

HORSES.

Training Colts.

To my mind the value of a horse depends very largely upon his manners and habits; therefore, it is of the greatest importance that he be properly trained, or (as many use the term) broken. Taking these two words by their literal meaning, I would say there are more colts broken than there are colts trained, and it is because such is the case that we see so many enquiries in live-stock and farm journals, such as "What is the best method of handling a balky horse?" or it may be a "halter-puller" or "kicker." Now, "as the twig is bent so will the tree incline," and as a young mind is more easily controlled and influenced, it is necessary and essential that the colt's training be commenced as soon as possible. The day has gone by when they would let the colt run wild and do as he pleased until three years old, then get the boys and the neighbors gathered around and catch the colt for the first time, and get an old bridle on him and a bit in his mouth that he knew not what was there for, then harness him, get old Bill or Jack hitched to the wagon, have dad get in and take the lines, and when they got the colt hitched beside the old horse too lazy to move, start down the lane, while the boys caught on behind and climbed into the wagon. The noise of the wagon and the harness all being strange, the colt plunged first to one side, then to the other; the bit hurting his mouth caused him pain, and finally he became too tired or got tangled up so they had to unhitch him, and really he had learned nothing but fear and pain. That is a case of "breaking" the colt, and I am sorry to say is too often the fate of the majority of colts raised on the farm. Now, my experience has been that you can teach a young colt easier than an older one, and usually when the colt is two weeks old I put a strong halter on him; then in a few days, after he has gotten used to it, attach a rope and lead him alongside of his mother. It requires patience, because he will likely pull and plunge, but at that age is easily controlled. If coaxed, after he finds he cannot get away, he will usually give in and lead quite easily; then he ought to be led every day, even if it be but to and from pasture with his mother. Next, he should be taught to stand tied. Be sure your halter and rope is strong, so he cannot break loose; if he does, he is liable to develop into a confirmed halter-puller. However, if he cannot get loose he is mastered, and will not try as hard next time. Always be firm and kind, and talk to him; it will divert his mind from being tied. Then after he will lead and stand tied, he ought to be handled frequently, and to learn the words and the meaning of whoa, back, and whatever other words his owner wishes him to learn. After he is weaned he is ready to learn the use of the bit. This is a most important lesson. I usually put on a light, open bridle, with a good-sized plain bit, and turn him out in the paddock every day. When he gets used to it, I use a "dumb jockey" (a cheap one can be made with a girth and two sticks crossed over the back, with a crupper, and lines from the outer ends of the sticks to the bit), at first leaving the pressure on the bit very easy, or slack, and gradually tightening it more each day, until the colt takes hold of the bit fairly well. I have never had a soft or very hard mouthed horse when the "dumb jockey" was used. Next lesson is the check rein. I usually use a side check with a small bit, and commencing with it slack, gradually tighten each day until the desired height is reached. This training does not require much time, as the colt can be turned out in the paddock when the weather will permit. When the colt is rising three years I harness him, being sure that the harness is strong, and after being used to the bit and the "dumb jockey" he will not make any fuss over being harnessed. Then I hitch him with a good, well-trained young horse; if a good walker, so much the better. I always leave the halter on the colt under the bridle for the first few times, and tie the rope to the other horse's hame-ring. After they are hitched, have your assistant hold the colt until you are ready to let them start; then make them walk for the first five minutes, then give them the word to trot. His next lesson is to learn to "back up" while hitched. Usually this requires a great deal of patience, but do not lose your temper and strike the colt over the head with the whip, but rather take him gradually, pulling gently on the lines and saying back-up. He will learn from the older horse. When he has been driven double, first on one side of the pole, then on the other, and has become quite tractable, he is ready for single harness. I prefer hitching first few times in a two-wheeled cart, and always use a kicking strap over the rump, placed well back, and as an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, I have never

had a kicker. I always carry a whip, but seldom use it, but when it is necessary I usually make its presence felt. However, it appears to me that the most essential part is to be firm, but kind, and make your colt realize that you are its master, and its friend, and when you get a colt well bitten your greatest troubles are over, as you have to control your horse by the bit. A person cannot get an education in a week or a month, neither can a horse be trained in a short period of time. I have a filly in my stable now that is of a very nervous disposition, and that would not let the stableman into her stall, because she knew he was afraid of her, but with being firm and kind, she is one of my finest drivers to-day, and won many ribbons last fall, but I did not whip her, rather I won her confidence.

The worst kind of colts I have had experience with are those which have been made the family pet while young, and allowed to do as they wished. They are usually stubborn, and a person has to make them obey, and do what you command them. They require to be carefully handled. A good roomy box stall is a splendid place, so they cannot get far away, and when they refuse to do what you wish of them, they ought to be punished until they give in to their master. A horse that is properly trained will have no vice; however, there are those who have bad traits, such as the balky horse. I have found out that patience is about the best cure; try to attract their attention in some other manner. For a horse that rears and plunges I have had splendid results by tying a stout cord or small rope tightly around his body, over the stomach, so when the horse rears it will hurt him, and usually he will not repeat it very often. However, I say, if proper judgment is used in the education of the colt there will be comparatively few vicious or bad-mannered horses.

