

N THE BREEDING OF HUNTERS AND HACKS.

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We must, then, insist on the conditions as advised by this society for "a thorough-bred allion to get hacks," as the main principle to on. Such an animal, as I have already intimated, need by no manner or means have been a famous racehorse—a fact that of itself would go to place him beyond our limit, at the me time that it is anything but an indispensable item in the qualifications. The chief things we have here to look for are true symmetry, good action, a staying pedigree, and freedom from hereditary taint. A deep frame, round barrel, on a short, wiry leg; a sensible rather than a "pretty" head, a well-laid shoulder, a good back, and plenty of bone. Never mind if his powerful quarters do droop a little, so that they run down to big clean hocks and thighs; and do not care to dwell too much on an accidental blemish, or even a fired fore-leg, so that the leg itself is of the right shape and calibre. Above all do not mistake mere force for power, and in the thorough-bred horse, as all others, go for wire, muscle, and breed, in preference to what may look like more substantial qualities. In this respect some of the authorities of the show-yard, who are called up to decide over sheep, pigs, chaff cutters, and other stallions still require a little tutoring. The "what to avoid?" we must guard against, is flashy strains of blood, that are of no value and the T. Y. C., and hereditary infirmities of all kinds. Bad eyes, bad wind, bad hocks, suspicious ring-bone-looking fetlocks are all bad things in a stallion, the more especially you can trace them. A horse may be blind to an accident or ill-treatment, and one of our eminent veterinarians has assured me that he did not think there were half-a-dozen stallions in England that were not roasters. The injudicious manner, however, in which many stud-horses are still kept, what with high feeding, hot stables and little exercise, might account alike for diseases of the eye and the respiratory organs. Beyond what you may deduce from actual appearances, it is always as well to look back a little into the genealogy of the thorough-bred horse. Some lines, for instance, are notorious for the noise they make in the world. Hump-Clinker, the sire of the famous Melbourne, was a bad roaster, as was Melbourne himself, and so were many of his sons and grandsons. Another celebrated Newmarket horse was known to all his stock with a tendency to ring-bone, and weak hocks give way as soon as you try him. There are clearly admitted exceptions: a ne-blind stallion will get animals remarkable for good eyes, and a thick-winded horse will not reproduce this in his progeny; but, as a rule, wind, eyes, and hocks should be the

three essentials of anything sound enough to bear in mind the sort of mares such a horse is to breed from, be it either sire or dam. I would not so much declare for a big horse as against fair sized one; and the saying of a good big horse being better than a good little one is not quite such a truism as it sounds to be. Fifteen two or fifteen three, with bone and substance, is big enough for anything; and when we come to learn in mind the sort of mares such a horse is to be put on, it is perhaps preferable to anything higher. For my own part, I go very much with the Cline theory, which says, "It has generally been supposed that the breed of animals is improved by the largest males. This opinion has done considerable mischief, and would have done more injury if it had not been counteracted by the desire of selecting animals of the best form and proportions, which are rarely to be met with in those of the largest size. Experience has proved that crossing has only succeeded in an eminent degree in those instances in which the females were larger in the usual proportion of females to males: and that it has generally failed where the males were disproportionately large. When the male is much larger than the female the offspring is generally of an imperfect form." It must be some such opinion as this which causes that rare sportsman, the venerable Sir Tatton Sykes, to breed from none but small or moderate sized sires; and I believe that the cross of the Exmoor pony with the thoroughbred horse would be yet more successful were the latter only more proportionate to the size of the mares. It would be pleasant to hear that Lord Exeter had lent handsome little Midas to his old neighbour of former days for a season or two, when we might expect to see in the produce some of the most perfect hacks ever backed. Not the hideous, vulgar, heavy-shouldered, loaded neck, Prince Regent kind of cob, but a little pattern of beauty and strength, with style, substance, and action really fit to carry a king. Such a hack as this would soon outplace even the Prickwillows and Phenomena, already going out of use for the saddle, now that men travel to meet hounds in first-class carriages, and the feats of Dick Turpin and "The Squire" are fast becoming mere matters of hearsay. Like the modern hunter, the modern hack must be well bred, and the council have done right to couple the two in the requirements of their stud-horse. If a country breeder wishes to ascertain for himself the description of the riding horse that is likely to make the most money. I would recommend him to stroll into Rotten-Row, between one and two, during the approaching season, where he will find here again how "blood will tell," and what Mr. Rice and Mr. Quartermaine have to go in search of.

Will the man who means to do better and give nag-breeding a fair trial be good enough to bear in mind that much of all I have said as to the sire applies equally to the dam? Let there be some shapo and make, with health and