

Buying Stock.

One of the first things which the young farmer has to consider in stock on his farm, is the proportion between his stock and the quantity of food that will be necessary to support them. It will be essential for him, of course, to decide whether he will direct his attention to breeding cattle, to dairy stock, or store animals. Should his decision be to rear stock for the market (and that will be easily determined by the character of the soil he holds, and his proximity to a good market), he will require to know how much stock his land will carry, because, should he overstock his farm, he will be compelled to dispose of his cattle before they are fit for the butcher, and have to face, consequently, certain pecuniary loss. On the other hand, should he fail to make his calculations with necessary exactness, and stock his farm with an inadequate number of cattle, he will incur a diminution of profit. Sir John Sinclair says, of buying cattle, "When the hide or skin feels soft and silky, it strongly indicates a tendency in the animal to take on meat; and it is evident that a fine and soft skin must be more elastic, and more easily stretched out to receive any extraordinary quantity of flesh, than a thick or tough one. At the same time thick hides are of great importance in various manufactures. Indeed, they are necessary in cold countries, where cattle are much exposed to the inclemency of the seasons; and in the best breeds of Highland cattle, the skin is thick in proportion to their size, without being so tough as to be prejudicial to their capacity for fattening." Mr. Bakewell, who did so much to improve the breed of Leicesters, invariably attended to the following points when purchasing stock:—Beauty of form, or a pleasing proportion between the various parts of the animal; utility of form, or a disposition to accumulate flesh and fat on the best and most useful parts; a fine quality of flesh; and a propensity to fatten at an early age, and in a short space of time. Youatt assures us that he paid much attention to what is generally termed *kindness* of the skin, or a mellowness and softness, and yet fineness, equally distant from the hard, dry, argument peculiar to some cattle, and the loose and flabby feeling of others. It may be added that it is estimated that the best grazing-land in Lincolnshire will, under favorable circumstances, support one ox and a sheep per acre throughout the summer, and that the former will gain 20 stones, or 280 lbs., and the latter 10 lbs., a quarter, or 40 lbs. We may add that if the autumn should be well advanced before the stock be purchased, it will be necessary to study the health of the animals. If they appear jaundiced and foot-sore, they should be avoided, because, although the disease may not be exactly present, they have evidently undergone a good deal of fatigue and exposure, both predisposing influences to pleuro-pneumonia and foot-and-mouth. If the stock are intended for fattening, choose those which are rather above the medium in quality, and therefore somewhat higher in price. Those who give a preference to either extreme are seldom well paid. If extremes are partly to guide choice, the best quality and consequently the highest priced will generally leave the largest return for the food consumed, providing that strict attention is bestowed on their comfort, both as to housing and food. As regards sheep, it should be borne in mind that the highest-bred animals, whether pure or crosses, are likeliest to give a good return for their keep. — *Eng. Live Stock Journal*.

Selecting Horses by Their Colour.

In the case of horses, there is no doubt that fashion with regard to colour has been greatly influenced by the special qualities usually found in combination with special tints or shades; though it by no means follows that a colt unerringly exhibits the same coloured hide as its immediate parents. A writer at the close of the last century stated very broadly that not only among the Turkish horses were many of pure white colour, but that in Persia there were studs of them, several thousands in number; while it is a well-known fact that until after the death of Prince Albert, the Queen's state carriage was drawn by eight cream-coloured horses, of whom a succession is still kept up at Hampton Court. Strange to say, however, while the cream-coloured horse is noted for powers of endurance, the grey is held to be deficient therein, and while black horses are rarely first rate in point of speed, the browns, the chestnuts, and the bays the last more especially are noted for their turf victories at Epsom and Doncaster.

