

do not let fastidiousness turn you from what you judge to be a remarkable and valuable sire. Of course, I am principally addressing the pedigree man; the ordinary breeder is free from the onus of considering the minute characteristics of a breed.

On What Lines will the Best Shorthorns of the Future be Bred?

BY S. F. LOCKRIDGE, GREENCASTLE, IND.

What line of procedure the future breeder of Shorthorns may adopt is, of course, very much a matter of speculation, but it is fair to suppose that, while he will readily accept new and approved ideas, he will not be indifferent to the observations and experiences of the best breeders of the past. It is questionable, indeed, if better Shorthorns ever existed than were bred during the first half of the last century. The records are somewhat meager concerning the operations of what may be termed the formative period of the breed as we know it today, yet there is sufficient evidence to show that the early breeders were not hampered by the great variety of fads and crazes that have come to vex the soul of the breeder of the present day. Starting as they did without records or any knowledge of the breeding of their cattle except that derived from private registers and traditional sources, line breeding was, of course, an unknown term for many years, although they did engage in the practice of interbreeding, in some instances from very close affinities. To-day the question of in-and-in breeding is a debatable one, and in all probability will continue to be so for many years to come. There is no question but that valuable results have been derived from that system of breeding, and it is equally apparent that injurious effects have in some cases followed a too close adherence to that practice. The early breeders, as I have said, in some instances bred together animals of the closest relationship. The case of Favorite (252) has often been referred to. It is said that he was bred to his daughters and granddaughters, and on to the fifth generation, and that, too, without any serious results so far as history or tradition give any account.

There are two ways of accounting for this. In the first place, the men of that day who advocated in-and-in breeding were of more than ordinary intelligence, and it is not presumable that they practiced it indiscriminately and in all cases, but that they used the utmost care in the selection of the animals they desired to submit to the experiment, mating only those that possessed the necessary requisites of constitution, vigor, and general conformation. In the second place, the Shorthorns of that time, we are told, were large and coarse, loosely made, inclined to be thin-fleshed, and often poor feeders. Now it is admitted, I believe, that in-and-in breeding has a tendency to reduce the size, to refine the form generally, and to increase the disposition toward early maturity. How long this practice can be followed without impairing the useful qualities in the animal is a question not easily answered.

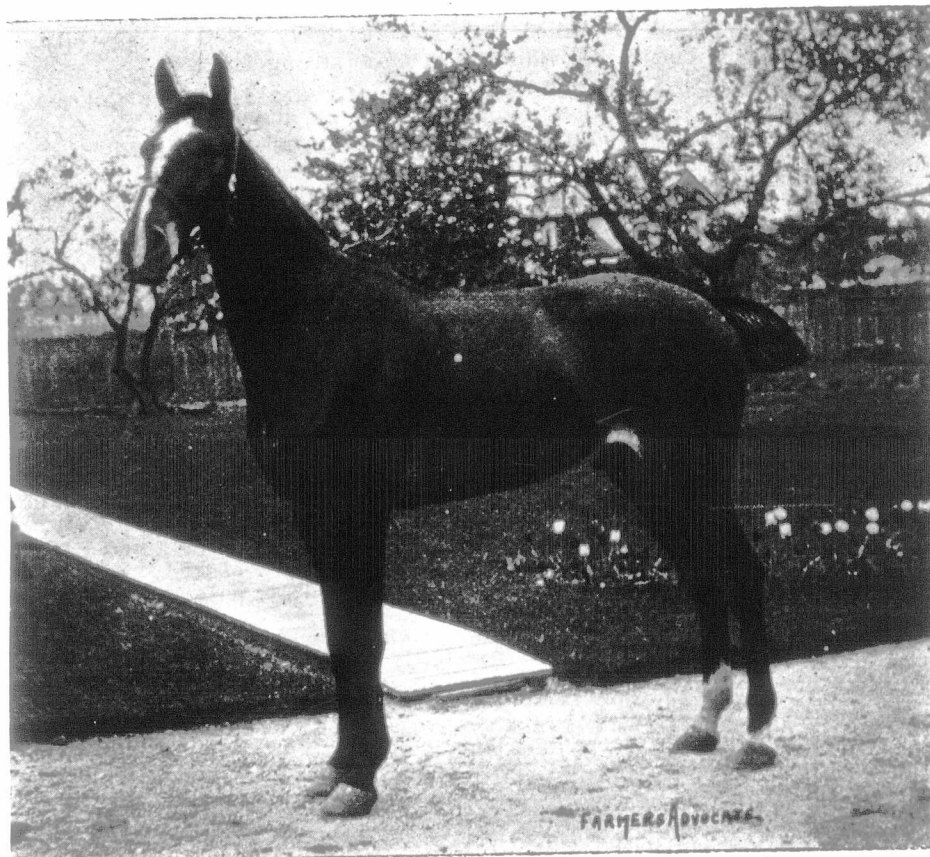
The Collings and other early breeders of Shorthorns bred from very close connections without apparent injury to their cattle, and Bakewell, with the Longhorns, probably to a greater extent than any other breeder of his day, or since. As intimated, however, the character of the cattle of that early period justified his practice to an extent that would not be permissible at this late day, when Shorthorns have reached the highest degree of refinement, it seems, compatible with a good constitution and general usefulness. In fact, I think most of you will agree with the opinion that in some cases the limit has been exceeded, and that there are Shorthorns to-day that show the effects of too close breeding in an excessive fineness of bone, lack of scale, and indication of delicacy throughout the whole animal. It is evident that animals of this character cannot be depended on to produce a healthy and robust progeny. If this is true, is it not time to call a halt, and as practical, common-sense men, having the best interests of the breed at heart, advise a return to safer methods and a more intelligent and liberal selection of the material for use in the herd? The most successful breeders of the past did not hesitate, when the occasion demanded, to introduce new blood into their herds. Thomas Bates believed he possessed the purest Shorthorns in existence in his Duchess tribe, and yet, after confining himself to the use of their blood through his sires for a number of generations, found the necessity of going outside of his herd for a fresh infusion through the bull, Belvedere.

