

The Horse, Forty Years Ago and Now.

By Whip.

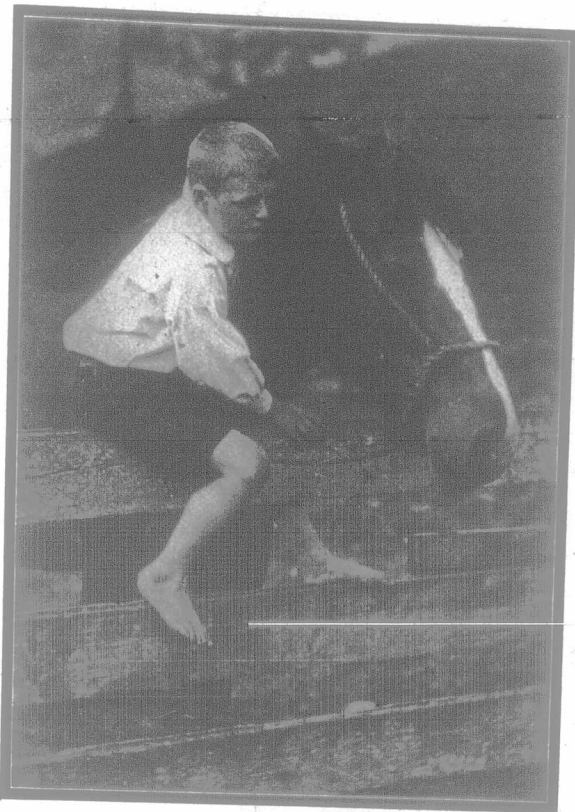
The young horseman may be interested in reading about the horse of "forty years ago." To him forty years seems a long, long time and what occurred then may, to him, appear almost prehistoric, but to the man who has passed the half century mark, forty years back does not appear so long ago, and he may have hopes of seeing another "forty years." Forty years ago pure-bred, or registered horses, with the exception of the Thoroughbred, were unknown, at least in this country, hence horses were spoken of as classes rather than breeds, and even the classes were much fewer in number than now. They were the Draft horse, the General-purpose horse, the Carriage horse, the Roadster and the Saddle horse. We then knew nothing about the Runabout, the Cob, the Combination horse, the High Stepper, the High Jumper, Light, Medium or Heavy-weight Hunter and other fancy classes, and in heavy horses the Agricultural class was unknown. The draft horse then, was, like the other classes, of mixed breeding. He was not of sufficient weight to be now classed as a good-sized agricultural horse. He was produced out of a mare of fair size by a sire, also of fair size but of no particular breeding. Any male foal that gave promise of becoming a fair size was usually kept for stud purposes, independent of breeding or characteristics other than size. It was not uncommon at that time for a man who had a team that he thought good enough for show purposes, to enter as draft, general-purpose and carriage, and then after gaining all the information possible as to what would compete in the various classes, exhibit his entry in the class where he thought he had the best chance of winning.

Even at that time there were a few imported draft stallions, called, as they are called now, Clydesdales and Shires, and some Suffolk horses. The first two named, while they had pedigrees, were not registered. The writer is not sure whether or not the Suffolks even so long ago were registered or not. The principal desirable point in the Clydesdale or Shire was weight. Quality then was practically an "unknown quantity." It never was discussed, and those who remember the individuals do not wonder at the fact, as there really was none to discuss. These two classes resembled each other then, probably to a greater degree than they do now. As at present they were of different colors, with large, coarse heads, heavy necks, upright shoulders, an abundance of coarse, wavy hair on very beefy legs, with short, upright pasterns, but usually good feet. It was not possible to distinguish the breeds, and this was a natural result, as there was a constant intermixture of the breeds. Both the Scotchman and the Englishman were ambitious to improve their horses, and the former imported good sires and mares from England to improve his stock, while the latter returned the compliment by importing good individuals from Scotland to improve his. During the first half of the last quarter of the last century each country established a stud book, and since then a mixing of blood rendered the progeny intelligible for registration, hence the practice practically ceased. The excellent, massive and beautiful animals, full of quality, substance, style and action that are seen by the present generation, not only in the show ring but on the streets of towns and cities, on the country roads and in the fields, either at work or on pasture are the result of careful selection and mating. Descendants of these horses, whether pure or cross-bred are now divided into two classes, viz., draft and agricultural, according to weight, and those that are not heavy enough for either class really have no class and are called chunks. The Suffolk horse even forty years ago, whether registered or not was evidently pure-bred as he had then practically the same distinctive characteristics as he has now, viz., chestnut in color, little or no white, and a very blocky body set upon short legs of good quality. The other draft breeds, so well known now, viz., the Percheron and Belgian drafts, were not known here.

