

WESTERN LETTER.

The other day I casually asked a friend who came to Manitoba with the second Wolseley expedition, if he ever saw a better winter, and, by way of reply, he began to recall some of the nice weather they had in '74. This gives an idea of the mildness and steadiness of the past three months. No better weather could be conceived for stock. We have had no extremes, and the average has been most enjoyable. It has done wonders for the country. Feed was scarce enough in many places, and the short crop had made many new settlers despondent; but the Western sunshine is a wonderful mental tonic, and people are even now discussing seeding, and the prospects for an early spring, with rapid growth.

The Western farmer has been accused of ignoring everything in the summer but his crop, but he turns in winter to public questions with a vengeance. The Manitoba Grain-growers' Association wants the Government to provide storage elevators throughout the Province, and so give the farmer independence of the elevator owners, who now are making good profits by taking wheat from farmers' wagons and transferring it to cars when they arrive. The idea is a new one, and, as it promises economy in handling grain, may be expected to stick.

The report of the Royal Grain Commission is not enthusiastically received. This is probably because it is those who are inclined to radicalism who generally display most enthusiasm, and the report of the Commission does not embody any very radical recommendations. The Commission has done much good, for, as a result of its inquiry, which was freely published and widely read, the public has a much better grasp of the conditions in the trade.

Saskatchewan is doing some good work this winter. Seed fairs are being held all over the Province, the Dominion Seed Branch and the local Government co-operating. Mr. McFayden makes a splendid official in charge of the work for the Dominion. Farmers were never more interested in good seed, clean farming and grass-growing, all of which augurs well for the great grain Province.

Some good work is also being done in Alberta. The Department of Agriculture and the railway companies are running Farmers' Institute trains, and all the experts in the Province are on the programmes.

The Western stock-breeders are watching the fraternity in the East. It is not yet clear to us up here why the Clydesdale Horse Association failed to make an appropriation to the prize-list of the Manitoba Spring Stallion Show. Last year the show got \$100.00 from the Association, and certainly deserved as much this year. And, while on Clydesdale matters, why is it that none of our Western men are asked to judge at some of the Ontario shows? We have Clydesdale judges up here that are capable enough, and we are always courteous in engaging the services of Easterners to judge up here. Ontario Clydesdale men are overlooking a chance to fraternize, and incidentally extend business.

Our Shorthorn breeders in Manitoba will watch with more than ordinary interest the proceedings of the annual meeting, whenever it may be (no one out here has yet been notified of the date). Your breeders down East are promised an intricate problem as a result of the precedent they established last year, when they divided the grant to Manitoba between Winnipeg and Brandon Exhibitions. This year an effort is being made to have all the Manitoba grant allotted to Brandon, but it is hardly conceivable that the annual meeting will ignore the services Winnipeg exhibitions have rendered the breed, and offend a large number of breeders in the central and eastern parts of the Province. Upon the basis of entries and money awards, Winnipeg Exhibition can show a claim to as large a grant as Toronto, and these are considerations that should weigh with the members of the Shorthorn Association at the annual meeting.

"BACKSETTER."

UP-TO-DATE METHODS AND GENERAL INTEREST

In renewing my subscription to "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine," I take pleasure in expressing my appreciation of your up-to-date methods and general interest in the farming industry. Wishing you every success in your several departments.

WM. R. LONEY.

Carleton Co., Ont.

I beg to acknowledge receipt of premium knife for securing one new subscriber to your valuable paper. It is a very fine knife, and I feel that I am well repaid for my trouble. "The Farmer's Advocate" is a welcome visitor to our home, and is read by old and young. Wishing it a prosperous year.

JOSEPH JOHNSTON.

Wellington Co., Ont.

HORSES.

HORSEMEN'S EXPERIENCE COMPETITION: FIRST-PRIZE ESSAY.

J. P. Nunan, Brant Co., Ont.

BREEDING.

Our experience in breeding horses began about thirty-five years ago, and has consisted of raising from one to four, and averaging about two colts per year—this as one branch of a very mixed system of farming on a hundred-and-fifty-acre farm, the mares doing their share of the work thereon.

The start was made with a pair of half-bred Percheron mares, sixteen hands high, weighing about fourteen cwt., and sound. We have the same stock to-day. For some years we used sires of the same breed and type, until the colts had three top crosses of the breed. This gave us a very uniform lot of gray and black colts, weighing from 1,350 to 1,500 pounds. I remember three years in which we raised ten of these colts—that would make five teams matched in height, weight, color, and, what is better, and harder to get, disposition. But not being in a position to keep many horses, we sold them young, and so missed the profit we might have had in selling them as matched teams.

