

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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THE DOMINION.

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classes of costly publications. Mr. Wilson, the new Secretary of Agriculture, is reported to favor restoring the seed business to its original purpose. It is coming to be generally recognized that there is an obvious wrong in a system that involves taxing private enterprises, that are serving the public economically and well, to sustain an unfair competition with themselves.

Shall Farmers' Daughters be Educated at the Agricultural School?

A bill has been presented to the Legislature appropriating \$25,000 to pay for the construction of a suitable building to accommodate the gentler sex at the University Farm School. They are knocking for admission, and none in these days of a "truer" chivalry are so ungallant as to turn them away. It is certainly of importance that the mothers of the next generation should be equally as well as the fathers fitted to impress and develop the plastic mind of childhood, with which they come much more closely in contact. A dwarfed and undeveloped motherhood means undeniably the retardation of the human race. Horticulture especially is interested in the fullest education of the farmers' daughters, for to them, rather than the sons, must it look for the practice of those special features of its art which so much beautify the world we see and in its highest sense ennoble life. By all means give them the fullest opportunities.—From Secretary's Corner, Minnesota Horticulturist.

Seed for Experiment.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—I have read with interest your article on the U. S. Free Seed Scandal, in your issue of March 15th. There is not the slightest doubt that this business has been carried on beyond its usefulness in that country. In Canada, I believe no seeds are given out to politicians to distribute, nor as a political bribe. Any farmer who wishes to get any seeds to test receives them from Ottawa or Guelph, as the case may be. One trouble, I think, is that we who receive these small lots to test are apt to manure the land too much, thereby not giving them a fair trial. This, of course, is natural, as we all want to get as big a yield as possible, so that we can sow as much land as possible the next season. I think it would be a good plan if we reported on the crop for three successive years. Then our reports would be more reliable. But as we only report the first year, we should sow our samples on land prepared in a similar way to that which our main crop is to be sown on. Farmers never have enough manure, otherwise it would be all right to manure these plots well. I have noticed in some reports at one of the experimental farms that when small plots of one-twentieth of an acre were sown the yield was much larger than when an acre or more of the same variety was grown.

Another drawback is, that it is very hard to keep these different varieties pure. I certainly think that there should be a limit in this free distribution

of seeds, otherwise, as you say, the Government might as well take hold of the seed business of the country. I have dealt with many of our leading seedsmen and have not had any reason to complain of the way my orders have been filled. However, our experimental farms have done and are doing very good work, and we should all feel grateful for the help we derive from them. Perhaps some of your readers may think that I am writing from personal motives, but this is not the case, as none of us who sell seeds and wish to remain in the business can afford to offer seeds of an inferior quality or seeds that are not likely to give the purchaser good satisfaction.

J. E. RICHARDSON.
Brant Co., Ont.

STOCK.

The Shire Horse—His Characteristics and the Ideal Type.

BY HORACE N. CROSSLEY.

The Shire horse of to-day derives his name from the "Shire Counties in the heart of England," which are principally responsible for the production, since the commencement of the present century, of this most perfect of all breeds of heavy draft horse. Taken in order of precedence, as judged by results of prize winnings at the London Shire Horse Show since its inception (and this is the only true gauge of the respective merits of the different Counties which we have at hand), the Counties which have done most for the modern Shire horse are Derbyshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Northamptonshire, Yorkshire, and Huntingdonshire, with twenty-three counties which have won more or less prizes.

For a long time prior to the eighteenth century the Shire horse was known as the large "Black old English horse" or the "Lincolnshire black horse." The Shire horses of to-day, to trace their origin still further back, are the lineal descendants of the "Old English war-horse," which ancient writers tell us excited the surprise and admiration of the Romans when they first invaded England. And though they may not be the only descendants of that noble race of horses, Shires are now generally regarded as the purest living representatives of that earlier type. In support of the above contention, Mr. Walter Gilbey, writing in 1888, says: "Recent investigations appear to establish that what during the past few years has been spoken of as the Shire horse is the closest representative of the purest in descent from, the oldest form of horse in the island. A thousand years ago this form was written of as 'The Great Horse'; and nearly a thousand years before that we have evidence which goes to prove that the same stamp of horse then existed in Britain, and that it was admitted by those who saw it here to be something different from, and something better of its kind, than what any of the witnesses of that day had seen before, and they had seen most of the horses of those times."

Whilst the majority of the breeders of Shire horses claim that the above represents in brief the principal origin of the Shire horse, and that his foundation stock existed in the "tight little island" even before what is now an "illustrious empire" had any history at all, one must not suppose for an instant there are none who maintain that a few at least of his salient points are derived from foreign sires. Stud books are the creation of the nineteenth century, and even the modern Thoroughbred horse cannot trace back his lineage as a distinctive English breed much beyond that date, and there are those who assert that the Shire horse, or, as he was styled at that time, the "Black old English horse," was from time to time crossed with and greatly improved by stallions introduced from foreign countries.

One must not forget that the old English war horse was a very different animal to the trooper's charger of to-day. He had to carry his master in battle incased in heavy armor and carrying ponderous weapons, he himself being similarly incased. Sometimes his services were required at the crusades, sometimes in the various conquests of Normandy, or on the banks of the Ebro in Spain. English mercenary knights even at times fought in Italy. We must further consider that the English arms were in these times always victorious. Horses were then principally valued for their use as chargers, and if, under the above circumstances, Europe held any horses superior to those of the English, it is almost certain that these victorious knights would transfer some stallions or mares to their English homes, and use them for the improvement of the native stock.