The question we should ask ourselves to-day is, Are we exercising a proper degree of independence in our operations, or are we allowing the preference for this or that line of family to influence us against our better judgment and common sense? In selecting a sire, should we not choose him because he possesses in a superior degree the qualities that we desire to secure in the progeny, rather than be

influenced altogether by the fact that he is of a particular strain of blood that happens at the time to be of the prevailing fashion, although he may be deficient in individual qualities? In other words, shall we select a sire for no other reason than that his ancestors were famous in the hands of a man who had the genius to make and keep them so while he lived, when, possibly, their descendants in other hands have not maintained the family reputation? For that is the sum and substance of the whole matter. It is unfortunate, I think, that too many breeders continue to worship at the shrine of their early love long after the source of inspiration has lost its power.

It is not that we should refuse to use a sire that is line bred, or even in-and-in bred, if he possesses the qualities that every one is looking for in the head of his herd. On the contrary, such an animal would, in my estimation, be invaluable as a sire, because the fact that his blood is concentrated only the more certainly insures the perpetuation of those good qualities in his offspring. But, on the other hand, if possessed of inferior or indifferent qualities, he will for the same reason be equally as potent in the transmission of those bad qualities; and therein lies the danger and the necessity for the exercise of the greatest care and judgment in selection. There have been many intensely bred animals that were noted as producers of excellent stock, not, I take it, because of the consanguinity of the sires and dams in the make-up of their pedigrees, but because of the superior individual qualities of all, or nearly all, the animals composing the line ancestry.

The successful breeder of the future will, in my humble judgment, be a firm believer in the value of pedigree, but he will insist that it be accompanied by unquestionable proof that the characteristics of the ancestors were such as to insure the perpetu-



SADDLE HORSE, FALKIRK.
(See Gossip, page 378.)

ation of the good qualities in the offspring. He will not refuse to introduce into the herd sires bred from close affinities, provided they possess in an unqualified degree the qualities already referred to, but he will resolutely reject all that do not measure up to that standard. On the other hand, I believe that the breeder of the future will not be hampered by the fact that the material that he selects is not line bred, but that he will unhesitatingly make use of miscellaneous bred animals, always conditioned upon the fact, however, that the converging strains are from the herds of men known and acknowledged to have been distinguished and reputable as breeders in their several ways. And in so doing he will but follow the precedents left him by the greatest breeders of the past.

