in which durability is comfort, is the best. For all ordinary farm work, such as plowing, harrowing, drilling, reaping, etc., harness with hip straps and crupper is the most serviceable. When considerable haul-

ing over rolling land is to be done, breeching is the best. It is a good plan when purchasing harness to get both hip straps and breeching; then either can be used as occasions demand. When both can not be afforded, I would prefer hip straps, as they can be used to advantage on most occasions, are more comfortable to the horse, and are more economical to the saving of the remainder of the harness. The practice some teamsters have of tying the traces in a knot every time they unhitch can not be too strongly condemned. It is the main thing that causes them to rip and come apart. The strength of a tug depends upon its firmness. In the saving of tugs, hip straps will pay for themselves in one season.

In the choice of bridles the disposition of your horse must be considered. If he has been broken to a blind bridle and will scare without one, I say by all means get one. If, on the other hand, he is docile and has never seen a blind bridle, and you desire his eyesight to remain natural, I say emphatically, do not get one. A horse's eye is somewhat like a giraffe's. He can see behind himself with a very slight turn of the head. A blind bridle checks this natural tendency of the sight, and tends to throw it like the headlight of a locomotive, in a line directly forward, thus straining the lenses of the eyes, and impoverishing the sight. When once the practice of using them is begun, it should be continued; but I would advise no one to begin the practice unless he is capable of judging of the tendency of the blinds. Some blinds when rightly used are not very hurtful, and are the means of "setting off" a horse to better advantage, especially buggy horses. A horse in the shafts without a blind bridle is not at all in accordance with the tastes of most drivers, I among the number. The common, smooth-jointed bit is suitable for the ordinary, easy-going farm horse. A young fiery horse must have a more restraining bit.

The rest of the harness in parts and construction is about the same, and I leave its selection to the good judgment of every farmer.

Having bought new harness, the next thing demanding our attention is the keeping of it. This is where most farmers make a mistake. They do not take enough pains with their harness. Moisture is the great destroying agent of leather. Oil is its preservative. You know as well as I that if you do not oil your shoes they will soon become hard and hurt your feet. The same principle applies to harness. It requires oil, more oil. I have seen harness out of the shop three years, and out of oil just as long. Of course it was hard and full of unmendable cracks. New harness had to be bought the next year. No doubt you will at once see that farmer down as careless and neglectful. I did, and he was once one of the most extensive farmers in Illinois. He failed, not simply from neglect to oil his harness, but from neglect to oil everything. Metaphorically speaking, a great many things need oiling. Harness should be taken apart, all the weak places mended and oiled at least twice every year. The spring and fall are the best times; immediately before and immediately after the hardest work of the year. Select a warm, sun-shiny day; heat your oil (of all the common oils, neat's-foot is the best and cheapest) until you can scarcely bear your hand in it; have your harness taken apart and cleaned from all dirt, then thoroughly rub and re-rub each strap and part, including collars and hames. Having oiled a set, hang it in the sunshine for a few minutes, take down and rub again with your bare hand until no oil remains on the outside. Harness treated in this simple and easy way twice a year, will last twice as long as when merely smeared over once or twice in a lifetime.

Besides oiling there are other simple pre-requisites to be observed in order to get the greatest utility of harness. It should always be hung up, when not in use, in a dry place, free from mice and rats, and where the horses can not pull or knock it down and trample upon it. It should always be kept away from cattle, as the saline matter on it induces them to chew it. When on the horse it should never be subjected to sudden jerks or excessive straining on immovable loads. Every part should be free from twists. The tugs and lines are most apt to get twisted, and when this is the case, unnecessary wear and tear is the result. The lines should never pass through rings made fast to the hames. If passed through iron rings made fast to or a part of the hames, the wear at that place is exceedingly great. By giving proper attention to these small particulars and adding a stitch in time, the durability of harness may be greatly increased, much to the pleasure and profit of both beast and owner.