

Old Country Shire Men, Wake Up!

The F. & S., recently, under a heading, "The Shire Horse Abroad," points out reasons, which all who have attended horse shows in Canada and the United States know to be correct, why the Shire is not more commonly used on this side of the Atlantic, and refers to the Percheron fancy. One thing horse-breeders on this side of the Atlantic can make up their minds to is that, if pure-bred draft horses are wanted, the Shire pedigrees (either British or Canadian Books) are far more valuable than many of Percheron pedigrees, so called. It is remarkable that even yet the Shire horsemen of Great Britain seem to consider Canada a negligible factor as a horse-breeding country, whereas it is unexcelled in climate, etc., by any part of the world.

More attention is now being paid to the possibilities of developing a better trade for Shire horses abroad. Hitherto the extremely satisfactory home demand and the high prices which horses are realizing was enough in itself to warn off any foreign purchaser who had not a sufficiently long purse to stem the current of home competition. Nowadays, however, there seems a greater disposition to view the foreign demand in the light of a thing that might be cultivated, and as useful for more than an inferior horse. How often have we heard the phrase used, when doubts were entertained as to the advantage of maintaining a colt entire, "Oh, he will do for a Yankee." This seems to be a rather unjust aspersion upon the possibilities of our foreign trade, although no doubt it is a correct reflection of popular opinion with regard to the present state of the foreign trade for Shire horses. It is much to be regretted in more ways than one. The foreigner, for example, can only have a very moderate opinion of the character of the Shire horse. How different has been the policy which has animated breeders of the Clydesdale and the Percheron in the United States. The Percheron is the great overshadowing power there in the draught-horse world, and it is just because the fatal mistake has not been made of sending indifferent animals over, that this power is wielded and the fashion in draught horses so largely set. Chicago, for instance, looks for draught horses with as little hair on their limbs as possible, just because the Percheron has set the fashion, and the quality of the French breed exported has been infinitely higher than that of the Shire.

Undoubtedly there is room for development in the foreign trade of the Shire horse. There is a growing disposition to look for even weightier stock than any possesses as the present moment in the United States, and, judging by a report, the activity which the native half-bred draught mare possesses is regarded as sufficient in itself to impart that quality, even where it is slightly wanting in the sire. But weight is a desideratum which experience proves to be absolutely necessary in a draught horse. Activity is not everything, although it is an extremely valuable feature, and the American-bred horse has not been lacking in that particular quality. If American breeders are looking more to weight than they have been in the past, it is a moral certainty that the Shire horse will be one of the first breeds to benefit, and a writer seriously considers the problem of the use of the Shire horse as a means of grading up the mares which produce the cart stock of the United States. It must always be remembered, however, that the Percheron interest is a powerful one to fight, and progress can only be made by sending out really representative animals, and not the class of stuff which, unfortunately, has left these shores so freely within the past ten years. The Shire Horse Society has been considering the question, but it is not one which can be dealt with satisfactorily by the society itself, and the slight encouragement which it affords to Shire admirers in America seems to be about as far as it is likely to go, at present, at all events. Private enterprise will require to effect an opening, as it has done in the case of other breeds. There are various difficulties in the way of the Shire Horse Society taking the matter up, but there is none beyond the question of expense and consideration of the probable results to bar the breeder privately undertaking to push a better class of Shire in the States. The question might very well be further considered, as its possibilities have been by no means exhausted, in view of the tendency of the times on the other side of the water.

A Necessity.

I am a subscriber to the "Farmer's Advocate," and cannot get along without it.
Oxford Co., Ont. JOHN A. McDONALD.

We Can Sell that Farm for You.

A SMALL ADVERTISEMENT IN OUR "WANT AND FOR SALE" COLUMN WILL DO THE TRICK. ADDRESS: THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE, LONDON, ONT.

STOCK.

Co-operation for the Beef Industry.

There is something wrong in the beef cattle trade. Every breeder and every feeder complains of it, though few have suggested a remedy. In Great Britain beef prices are high and fairly steady. In the Canadian and U. S. markets dressed beef brings prices much higher than seems demanded by the prices paid to the farmers on either side of the line. The Beef Trust accounts for the pernicious conditions existing in the United States, but we have no beef trust in Canada—so far as we know. Why, then, is the business of feeding beef so speculative? Why do so many complain of having lost money in it? Why are farmers so slow to improve their beef stock by breeding, and so poorly repaid for doing so? Why are so many unfinished animals thrown on the market at times? The answer to all these questions is, the farmers' system—or lack of system—of selling is at fault. Let us analyze the situation. The following individuals are engaged in the beef trade: The farmers who breed, raise and finish beef; the farmers who raise stores only; the farmers who finish purchased stores; the buyers who buy and sell finished cattle at home and abroad; the men who slaughter them; and the retailers. The following are reasonable factors in the price of beef as retailed:

- (1) Cost of production—breeding, care and feeding till finished, but not beyond finishing.
- (2) Cost of sale and transportation—reasonable expenses only.
- (3) Cost of slaughter and cold or other storage.
- (4) Cost of retailing.

