

HORSES AND CATTLE.

THE MARKING OF CATTLE.

In an elaborate discussion on herd-grazing, especially on extensive ranches in the North-West, contained in the last report of the Ontario Agricultural College, Professor Brown suggests a method of marking cattle which is worthy the attention of stockmen. The importance of some trustworthy mode of proving ownership of cattle will be readily admitted. It is desirable to have such a means of identifying animals even where they are not kept in large herds roaming the boundless prairie. Cattle sometimes go astray, and it is not always easy to prove property in them. How to mark hornless cattle is becoming an important question, now that the muley breeds are coming to the front. On this point Professor Brown remarks:—

"The hot iron cannot be used anywhere with them except upon the hoof, and this would always be a very awkward check—in fact, is rarely used; branding on the skin is only of one year's use, and any other form of hair marking soon grows out, and ear labelling would not do unless everybody was above suspicion. It is evident that a plan of ear-marking or hole-punching is wanted, and in order to draw forth something better, I beg to suggest the following:—

"The two ears have four distinct sides—two upper and two lower—thus giving four unmistakable base lines, that the commonest cowherd could not misinterpret: (1) the upper of the right ear; (2) the upper of the left ear; (3) the lower of the right; and (4) the lower of the left.—See Fig. 1.

"The average length of an ear being eight inches, and about four inches in breadth, there is space enough for three distinct positions on each base—one near the point, another in the centre, and the third near the head; these, on our four edges, sides or bases, give twelve positions. The idea now is to arrange such a plan of punch-holes at these twelve places as will represent all the letters of the alphabet excepting I and Z,—therefore twenty four. My plan is as follows:—See Fig. 2.

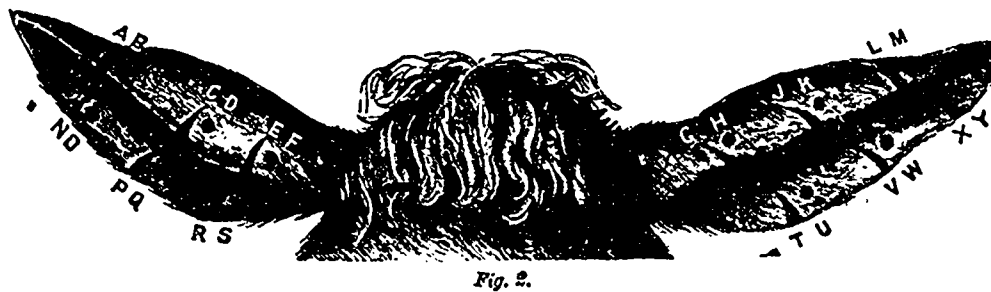
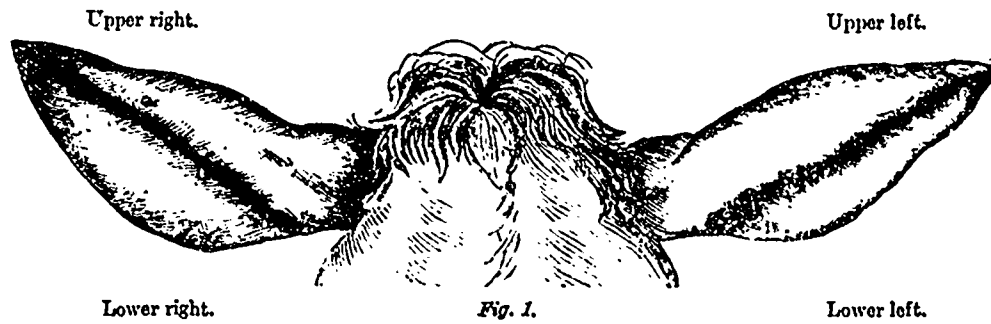
"A double punch constructed to cut out a wedge piece, and also a circular hole, will serve the purpose; and now supposing it is desired to mark cattle belonging to William Brown, Guelph, the cuts would take this position:—See Fig. 3.

