

Our Scottish Letter—Clydesdales.

For some time past, all around our planet, so to speak, the welkin has been ringing with statements and theories regarding the Clydesdale and his alleged want of pith and weight, as compared with his great southern rival—the Shire. In the course of a lecture which has recently been delivered before a meeting of farmers and breeders of horses in Cupar Fife, Scotland, the following statements were made on the authority of the owners of the various horses named, and our readers will be able to judge for themselves after reading them whether the lecturer overstated or underestimated the claims of the Clydesdale to be regarded as the best draught horse in the world:—

Taking three different horses got by different sires, and of somewhat different types, the following results have been obtained: Cairnbrogie Stamp 4274, owned by Mr. John Marr, Cairnbrogie, Oldmeldrum, is familiar to many breeders as the winner of first prize three years in succession at the Highland Society's Shows. His height is 17.0½ in.; girth, in low condition, 7 ft. 6½ in.; measurement round the upper muscles of the forearm, 32 in.; round the forearm, with the lower edge square with the upper edge of the horn, 18 in.; bone below the knee at smallest part, 11½ in.; length from elbow to knee, 16 in., and from knee to fetlock joint, 11½ in.

Sirdar 4714, a successful prize horse, and now the property of the Fortmashire Clydesdale Horse Company (limited), is of somewhat different build and breeding. His height is 17.1½ in.; girth, lean, 7 ft. 10 in.; weight (at present), 19½ cwt., or 2,184 lbs.; measurement round upper muscle of forearm, 23 in.; round forearm above horn, 16½ in.; bone below knee at smallest part, 10½ in., and bone below hock, 12½ in.; length from elbow to knee, 18½ in.; from knee to fetlock joint, 12½ in.; from stifle to hock, 22 in.; from front of hock to fetlock, 13 in., and from point of hock to fetlock, 15½ in.

Sir Everard 5353, owned by Mr. William Taylor, Park Mains, Paisley, has three years in succession been awarded the Glasgow district premium at the Spring Stallion Show. His height is fully 17.1 in.; girth, in lean condition, 8 ft.; weight (in June, 1890), 20¾ cwt., or 2,324 lbs.; measurement round upper muscle of forearm, 26 in.; round knee, 17 in.; bone below the knee, smallest part, 11 in.; below the hock, 12 in.; length from centre of knee to centre of fetlock joint, 11½ in.; from stifle to bend of hock, 21½ in.; from point of hock to fetlock, 18½ in.; from top of shoulder to top of foreleg, 3 ft. 4 in., and from elbow to stifle, 3 ft. 2 in. All of these measurements were taken in the second week of March, 1891, except the weight of Sir Everard as specified above.

If we look now at the measurements of one or two well-known Shire horses, we get the following results:—

Mr. Forshaw's Bar None 2388, a much older horse than either of the three Clydesdales specified, having been foaled in 1877, is a well-known and popular sire in England. Some measurements connected with him were recently published, and from these it appears that his height is 17.1 in.; girth, 8 ft. 9 in., and measurement of bone two inches below the knee, 11½ in. From these three items it appears that he has no advantage over the Clydesdales except in

girth, and the question of condition would require to be considered before that could fairly be compared. He measures 19 in. round the knee, whereas Sir Everard, who is eight years younger, measures 17 in. at the same part.

Captain Heaton, the respected manager of the Earl of Ellsmere's stud, furnishes these measurements of Vulcan 4145, the London champion of 1889 and 1891. This horse is eight years old, and, therefore, three years older than Prince of Albion; two years older than Sir Everard; one year older than Cairnbrogie Stamp and Sirdar, and the same age as Flashwood. Vulcan's height is 17 hands; girth, 8 ft. 7 in.; weight, 20 cwt.; measurement round forearm, 20 ft. 7 in.; bone below the knee, 12 in.; length from elbow to knee, 1 ft. 7 in.; knee to centre of fetlock joint, 13 in.; stifle to hock, 1 ft. 9 in.; point of hock to fetlock joint, 1 ft. 7 in. It is a pre-eminently fair comparison to bring some of the measurements of the Clydesdale, Flashwood 3604, alongside of these figures regarding the Shire, Vulcan. He was first at the Glasgow Spring Stallion Show in the same years and months as Vulcan was first at the London Spring Show, and both are of the same age. Flashwood then stands 17 hands high and weighs 20 cwt. His girth is 8 ft.; he measures above the knee and round the forearm, level with the upper edge of the "horn," 20 in.; below the knee, 11 in.; above the hock, 21½ in.; and below the hock, 12½ in. It will thus be seen that he and Sir Everard measure 7 in. less in girth than Vulcan and 1 in. less in bone below the knee, but Sir Everard in the middle of his season last year weighed ¾ cwt. heavier than Vulcan did four weeks after his London triumph, and Flashwood weighed equal to Vulcan under almost similar conditions. Deduct the Shire horse's 7 inches greater girth, making allowance for the part that plays in increasing his weight, and it is obvious that the two Clydesdales weigh heavier in bone, muscle and sinew than he, although in these they are less bulky.