Add to this total a fair profit to each person engaged in the process, and you have the price of beef

steady. If all farmers always sold their animals at about the same age and in the same finished condition, regardless of the market prices prevailing, there would be no fluctuations worth noticing, and no one would lose money. But when the price is high farmers usually rush their cattle on the market, finished and unfinished. That means a sudden and extraordinary supply to a regular demand, and the price goes down as suddenly. The last farmers selling lose money, and, unfortunately, those so losing are generally the farmers who have held their cattle till they are finished, and who cannot hold them beyond that point without loss. As such fluctuations are very common, particularly at certain seasons of the year, something is needed to prevent them if possible. Organizing and co-operative sale is the only preventive, by central regulation, in accordance with a knowledge of the market demand and rules as to maturing and finishing of animals.

So much for conditions as they now exist. But the problem of the beef trade has not yet been fully stated. We have heard much of the cattle embargo, and something of an export dead-meat trade. Only those who, like the writer, have followed every stage of the journey of export cattle can realize the wastefulness of values under the present system of marketing in Britain. Deterioration of quality, and, therefore, of value, is inevitable in a railroad and steamer journey of two weeks or longer, and there is no chance of recovery when the animals must be slaughtered so soon after landing. As the most perfectly-finished animals suffer the greatest deterioration, and as unfinished animals always bring an inferior price, our beef never brings a good price on the British market. Moreover, the necessity of killing and marketing at once, whatever be the going prices, makes the business speculative in the extreme, and the farmers are always the losers. From the prices received must be deducted large freight rates, insurance, costs of feed, handling, etc.

The farmer at best can receive but a small fraction of the value of his animals.

For this wasteful condition of affairs a dead-meat trade is the only possible relief. With abattoirs at the stock-yards at, say, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and St. John, and cold-storage warehouses at home and in Britain for distribution of products, the risks of the cattle trade would be eliminated, the money now wasted would be turned to profits, and the farmers could safely increase and improve their herds. The by-products, that we now freight expensively to England only to throw away, would be kept in the country, and their manufacture and sale would pay a handsome profit on the whole enterprise. Thus we would not only eliminate the present waste and get higher prices for what we produce, but would develop the beef industry immensely. It



Oro Wilkes 30347.

Winner of first prize for Standard-bred Stallion, 4 years old and over. Also winner of championship for best Standard-bred Stallion, any age, at Canadian Horse Show, 1905. Owned by the Cruikston Stock Farm, Galt, Ont.

under ordinary circumstances. But the farmer complains sometimes that he sells at a loss instead of a profit, whereas the consumers' price is always high enough to have paid the fair profit allowed. Therefore, if expenses between producer and consumer have not increased, some person on the chain has absorbed the farmers' profits in such cases. Seeing that the farmer has done more than anyone else to give value to the retailed product, he is the one who should be sure of his returns, if at all possible. It is clear that two conditions exist that are against the interests of the farmer; one, a generally and permanently small payment to the farmers out of the consumers' price; the other, frequent fluctuations in the price, on every drop of which, it is safe to say, many farmers lose money. Both of these conditions are wrong. If any business should be absolutely safe and unspeculative, it is the business of producing such a staple food as beef.

A low price at the farm and a high price at the butchers' may be explained in two ways: First, an abnormally great expense of transportation, etc.; second, abnormally great profits absorbed by some of the middlemen between producer and consumer. In the home trade the second is the cause of the conditions complained of. In the export trade both are to blame. In both cases co-operative selling by the farmers would at once remedy both conditions, and pay the farmers the difference as profits.

A sudden depression in the market, and low prices paid to farmers is due simply to the fact that too many cattle have been sold at once. It must be remembered that the consumers' demand for beef is fairly steady from year to year and from month to month, and that the breeding and maturing of the beef supply is quite as

has been hoped that capitalists would establish such abattoirs and other facilities of a dead-meat trade. If they should do so—and there are no indications that they are thinking of doing so—it would, undoubtedly, benefit the farmers enormously, so long as a Canadian Beef Trust were not born. But while private enterprise is waiting the farmers are losing money, and, in any case, if capital is needed, why should not the farmers put it into what is peculiarly and vitally their own business? If a dead-meat trade would be profitable to the farmers, why should they pay profits to private enterprise? Since the abattoirs and warehouses are to be built, it would seem advisable that the farmers, first organized as beef-selling co-operative associations and federated, should themselves build and operate them.

Let all farmers who want improved conditions and increased profits organize district associations, "for the sale of beef cattle and their products, on the hoof, or manufactured by the association, etc." Then let such district associations federate into provincial and national associations. The local associations could effect economies in sales for members from the moment of organization. When powerful enough by federation they could undertake the manufacture of dressed beef, etc. There is no reason why such an organization should fail, provided the following essentials are observed in organizing:

- (1) Payment of all profits on ledger accounts and not on shares.
- (2) Compulsory sale of all members' animals (with certain reasonable exceptions) through the association, to prevent desertion of members and consequent failure.
- (3) Rules providing for proper finishing of animals.

Such an organization could not fail. It would pay