

The Breeding of Coach Horses.

How to breed high-class Coach horses has, for the past twenty-five years, at least, exercised the minds of many horse-breeding farmers, and others engaged in the pursuit more as a "hobby" than as one of the visible means of support to the family. Everybody who has tried it knows that it is not so easy as it looks on the face of it, and that, from a variety of causes, notably injudicious mating and antiquated theories, many men have raised "expressers" or little "weeds," where the happy medium, so far as size and weight is concerned, was the goal aimed at. Some say we haven't got the mares; I say most emphatically that there are plenty of mares in the country of the right type, if only they are properly selected, and what is just as or more important, after selection mated with the proper kind of a sire. Then, again, many men who lack practical experience are apt to listen to the persuasive tongue of the cross-roads stallion-r, and, probably for the sake of saving a little trouble, breed to the horse which comes nearest to his doorstep, whatever his breeding or individuality, or lack of either one, or both, may be. This is, of course, all wrong, and has been exploited times without number in the agricultural press; and still the same old thing goes on. It is my object in this short article to give a few practical hints to some of those who are raising coach horses, and if a few are saved from the fate of the many, I will not have written in vain. I want it distinctly understood that I have no "axe to grind" in favoring one breed, at the expense of another, and whatever I write comes from actual experience and observation right in the coach-horse line for a period covering the last 25 years, and consequently the bulk of the importations of the various coaching breeds.

Now, let us consider how to commence. In the first place, it is very important to have the right kind of mare. In making your selections, eschew those with ragged or pointed hips, droop quarters, ewe necks and short back ribs, and take only those standing from 15 hands 2 in. to 16 hands, with clean, cordy limbs, oblique shoulders, and long, arched necks, with a head and eye showing intelligence and good disposition; breast should be well developed and girth deep; back as stout as possible, but not too short in a brood mare; quarters long and level, with tail coming out well up. No horse with a short or drooping quarter ever carried a high (natural) tail, and nothing enhances the appearance of a coach horse as much as the carriage of the tail, and it would be well to always bear this in mind. As to blood lines, no hard-and-fast rules can be laid down, but avoid one thing—do not use mares with draft breeding in them; take those of good trotting or Thoroughbred blood if you want the desired result, always keeping in view the individuality of the mare. No man ever amounted to much who had not a good mother; the same rule applies to horses.

There was a time when heavier vehicles were in vogue, and buyers not so critical as at present, when a so-called coach horse was raised from a mare having a slight admixture of draft blood, but that time has gone forever, and "quality" is the "sine qua non" of the coach horse of the present day. Next comes the most important question of all: What kind of a sire should be used? Goodness knows, there is plenty of choice! With the immense numbers of French and German Coachers, Cleveland Bays, Trotters, Thoroughbreds and Hackneys that have been "placed" in nearly every township, it should not be difficult to find a suitable sire—but, which is best? To review the merits of each breed in the order named, in concise form, and without prejudice, seems to be about as common-sense a way of "getting at

the thing" as I can think of. Take the French Coacher to start with, and, to look at him as an individual, he would seem to come pretty close to "filling the bill." He certainly has size and quality, and oftentimes quite a bit of action, but he does not reproduce, and therefore will not do. The reason is not far to seek: He is a cross-bred horse himself, and has not been bred long enough "in line" to be called a breed, and is indebted for most of his good points to the English Hackney and Thoroughbred. I have seen pedigrees of winning French Coachers analyzed which showed seven-eighths English Thoroughbred in their make-up.

Then we come to the German, or Oldenburg, Coacher, a horse undoubtedly evolved from ordinary stock for army purposes, and a very good animal for those purposes, but, except in very few instances, entirely too large and coarse for a coach horse. I have often "judged" registered German Coachers which were very much better adapted to an "express" wagon than a gentleman's carriage, and even within the last week have been approached by a seller of these horses, saying (as if it were something in their favor), that he had some three-year-olds on hand weighing 1,600 pounds. Ye gods! fancy a coach horse weighing that much! Such horses may do some people, but they won't do me. Still, I have seen some that had both quality and action, but they are few and far between, and I have yet to see

not be high enough, to justify your raising coach horses on this kind of a basis.

