

The Stud Farm of the World

An Outline of Livestock Interests in Britain at the present time

By Alex. Mowat of The Scottish Farmer



William Dunlop, Dunure Mains, Ayr. A noted Clydesdale breeder.

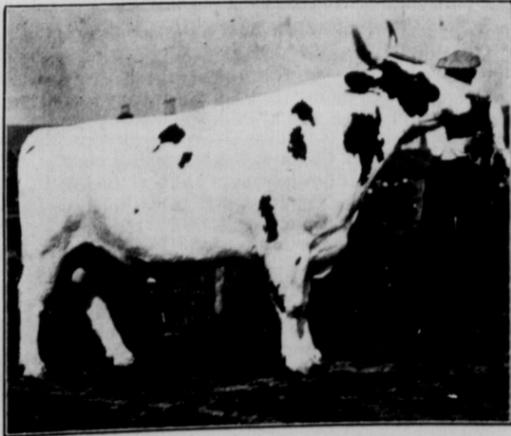
There is but one opinion in Great Britain regarding the future of the livestock trade of the country. At the present moment every branch of that industry is, to use a simile, up to concert pitch. In years past the breeders of cattle, horses and sheep have been following scientific lines, and the assistance tendered by the government since the establishment of the Development Commission has given an impetus to the raising of pedigree animals of the highest class. In England as well as in Scotland what was known as the poaching stallion—the horse which had failed to secure a premium on account of his questionable character—is now practically unknown. Societies have been established

in every part of the country for the engagement of pedigree sires, and these, to secure the grant from the Development Commissioners, must be on the registers of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in England and the Board of Agriculture for Scotland, which means that they have undergone a searching veterinary examination. In like manner the small farmers are assisted in other branches of livestock breeding. Even the pig is subsidized when a sufficient number of people are desirous of using a first-class boar. It will thus be seen that the livestock interests of the United Kingdom are surely and firmly established, and that it is within the reach of all classes to participate in the activities associated with the export business.

The first shock of the European war was disconcerting, and prices for pedigree stock receded a bit, but when once the country regained completely its equilibrium not only did the former conditions prevail, but values hardened and are now in excess of those of the past few years. Just as the people of the Empire in general have, with a grim determination, made up their minds to smash the military tyrants of Europe, stockmen have resolved that when the conflict is over they will be prepared to assume their old role of the managers of "the stud farm of the world."

Horse Trade Strong

To one who has been in touch with the various centres in England where horses of all grades are put up to auction, it is easy to discern the stiffening which the trade has undergone during recent months. The war has, of course, created a shortage of work animals, and noblemen and others who were in the habit of following hounds have given freely of their studs to fittingly mount British officers. The former class of animal went rapidly up in price, but now that the drafters and vanners taken away have to a considerable extent been replaced by imports from abroad—from South America and Canada in particular—the general run of prices is not quite so high as it was. On the other hand

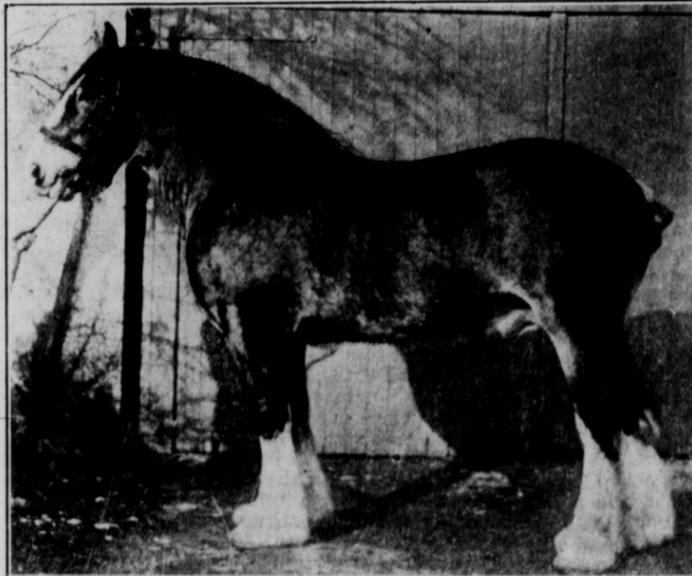


"Sir Hugh," Unbeaten champion Ayrshire bull. Owned by James Howie, Hillhouse, Kilmarnock, Scotland

seasoned geldings of approved type and showing some breeding are still bought at extravagant figures, some of them touching the \$785 mark. Hunters, too, when capable of carrying a fair weight and having quality and speed, are in request up to figures approaching \$1,575. Not, however, until the war is over, and then to a more limited degree than formerly, will the demand be renewed for this class of stock. But it is the pedigree animal which counts in the export trade. The noblemen and gentlemen of England have given a loyal support to the Shire, and even in these days of stress and storm they have not deserted him, as recent events have shown. A notable example of this may be found in the recent dispersion of the stud at Tring Park, Herts, belonging to the representatives of the late Lord Rothschild, when 47 head of all ages, but mostly composed of stallions of the richest blood, made the magnificent average of \$2,823 each, with a highest price of \$13,121. This is a record average, but not a highest price. The Shire does not count for much in Canada. His best market is in his own country, and this is likely to be the case for a long time.