"But, of course, the G could be omitted if considered confusing, and to meet the case of similar initials with a different name, such as Walter Butler, the last letter of both christian and surname can be added thus, the cuts being doubled as required:—See Fig. 4.

"And so on, in almost any variety. Were some such plan as this registered as the Government standard or index, much trouble would be saved, as it could not possibly be left to individuals to

record their own ear-marks, because no possible variety could meet the wants of hundreds of different graziers."

The only objections to this plan that occur to us are that it involves a degree of indefiniteness, and, in some cases, would necessitate considerable ear mutilation. The initials "W. B." stand for a great many other names besides "William Brown." William Benham, Galt, might claim the animal also claimed by William Brown, Guelph; and so on indefinitely. Where there are several initials, there would be more cutting and puncturing of the ear than would be consistent with its beauty or autonomy. There is a Canadian whose initials are G. N. A. F. T. D. Could a beast wag its ear or hold it up, if it were marked with all these letters and the place of



W. B. G.—WILLIAM BROWN, GUELPH.



W. B. L. G.—WALTER BUTLER, GODERICH.

residence? This is an extreme case, and perhaps the Professor can devise a special way of meeting it. No doubt there will be difficulties and objections in connection with this and every other proposed plan of cattle-marking: The Professor makes his suggestion with exemplary modesty and diffidence: "in order to draw forth something better." We publish it as a valuable contribution toward the solution of an important practical question in connection with stock-keeping, and shall be very glad if it helps to draw attention to the matter. It is needless to add that communications on this subject will be very welcome to the columns of the RURAL CANADIAN.

Ten new frame barns are to be erected within two miles and a-half of Kinkora village this summer.

ACTION IN WALKING.

How few horses really walk well, exhibiting, as they should, a free, graceful, vigorous style of action; for the hack it is in constant demand, and has long since established a moneyed value in dealers' yards. Horses are required to move lightly, quickly, firmly; the knee to be well bent, the shoulder to evidence suppleness and freedom. A horse must be of the right stamp, for if he does not stand well he can never be firm yet corky in his gait. As a wide-chested horse is invariably unsteady in his paces, and treads unduly on the outer quarter of his foot, a horse that leans must step short and go on his toes. The nimble hackney moves his legs in quick succession; flat-footed horses go on their heels. These defects import

faults in action, and defective action is both unsafe and unsaleable in the best market. The walk has ever been held to be the crucial test of value. A good walker, *ceteris paribus*, will perform well either in the field or on the road. The sharp, quick lift, the graceful turn, the correct stay, the firm, flat, light, grounding of the foot—these are the desiderata, elegance with precision and safety. The lift should at all times be sufficient; if insufficient he will knock his toe against a stone, or some other obstacle or inequality of surface; whilst an exaggeration of lift, being more than is required, will cause him to cross his feet and speedy-cut. No sprawling is admissible. The horse's action in all his paces must be collected. Many high-actioned horses, with strong, upright feet and concave soles, go on their toes. The foot, when flexed in the air, should evidence no lateral deviation—i. e., no dishing, no darting. This will be best observed in the trot.

The stay is executed by catching the foot sharply off the ground, to be followed by a graceful sweep, the direction being both forwards and upwards. Now, this suspension in mid-air is one of the finest tests of soundness, for any horse that is screwed in his foot would, by force of circumstances, be ready to afford the required relief at the earliest opportunity. Hence the stay would be indifferently executed. So much for flexion or lifting, the extension and stay. Our third point is the approximation or grounding of the foot. This must be firm and flat; but no matter how high a horse may go, he must tread lightly, which a horse with longish pasterns and a deep oblique shoulder cannot fail to do.

To adjudicate on the walk. The effects rather than the manner should be appraised. A fast, faulty, insecure walker should be rigorously rejected. And again, though fast and safe, if rough, there is no pleasure in the mount. It is valueless alike to breeder and dealer.

A natural short step must not be mistaken for that cramped action, the sequel of disease. Foreign horses fight in their fore action, and go