An author of good credit, treating of the mixture of breeds in cattle, and especially in horses, advises, with a good deal of reason, to take care of the good qualities of the horse and of the mare. He says, that an ill bred horse may beget a colt that may have a fair colour and shape, appearing beautiful, he may be also strong and vigorous, but of a vicious disposition, which may render him incapable of ever being brought to rule, without half destroying him. As to the choice of a stallion, a person of great skill says, that the dapple-bay, the white-bay, and the dapple-

grey are to be preferred; but do not allow of a horse of a pure black, provided he has a white star, and a white foot; but in the judgment of others he should be all of one colour. We find, in many cases, that horses of a bright bay colour, with a black man and tail, are good as well as beautiful, and these have commonly the tips of their ears and the extreme parts of their legs black; it is also common for a dapple-grey to have a white mane and tail, with the former mentioned extremities white, such as the tips of the ears and the extreme parts of the legs; but for other coloured horses, except the dun, we seldom find their manes and tails of a colour different from that of the body; but in a dun horse, the long hair in the mane and tail is commonly black, and for the most part there is a black lift down the back, which is not a little remarkable, as it is not observed in any other creature except the ass or mule, that I know of.

In a horse, indeed, it is only a plain straight life, but in the ass there is also a cross stroke of black over the shoulders, so that if the skin were to be opened and spread, the black would exactly represent the figure of the cross, as it is represented in painting or carving for a crucifix. Some pretend to tell us, as to the cross upon an ass's skin, that asses were not thus marked before the Christian era, and that none are now without the sign; but upon what good authority they assert this, I know not. Some are of opinion that the black lift down the back is a token of strength, because the ass that is marked with it is accounted the strongest creature in the world among animals, according to the size. And for this reason asses are used for carrying heavy, and drawing heavy loads. If this lift then be a mark of strength in an ass, we may well suppose it is not less so in a horse, and likewise we may judge it is also a sign of strength in the mules, and is produced by couplings between the horse and the ass: we may well suppose that this lift, generally speaking, comes from the ass. — *Cor. English Farmer*.

Farcy Cattle.

Short-horn sales are becoming almost as 'sensational' as those of thoroughbred yearlings were a short time since, and it is no uncommon thing for an animal of the Kites or Booth blood, each of which strains has its respective admirers and even champions, to be sold for a price equal to that which a Derby winner would have realized a few years ago. These pedigrees refer only to the sales of 'pedigree Short-horns'—that is to say, of animals inscribed in the herd-book, which is for cattle what the stud-book is for the turf; and from them we learn that while 65 sales held in Great Britain yielded a total of £228,088. 16s. 6d., the 57 sales in America amounted to £204,750. 6s. 10d. Each of the American sales amounted, upon an average to £3593, as against £3509 for each of the English sales; but the advantage does not in reality remain with American breeders, for though 8 fewer sales were held there, the number of animals disposed of was within 10 of those sold at home. The 2589 Short-horns sold in America averaged £79 each, and the 2539 sold in Great Britain £87 each. The largest total realized at any one sale was £42,919 16s., for which 51 animals belonging to the late Torr, a Lincolnshire farmer, were disposed of in September. The highest price given at this sale was 2160 guineas, and the average of the whole lot was £510. 12s. Still more remarkable was a sale held in Scotland a week previously, when 39 animals, the property of Lord Panmure, fetched £26,223 15s. This gave an average of 672 8s. for each animal, one of which went for 4500 guineas. At a third sale 31 animals fetched more than £10,000, and there were several others at which the total was over £7,000, and the average over £200. The most successful sale held in America was that at which 82 Short-horns fetched £18,531 17s. 5d., with an average of £402 19s. 9d., for the whole number, one of them reaching £3225. At two other sales in America, totals of rather more than £10,000 were obtained for 35 and for 33 lots, the average in both cases being slightly over and under £300. These figures may be left to speak for themselves; but it is impossible to avoid the suspicion that purchasers will not, in the long run, get the best of the bargains. *Agricultural Gazette*.

Shoeing Horses.

An English jockey of experience, writing upon this subject to the *Live Stock Journal*, deprecates vehemently the practice of paring and burning followed by blacksmiths in fitting the shoe to the horse's foot. He says:—Most of the horse-shoers of the country prepare the foot, fit a shoe, and secure it to the hoof in the same manner that a wood butcher fits a shoe to an old wood or ox sled. The mechanism of a horse's hoof is one of the most wonderful and ingenious structures that can be found in all the works of the Creator. Beneath and in the rear of every foot there is a frog, which is a tough and elastic pad for preventing injury to the animal whenever he plants his foot on any hard substance. Large rolls or cylinders of india rubber are placed beneath railroad cars to prevent any injury to any part of the car or to the cargo with which it is loaded. The frog beneath the foot of a horse is designed to subserve a similar purpose. But the manner