Lastly, we come to the Hackney, which, to my idea, is the best and safest horse of all to breed to. In him you have the best conformation, the finest disposition, and the highest all-round action of any of the breeds named, and what is more to the point, he transmits these very desirable characteristics to his progeny to a marked degree. Show me a section anywhere where a half-way decent Hackney has stood for service for any length of time, and I will guarantee to find more good high-class coach horses in that vicinity than in all the rest of the county, giving choice of all other coaching breeds combined. Take the records of the principal horse shows in the United States and Canada for the last five years, and analyze the breeding of the winners, and you will then have little doubt about "tying" to the Hackney. Some farmers say he is too small. Remember, a little "good un" is worth more than all the big "bulls" you can get. In breeding coach horses, it is absolutely necessary to have quality and action, and you can't get these qualifications by using large, coarse stallions. The Hackney gets more nice salable horses than any other breed, and gives them the well-rounded form, high style, action and good disposition which go far to make up the ideal coach horse that is wanted at the present day. Some N. Y. dealers are even buying Hackney mares and geldings in England right now to fill their orders for well-made, smart-looking, high-styled and high-actioned carriage horses. The Hackney is unquestionably the horse to sire such animals as are in demand at the present time, and I don't hesitate to say that a good Hackney sire is worth from \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year to every township in which he stands, after his progeny gets to a marketable age. There are records of Hackney sires in England, notably in the case of Triffit's "Fireaway" and D'Oyley's "Confidence," where the figures stated above are most conservative, one eminent authority having stated that the value of the stallions exported and the mares left behind from these two great sires was so great as to be scarcely computable, but certainly ran into the hundreds of thousands of dollars in each case. R. P. STERICKER. Orange Co., N. J., Jan. 10, 1906.



A Typical Hackney.

the first high-class gelding, or mare, got by a stallion of this breed.

Next we come to the Cleveland Bay, a well-defined type of large coach horses, and one that reproduces his kind in color and form, the long neck and quarters standing out, and giving him a majesty of style seen only in this breed. A little too much size and not quite enough action are the points most against this breed for present-day requirements; but they get good coach horses, and I have personally handled and exported many high-class coach horses got by good Cleveland Bay stallions.

The Trotter undoubtedly gets an occasional coach horse, but a man only finds out how few when he goes out to try and get some. You may find one here, and the next from three to five hundred miles away, and I still have to find the trotting-bred sire that ever got more than an occasional colt of the right size, finish and action to make a coacher. There are many trotting-bred colts "docked" and put into heavy harness which look woefully out of place there. Ewe necks, ragged hips and cat hams do not go far in the make-up of a genuine coach horse, but they are often passed over in the craze for "speed," and put before the public as the "real thing."

The Thoroughbred of good size and bone does certainly get some good coach horses, and in using such a sire, a person can even use a mare with a dash of coarse blood in her, and if a good hunting horse is not produced, it may be that one of coaching conformation is the result, but in most cases I should be afraid the action would

"The Proposed Horse-owners' Lien Act for Manitoba."

To the Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Replying to your enquiry as to my opinion of the proposed act, as outlined in your issue of Jan. 4th, I wish to say at the outset that there is such a thing as the people legislating themselves to death, and to this extent I am not in favor of filling our statute books with laws the observance of the main features of which both plain common sense and financial gain should teach us to respect. Much rather should we favor the principle of endeavoring to educate breeders up to that standard of discrimination between the good and the bad, and intelligence which will enable them to realize the great folly of breeding from unsound or undesirable male animals. And this is but another instance of the great truism which is continually forcing itself upon the minds of our people, that there is no line of Canadian industry which now demands such a wide range of mental power in its development as that of agriculture.

Those of us who are at all acquainted with the general merit of pedigreed males in the heavy-horse breeds (as in all other breeds of animals), know well that there are many animals whose breeding and soundness would conform to the standard, as laid down under sections 6 and 9 of this act, and still be most undesirable animals to breed from—nothing more, in fact, than pedigreed scrubs. So that, after all is said and done, no matter how you may protect what we might call a desirable standard of breeding animals by legal enactments, the fact still remains that good judgment and a proper power of discrimination is the only safeguard to a desirable method of breeding.

With these observations, I may say I consider this proposed enactment does contain one or two desirable features, in that sections 3, 8, 13 and 18 require every stallion owner, under a penalty, to properly and publicly advertise the breeding of every animal to which he solicits custom, thus compelling the production of information, for which he is responsible, which every breeder should know, and which otherwise there is a certain difficulty in obtaining.

From a long experience in the care and handling of breeding animals, I would not put much weight on any endorsement of soundness given by the Department of Agriculture. Even if everything is right, such an endorsement can only apply to the date of examination and issue, and certainly would not be trustworthy for any continued length of time. This being so, along with the fact that a renewal of such an endorsement is required annually (a stipulation not likely to be generally complied with), renders these sections of the act really of no practical value, hence largely a useless enactment. As I have already pointed out, the