

ters remarkably well. They are early maturers, produce a large amount of beef of an excellent quality, and are, in short, about as popular with North-Western cattlemen as any of the improved breeds.

## THE CANADIAN BREEDER AND AGRICULTURAL REVIEW.

Weekly Paper published in the Stock and Farming interests  
of Canada.

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Advertisements of an objectionable or questionable character will not be received for insertion in this paper.

### RECENT ENGLISH STUD BOOKS.

The sixth volume of the Shire Horse Stud Book has just been received, and as it is merely a sample of the so-called "Stud Books" with which Great Britain is now being flooded, perhaps a notice of this particular one may do for all. To say that such a publication as the one before us is absolutely useless does not fully express what we ought to say on this question. Such books as these are a positive damage to the horse-breeding interest rather than a benefit. Instead of promoting purity of breeding they actually place it at a discount, inasmuch as they place it on a level with the grossest impurity of blood. It seems that any colt can be registered in this stud book whose sire is registered. Now let us see how such a rule as this will work in preserving the characteristics of a certain breed. A farmer in Western Ontario has a herd of Walpole Island ponies. He imports a registered Shire stallion having all the prominent characteristics of the breed. This stallion covers a dozen Walpole Island ponies and gets a dozen colt foals. These scrubs, half Shire horse and half Indian pony, are eligible for registration though they are only half-bred at best. The evil does not end there. These half-breds are all "registered stallions," and they cover another batch of Indian pony mares and get colts that are one quarter Shire horse and three quarters Indian pony, and yet these colts would still be eligible for registration as Shire horses. The next cross in the same direction would produce a registered Shire horse that would be in reality seven-eighths pony. The next would be fifteen-sixteenths pony, and so on, till nothing but the name of the Shire horse would be left, and yet, on the principle

pursued in these late stud books, such an anomaly in breeding is perfectly possible.

"Fraud" is a hard word to use in such a connection as this, but is not a gigantic fraud being perpetrated upon the public by these books? In this country horsemen know more about the stud book for thoroughbreds than any other. When they are informed that a horse is registered in the Shire Horse Stud Book they suppose that to be a guarantee that the horse has no other known blood than that of the Shire horse for some few generations back, to say the least of it. Such being the case, the registered stallion might reasonably be expected to stamp his own characteristics more or less pronouncedly on all of his get. But what are the facts? The so-called Shire horse may stamp his own individuality upon his offspring or he may breed back to some weedy ancestor on his dam's side.

It is no wonder that the breeders of heavy horses in the Old Country pay but little attention to the breeding of a horse and a great deal of attention to his points and general make up. They know how utterly meaningless are the figures behind a horse's name showing his number in the stud book. It is thus that confiding buyers of draught horses are humbugged. It is not to be expected that every farmer in Ontario, Michigan, or Illinois will have a stud book at his elbow, and therefore he must content himself with the assurance that the horse is a pure-bred Shire horse because he is registered in the Shire Horse Stud Book. They do not know that they can breed this "pure Shire horse" to a Cayuse mare and then register the monstrosity they produce in the book that is ostensibly published with the object of preserving the purity of the Shire horse. English breeders should be ashamed to countenance such a travesty upon the registration system. Let the standards be so arranged that the tendency will be to breed up toward purity instead of downward and away from it. Let it be insisted upon at least that to be eligible for registration hereafter both sire and dam must be registered animals and the produce of sires and dams that are now registered. At the outset there was of course the difficulty of establishing a foundation, but now that the Stud Book has reached its sixth volume it is high time that the work of purification had commenced. It is a thousand pities that this work had not been better done at the outset and the characteristics of the breed better concentrated. With all the outside elements that have been introduced into the "Shire" family during the production of these first six volumes, it will take a long time to establish a breed of horses in which the distinctive characteristics will be sufficiently fixed to warrant their reproduction with any degree of certainty.

One has not far to go to stumble upon the reason why the usually respectable and very deliberate and methodical Englishman has resorted to the extraordinary, not to say disreputable, expedient of stamping as genuine that which he knows to be spurious. The

American buyers of heavy stallions must have pedigreed stock at any cost. A registered animal is what the American buyer wants, and so long as he has a name and a stud book number behind it he is quite satisfied on the score of breeding. It would surely be edifying to buyers of some of these "pure" registered horses to know what claim they have to registration. Usually the sire is registered, and occasionally the dam is by a registered horse, but it is very seldom that there is anything said about a second dam. Very often nothing is known about the first dam, and the claim of the colt to registration rests solely upon the fact that his sire was registered. Thus, for example, one very fine big horse that figures as a crack horse on this side of the Atlantic is registered in the stud book as a Shire horse, and as he is a good hard bay with black points it will be a wonder if his name should not yet find its way into the Cleveland Stud Book. It would doubtless take time to accomplish anything in stemming this tide of folly regarding the stud books, but it is very certain that sooner or later this system of registering all sorts of horses as belonging to a distinctive breed will work its own downfall. American and Canadian farmers will in time learn how little registration in an English Stud Book really means, and learn to buy as the English breeder now buys, solely upon the individual characteristics of the animal before him, quite indifferent as to whether he happens to be registered or not.

We would not be understood as being opposed to the practice of registering animals that are eligible, but this English system of registration has only to be pursued a few years more in order to breed out all the distinctive characteristics of the races whose purity it pretends to conserve. If the lines governing it cannot be drawn considerably tighter and its very comprehensive grasp materially narrowed, it would be much better to abandon what has been done and begin over again on a sound basis. In the meantime, however, buyers should always bear in mind that a pedigree extended only on a line of sires is comparatively valueless, and that as long as the present system of registration be pursued it will be much better to buy a horse for his strong individuality than on the fact of his having a stud book number attached to his name.

### AYRSHIRES AS DAIRY CATTLE.

Those best acquainted with the Ayrshires almost invariably speak highly of their merits as dairy cattle. Of course no one pretends that they are such butter cows as the Jerseys have proved themselves to be, but for the milk-selling dairyman they have not an equal unless it be the Holstein. They are handsome, hardy, and gentle, and besides all this they are comparatively inexpensive to the purchaser. Mr. E. Arthur Roberts writes a vigorous defence of the Ayrshires to the London *Live Stock Journal*. After referring to a prize cow of this breed who won against individuals of other famous breeds of milkers, he says:—