

ABSORBENTS FOR THE STABLE.

Correspondence of Western Plowman.

The most valuable part of our stable manure escapes in gaseous and liquid form. Ammonia, that indispensable element of plant food, is a slippery article to hold at best. The air of every stable is reeking with its pungent fumes. Much of it escapes in this way. It works an injury to stock confined that are obliged to inhale it constantly. When it will take the life out of a well-oiled harness it cannot be the harmless gas for animals to inhale that many believe it to be. Stables that are shut up tight in cold winter weather are so filled with this gas that a person can hardly breathe in them when first opened up in the morning.

Kept in its proper place, ammonia is of great value to the farmer. Allowed to permeate through the stable and render the air unfit for breathing, it is a nuisance. The only way that it can be kept in its proper place is by the use of absorbents. By the use of these it may be retained and made of immense value to the farmer, and at the same time keep his stables pure and wholesome. The common bedding used in most stables does not accomplish this purpose, straw or hay can contain but little even of the liquid excrement.

Muck and earth make most excellent absorbents. Muck has a most wonderful capacity in this respect. It will absorb and retain an immense amount of liquid and gaseous substances. A few handfuls of lime sprinkled through it makes it still more powerful as an absorbent of gases. It will draw ammonia into its keeping as a sponge draws up water. Dry muck will hold more moisture than any other available substance. Dry, loamy earth ranks next in this quality, and in the absence of muck will do very well for a stable absorbent. A few shovelfuls of either muck or earth sprinkled over the stable floor after cleaning out will make the air sweet and pure by absorbing into itself the impure substances.

I have no doubt that the value of the manure pile may be doubled by the use of muck as an absorbent in the stable. Not only is the excrement retained in nearly its original value, but the body of the absorbent used also adds much to the value of the manure pile. Muck is a valuable fertilizer itself, and when loaded with the liquids and gases of the stable its value is vastly increased. It becomes incorporated with the coarser manures, and the composting thus achieved works a benefit to the whole mass. It prevents fre-fanging, which works such a loss in some cases, and by holding such a quantity of moisture hastens decomposition of the coarser portions of the pile.

Muck ought to be taken from the swamp some months before it is wanted for use, and allowed to cure out and dry. It is a good plan to leave it in the pile over one winter, and give the frost a chance at it. But it may be taken out even now and put in shape to use next winter. It should be spread out on high, dry ground, and stirred up with plough or cultivator frequently in drying weather. When well dried it should be stored under cover. A closet or small room opening off the stable is excellent for this purpose. An unused stall will do. Road dust may be gathered up almost any time and stored away. It will pay to devote a little time to this work.

HOW TO JUDGE A DRAUGHT HORSE.

Mr. J. Minot, French veterinarian, in his book, "Appreciation of the Horse," gives the following directions for the choice of heavy draught horses, says the *Journal des Haras*.—

"The choice of a heavy draught horse is a great deal easier than that of a race-horse, yet it is important to know how to distinguish the best,

strongest, most enduring, those which feed well, those which are fiery, and those which are slow.

"The draught horse derives his power from several causes, the development of those parts which constitute its bulk, the energy of its muscular action, and the firmness and hardness of its organs.

"The exterior characteristics of a good heavy draught horse are a large, deep chest, straight shoulders, a little inclined, fleshy, a thick body, yet not too much belly, straight loin, the hind quarters a little depressed, thick through the thighs, and a long perieum. The horse that has a long perieum, prolonged down from the anus, and thick and short muscles of the thighs is very strong and a good draught animal.

"The walk of a heavy draught horse is immaterial; there are draught horses that are quick and those that are slow. The light, quick horses are good for farm work, where the ground is light and even; the heavy, slow horses, with firm tread, are excellent for new, sticky ground and on bad, uneven roads.

"A horse for drawing loads, to be well formed, ought to be high in front, having high and projecting withers, large chest, front legs strong and well spread apart, back and loins straight, hind quarters a little depressed, muscular, short in the flank, large sinews. With such a shape, a draught horse is solid, and able to resist all the knocks from uneven roads and the weight which presses upon it when going down hill.

"To be too fiery is a fault in a horse drawing heavy loads on an uneven road; in this case a strong and slow horse is better, it will resist fatigue more and do more service."

POINTS IN HORSE BREEDING.

Argus, in English Live Stock Journal.

