

oing the pedigrees of most of the horses whose descent was regarded as obscure when we last wrote on the subject.

Extensive breeders, with capital, energy, and plenty of backing, can always sell their animals; but it is the small farmers with one or two mares, generally animals of rare merit, that are to reap the greatest benefit. A recorded pedigree—a pedigree that stands on black and white, and owes nothing to the good word of anybody—will always bring its value; and, through the agency of a stud book, the purchasers of pure-bred Clydesdales will know where to find them, be they grazing among wide spreading oaks in a rich, verdant park, or dragging the plow on the sloping shores of Kintyre.

For the greater part of a century past, breeders of all classes of live-stock have run upon the idea of blood, and perhaps its true value was never better realized than at present. Over a hundred years ago Hubback (316), the famous bull that stamped every Short-horn he got with a marvellous likeness to himself, was born; and since then the old breed of Teeswater cattle have grown and been improved into the Shorthorns of the present day. The Brothers Colling began the great work, a work that was continued with untiring perseverance and matchless skill by Mr. Bates and Mr. Booth. The system carried out by all those gentlemen and their followers was, to continue on a basis of line breeding. They kept as far as possible to one strain of blood, or, at the most, they worked two or three strains through one another. So with Abram Renick, of Red Rose fame, and so with all breeders of famous Shorthorns. True, some men have sprung up to a showyard notoriety through mating good animals together, but their existence has been, as a rule, short lived. If it had been true that it was only an animal of, to outward appearance, rare merit, that was suitable as a bull in a Shorthorn herd, no matter what his ancestry was, a herd book would have been of little use. But the value of a Shorthorn, at least, lies not in his good looks so much as the pedigree that stands below his name in the herd book.

The same rule applies to sheep. Bakewell is said to have improved his Leicesters by a system of in-and-in breeding. On the Cotswold hills the breeders stick to the system, and, amid the grassy glens of the Cheviot range, for generations, the flocks owe that extraordinary family likeness they possess to the influence of careful line breeding. Nor need we go farther than Merton to see the powerful influence of blood upon sheep stock, where there exists a flock of Border Leicesters far in advance of any other, simply through the potent influence of family blood.

If, then, recorded pedigrees are of such enormous value—in fact, the very keystone of the arch, as far as other classes of stock are concerned—is it not fair to infer that one powerful incentive to the improvement of our agricultural horses will be a stud book for the Clydesdale, from which class many of the stallions used both at home and abroad are drawn? How often do we see a wretched mother produce a noble-looking son when matched with a good horse; but when this latter horse is used as a stock-getter, is not the result generally disappointment and blighted hopes? It is a fact seldom disputed that, as far as appearance is concerned, the finest and best-looking Shorthorns are often produced by linebred bulls from short-pedigreed cows; but few breeders of any repute would use those animals. They are beautiful to look upon, but they do not leave that preponderating influence upon their stock which is necessary for successful breeding. In the same manner we could name many Scotch horses, Clydesdales so-called, that sprang from bad blood on one side or other, which, as stock-getters, have proved of no use, and have done an immense amount of harm.

When, however, the stud book is published, breeders can find out the horses which possess that nobility of ancestry

which will be potent in their veins, and which, in nine cases out of ten, they will impress upon their progeny. Let the breeders of Scotland take a lesson from their brethren—pick out the good and leave behind the bad results. Pedigree, we must remember, is not only a record of mere names, it represents the work of years. It is the outcome of long labor and skilful management, and it is a powerful check upon deceit and knavery. Hitherto, a stranger going to buy Clydesdales in Scotland had no check on the pedigrees. He was entirely at the mercy of the dealer or seller as to lineage. The practice of calling everything a Clydesdale, whether it was bred from a Shire, or a Highland pony, if it is only good enough looking, has at length filled the minds of many buyers of this far-famed class of stock with distrust. Nothing will so soon elevate the ideas of purchasers, or bring back confidence so readily, as the history and descent of a horse placed upon paper. Breeders and sellers are then upon their oath; and we pity the person who tries to palm off a false pedigree!

Not many weeks ago, sitting in the company of a well-known breeder of these horses, our conversation turned upon a certain sale of this stock held in spring. Some of the mares went, in his idea, very cheap, and he concluded by saying, "If they could only have called them pure-bred Clydesdales, what a price they would have made!" And true it was, for every animal with the semblance of a pedigree, went very dear. Such and other facts are convincing that the value of blood has at least got fairly rooted in the minds of Scotch breeders of horses. It will only take some careful nursing to make this grain of seed spring into a mighty tree. But we must caution our readers that there is not a large supply of really good blood in the country. It is not the sire and dam of an animal being of rare excellence that can stamp it as of good and pure blood. You must go further back—back to the grandams and the great grandams, and see if they were well-bred and really meritorious animals. It is not necessary that they are line bred, or have that relationship in blood which some people like in sheep and cattle, but every dam, for generations before, should have been a fair, good animal, to entitle the produce of the present day to be called pure-bred, or, rather, well-bred. Such blood is very scarce, and the more reason it should be looked after. We will, from a well-known book, the following sentence as a guide for Scotch breeders who are only beginning the battle of blood and merit versus individual merit alone: "The immense value of absolutely pure blood is by no means factitious, as it is the only trustworthy means of getting a certain stamp of animal; but the very limited supply of this sort of blood will lead to dangerous results, unless great care is used."

What, then, is pure blood? that is the question; and a difficult question it is to answer, as far as the Clydesdale is concerned. From glimpses, however, at some of the pedigrees to be published in the first volume, we have reason to believe that there are horses that have been bred for generations in the west of Scotland, and have no crosses in their line. They are descended from horses that might be called the fathers of the Clydesdale. So far back, at least, do those pedigrees go, that we may safely consider the animals pure-bred Clydesdales. But we have little doubt that, sooner or later, for successful horse breeding, the system of in-and-in breeding which has elevated the character of the Shorthorns and most other classes of live stock, will come into practice. Till then many of the leaps will be in the dark.—*North British Agriculturist.*