Then, for some years, a suitable Percheron not being available, we used Clydes as sires, and from this cross we got some grand individuals and some poor ones. They lacked uniformity, weighing from 1,300 to 1,650 pounds, and stood from 15 to 17 hands high. This indifferent result was through no fault of the sires, remember, but because we were breeding out of line and mixing types—a bad error in breeding heavy horses.

We used Coach and Carriage sires a few times, with about the same result, with this difference, that our misfits, being lacking in weight, were not

and plunging through snowdrifts, and don't let them drink too much ice-water. We never had but once case of abortion, and that was from this cause, the mare being warm at the time. I remember two years in which we raised eight colts from four mares, and did all the work on our hundred and fifty acres with these same mares and one other work horse. Of course, you have to do a little managing, such as having your plowing all done in the fall, your manure out in winter, etc.

We like our colts to come early—the earlier, the better; we always had better success with them than late ones, and this has been the experience of most breeders of my acquaintance. One would be inclined to think it would be better if the mares had a run on grass before foaling, but our experience has been the reverse. We lost four colts by their not being able to pass the dark stuff contained in the bowels at birth, and they were all late ones. I may add that now we always use a syringe to help the colt get rid of this, whether he really needs it or not; we think it better. We have lost four colts with joint-eval, and three of them were late colts, also. I wish I knew how to guard against this trouble, but I don't. Treating the navel cord may help, but in one of these cases I treated the cord when I cut it, and carefully afterwards, but the colt died of the trouble when three weeks old.

We have always tried to be present when our mares foaled, but must say we have had very good success when the mares were unattended, although we would have lost one valuable young mare if we had not been there. The colt was a malformation, and required a veterinary and his instruments; but this was the only serious trouble we ever had at foaling time. I may say that we have always called a veterinarian when anything serious was wrong, and found it paid. All the cases I have mentioned have had such treatment.

When working the mares, the colts are better shut in a loose box than following around the field. Darken the box when the flies are bad; keep hay and water where they can take it at will, and, as soon as they will eat them, feed a little bran and whole oats. In a few cases, where the mares were working hard, and their milk low, we have given them cow's milk, with good results; they soon learn to drink even skim milk, just like a calf.

The first winter is the critical time in a colt's life. I suppose there are many things good to feed them, but we have never found anything to beat good clover hay, with a little bran and oats, and water often. If you feed timothy hay, you must feed more bran to balance, but, whatever roughage you feed, be sure it is good, for the colt's stomach is very small, and will not hold enough poor stuff to properly nourish the growing body.

Some of the things we have learned from our experience are the following:

If you want a good safe brood mare, breed her young, and don't expect to raise a good horse from a broken-down and worn-out mare, as she cannot transmit what she has not got—that is, the stamina and vigor necessary for a good horse.

Try to stick to the type you have, unless it is bad, and you want to change it altogether; then, buy a good sound mare or two and start fresh; it is surer and cheaper.

In choosing a sire, even if you know there is a better horse in the neighborhood, still stick to your type.

Don't quarrel with your neighbor about the merits of the different breeds. You might as well run down a man's wife as his favorite breed of horses. Any of the heavy breeds are good enough, provided you aim at the best type of that breed; but if you like one better, that is the one for you to breed.

I have been much interested in reading the articles in "The Farmer's Advocate" and elsewhere on the subject of improving the type of horses; also the report of the Government Commission to the same end, but it would seem to me that too much attention is given to the sire, and not enough to the mare. If the type of heavy horses in Ontario, or parts of it, at least, has not improved as it should, we, as farmers, are largely to blame ourselves. When we want a



Bardon Marion.

Shire mare; foaled in 1904. Champion mare, Royal Show, 1907.

worth near the money that heavier horses were, even though lacking in quality. This is the great advantage to the ordinary farmer in breeding heavy horses, for, even if slightly blemished, they are always worth a fair price for the work there is in them. We also bred two of these mares to a Suffolk Punch, with good results, I suppose on account of the types being more alike, but we did not continue it long enough to be sure.

We had a nice carriage mare once that had navicular lameness, and we raised three nice carriage colts from her. This was a mistake, as two of them developed the same trouble, and the third we sold to a dealer, and she went to Boston as one of a nine-hundred-dollar pair. I hope the man who got them was rich enough to replace her without feeling the outlay. Mare or horse with this trouble should never be bred, for, while it may not be exactly hereditary, the weakness is there, and the least thing acts as an exciting cause.

During the time covered by this experience, we have sold our young stock at about the following prices: Yearlings, \$80; two-year-olds, \$120, and others from this up to \$200.

We have certainly found it a very profitable branch of mixed farming, as the colts can earn their living after two and one-half years old, and be the better for it; and the brood mares are the better for earning theirs, if you are careful with them when pregnant. Avoid much backing up