THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE
AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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Impressions of a Visitor.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

During the winter it was my pleasure to spend a month among Ontario farmers. The editor of "The Farmer's Advocate" has asked me to state my impressions for the benefit of his readers. I cheerfully do so, because it is always a pleasure to praise, and most of my impressions were favorable.

The farmsteads generally are neater, and the barns larger and better than in my own country. Many of the barns, however, principally the older ones, are open to one criticism, that is, that they are closed to light. I saw a few men doing chores in day time with a lantern. Then, the air in some stables was very bad.

But that practically all animals are provided shelter in winter, and are kept in, is in commendable contrast to the practice of many farmers in the United States. Other contrasts in the barns are that a far larger proportion of Ontario barns have stone basements. Our farmers make a more general practice of painting barns and other outbuildings. Very few farmers of the United States grow beets or turnips, so have no use for barn cellars. Then, only a few farms got enough boulders from Canada to build barn basements, though Canadian boulders are not unknown in the States.

I got the impression that Ontario farmers are far more systematic and conservative than American. Many of our farmers—not our best ones, however—shift from one line to another frequently. They try to get into every high market, and they usually get there—as buyers.

A reasonable stability is commendable, but there is a stability that is unreasonable. Stability based upon custom solely is such. I did want to get into some of the cattle stables I saw and knock the mangers out, making way for modern ones that would permit the cattle far greater comfort and save a lot of manure for the farm that now leaves it when the cattle are marketed. It may put some one to doing that work for me if I suggest right here that the manger now in common use could be modernized by elevating it so that the cattle could put their heads under it when they lie down, hence sleeping forward away from their manure, instead of having to lie back in it.

I think the Ontario farmer has [illegible] I [illegible] far better than many of our [illegible] of not see evidences, as among our [illegible] ing without reckoning wisely for [illegible] stock I saw was generally of bett[illegible] ould say, of better average gra[illegible]

with us. I did not see so much evidence of mixing of breeds.

I could discover very little difference in prices of farm lands, products, stock or wages of farm labor. The greatest surprise to me was the small number of sheep kept on a farm. A man in Ohio who does not keep a sheep to the acre is hardly thought of as being in the sheep business. But Ontario farmers are far ahead of many of our Merino breeders in system of marketing lambs, in that many of our people have no system. There are thousands of three and four-year-old wethers in Ohio. Of course, wool is much more of an object with our breeders. It is a poor sheep or a poor market that will not make $2 per fleece.

Your farmers spend far more labor in caring for animals than is done with us, especially in pulping roots, cutting straw and wheeling out manure. Feeding corn and hay is a light chore, in comparison with the Ontario system of feeding and the use of silage, cottonseed meal and hay is also easy in comparison. Then, our best farmers handle manure but once, throwing it upon a spreader from where the animals drop it, and scattering it at once upon the fields. Our lighter snowfall makes this practical.

Some contrast in the breeds of animals was noticeable. With us, the Percheron horse is almost universal as the draft horse, and Poland-China, Chester White and Duroc hogs greatly predominate. The Tamworth is considered a curiosity. Not many people in Ohio ever saw a Leicester sheep. The Merino, in its various families, greatly outnumbers all others. There is less contrast in the matter of cattle, though the Shorthorn is no longer as prominent as in Ontario.

Corn is a far more prominent crop with us, and oats less so. Not one per cent. of our farmers grow roots, peas or rape.

I have written from the standpoint of an Ohio farmer, but statements hold for States east and west. In other latitudes, crops and conditions differ.

The most pleasing impression was of the friendly feeling toward us below the border. I was delighted, also, that you put living above making a living as the passion of life. I did not discover among you the mania for money that mars the life of so many among us, engenders graft in our public servants, and bitterness between laborer and employer.

You are to be congratulated that your country has not become the Mecca for all the races of the earth.

H. P. MILLER.
Ohio.

HORSES.

It is a fault of the small breeder, sometimes, that he expects a stallion to do everything, and that with a mare of very poor calibre. Exceptional foals are frequently looked for when they should least be expected.—[Farmer and Stockbreeder.

Fit the collar to the horse, and see that the line of draft runs straight from the point of attachment of the tug to the whiffletree. If a back-band harness is used, see that the back-band is not too long and the belly-band too short. Such arrangement draws down on the collar. Collars are not intended to be worn over pads. A pad is serviceable where a horse is run down in flesh, and doesn't fill the collar as he should, but, as a rule, they are the cause of more harm than good. Especially is this the case where the driver is careless and doesn't inspect the fitting occasionally and adjust the pad.