The General-Purpose horse forty years ago was practically the same as he is now, a serviceable animal for general use, but of no particular

breeding. This is a class for which there never was, and no doubt never will be a stud book. No person can give an intelligent idea as to how to breed him. As a matter of fact the good general-purpose horse is generally an accident. The breeder, in trying to produce a special purpose horse of some of the light classes, gets one that is not good enough to make a high-class representative of his class, but has sufficient size and action for general purposes.

The Carriage horse of forty years ago was essentially a different animal from that of to-day. In most cases he was the descendant, more or less close, of the English Coach horse known as



Preparing to Mount.

the "Cleveland bay," which, like the Suffolk, had been bred on certain lines for generations until he became of a definite color, good size, stylish appearance and fair action. At that time height largely classified between the carriage horse and the roadster. The horse of any good color, that was about 16 hands high, with long neck, good tail, clean limbs and good feet, that carried his head and tail well, had good style and general attractive appearance and could trot at seven or eight miles an hour would win in good company. Excessive or flash action were not looked for, in fact was not thought of. Those of us who can remember so long ago can call to mind horses or pairs that used to attract general attention and admiration and win at our best shows, that, if taken into the show ring now in the heavy har-

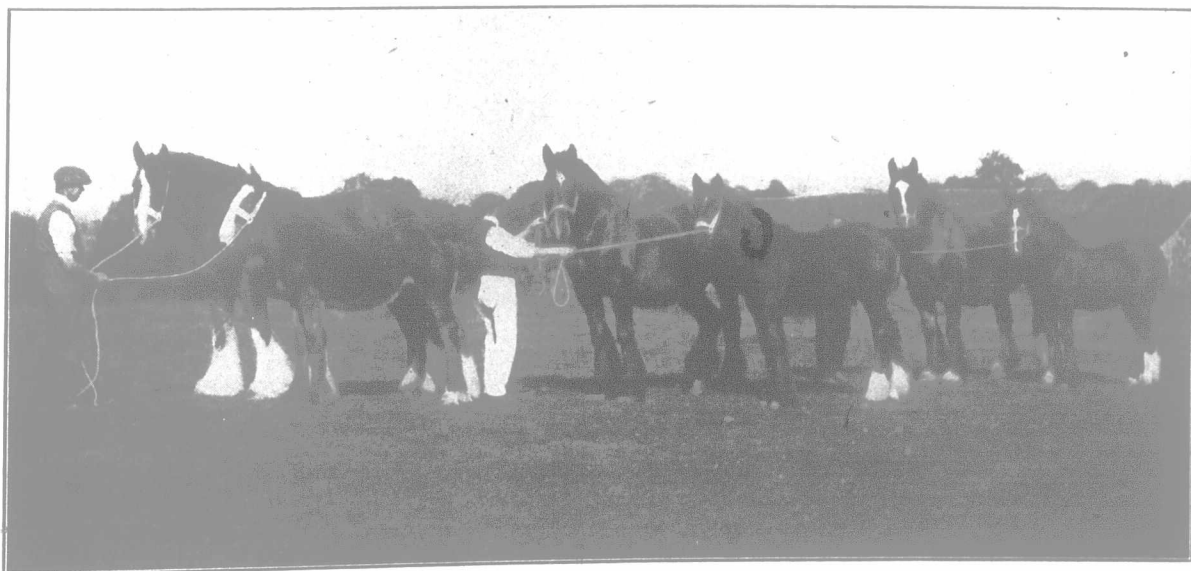
A roadster was supposed to be between 15½ and 16 hands, with the characteristics of the carriage horse more or less marked, but those with some speed were favored. Even at that time, while the "Standard-bred" was not known, the Americans had for some generations been endeavoring to breed so as to produce speed at the trotting or pacing gait, and some of the sires bred on these lines were brought to this country; it was not uncommon to see in the show ring an animal that had some speed. A horse that could show a three-minute gait was considered fast, and if he could go in 2.40 he was considered "a whirlwind." For the presence in our country now of a class of road horses with extreme speed we must thank our American cousins, as to them is due the credit of producing both sires and dams of that class called "Standard-breds."

