

HORSE

Developing Action in Hackneys.

"I would be thankful for information regarding best method of handling, as to biting, manning, shoeing and developing action, of a two-year-old Hackney colt intended for stud purposes."

The young Hackneys on this place are taught first to walk and kept walking to a halter; no bit put into the mouth for first month. Then an English biting bit is put in use and they are checked up with side lines buckled to roller to keep head straight. They are now trotted alongside a fence, back and forth for about 200 yards, going slow at first, and gradually increasing the gait. We do not shoe for two or three weeks after beginning to handle the colts and then only with light shoes. The action must be carefully watched to keep it true and straight, weight on heel to make him fold his knees and on the toe to reach out. It is a good rule to remember to make haste slowly and not hurry too much, giving plenty of slow work to get the colt strong and quiet.—*Ex.*

Day to Return Mares.

We have been breeding horses for many years. The oestral period with mares recurs quite regularly every three weeks, the first one after foaling being manifest about the ninth day. This period with most mares is brief, seldom ever being manifest over three days and usually only one, the ninth. The subsequent periods are longer, varying with different mares from three to ten days.

Our instructions are always to return in just three weeks. I should never allow a horse to serve a mare at intervals of nine days. If she were in heat at that time it would only be evidence that she had not gone out since the previous service and would not be evidence that she had not conceived. If a mare should be bred toward the close of an oestral period and did not conceive, she would probably be in heat again in eighteen days, but if she had been bred toward the first of the period she would not be, so we think it safer to make the return the twenty-first day. We have been reasonably successful in breeding mares on the thirtieth day after foaling.

P. MILLS.

The Barren Mare Problem.

A problem which has long perplexed horse breeders, and is apparently no nearer of solution, is the relationship which should exist between the barren mare and the modern show-yard. It must be admitted that when our best mares run barren it is a severe and regrettable loss to the breeder. The chief principle involved in pedigree is the perpetuation of first-class strains, of outstanding individuals and the recognition of their worth on paper. To what extent barrenness is accidental, and in what manner designed, is sometimes rather difficult to determine. If a mare, for instance, has a very late foal the expediency of permitting her to run barren for a time can be excused, and if it is accidental, and perhaps due to the sire, there can be little cause for complaint; but there can be no doubt that a strong temptation exists to keep a mare barren for the express purpose of winning at summer shows. It is this last and premeditated form of barrenness against which breed societies should most firmly protest. The show-yard is entirely overshooting its object if it encourages barrenness purely and simply with the object of establishing a reputation.

The matter has not quite received that attention which it deserves, although the Shire Horse Society has attempted to deal with it, and has partially dealt with it. Yet stronger measures are required, and they ought to emanate, first from breed societies, and secondly from Agricultural Societies, which should support, in the interest of those whom they are designed to serve, the principle of fructivity rather than inutility. These remarks are partially prompted by the extraordinary barren mare class which appeared at the Nottingham Show in the Shire section. It is probably within the mark to say that such a class has not been gathered together at any other show in the country. How far the condition of those animals is merely the accident of Nature cannot be determined off-hand; but it cannot fail to be a subject of remark that such magnificent talent should be left even one year unfruitful. It is true that the Shire Horse Society is still considering the most effective means of dealing with the barren mare problem, but unless it lays down very definite conceptions of its intentions, like the average Act of Parliament, the proverbial coach and four may be

driven through them. The praise-worthy idea of making the championship only open to brood mares and fillies, which include—or are supposed to, which is quite another matter—mares which have not spent periods of unfruitfulness at stud, deserves to be carried out strictly. The question which the Society has got to solve, however, is whether the mare, by accident of service, is to be considered as qualified for breeding purposes. There have been cases in which the mares obviously not in foal, have secured high honors and won the glory, yet failed to qualify for the position. But the honor still remains, although they are deprived of the actual emolument attaching to the position.

There can be no doubt that the problem bristles with difficulties. It is very hard indeed that a mare which has bred regularly, and may happen to miss a season, in all probability due to the sire, should be disqualified for barrenness. Probably the difficulty can be got over to some extent by not recognising late services, so that there would be reasonable external evidence that the mare was in a brood condition. That rule might operate somewhat drastically, but, on the whole, it would operate beneficially. Meanwhile, the Society might very well exclude from competition for medals animals which are not in a fruitful condition.

A society's first duty is to keep the show-yard as far as possible in consonance with the aims of the breeder. Most societies are concerned with securing a first-rate show, but in the interests of breeders it is doubtful whether a barren mare should be eligible for championship. The other thought suggested is that barrenness may be encouraged on account of two reasons—first, because of the hard feeding and preparation involved in showing horses in the show-yard of to-day, which admittedly has a deleterious effect on their breeding capacity; and secondly, the over service of sires, having the multiplicity of fees in view rather than their capacity to leave foals.

This question, in the interests of the breeder, requires to be very deeply probed. Complaints are heard on all hands when barrenness is rife. Meanwhile it certainly falls upon the Shire Horse Society and other organizations with similar objects to give a lead in this matter in a much more decided fashion than they have done in the past.—*Farmer and Stockbreeder.*

The Hackney not Suited to Every Type of Mare.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

I notice that my friends the Hackney enthusiasts are in full blast again; in fact, have continued in full blast since our controversy, of a year ago. One result of their activity has been that I myself now know what are the feelings of an Irish Roman Catholic, who witnesses an Orange parade, and vice versa.

