

hail insurance has been tried and very few have cared to avail themselves of it. The people then do not want it. The natural question is why should it be continued? Why should it be made compulsory?

There are many schemes suggested that are simply an evidence of a large heart turning to softness of head. Not many days ago a gentleman suggested to the writer that all the good grain in the country should be bought up by the government and retained in the country for seed. Another has an idea that the government in Alberta should go into the pork packing business and start an outfit in every little burg that would throw Swift's, Armour's and P. Burns & Co's completely in the shade. The trouble is that in many ways are we already nearing the condition of the ants in the old school books; through too much attention we are forgetting to develop our own ability to help ourselves. The farmers of the country should realize that they can only hope for success as they depend on their own strength and individuality. The functions we cease to exercise are the ones that decay. There is grave danger from over pampering. With the government rests the work of pointing the way, of collecting information, and making such investigation as can best be made by collective effort, but upon the farmers themselves, upon the separate units, among the people rests the responsibility for success or failure.

Indiscreet Generosity.

It is gratifying to note that public men in different stations are beginning to realize that the area of free land in Canada is pretty well circumscribed. Jas. J. Hill voiced the sentiments of most thinking men when he said, "don't give away any more of your public domain." Mr. Hill may have had reference to railway grants but the Canadian public are willing to go further and cease to desire any parade of Canada's free lands outside of the Anglo Saxon countries. Scarcely have we become accustomed to the slogan, "Homes for millions" than we are made aware of the fact that at the rate at which the Northwest is being settled all the free land will be taken up in eight or ten years. We have been lavish of our soil and a large area yet remains to be settled but there is no ignoring the fact that our farming area has a limit and that we owe it to posterity to husband our resources. Our people are frequently heard to decry the so-called folly of our statesmen of twenty five years ago and earlier for the extensive grants they made to the C.P.R. and the large fur companies; but in the light of that experience have we not been committing as great error and doing as great injustice to future generations by our indiscriminate exploitation of the public domain?

HORSE

Draft Horses: Origin and Characteristics.

THE SHIRE HORSE.

The Shire, the draft horse of England, doubtless originated in England in much the same way as the Clydesdale did in Scotland, viz., by crossing the native heavy mares with stallions imported from European countries, notably Normandy and Flanders. Considerable evidence exists to show that large horses existed in England before the Christian era. There are no plates or drawings in existence to show the type, and we can only surmise that they were of considerable size, because their descendants were large, and bore considerable resemblance to the Shire of to-day. It must be remembered that a horse of a certain period is naturally moulded so as to be suitable for the requirements of the times, and that in the early history of England the majority of the inhabitants were warriors, and this created a demand for horses of sufficient size and strength to carry an armored man, weighing (with his armor) probably about 400 pounds, much if not quite the same condition as existed in Scotland about the same time; hence the horses must have had considerable size and weight-carrying capacity, while those used in harness were required to draw heavy chariots over rough and heavy roads. Besides weight and strength, these horses would, of necessity, be horses of considerable activity. History supports these suppositions, as Cesar recounts the methods of warfare carried on in

Great Britain in those days, and mentions the chariots full of warriors that were drawn at a rapid pace over rough and uneven ground. These horses, while doubtless not approaching the modern Shire in quality, and probably not in size, were doubtless the foundation stock of the high-class modern Shire.

An extract from the work written by Sir Thomas Blundeville over 500 years ago, reads thus: "Some men have a breed of great horses, meete for the war and to serve in the field; others tried ambling horses of a meane stature for to journey and travel by the way. Some, again, have a race of swift runners to run for wagers or to gallop the bucke; but plane country men have a breed only for drafts of burden."

This passage affords strong evidence that in England at that time existed the different classes or breeds much as they exist to-day. They evidently had the race-horse, the carriage horse and the draft horse.

From early cuts of the English cart horse or Shire, we learn that there were some differences in type, one of which was endowed with peculiar appendages of hair, as a mustache on the upper lip, a long lock of hair hanging from the front of the knee, and one also projecting from the back of the hock, and the back of each leg, below knee and hock, was supplied with long hair in great profusion, while in other strains there was an absence of the mustache and locks mentioned, and a general lessening of hair on the posterior border of the cannons. The latter strain doubtless had an infusion of light blood of some kind but whether this was derived from foreign ancestry is not certain. While doubtless there were very early importations of both sires and dams from European countries into England, to cross with the sires and dams of that country, the first recorded importation took place from Flanders in the year 1160, and this was followed by many others. In the meantime, there were doubtless importations from Scotland, and exportations from England to that country. In this way, we may say that there was a more or less constant infusion of foreign blood, both from European countries and from Scotland, in the English horse during the years in which the Shire horse was being improved. This infusion continued until the introduction of the Shire Horse Studbook in or about the year 1877, since which, of course, no such infusion has been tolerated. In the first volume of the studbook 2,381 stallions were registered, all of which were born before 1887, and some as far back as 1770, thus covering a period of 110 years. It is hard to appreciate the labor it must have entailed to collect the names and breeding of all these horses. As no public record had been kept, details were obtained from breeders and records kept by families.

By careful selection of sires and dams, the breed has been gradually but surely improved; the general quality has been increased without sacrificing size and substance to too great an extent. The obliquity of shoulder and pastern, the quality of feathering and of feet and the

improvement in action have been the principal points which the intelligent breeder has aimed at, and so great has been his success that no better draft horse can be produced than the high-class modern Shire. In the points mentioned, the Shires that have been imported into Canada, with some exceptions, do not compare favorably with the Clydesdales, but the numbers have not been nearly so great, and the price of the high-class Shire in England is so great that the importer cannot purchase him with reasonable probability of making the investment a financial success.

The desirable characteristics of the modern Shire are identical with those of the modern Clydesdale. While many may take objections to the ideas I have given when comparing the two breeds, and may claim that the Clydesdale is the better horse, none, I think, will deny that if any difference exists it is merely in degree, not in kind, and when I say that "the desirable characteristics are the same," I am correct; and, as those of the Clydesdale were given in detail in a recent issue, it is not necessary to repeat.

"WHIP."

Breeding Polo Ponies.

The exhibition of polo ponies at shows may raise the question in some enquiring minds whether there should be any money in seeking to produce this type of horse in a commercial way. Seward Carey, the well-known polo-pony judge, of Buffalo, N. Y., interrogated on this point by the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, said he had given up trying to breed them. The polo pony, like the ideal farm horse, must be regarded as somewhat of an accident of breeding. There is no known breed, cross, grade or line of breeding that can be depended upon to produce polo ponies in any profitable number of instances. "I used to undertake," said Mr. Carey, "to superintend matings, taking, perhaps, the first foal for my trouble, but it did not pan out very satisfactorily. Now, when I get a polo mare too old or otherwise incapacitated for the game of polo, I give or sell her to someone who wants to try the experiment of breeding ponies, and if she has a promising colt I buy it from him at his own price."

One great drawback to the enterprise is the fact that the culls are of little value for other purposes, and the number of suitable ponies being so small, the business of breeding them is not only very precarious, but unprofitable. If a skilled breeder and expert judge cannot make it pay, it requires no argument to persuade farmers to stick to the breeding of drafters, in preference to polo ponies.

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At a recent Scottish sale of Hackneys ten animals, the get of Mathias the London champion, averaged \$1,580.00. The dam of Mathias is Ophelia but it is not known whether her sire was Denmark or Danegelt. At the same sale the London champion mare Menella sold for \$5,875.00 and the black gelding Gay Mathias for \$3,250.00.



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