The Saddle horse of forty years ago was to a great extent the same as he is to-day. We do not refer to the flash-acting saddler or park horse, such as often win in the show ring now, but to the utility saddler. He was then and now is, the descendant, more or less pure-bred, of the Thoroughbred. Just here we may remark upon the abuse or misuse of the word "Thoroughbred." We hear, and see in print, thoroughbred Carriage horses, thoroughbred Clydesdales, etc., thoroughbred cattle, thoroughbred sheep, swine, dogs, chickens, thoroughbred fruit, roots and even plants, etc. As a simple matter of fact (the definition of the word in dictionaries, etc., notwithstanding) there is only one animal or article in the world that is entitled to the appellation the pure-bred descendant of the English race horse. The Thoroughbred is a distinct breed, and the fact that a stud book has been in existence for so many generations makes him more "thorough" than any other breed, hence entitled to the distinction. This horse was registered at the period under discussion, and no well-marked change in general characteristics can be noticed. Those of us who can remember can call to mind individuals of this breed that we admired in our boyhood that would compare favorably with winners of to-day. Then, as now, the high-class saddler had Thoroughbred blood close up. His progeny then was more common on the ordinary farm than he is to-day. At that time roadsters were not so common, light buggies also were more rare, the roads were not as good, and much more travel was done on horseback. There were few farm stables without one or more saddles and riding bridles, and father, mother, sons and daughters, with few exceptions, could ride, and all the light horses were taught to go in saddle, whether or not they had saddle characteristics well marked. When we say that all "could ride" we do not mean that they simply could stay on the horse's back, humped up like a monkey and apparently afraid of falling off, but could ride in good form with a good seat and good hands. The exercise was pleasant and healthful, and certainly there is no place in which a man or woman appears to better advantage than well mounted, provided, of course, he or she can ride well enough to do credit to the mount.

The facts are different now. It is a rare exception to see saddle or bridle in the ordinary farm stable as it is rare to see the boy or girl who "can ride." This, we think, is unfortunate. It is caused by the multitude of light vehicles, motor cars, and other means of transportation that are used by both young and old. When the boy or girl does not learn to ride while young it is seldom that he or she acquires the habit later on, as it is an acquirement that requires some skill to make it enjoyable, and an adult or older person, knowing that he does not either look well or feel comfortable when learning to ride, will usually choose other means of transportation.

Space will not permit of any discussion of the modern breeds and classes of horses not known here forty years ago, viz., the Hackney, the Cob, the Runabout, the Combination horse, French Coach horse, the German Coach horse, the Hunters and Ponies.

In conclusion we may venture to prophesy, notwithstanding the present, somewhat dull horse market and the presence of electric and gasoline-driven machinery and vehicles that perform the functions formerly performed by horses, we do not think that the day for "the passing of the horse"



Shires in the Home Land.

ness class, would practically not be looked at by the judges. They would now do well in the "general-purpose class." The sires that at that time produced carriage horses were animals of the characteristics noted, but of no particular breeding. We may almost say that they were "accidents," and we cannot wonder at the fact that few of their offsprings possessed the characteristics of their sires. Hence, while most of them were useful they were not valuable as show horses.

The Roadster of those days was generally distinguished from the carriage horse by his height,