

and bear goodly fruit. I shall know it was not *all* chaff.

The lecture was illustrated throughout by reference to drawings, &c.

THE CART HORSE.

At the last discussion meeting of the Stowmarket Club, this subject was introduced by Mr. Henry Crosse. The following epitome we extract from the London Agricultural Gazette of 28th January:

I have chosen my own subject, and my first ideas upon it were instilled into my mind when very young; for when I rode a donkey beside my father, who was a great admirer of the Suffolk breed, and for many years a successful breeder, he used to point out to me a good one when we met a team, and tell me the good points and find fault with the bad ones. If on the subject of the draught horse I possess a little extra vanity, perhaps you may think it the more excusable when I tell you I have been selected to act as a judge of agricultural horses 17 times at local shows, and six times at the Royal Agricultural Society's meeting; and the confidence thus placed in me has certainly added no little experience to my early lessons. Next to the *genus homo*, or the human being, (for all climates) I should place *equus*, believing the horse to be the most useful, most valuable, and the staunchest friend to the human race of all animals. The elephant may suit the jungle, the camel the desert, the reindeer the Laplander, and the dog the Kamtschatka; but for the rest of the globe it cannot, I think, be disputed that the horse stands first in importance and usefulness. In the choice of a draught horse, whether a Suffolk or any other breed, I state as an opinion that there are three most especial points which ought to guide either breeder or purchaser—symmetry, quality, and action, and these may be defined by three other words—beauty, endurance, and pluck.

Symmetry in a horse many will say is a matter of fancy or taste, but it ought not to be so, for it has nothing to do with size or with substance, but may be nearly the same in all, from the pony to the dray horse. Any horse having four good legs sufficiently strong to carry his weight ought to have a shape which will bear an equal weight or proportion on each leg. Take an animal with a very heavy forehead and light hindquarters. Can such an animal possess symmetry? Reverse the shape, and it is equally out of proportion. Still I have many times found both these, to my eye, ill-shaped animals, much praised, and have known them work well. This only makes good the saying of an old Suffolk Nimrod, that horses may go well in all forms, but he liked the handsome ones best. Now, my definition of symmetry in a horse is that the nearer you divide his length in four equal parts of neck, shoulders, back, and hind-quarters, the nearer an animal exhibits perfection in a side view, and if you divide his body at the second long rib, each leg ought to have an equal proportion of its weight.

Next as to quality. I was told when a youth, of a veterinary surgeon at the London Hospital, who, to illustrate quality, had two inches of bone cut from the shank of a blood-horse and a dray-horse, and the bone of the race-horse weighed quite as much as the other, though not more than two-thirds of the size.

Now one of the most estimable qualities of the Suffolk breed, especially to foreigners who come to purchase, is that his bone, as well as his muscle, shows plenty of quality; and if I see a Suffolk with a good clean shank bone and flat hard back tendons, they go a long way, in my opinion, towards securing both quality and endurance. It is often said that action in a draught-horse and in a hack are of two different kinds; but is it not rather the training from generation to generation that makes a great proportion of difference? Now the action of a cart-horse should develop itself in a firm quick step, not too long, as a long step requires greater leverage to get through dirt, and more power is exhausted than by a moderately short one, and a quick step is a sure sign of good pluck in any animal. As to the height of a cart-horse for agricultural purposes, one more than 16½ hands high is too high, and one less than 15 hands high is too low for general purposes.

To summarise these remarks, let me describe in full what I consider perfection in an agricultural cart-horse:—

A well-shaped head, rather large, a long clean ear, full eye, neck rather long, but not too much arched, strong withers lying well forward to catch the collar at the proper angle for draught, and broad shoulders well spread into the back, back straight, ribs long and well rounded, hind legs bent at the hock, forelegs forward, hind-quarters somewhat round, but not sufficiently so to make them look short; the mane and tail of strong but not coarse hair, and with a fetlock about two inches long, broad knees, long hocks, short shanks and hard ankles or fetlock joints, and round hoofs well opened behind; and the nearer you approach this description, the nearer the horse will be to perfection.