I have used the term "miscellaneous bred" because it is the common way of expressing the mating of animals of different families or strains of blood; but to my mind it is a misnomer, and in its general application has been given too broad an interpretation altogether, conveying the impression of the crossing of distinct breeds, rather than of animals having a common origin and carrying more or less percentage of the same blood, either in the direct or through collateral lines. All our families of Shorthorns were of miscellaneous bred origin, and after they had been subjected to a course of close breeding long enough to establish a type and become known as a distinct family were reinforced and renewed by the infusion of extraneous or new blood, as I have endeavored to show. Not one of the great families, by whomsoever bred, but was subjected to this treatment to a greater or less degree. The fact that the cross of new blood was made by the hand of the master breeder was all that was necessary to make it acceptable to the votaries of fashion. Yet when the supervising hand

and brain are gone, and some disciple of the departed great one, seeing the necessity for further reinforcement, goes for a change of blood, although the wisdom of the course is seen in better individuality, better vigor and constitution, he is met at once with the charge of treason, and the market value of the offspring is lowered two-thirds.

To my view the future is bright with promise for every breeder of Shorthorns who is at all worthy of his great vocation. Civilization is extending its domain to every nook and corner of the habitable globe, offering new outlets and making new markets for the distribution of our surplus products. Not only in our own yet unoccupied territory and the territories of the republics to the south, but in the islands of the seas just now throwing off the sway of barbarism, are vast fields awaiting the occupancy of the future breeder. And just beyond, on the other side of the Yellow Sea, lies the great empire of China, with its four million square miles of territory and its 400,000,000 people, once a sealed book to all except the followers of Confucius, but soon, if we can read the signs of the times correctly, to receive the impress of a newer and better civilization, with all that the term implies. And when that regenerating process begins, you may be sure the Shorthorn will be found, as always in every situation of a similar nature, foremost in the great work of improvement of his kind, proving himself in all respects worthy of his noble lineage and the best traditions.

Hog Raising for Market.

In traveling through the country we notice that nearly every farmer has a number of hogs, and just now small ones seem to be very plentiful. The high price is perhaps some encouragement, but this cannot long continue, as they are rapidly becoming more plentiful, and then, when the price is low one must be experienced to make them pay. The first essential in hog-raising is to have a good pen to keep them in. One of the best pens is made from cement concrete, as it is most durable, and is also warmer in winter and cooler in summer than any other. Hogs should not be allowed to sleep on a cement, however, but should have a place made of plank above the floor, and this should be kept well bedded. The hog itself is next most important, and in order to get the best price we must grow what the market demands. The Yorkshire is one of the best, as it produces those long sides and fine hams which meet with ready sale in British markets. Whatever the hogs are, they should be well bred, for, like other stock, the poor breed is the hardest to make money with. In many cases around here the grain which has been fed to a load of hogs would have brought more if it had been sold. This should not be, and people should give this branch more study in order to feed profitably and to the best advantage. The feeding plan is a very important feature, and should not be neglected. When the pigs are first weaned I feed them five times a day, and only on light food, such as milk, shorts and oat chop. Many young hogs are fed corn, which is too heating and fattening, and they soon become stunted, and then no one can make them pay. Many claim that corn is the greatest crop to raise for hogs. It is the best, as it does not take so much from the soil as other grains, but barley and oats are also necessary in hog-raising. When feeding corn it should be well ground and mixed thoroughly with roots or with other chop. I never feed any corn until the hogs are two months old, and then only a little at a time. Corn should never form the entire ration. Hogs should have a small yard to take exercise in, and they should have free access to this for at least one hour each day. Never feed them more than they will eat up clean, and always be regular in feeding them if you wish to obtain good results.

Norfolk Co., Ont.

J. R. B.

A Prolific Flock.

W. R. Barlee, Kelowna, B. C., writes under recent date: "Can any of your subscribers beat this: From twenty-six ewes I have had this spring fifty-three lambs, and only lost three, these being from three different sets of triplets?"

It Stands the Test.

P. P. FOWLER, Sheffield Co., Que.:—"During the past 28 years that I have been a subscriber to the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, I have learned much from its pages, and with confidence rely on what its pages contain. I admire the way you deal with any matter of a questionable character. Wishing you every success."