"The mare gives the constitution, the sire the conformation," is an almost stereotyped phrase in horse lectures and essays. We question it very much indeed. Had that celebrated Clydesdale sire, Prince of Wales, got one-third of the stock off him like himself in every way, judges in Scotch show-rings would have been saved much trouble in choosing the prize-winners. On the other hand, being a horse of a healthy constitution, he has imparted health to his progeny invariably; and when it is known that he goes on hard ground and stones still as active as a two-year-old, those who have had some experience of feet founder know what that means. The fact is that the balance is about even in draught-horses, no matter what it may be in Shorthorns, which have, in their mating, been dominated by man under a system scientifically complete for more than half a century. We should, indeed, like draught sires to be more impressive than they are in order to bring up the general quality of the stock, but this can only be done by mating for several years in the line of utility—that is, in utility as opposed to fancy show-yard animals which could never do a day's work in the streets.

Mr. James Howard, M.P., is strong in his belief in the constitution and conformation theory, and no doubt, in his extensive experience, has seen much to justify it. The reproduction of the conformation, of course, is readily noticeable; that of the constitution difficult indeed to detect. That and the fact that the breeding of the sire is paid more attention to may account for the prevalence of this opinion; but all we can say is that the half-bred (that is, well-bred) mare will frequently throw her produce to herself, though the sire be the purest thoroughbred, and give her constitution along with it. Now that the sire must always pass the show veterinary surgeon, while the mare bred from will, in the majority of cases, never be seen

at a show, we would attribute constitutional defects in a colt or filly more readily to the dam. The farmer who has a good stock of mares, however, will be the best judge of their constitutions, and will mate them accordingly.

WEANING AND WINTERING COLTS.

National Live Stock Journal.

It is with the colt as with an infant—injudicious practices at time of weaning may lay the foundation for disturbed digestion, and in the case of the colt, this comes at a very inopportune time, as the winter, with its dry feed and deprivation of grass requires to be met. The colt is readily weaned, and this can be done with safety, provided the change be made gradually, suitable food being given, and this with care. The dam is readily relieved of her milk, her small udder has room for but little at a time, and she soon ceases to give milk. A colt that is worth raising at all is worth giving all the care that is necessary in order that it may develop to the best advantage from the start, losing no ground. To reach this end requires more judgment and care than is usually exercised upon the average farm. Some farmers advocate giving no grain to young colts, relying upon hay after frost. The effect of this treatment is to give them a big abdomen, but from day to day they get thinner upon the ribs. The coat stares, and as cold weather comes on, the colt shows that sort of discomfort that always comes of insufficient nourishment being given. The weanling colt should be so fed that its sides remain straight from point of shoulder to quarter. This means a moderate amount of hay, and very nearly what clean oats the colt will eat. At first a pint of oats twice daily is enough, to be increased as winter sets in. Many colts, when spring opens, show that they are the unwilling victims to a slow and relentless system of starvation. They mope around spiritless, and if they have gained any weight during the winter, it will be found to be mainly weight of abdomen. A deceptive appearance is maintained by the free growth of hair. When this is shed, the ribs are altogether too plainly seen, and colts wintered in the scant manner referred to seldom, if ever, get rid of the big abdomen acquired during winter. The internal organs grow unduly, as compared to the bony, muscular, and tendinous systems—these latter remaining pinched, the muscles being flabby. The so called toughening process to which colts are often subjected during winter, is the outgrowth of inhumanity and the lack of common sense. Discomfort from any cause means suspension of growth, and no influence can so completely tend to this end as suffering continuously from low temperature. The grown-up horse inured to many winters of exposure, cannot be pointed to as an example of what a weanling can stand. Hence the only safe practice with the colt is to feed liberally with food well chosen, alternating careful protection at night, with mid-day exercise in the open air and sunlight. It is well to bear three things in mind, as these lead to growth, health, and unvarying success with the young colt, namely, a dry bed under shelter, suitable feed properly given, and outside exercise in the sunlight.

Mr. D. D. Withers has given his bay filly by King Ernest—Revolt the very appropriate name of Anarchy. The name was suggested by Mr. T. C. Patteson, of Toronto, who names nearly all Mr. Cassatt's. Mr. Patteson has given the subject of nomenclature much study, and he rightly holds that the best name is one suggesting that of the sire or dame or both, as it facilitates the tracing of pedigrees without recourse to the Studbook.—*Spirit of the Times*.