

now offered as a premium on a show ground. To the growing interests and success of such a system I have already spoken; but we have scarcely yet got so far as the show-ground. Before we venture into public, we must see if we cannot set to work, and breed something fit to place before the judges. And here, too, the hunt may help us. Let it be admitted that, in a free country like this, the licensing would hardly be practical, and that any man may still "travel" any brute he chooses. Surely the fitting way to meet him will be to start a better horse in opposition. Let the master and the managing committee of the county fox-hounds make it part of their business to see that the district is never without the command of a good, sound, thorough-bred stallion, "calculated to get hunters and hacks." Let such a horse, if necessary, be even the property of the hunt, to stand at kennel stables; and let him, moreover, serve farmers' mares at a certain moderate figure. Never, however, under any circumstances, let his favours be given gratis; for people are very apt to estimate that which they get for nothing at what they pay for it, and such a practice would only tend to make men more careless over a matter which they are only too indifferent about as it is. The principle I would here recommend has already been tried. It was only within the last year or two that I was staying with a friend on the borders of Shropshire, who was then looking out for another stud-horse for the country, as they had just lost the one they had been using for some seasons. Baron Rothschild, who hunts the vale of Aylesbury so handsomely, takes especial care that a thorough bred one is ever within the graziers' reach at Mentmore; and the Duke of Beaufort has now always a stallion, which serves mares within the boundaries of the Badminton, at a trifle over a merely nominal figure. I had the honour last autumn of awarding his Grace's premiums for the best yearlings by his Kingstown, as well as for the best mare with a foal at her foot by the same horse, when the following suggestive incident occurred. The prize for the yearling went to a really blood-like filly, with fine, free action to back her appearance. In the course of the morning I was accosted by her owner, a perfect stranger, who after a word for the young one, added, "But you would not give her mother a prize, sir." I did not know that I had ever had the opportunity of doing so, until my new acquaintance explained to me that she was in the brood-mare class, acknowledging at the same time, "I know why she did not get it; she is not quite well-bred enough, nor active enough to be either first or second of her order; and that wonderful nick with the thorough-bred horse had done it all—a fact which even a possibly partial owner saw as plainly as I did.

This brings me to another branch of my subject. Having secured the use of a good, promising horse, let us as early as possible go on to prove him. The four-year-old hunting class is

the favourite one at our agricultural meeting; but I am not quite sure but that the yearling or two-year-old classes are not more advantageous in their effects to the breeders. In the first place, if a man has a tolerably good-looking foal he may begin to keep him rather better than fear many farmers are inclined to, if he thinks exhibiting him as a yearling. Then, if he chooses, this said exhibition may be something of a market. It is not every man who has the time or ability to "make" young horses; and there is always some risk in breaking, and so forth. A fair offer should consequently seldom be refused, especially if it comes at an early period in the colt's career; but this is a part of the business, again, that agriculturists are scarcely up in. If they have a good-looking yearling one they are terribly apt to overstay their time with him, and to keep him about home until he gets thoroughly blown on. A dealer has the opportunity of shifting a star-maker that a farmer can possibly command; and even further this "making" of a hunter of a very necessity implies a deal of knocking about. A friend of my own once refused an offer of between two and three hundred guineas for a prize two-year-old from a neighboring master of hounds, or to keep him until, from a series of misadventures, his chestnut horse became almost unsaleable, never afterwards worth a fifth of what was paid for him. Others will become yet more enamoured with their own, and turn all their geese into ganders. Such a man will look at his colt, and he finds him to be too good either to ride or sell; and the coarse, fleshy, cocktail countenance of the stallion is the consequence. His owner's immediate influence in the neighbourhood is so great to get him some mares, and as he has never a day's work in his life he is possibly free from any very visible strain or blemish, a point the equally certain to be made the most of. It is almost needless to say that the presence of such a stallion does infinite injury in a district; and if the weedy thorough-bred should not be taken down without a license, it would be advisable to put down such an animal as this other one by an act of parliament. Some gentlemen without any direct call of the M. F. H. will offer to friends the example of a proper model of their own free will. An enthusiast like Mr. P. S. Snaith, with a horse so well selected as Theon—Captain Barlow, with Robinson rephrased by Middlesex—and, I must add very appropriately here, Captain Watson, with the Bishop of Romford's cob, followed by Hungerford—inculcate a most useful lesson in their several districts. Theon did wonders in this way at Boston; and, despite their vicinity to the great flat of the turf, the farmers of Suffolk, within a very few years back, were quite willing to try and breed a hunter "anyhow," and anything that came in their way. The improvement, thanks to the opportunity at Hasketon, can say, from personal observation, is remarkable; while the Devonians must know