

HORSES AND CATTLE.

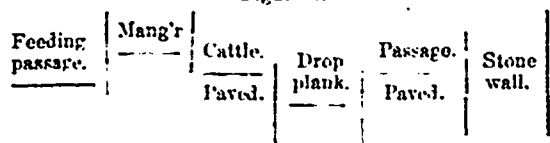
FOR THE RURAL CANADIAN:

A CHAPTER ON STABLE FLOORING.

When the early settlers closed in a part of the shed under the straw stack with a few rough boards in order to make a stable in which to fatten a few steers or dry cows, they were not very particular as to what the floor was like, cedar blocking was never thought of. Generally the ground behind the cattle was dug out about six inches deeper than that where the cattle stood, a flat pole was staked down against the face of the drop to keep the earth from being tramped down level and a few boards were thrown down to make the work of cleaning out the stable more easy, and when neatly done this made a very tolerable floor. After a space, as times got better, the farmer got up a neat frame stable to accommodate both horses and cattle, this building had a good plank floor, which, for substantiality and neatness, was far ahead of its predecessor under the straw stack. But the most popular and certainly the most comfortable horse and cow stable of the present day is that under the barn with a good stone wall on at least three sides. The floors of these stables are generally of two kinds, viz., stone paving, and cedar block paving, and a few remarks on each of these methods may not be out of place at this season of the year, when a great many farmers are making preparations to build during the coming summer.

In order to make a good job of stone paving you must have suitable stones, these should be egg shaped, not more than four or five inches long, set with the large end down, a good many use larger stones than this, but they never make a neat floor. The Scotch stone-masons are generally all good paviors. For cow stables it is better to form a drop behind the cattle, with oak plank fourteen inches wide and two inches thick, as shown at figure one.

Figure 1.



The edges of the drop may be formed of good flag stones, which the mason will dress to suit. The stones should be large enough so that there could be at least an inch more of the stone going perpendicular into the ground under the plank than is intended to stand above it.

In cedar block paving the cedar is sawn off evenly, squarely and equally four and one half inches long and are laid on their ends in sand, to a straight-edge, the same as stone paving. The quantity of sand required will vary according to the quality of the stones or blocking and according to how equal the ground has been levelled off; but a load to every 200 square feet of paving might be a fair average to compute by.

It has been urged as an objection against the stone paving that it is bad for dulling the points of dung forks and for dulling sharp shod horses in winter, but I have now used all the four kinds of flooring mentioned above and I decidedly prefer the stone paving as the most durable, the cheapest, the safest, and the healthiest for stock. In most parts of the country cedar is coming to be pretty expensive, and although it may last a long time it certainly cannot last as long as a well laid stone pavement, and in a short time the cedar gets saturated with the urine of the horses and cattle, and continually emits a strong ammoniaical vapour, this, especially in hot weather, will be anything but conducive to the health of the stock. I will admit that dung forks will get prematurely blunt by being used on stone floors,

but by keeping sharp shod horses well littered with straw I never had any difficulty on that score.

SANDIE TAMSON.

Thamesford, December, 1884.

BREEDING AND CLASSIFICATION OF
CLYDESDALES.

My attention has, in various ways, been recently drawn to the above subject. I have nothing whatever to do with Clydesdales pecuniarily, but I must confess I am a great admirer of them; nor do I expect that my ideas will find favour in every quarter, but I claim, as I give to others, the right of entertaining my own opinion.

So far as I can gather, one of the great objects of breeders in the past has been to obtain horses with plenty of hair on their legs—"well feathered," in other terms; and I would ask at once, of what benefit is this superabundant growth of hair on the lower part of the extremities? If horses were like Cochon-China fowls or pouter pigeons, required for no more important purpose than to strut about in a dignified manner and to please the eye of their owners, I could understand the anxiety of some breeders to increase—even by questionable artificial means—the quantity of this hirsute appendage; but seeing that horses are intended to subserve a useful purpose, I fail to see wherein they are advantaged by the possession of a plentiful supply thereof on the posterior aspect of their limbs. Indeed, considering the great disadvantages it entails upon animals in hard work and in dirty weather, I marvel that men can be found to advocate its production. That a large quantity of hair on the legs improves the appearance of an animal I have yet to learn; and if this were the case, how is it that the absence thereof in the legs of light horses is accepted as a mark of beauty and a sign of good breeding.