in which most horses are shod, lifts them up, as it were, on short stilts so that the frog cannot perform its appropriate functions. If we look carefully at the young horse when he is trotting or running, it will be perceived that every foot is brought down to the ground in a manner that the frog receives the powerful blow. By this means all injury to the animal is avoided. Science teaches us to permit the frog to develop and expand downwards. But most blacksmiths seem to think that the all-wise Creator made a mistake when he formed the hoofs of horses. Hence they fall at the frog, with red-hot burning-irons, and with edge tools, and with any other appliance that will enable them to remove this extraneous excrescence. Illustrations! Why not shave all the rough, callous, adipose tissue beneath their own heels, and allow the bones to rest on a plate of iron inside of their own boots and shoes.

Fat Sheep for Heavy Fleeces.

A writer in the *Country Gentleman* says:—"There is much said about ewes being too fat to breed well. In my experience of twenty years I have never seen anything that led me to think so, providing the flesh was put on with good pasture during the summer, and a few roots with good hay in the winter. The fatter sheep become under such circumstances, the more valuable I consider them. There is no time in the year when it pays better to feed a small allowance of grain daily than in the fall after the feed gets frozen, and it is not necessary to bring the flock to the barn."

"It is an old saying that 'sheep well-Novembered are half wintered.' Keep the ewes fat, and the lambs will be fat and the fleeces heavy. I do not say that it is better to have the lambs come early or late, but I do say that it is better to have them fat; but whether early or late, they are saleable. All ewes that with good care will not raise a lamb and shear four lbs. of washed wool, should be sold. I have some in my flock that will shear nine lbs. and raise a pair of twins, and it costs no more to keep one than a sheep that shears but three pounds. I think that no one will hear the man who keeps his flock in this way, complaining because his sheep are all 'run out,' and do not pay him, and the like."

"Ticks must be kept out of the flock; they are the worst enemies of the sheep. If they are not killed they will destroy the sheep. For killing them I have tried nothing better than tobacco juice."

Overfeeding Stock.

It has been averred by some that breeding, or feeding cattle is a kind of necessary evil, involving loss; but we cannot help thinking that the experience of such, if truly reported, arose from overlooking the fact that enough, in the way of feeding, is better than a feast. There is no doubt considerable loss sustained sometimes through well-meant but short-sighted overkindness. Too much food is placed at one time before animals, with a view apparently to let them pick the choice morsels, the rest going to waste; and still another result of overfeeding is a clogging of the alimentary organs and general derangement of the intestines. At a late meeting of the Gloucestershire (Eng.) Farmers' club, Mr. H. Cox of Minchinhampton narrated some of his own experiences on this subject, from which we make an extract. He said:—"Several years ago I had eight large oxen tied up to fatten, under the care of an old man who boasted of having been head bailiff more years than I had been born. I put out for those animals about once a fortnight what I considered a liberal allowance to last that time—4 lb. cake and 2 lb. meal each per day; sweets and hay without limit. The cake and meal were always out before the time was more than half expired, but the cattle would not fatten, and as often as I complained he retorted that they would fatten fast enough if I did not keep the key of the granary; that the hay was not good enough, and that he never could get fattening hay off those hills, and that the sweets ought to be washed. It was no use to reason with him; so, without telling him my object, I got the four smallest out of my herd of yearlings; those were allowed to run on a very poor bank, with a small sled to run back to, and I gave strict orders that they should have nothing but the cleanings of the mangers of the fattening beasts, and that the roots and tops from the sweets should be taken out on the grass lanks for them to pick over. In a few weeks the yearlings began to get very fresh, and I had to complain that they were getting too fat, as they were intended to turn out on the common. The old man declared with an oath that I was always grumbling, do what he would, and that the yearlings had never had an ounce of anything more than I had ordered. Those beasts actually got fat much faster than the more pampered ones, and were sold to the butcher at about two years old at more than eight score per quarter, and were fed with what the others would have trampled under their feet. If, after those beasts had got this good condition, I had carried out my first intention and turned them into poor keep, that condition would have been wasted and the food lost, yet how many beasts do lose their condition twice or sometimes thrice during their first three years?"