There have been letters lately in the *Breeders' Gazette* of a similar nature to the ones this winter in the *FARMER'S ADVOCATE*, in answer to a correspondent who asks advice as to how he should breed his bunch of light Western mares. By this time both the *Gazette* and the *FARMER'S ADVOCATE* man must be ready to cry, *Save me from my friends*. They have both been advised to use every kind of known and unknown stallion. Mr. Ross (the *Gazette* seeker-after-knowledge) was recently advised, in an extremely good article, to use a Hackney stallion, the writer describing a bunch of range mares on which the experiment had been tried, with most splendid results. The colts were, smooth, fast, large, and made extra good cow ponies; also looked as if they would make hunters. Here the writer remarks, "Woe betide me, I know, if Mr. Ross (the enquirer) happens to be an Irishman, for I know it is impossible to talk Hackneys into the men of Ireland in connection with hunters. Here I too think it is time to make the point that Ireland breeds the best hunters in the world. The fact has never been disputed so far as I know. Irishmen themselves are among the best if not the best cross country riders in the world and they one and all say that the Hackney as a hunter is no good."

Yet in spite of this fact, more Englishmen, Canadians and Americans will persist in telling us that Hackneys are good cross country horses.

I notice one *FARMER'S ADVOCATE* correspondent claims that the Hackney will soon breed the "cow hocks and ewe necks" off a bunch of range mares. Now where is this bunch of Western horses to be found in which ewe necks, cat hams, cow hocks, etc., abound to such an extent as to have become a characteristic of the bunch? Not any where where I have been and I have seen a lot of these horses. Perhaps Mr. Goddard or Mr. Moodie will acknowledge the claim. Of course if people only see these horses, when they have been travelled around the country, they then see their horses, but Clydes, Percherons, Hackneys and all other horses have ewe necks and more or less

cat hams, if in the same condition. People get into the habit of repeating platitudes. I suppose some fool, years ago, saw a bunch of cayuses and thought they were representative Western horses, and now when we have good horses and plenty of them, the same old yarn of goose rumps, cows hocks, etc., is handed round. I am very proud of the color of my own bunch. Nearly all my horses are and have been for a long time "whole" colors—bays, browns, and chestnuts; yet one time a man who was looking over them, kept on murmuring to himself, "There isn't a good bay or brown in the lot"—Force of habit I suppose.

To get the best results from say a bunch of twenty mares, I should say as many as three stallions should be used; some would suit one horse, some another. This I know is hard to do, and the man who is able to select the mares suitable to each stallion would be a sufficiently good horseman to need no advise from me or anyone else on the matter.

When you, good Hackney admirers moderate your enthusiasm, no stallion of any breed will produce a uniform bunch of colts from any bunch of Western mares, unless they have been selected specially to "nick" with the particular horse. Don't claim too much. Remember the fable of the boy and the nuts, who filled his hand so full that he could not get his hand out of the jar.

I acknowledge the Hackney to be the popular show horse, the high actor, par excellence, and like Captain La de Dau, "He is the pet of all the ladies." Is not that glory enough for any one breed? Don't spoil your whole card by setting up a claim to speed endurance, jumping powers, good looks, easy gait, and prepotency, in fact a combination of good points never yet attained by any one breed.

G. H. BRADSHAW.

[We agree that no horsemen would claim that the Hackney is a getter of hunters or jumpers, but he certainly will breed out the angularities of some of the other light breeds.—Ed.]

Some Pertinent Words on Fitting Horses for Work.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

I have read with pleasure the article on fitting horses, by Mr. Hallman, in your issue of 29th May. In fitting horses for spring work a man must decide between two things does he intend to work the horses himself or does he intend to sell them? If the horses are for sale, I should say Mr. Hallman's advice is good; in fact, I could add nothing useful; but if he intends to use the horses himself, I might suggest some small changes.

A couple of years ago I happened to call at a place when a large railway outfit were wintering their horses. I looked through the horses and had a talk with the man in charge. The horses were looking fairly well but not at all fat. I asked how they were fed and was told they got about a gallon of oats or chop of some kind twice a day; also hay when fed in the morning. They were turned out on the prairie to "paw" all day. Just about sundown they were taken in again and fed grain and hay, for the night. I thought the horses were hardly fat enough and said so; but the man looked quite surprised and said that if they ever noticed a horse putting on flesh they at once cut his feed down, the idea being to have the horses when spring work started, not fat, but just in fair condition. They would then have their feed increased on getting to work, gradually, until soon they were getting all they could eat. This is just the reverse of the course generally followed. Most farm horses get little or no grain all winter, when not working then in the last month are made as fat as possible. That this is not the good plan is self-evident. Fat does no good, and sometimes lots of harm. A fat horse, conditioned in this way, will surely fail more or less at spring work, whereas the horse who is not fat, but in fair order, will gain on work if the feed is increased.

The next point in importance is to get rid of his hair. About two weeks before you expect to start work, get the clippers to work. This beats any way Dame Nature knows of to get rid of the old winter coat. You may think the horse has his new coat but you will find a big difference between a partially new coat and a clipped one. I never knew a clipping horse who did not gain up on work. This spring I took in a couple of horses three days before I needed them to start discing. I clipped them at once, and now after discing and harrowing 200 acres they are in better shape than when they started.

About scalded shoulders I think the shoulders should be bathed, for some time before spring work, with some hardening preparation, such as a solution of tannic acid. If the shoulders are already sore I should wash them off when the horses come into the stable; then grease them in the morning, get the grease off and dust over with sulphur or something similar. Bleeding applied to the sore part before leaving the stable will cause the scall to have less friction on it. You could also cut a piece out of the scall, and cover the sore. If the sore is on the point of the shoulder, raise the draft of the traces.

In feeding, be careful not to feed loads of grain at first; feed a little at a time, and no trouble. If you put your horse to work, though