Busby hair is also a splendid harbourer of dirt, and an effectual screener of laziness; moreover, being very retentive of moisture, it predisposes to sloughs and hacks of the pasterns and coronets and leads to excessive irritation and itching.

Another great point aimed at by some breeders, is the production of plenty of bone. This in itself is laudable enough, but I would suggest that if a little more attention was given to quality of bone, a greater and more valuable desideratum would be obtained than can ever be got by mere quantity. Quality of texture, not excess of texture, is required, and I would prefer the Cleveland Bay, with his flat shanks and cannons, before the round-boned, heavy cart horse we so frequently meet with, for fatiguing and straining work. A broad, flat cannon bone is usually associated with well developed tendons, the whole measuring between five and six inches in width. In conjunction with such conditions as these, we want what are frequently overlooked, big joints and well developed muscles: greater care in the production of big arms and big thighs.

In regard to the shape of the pasterns, opinions seem to differ very widely, some minds favoring a comparatively straight and consequently short pastern; others a very oblique and consequently a long pastern. In both extremes there is danger, and in every case a happy medium should be aimed at. If the pastern is straight and short, it favours concussion and the production of ring-bone and side-bone, and predisposes to strain of the check ligaments at the back of and below the hocks and knees, while opposite extremes most certainly do not, as a rule, add to the strength and traction power of the limbs. Personally, however, I prefer the latter extreme.

In the estimation of some judges, I am afraid, gross condition counts for more than do good

points; and I suspect that many a horse which appears in our show yards as a splendid creature, would be only of use for the purpose of a clothes horse, if reduced in condition to the level of a working animal; and this abuse and absurdity will continue to the disadvantage of the horse, until those interested begin to recognize that fat is not power, and that it hides a multitude of sins of conformation.

Excess of fat and a forced condition predispose to disease, especially of the liver, and to give an animal a poor chance of battling against adversity when it comes upon him, and in the case of mares (as of cows or ewes) is very apt to interfere with impregnation and the nutrition of the fetus. Not only does high condition swamp sins of conformation and tend to produce sterility, but it more seriously and very largely distracts the attention of judges from the one point of importance in connection with breeding animals, viz.: soundness.

If there is one thing which has caused me more amazement than another, in connection with the awarding of prizes to Clydesdales, it is the utter neglect of all ordinary precautions to ensure that the prize is given to animals of reasonably sound constitution.

I must most emphatically declare that, in my opinion, no animal, be he Clydesdale or any other breed, should be awarded a prize as a stock producer, if he has the slightest trace of constitutional disease about him, and that every batch of judges should not only be accompanied in the ring by an attending member, but by a skilled veterinarian or two, more preferably in large shows.

I know that an objection is sometimes entertained against the breeding of big horses from their, theoretically, greater liability to become roasters, and to develop side bones, etc., but this objection would not in any sense be valid, if strict attention were paid to soundness and conformation. In speaking of big horses I do not necessarily refer to mere height, but rather to a large, well-developed, bony frame work, with plenty of room for the respiratory, circulatory, and digestive organs; plenty of muscle, good shoulders, haunches, arms, and thighs; big joints, and short shanks and cannon, and good, open feet. The animal that is required for heavy town work can be described in the single sentence—a mountain in a mole heap. We don't want long-legged-narrow-chested, flat-barrelled animals with long thin necks and heads set on an acute angle. They are neither useful nor ornamental, but are deficient in constitutional stamina, and as a rule are the first to fall victims to enzootic and epizootic affections. For town work big horses are required, not only on account of the great weights that have to be drawn, but also on the score of economy.—Prof. Waller, V. S., in *North British Agriculturist*.

TEACHING A CALF TO DRINK.

The following from the *Irish Farmers' Gazette* will touch a responsive chord in the breasts of many readers on this side of the Atlantic who have gone through similar experiences.

Those who have had the mournful experience know that there is nothing more trying to the temper than the operation of teaching a young calf to drink. The process is familiar to every man who has brought up a young calf from infancy. You seize a pail of warm milk, go into the stable, catch the calf by the ears, back him into a corner and bestride his neck. The idiot rather likes this, and while you are reaching for the pail he employs his time in slobbering the lower corners of your jacket. You discover what the blockhead is about and box his ears. You can't