My object in bringing forward these comparisons will not, I hope, be misunderstood. It is not to furnish data whereby Clydesdale men may attack the Shires, but to enable those who are partial to the Clydesdale, but have their ears ringing with declamations as to his deficiency in size and weight to judge for themselves how much truth there is in such declamation. It is admitted that Shires are as big as the heaviest kind of draught labor calls for a horse being. It is admitted that Bar None and Vulcan are typical Shires of the heaviest class. It is proved by these figures that while these two horses surpass several of our heaviest Clydesdale horses in weight and size of body, they do not surpass them in gross weight, so that the conclusion is forced on us that in that which constitutes the true strength and power of a draught horse—bone, muscle and sinew—the Clydesdale is not inferior to any other breed, but is superior, while the absence of an overweighted carcass renders him the most active of all draught horses. But I intend to go further. I maintain that the Clydesdale of most quality, the Clydesdale that is most popular in the show ring, that is sometimes, even by those who do not admit the truth of the charge of lack of substance and weight as brought against the breed as a whole, admitted to be somewhat on the small side, may be and sometimes is possessed of more of the

material that constitutes real strength and power in draught, than horses that to the eye appear to be bigger. To illustrate this position Mr. Gilmour's Prince of Albion (6178) was taken. It has been publicly asserted, not in England, but in Scotland, as a sort of universally acknowledged truism that Prince of Albion is undersized. Here are his measurements. The reader can compare them even with Vulcan's, the London champion of the Shires (the best Shire horse I have ever seen, and one of the best draught stallions that ever entered a show ring), and judge for himself. Prince of Albion on plates—not wearing shoes—stands 16.3 in.; girth, 7 ft. 4 in.; round forearm, tape touching horn, 1 ft. 6 in.; round upper muscle of forearm, 1 ft. 11½ in.; below knee, 11½ in.; below hock, 12½ in.; length from elbow to middle of knee joint, 1 ft. 7½ in.; from knee joint to middle of fetlock joint, 11½ in.; from stifle to hock, 1 ft. 9½ in.; and from hock to fetlock, 1 ft. 2½ in. These are the measurements; how do they compare with those that have gone before? Always bear in mind what has been said about the ages of the various horses. Prince of Albion is one inch less in height than Flashwood and Vulcan, 1½ in. less than Cairnbrogie Stamp, 2 in. less than Sir Everard and Bar None, and 2½ in. less than Sirdar. In girth he is 1 ft. 5 in. less than Bar None, 1 ft. 3 in. less than Vulcan, 8 in. less than Sir Everard and Flashwood, 6 in. less than Sirdar, and 2½ in. less than Cairnbrogie Stamp. Round the upper muscle of forearm he measures 8½ in. less than Cairnbrogie Stamp, 7½ in. less than Vulcan, 2½ in. less than Sir Everard, and ½ in. more than Sirdar. In bone below the knee he measures ½ in. less than Vulcan, the same as Cairnbrogie Stamp and the aged Shire horse Bar None, ½ in. more than Flashwood and Sir Everard, and ¾ in. more than Sirdar. Below the hock he is ¼ in. better than Sirdar, ½ in. better than Sir Everard, and the same as Flashwood.

It will be seen from these figures that Prince of Albion has absolutely the greatest width of bone of all the horses with which he is compared except Vulcan, and age being considered, he surpasses him also, and that in respect of his height and other measurements, he has the best proportion of bone, muscle and sinew. Cairnbrogie Stamp has more muscle than Vulcan, and almost as much compass of bone. The other measurements may be compared at leisure. What has been said is sufficient to establish the position that has been taken up, and to prove that even on the score of size and weight, which are not the only tests of the merit and value of the draught horse, the Clydesdale can do more than hold his own against other breeds. The last position that is established by these figures from the measurements of Prince Albion ought to suggest caution in making strong statements regarding well-balanced horses. The question in regard to draught horses, as well as in regard to racing horses, is not first which horse is the biggest, but which horse is made of the best stuff; which horse will stand the strain longest. These thoroughbreds are not the biggest looking, nor are they often the biggest in reality, and the best Clydesdale is not the horse that looks biggest at home, where there is more that he may be compared with, but the horse that is seen to best advantage when compared with the best that can be brought against him. Round, porous bone to the eye appears heavier than clean, flinty, flat bone, but we have seen that the horses with the latter turn the scales to best advantage.

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