

A Page About Live Stock

What's in a Pedigree?

Well, sometimes there isn't much, and sometimes, again, good money changes hands for pedigrees, when there isn't much else. Generally speaking, anyone who wishes to become a successful breeder has to get a little merit into the members of his flock or herd, both in the individuals themselves and in their immediate ancestors. Of course, pedigree does not always imply this, but the kind that does is the only kind of pedigree that is worth paying very much for. The purchase of an animal in any sense inferior, whatever its breeding, is a questionable investment. Rather a good individual, whose close ancestors and relatives have been able to land a few prizes in creditable company, than a low array of ancient glory whose mantle has not proven wide enough to cover its scions in question. To breed good stock from such is like gambling to win back lost money, and is probably more luck is against you. It sometimes happens that a breeder will show you an animal of very inferior appearance, apologizing by remarking that it seems not to have done well, but it has a good pedigree and is of the most fashionable strain. And more money will be asked and given than for a much superior individual of so-called plainer breeding. The writer was recently shown a 4-year-old Shorthorn bull which was a "holly terror" to look upon, and told that he was a — bred bull, and the name of some 42nd cousin, that is making breeders be mentioned.

A few years back, Canada was the dumping ground for whatever was undesirable in the forward-bred line, and even yet their descendants, bred from all kinds of mares, and strong in the outward indications of general worthlessness, are sometimes shown to us as the living relatives of Hambletonian, and frequently the name of some 42nd cousin, that is making the world take off its hat and yell, is also taken in vain to the end that more scorn is added to the beast.

It is generally admitted, both by those who have succeeded, and those who have not, that skill and experience both are needed to make a successful breeder of superior stock. Experience is a good teacher, and to put in practice all the theories that are offered is in a general way out of the question. But a few general principles can be easily kept in view. Stock that have long been bred to a type, are usually potent to impart their type characteristics to their offspring. If bred to animals of similar individual and ancestral type, the results are all the more sure and certain. But of all prepotent things, the scrub is the most superlatively prepotent to reproduce his frailties and shortcomings, especially if he is the son of scrubs.

In selecting breeding stock, get individuals of the right kind first, and if you get good young stock then you will be able to show the prospective purchaser that it has the right kind of parents. Then look to the pedigree. Don't be led by the type in any way. A sounding strain to overlook the immediate ancestors. Be sure they have been the right kind, and that neither families have been too prolific of scions that are of the same type. An individual whose near or recent relatives have all been uniformly good, is preferable foundation to the one whose family comprises a few stars and a mass of scrubs, too, for atavism will be sure to turn up

for you your full percentage of scrubs, though you may never get one of the others. It is true that common individuals of good breeding have been great producers, but it is the exception which proves the rule, and the rule reads the other way. Not long ago the writer, while visiting one of the leading Ayrshire breeders, asked to be shown the calf of a remarkably fine imported Ayrshire cow and the herd bull of the farm, a prize-winner of fine style and breeding. A strong, growly young bull of good lines but rather "off" in the head was shown, and on commenting upon this he was informed that Sivo had been refused for him. "I refused it," said the manager, "because I wouldn't let one like that leave the farm except for beef." Many breeders are scarcely heroic enough for this, but no one can say that the course was not commendable.

However, the buyer who meditates starting a herd that he hopes to become an excellent one, can assure himself of success by a careful study of the pedigree, along the right lines, and it is only when this runs into the most fashionable strains that he will have to pay the highest price for it. Then, if both individual and pedigree will stand careful inspection, it is worth the money. If it won't, it isn't worth very much. J.W.S.

No Feet, no Horse

How much the draught horse owes to the shrewd old Scotch breeders! To their unswerving adherence to their ideals and their consequent attainment is due in a large measure the improvement of the draught horse. His feet, his pasterns, bone and action, the running gear they made right first, so that this freight carrier of the highway will neither break down nor ever-engage.