Till the steam-plough takes the place of those now used, the plough will always be the work which will wear out the farmer's horse more than any other. Observe your plough-horses on a hard headland, and you will see the horse with very sloping shoulders swerve from his work, where a horse with moderately upright shoulders will lay to his work, and walk straight. I am aware that in these remarks I am touching upon tender ground, for I find the fashion of the present day is greatly in favour of very sloping shoulders. My experience is certainly not in their favour, and Professor Youatt, in describing the farmer's horse, writes that the shoulders should not be too much sloped, as workmen often find fault that a horse jibs when the fault is more in the shape of his shoulder than in his temper, for when he lays to his work the collar catches his windpipe, making him throw up his head and full back; and when a horse is required to start a heavy load, or take a dead pull, it will be necessary to have horses that will lay to their work, for it is a mathematical certainty that a draught horse must pull from an angle at the shoulder, and if that angle is too sloping, the collar will catch the windpipe, and, if too upright, will press upon the withers. To exemplify the necessity for a staunch horse, allow me to relate an instance I saw a few months since. A waggon was stopped at the bottom of the hill in the parish of Great Finborough, and when the driver wanted to start his load, three out of the four horses refused the dead pull, and had he not had one with a pair of upright shoulders, he might have stayed some time. On looking round I saw the three were of a favourite breed, and very smart animals, and

I also noticed that all three had on collars thickest at the top. This, to me, had a very ugly appearance.

A word or two as to breeding. One point I have found too much overlooked in breeding, viz., hereditary weakness and disease. My advice is, never breed from an unsound animal, particularly do not breed from one unsound about the feet and legs, for I have frequently been able to trace pedigree by brittle hoofs and bad ankles or fetlocks, for several generations, when acting as judge, and have found too many of our public favourites so very deficient, that even when only old enough to put to work their legs looked more than half worn out. To back my opinion as to the necessity for attending to the size of the ankles of a cart-horse, I will quote my brother, who lived at Onchouse Hall, for 40 years, and who would never breed by horse or mare that had small ankles. He maintained that it might do for a generation, but would be sure to go wrong if continued; and I believe those who knew his horses will agree with me that they were equal to any in the country, and they were chiefly bred by himself. He never showed any, for he said he could not spare his best to be fatted up for that purpose, and he never saw one too good for his work—this remark I heard him make to the late Rev. Copinger Hill.

Thus far I have confined my remarks to the Suffolks, but I will now say a few words about other breeds. For the light lands of Norfolk they require a faster animal than we do in our district, and they breed and use them rather longer on the leg; and many of the Lincolnshire, or Fen breed, that do not attain their full size, work as well as those of Norfolk or Suffolk, and in point of symmetry these and the Clydesdales sometimes even beat the Suffolk breed; but as working horses I believe none will last more years, or do more work, or keep their condition so well as the well-bred Suffolk horses. On this point I had, some years since, the word of a gentleman who set two farms at the same time, one with Fen breed and one with Suffolks, and he had most of the Suffolks when the others were worn out. In most old descriptions that I have read of the Suffolk horse, he is described as low in the forehead, sluggish in his movements, and with a blaze in his face as broad as a spade. These ugly points, by attention to breed, are chiefly vanished; and I have no doubt those imperfections which I have taken the liberty more particularly to notice, with other faults too commonly met with, may be also much improved, if not got rid of altogether by further attention to breeding by sound animals.

To conclude, gentlemen, after 40 years' and more experience, I may perhaps be allowed to caution breeders not to sacrifice substance for quality, symmetry for fancy, nor both for action, so long as strength and constitution are required in an agricultural cart-horse. I could continue the subject by relating many occurrences which have happened in my life amongst horses and men, but I shall be happy to have the subject discussed by others, whose modern experience can improve my, perhaps, too antiquated ideas.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. Crosse had brought to the room, in order to better illustrate his remark, two oil paintings of Suffolk horses. He said one was the likeness of a horse that had taken many