A collar that fits properly will rarely gall the shoulder, providing the driver sees that the face of the shoulder is not allowed to "scald." Scalding is due to the perspiration being worked up beneath the collar, and is more likely to occur the first few days in spring than any other time. Some precautions should be taken until the horse gets hardened to the work. Raise the collar at the end of each round, with the horse standing so the breeze can blow on each shoulder. Rub the hair gently, and let the skin cool off. A minute or two will serve for the whole outfit, and days may be saved later in the season. Throw a couple of handfuls of salt in a pail of water, and wash the shoulders carefully at night. It is easier to prevent shoulder troubles than it is to cure them.

Age to Castrate Colts.

From the middle of May to the middle of June [illegible] is generally considered the most favorable time of the year to castrate colts, the weather at this season, as a rule, being [illegible]. There is considerable difference of o[pinion] as to the age at which, for best results, the [operation] should be performed, whether as yea[rlings] or two-year-olds. The consensus of opinion [seems] to be that there is less danger of unfavorable [results] in having the operation performed when [colts] are yearling, though some contend that, [if] [illegible] it is [illegible] two-year-old, the colt develops a bolder front and stronger crest, thus improving his appearance. One of the objections to delaying castration until the colt is two years old is that he is likely to tease the mares if turned out to pasture with them. To avoid this, the unsexing should be done before going to pasture. If properly performed, there is but little danger of untoward effects, but it is safest to employ an experienced veterinarian. The colt should have only moderate exercise for a few days after, and should not be exposed to cold rains.

Origin of the Horse.

The most striking fact about horses living under domestication is their great variability. In all breeds, ancient and modern, one notices differences in form, speed and temperament. It is now realized that all animals are constantly changing, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another, and that amongst the varieties from time to time produced, the environment selects those best fitted for the conditions which at the time happen to prevail. The only true wild horse now living (Equus prejvalskii of the great Gobi Desert) is represented by three more or less distinct races, but such differences as exist among the members of this species are probably due to differences in their respective habitats. In the case of domestic horses, marked differences occur amongst members of the same strain, even when bred under the same conditions.

Until the end of the nineteenth century it was almost universally held that all the different kinds of horses had descended from a single variety or species domesticated in prehistoric times in central Asia. Now, however, it is regarded by many as extremely probable that horses, like dogs, include amongst their ancestors several quite distinct wild species, each of which for untold ages prior to domestication, was developing on different and independent lines. If the common ancestor of all the domestic horses was, as Darwin and others believed, "dun colored, and more or less striped," crossing of members of different breeds ought sooner or later to result in dun-colored, striped offspring, on the principle of outcrossing observed in establishing breeds of pigeons and poultry. This, however, never seems to happen, unless one of the parents or one of the grandparents is dun-colored and striped. A very common result of crossing horses is the production of chestnut offspring. As the ground color of hybrids between horses and zebras is very frequently chestnut, the fact that cross-bred horses are very often chestnut, taken along with the fact that striped duns are only obtained where one of the parents is dun-colored and striped, may support the view that the remote ancestor of the Equidæ was a chestnut or a foxy-red color, but it sheds light on the origin of the domestic breeds. The writer of "Horses of the Empire," after prolonged inquiry, has arrived at the conclusion that domestic horses have mainly sprung from three wild species. Of these three species, two no longer exist in a wild state, but the third persists, apparently unaltered, in the wild horse of the Great Gobi Desert. The three types of horses which have taken part in forming domestic breeds may be known as the Forest, Steppe and Plateau varieties.

The Forest variety is best represented by more or less striped, dun-colored, broad-headed, elk-nosed horses, with the face nearly in line with the cranium, the ears broad, and the eyes prominent, long body, strong limbs, thick joints, and broad hoofs.

The Steppe variety, which still exists in a wild state in Mongolia, differs from the Forest variety in being decidedly less striped, in having long ears, an erect mane, and a mule-like tail, the limbs slender and the hoofs longer and narrower than the Forest type.

The Plateau variety includes slender-limbed horses, characterized by a narrow head, small ears, large eyes, a fine muzzle, a flat nose, a long neck and small hoofs.

Assuming that domestic horses have in great measure sprung from these three varieties, it is interesting to ascertain how these varieties were produced, and what share each has had in forming modern domestic breeds. By studying fossil forms, horse like in build, Huxley, in 1870, arrived at the conclusion that modern horses had descended from Hipparion, a three-toed horse, the fossil remains of which occur in immense numbers in Pliocene deposits near Athens and in India. But six years later, in an address delivered in New York, Huxley indicated that he had come to the conclusion that, "We must look to America, rather than Europe, for the original seat of the equine series."

The first step towards the making of a horse was taken two or three million years ago, when out of a primeval mammal with five toes on each foot there was evolved a small creature more like a dog than a horse, but with its toes provided with hoofs, instead of claws. This happened in the Eocene period, at the beginning of the Tertiary epoch. This little primeval Eocene horse, [illegible] twelve inches high, had a wide dis[tribution], [illegible] remains having been found in Eng-