"The feet that have made the Clydesdale famous" is a motto that should be in the mind of every breeder of draught horses. Enough attention has not been paid to the kind and quality of feet by breeders in Canada. Many, in fact, who are good judges of the horse every other way, have even very little true idea of the characteristics of really good feet and their importance. If the hoof is not too flat, and of apparently sound fibre, and the horse goes sound, it is about all they know or think about. This would be very far from satisfying the expert judge in the prize ring, the Clydesdale breeder and importer, or the purchaser of draught horses to be used on the pavements. Not long ago the owner of a fine Clydesdale stallion walked him 12 miles, barefooted, on the gravel roads, then had shoes put on, and took him into the show ring. He wondered why, what he considered, inferior looking horses beat his exhibit. But the judge knew, and the man who had carefully tended his horses' feet for the past 6 months knew.

To the blacksmith, who handles horses' feet every day, and to the thorough horseman, who knows much difference and variation in the foot as in the horse himself. Examine the hoof carefully from behind. See if the heel is large, wide and strong looking, well sprung, and looking as if it could grasp the earth, rather than appearing as if it would make a hole in it. See if it is developed and spread out equally low both sides of the coronet, so that the chances are that you will not look very long before

you find some that are smaller on one side than on the other. Raise the foot, see if it is well arched inside, if the frog is large, fresh and healthy, with both sides equally well developed. Observe if the quarters feel and look to be equally thick of hoof-shell with the toe and heels. Notice if both front and hind feet are the same. Standing in front of the horse notice if the front feet stand square and straight, neither appearing to be turned in nor out, looking as if "tipped" to either side. Observe how the quarters are spread towards the heel. Thin quarters are perhaps one of the commonest defects in a horse's feet, and a thin quarter makes a poor weight-bearing foot. The best way to deal with a thin quarter is to shoe the horse often, as the toe grows faster than the quarter, leaving the weight on the heel and toe of the foot, when the quarters show a tendency to curl, losing their weight-bearing power and weakening the support of the centre of the foot. In shoeing, see that the toe is kept trimmed down rather than the heel, as the "old Scotch" smithies used to say: "Up in the heel, down in the toe," wide in quarters, and then sell 'em."

Be very careful always to note the appearance of the coronet, or hoof-head, if it looks small, fine and clean, or has any suggestion of narrowness it is very objectionable. The coronet should be large, wide and roomy-looking, appearing as if giving plenty of room for the bones and tendons. It is generally horses with such narrow coronets that are affected with side bones, ring bones, navicular and other diseases. If the feet of a horse will stand inspection on these lines, you have the foundation for a good horse anyway, and the average judge of draught horses will place him ahead of a horse that has considerably better top but not so good below.

FARRIER.

Loose Collars

Perhaps there is no more fruitful source of sore shoulders in working horses than the too common practice of leaving the hamestraps loosely buckled over the collar. Even moderately tight hames will, in heavy work, allow of an amount of play, sure to result in galls, especially if the collar is not, as it too often is not, a perfect fit for the shoulder on which it is placed. One cannot always be sure of anything more than an approximately well fitting collar, but if the hames are so adjusted over that when tightly buckled on, the sides of the collar press pretty firmly to the sides of the neck, and given reasonable care to the collars and shoulders daily in better times, it is found that the poorest shoulders on the farm will get along without the soreness and galls only too common as the result of neglecting to do this.

Starting a Flock

In starting a flock, only healthy, robust ewes should be selected, and all of them should be of the same type. They should be mated with a first-class ram of similar type, and one of the same breed as the ewe flock, unless the farmer is crossing for some special purpose and does not intend to retain the progeny for breeding. Each year the ewes should be carefully weeded out, only the best being retained; too many Canadian farmers in the past have followed exactly the opposite course, allowing buyers to pick out the best specimens, retaining only the second best for breeding. By following the system of culling closely, a high de-

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