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[WHOLE No. 139



**A Group of Shetland Ponies,**

The property of Messrs. John Anderson & Sons, Hillswick, Shetland.

## Shetland Ponies.

To those unacquainted with the fact that the size of animals is adversely or otherwise affected by the conditions of climate, soil, and feed to which they are subjected, the statement that the ancestors of the diminutive Shetland pony and the massive Shire or Clydesdale horse were one and the same may sound ridiculous and unworthy of credence, but, nevertheless, the statement is perfectly true. They are certainly descended from common ancestors, but, in the case of the Shet-

land, exposure to cold and storm for centuries, and the absence of juicy herbage, have caused a great diminution of stature, together with a great increase of thickness of coat, to enable them to withstand the biting cold, while their more fortunate cousins of the heavy breeds enjoyed a milder climate, and a much more succulent pasture, both of which tend to encourage great growth.

It is said that the Shetland pony is the purest bred variety of horse in existence, and this is probably true, but, of late years, many animals are passed off as purebred Shetlands

that have a cross of foreign blood in them. As a rule, these crosses grow larger than the purebreds, although the purebreds grow to a larger size when fed on better food than is obtainable in their native home. Ten hands high or under is the average height, and the smaller the size the greater value is put on them. They are much used in Great Britain for carrying children. The head is very fine, and the neck small at the head, but thickens at the shoulders. The back is short, the ribs well sprung, and the quarters big, whilst the legs are flat, and the feet rather round. The

most prevalent colors are bay, brown, and dun, but other colors, such as black, piebald, or white, are sometimes found. During the years when horse importing into Canada was brisk not a few Shetlands were brought over by importers, and single specimens can now be found in many parts of the Dominion.

The half tone on our front page represents a group of Shetlands owned by Messrs. John Anderson & Sons, Hillswick, Shetland, the well known breeders and exporters of pure bred Shetland ponies and cattle. At their backs is one of the "dykes" so numerous in Scotland.