The Clyde Supreme

In Scotland the Clydesdale has attained to a pinnacle of fame from which it will not be easy, even for the aristocratic Englishman, to remove him. At one time the breeders north of the Tweed were so much intent upon following up the quality fad that there was some danger of the draught horses of the northern nationality dropping in favor with customers from abroad. Happily they remedied the evil in time. Now they have added on weight to quality, and the combination is unequalled in any draft



Clydesdale stallion "Craigie Sensation," holder of the Glasgow senior premium in 1915

breed in the world. For drawing power and activity the Clydesdale stands supreme. It is the firm belief of those most competent to judge that the Clydesdale will always command a good price. And why? Because he is built upon the proper lines, and can move along at a good pace with a heavy load. These specially distinguishing characteristics are gaining him favor in many parts of the world. Up to the outbreak of the war he was popular in every one of the "Britains beyond the Seas," and other countries were beginning to make inquiries for breeding stock. South America was awakening to the fact that the Clydesdale had at last approached the ideal of the stockmen of that country, and he was ousting the Shire in certain instances. There they like a low set horse with a wide frame, and this they found they could get in combination with clean, flat bones, fine silky hair and wide open feet. South Africa, too, was taking a few, and the interest there has grown to such an extent that registration is being attended to with a marked degree of regularity.

Exports to the States

Some twenty-odd years ago the United States of America imported a good many Clydesdales, but the stock sent abroad at that time was of such a character that the farmers there became disgusted, and a golden opportunity of securing a profitable market was let slip by the action of the unprincipled people at home who thought they could fill their pockets with American dollars by exporting horses with nothing to recommend them but pedigrees. Fortun-

ately the more recent exportations to the great republic have been of a high class, and I have no doubt that in the not distant future we will see a decided revival of the export trade to that part of the world. Canada knows the Clydesdale, and when Canadian farmers are prepared to buy more horses



"Cairnoosh Conqueror," W. M. Cazalet's Shorthorn steer, first at Birmingham and Norwich

they will know where to find them. During the past two years the trade with the Dominion has not been upon extensive lines, but there may have been reasons for this which are not to be regarded as showing any falling off in the interest of the Canadian people in the Scottish draft horse.

Perhaps the tightness of the money market may be assigned as the leading one. A few have been sold for exportation to Canada this year, and at the time of writing about a score more are being got ready for shipment. Quite a number of Clydesdales have been bought by Russian agents in recent years for the grading up of the native stock, and a considerable order was on hand for stallions and mares when hostilities were commenced. Russia is indeed likely to become a pretty extensive customer when once again they and we have settled down to our peaceable avocations. France and Belgium have to a very great extent been denuded of their breeding stock, and the gallantry of the Clydesdale behind the firing lines, in drawing heavy guns and in shifting weighty wagons, has elicited the admiration of all. It is firmly believed in Scotland—and I think there is good ground for holding the opinion—that many horses and mares will be purchased in this country for breeding purposes in the territories of the Allies when the war is over. These are some of the grounds for entertaining high hopes for the future of the Clydesdale business.

High Prices Paid

Never in the history of the breed has more attention been paid to the rearing of first class stock than at the present moment, and the prices which are current, even now when war is raging and money is dear, are the biggest ever paid for Clydesdales of both sexes. The Clydesdale holds the record for a highest price for a draft animal, namely \$47,500, paid at auction for the horse "Baron of Buchlyvie" (11263), and quite recently a second highest price of \$26,250 was given for a nine-year-old son of this horse, named "Bonnie Buchlyvie" (14032). As in the case of the Shires, I will quote the figures at a recent dispersion sale of Clydesdales, that of the breeding stock belonging to the representatives of the late Robert Brydon, of Seaham Harbor, on the English side of the border. One hundred animals of all ages made the splendid average of \$1,059.50. Five yearling colts averaged \$772; three two-year-old colts, \$457 each; twelve stallions, \$3,771.50; one gelding, \$525; thirty-four mares, \$784; seven three-year-old mares, \$825; twenty-two Clydesdale foals, \$329.50; seven two-year-old fillies, \$1,061.50; and nine yearling fillies, \$499. These averages are proof positive of the stable character of the Clydesdale trade. At a recent three-day sale at Lanark, when 1,031 Clydesdales of all ages drawn from every part of the country, and consisting exclusively of surplus stock, which, in the majority of cases, is in reality the less valuable of the animals on hand, the average was the quite respectable one of \$260 each. In general the terms for premium horses are the highest ever paid and some of the animals kept at stud are at quite extravagant rates. For instance during the past season

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