It is positively stated by some writers that when William III. was invited to take possession of the English throne he brought with him many Dutchmen who settled by preference on the east coast of England, in the Fen District, on account of the resemblance which that district held to their own country. These Dutchmen brought with them many heavy Flemish horses, which when crossed with the weighty Lincolnshire stock produced a class of horse from which our present Shire horse is derived. That there is considerable truth in this statement one hardly feels disposed to deny. Lincolnshire is undoubtedly the birthplace and original breeding ground of the Shire horse. Lancashire and Derbyshire, it is true, head the list of Shire winners at our present shows, but Lancashire, in our opinion, has become a producer of this

stock because she is at the same time one of the greatest consumers; and Derbyshire, being in immediate proximity to Lancashire, would naturally produce that for which she had the best market. There is no evidence to show that either of these counties has been a producer of Shire horses for any very extended period; but, on the other hand, Lincolnshire, which at the present time ranks third in the list of prize winners, has from time immemorial been known as the seat and home of the "black horse." The counties which immediately abut on the confines of Lincolnshire are the ones which even to-day are, next to it, most celebrated as producers of this present exponent of the original English breed of heavy horses.

Geographically, too, Lincolnshire being adjacent to the Dutch countries, and the two having traded from time immemorial, it is reasonable to suppose that at least some interchange of stock would take place between the peoples living on either side of the North Sea. In 1878 a paper on the "Improvement of the English breed of cart horse" was read by Mr. F. Street, at the Farmer's Club, London, and attracted so much notice that very shortly the English Cart Horse Society was founded, but finally it adopted the name of the English Shire Horse Society. The first volume of the Shire Horse Stud Book was issued in 1880, and since 1883 an annual exhibition of Shires has been held. The stud books are published every year, and there were recorded up to 1896, when the sixteenth volume was published, 15,950 stallions and 21,204 mares.

The principal winning strains at the Shire Horse Show of 1895 are in order of precedence: Harold (3703), Lincolnshire Lad II. (1365), Bar None (2388), Honest Tom (5123); but if the pedigrees be carried back a step further it will be found that the majority of winners spring from one or other of the following horses, their sons or grandsons: Lincolnshire Lad II. (1365), Bar None (2388), William the Conqueror (2343), What's Wanted (2332), Honest Tom (5123), Vulcan (1145), or Royal Albert (1885). No fewer than 29 prize-winners at this show sprang from the old gray horse, Lincolnshire Lad II., who died in 1895 at the age of 23. His sons sired seventeen winners, his grandsons six, and he himself six. Great credit is due to the Shire Horse Society for the strenuous efforts which they have put forth to prevent the propagation of horses of this breed by anything, or from anything, which possesses any hereditary unsoundness. No horse, whether sent to the London Shire Horse Show for exhibition, or for purposes of sale, is allowed to be exhibited unless it has first passed a most rigid examination at the hands of three of the best-qualified veterinarians in England.

It is a fact admitted on all sides that formerly the Shire men aimed largely at the production of a horse of great bulk, a horse capable of shifting great loads in crowded streets, and starting the same on the level from a dead halt. Looking only to the upper half of the horse, they somewhat neglected the lower half, but this criticism does not at the present time apply to the Shire horse, and no one can be found to-day who will make any such assertion. Shire breeders to-day look just as much to the shape of the pastern as did always the Scotchmen of ten years or more ago. The reverse is equally true, that the Scotchmen look just as much to the great formation of the body to-day, for which the Shire has always been celebrated, as they notoriously neglected this formation a like number of years ago, when they considered that the pastern was the only part of a horse.

What a Shire horse should really be is described very well in an article on the Shire horse to be found in the book of The Horse, by Cassell & Co., London, England:

"In action he should move true and well in the cart, horse pace walking; if required to trot, he should have the action of a Yorkshire Hackney. The feet should be well proportioned, better too large than too small; depth of foot and width at heel being important elements, but wide, flat feet are very objectionable, especially for road purposes. The fore leg should be put on parallel at the shoulder and wide enough so as to support weight. Too great width between the fore legs is not often seen, but it is possible. This is objectionable, as it generally impedes action. The pasterns should not be too long or straight. The leg bones flat and short between the fetlock and knee; they should not measure less than 10 or 10½ inches below the knee. A stallion should not be less than 11 inches, a few reach 12 inches. The Earl of Ellesmere had one that measured nearly 13 inches. The hinder legs of a cart horse are even more important than the fore legs. A horse should not be 'split up' too high behind, or be cow hocked; he should have round thighs, large, flat, clean hocks, short pasterns, and the leg should measure between the hock and fetlock at least one inch more than the fore leg. The legs should be well covered with long, silky hair, this being regarded as a sign of constitution. He should be at least sixteen hands two inches in height. Seven feet six inches is a good girth, but eight feet is often reached. He should have a good 'cupboard,' as indicating a constitution to stand a good day's work; chest wide, shoulders pretty well thrown back, head big without coarseness, back short, wide loins, long quarters, tail set on well and high. To sum up, a good Shire horse is a long, low, deep, wide, well-proportioned and active animal. The other points of a Shire horse are those of every well-shaped harness horse, considering always that most of his business is to be done at a walk."

The Shire horse is the best Shire horse at the London opportunity. A. Grandin. Mr. John was Harold June last a formed a gold medal. She also v show last her with the by Mr. Cro

Clydesdale

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