EDGAR WATSON.

Vaudreuil Co., Que.

Re Training the Colt.

In answer to comments by J. E. M. on the decision of the judge in the "Colt-training Competition," I would like to say that the awards, made by the writer, were made with the idea that colts should be trained or educated, not "broken." As to whether the colt should be hitched double or single first, opinions will continue to differ, and while personally I prefer educating a colt to single harness first, I have no quarrel with him who prefers double harness, but in either case we claim that there should be preliminary education, and the essays were judged on this principle. J. E. M. writes: "I have 'broken in' five young horses, four of them being hitched double the first time the harness was put on them." Now, sir, this is exactly what we object to, and may properly be called "breaking." We think, sir, that no colt should be hitched, either double or single, "the first time the harness is put on him." While the "breaking system" can be carried out, and especially with heavy colts, with generally fair results, we claim that it is irrational, and with lighter colts often harmful and expensive, and that in no case are the results as satisfactory as when some trouble and time has been spent in education. It would seem about as reasonable for a man to expect his uneducated child to go to school and read the first day as to expect his uneducated colt to give reasonable service if "hitched double the first time the harness was put on him." Those who have followed this interesting, and, we trust, in-

structive competition, will have noticed that Clark Hamilton, the winner, does not hitch his colt "the first time the harness is put on him." He educates the colt before hitching him. J. E. M. states that when a colt is being "broken" in double harness "the driver can compel him to do it through the help of the other horse." Here, again, we take exception. Colts that have been properly handled do not require the aid or force of another horse to "compel" them to obey the will of their driver. He again states: "In every single situation that can arise in the training of a colt, that I can conceive of, the second horse is almost indispensable, until such time as the colt has learned to obey the commands of his trainer in stopping, starting, etc." Now, sir, here again we disagree with J. E. M. Clark Hamilton's method appeals to us. He teaches his colts to obey the words of command, as whoa, get up, steady, back, etc., etc., before he hitches them. I might here say that I did not expect the awards in the competition under discussion would meet with the approval of all. Each man thinks that his method of handling colts is the best, and, in many cases, will continue to think so. But, as stated, the essays were judged on the principle that colts should be educated, not "broken," and the places were awarded to those who, in our opinion, had the best ideas of how this education should be carried on, and gave good, common-sense details of the same. Some competitors gave details of elaborate fixings in ropes, straps, etc., and gave details of their application and use in conquering colts. Others gave more simple, but probably not the less effective, methods of subduing the animal; but as we do not consider these conquering methods necessary in colts that have been intelligently handled, we did not place such essays. To sum up in a few words, we consider a colt should be gradually educated, the earlier in life the education commences the better; that it is wise, if possible, to avoid conflict of opinion or will between the colt and the trainer, but that all harness, rigs, etc., used should be strong and that the trainer should, in all cases, be in position, by virtue of his knowledge, skill and tackling, to gain the mastery over the brute force and will of the colt, should such conflict occur.

"WHIP."

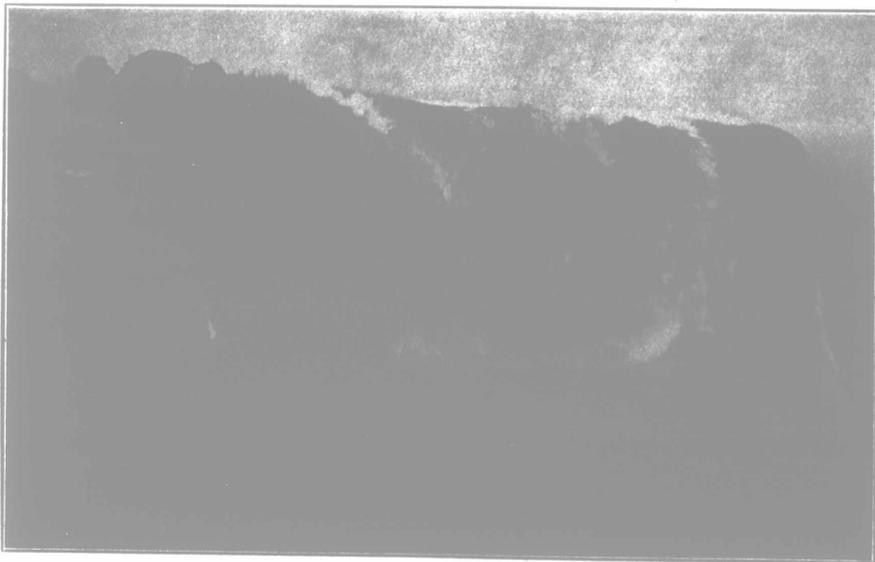
Remedy for Switching.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Re question in a late issue of "The Farmer's Advocate," headed "Switching Mare," I would say such animals should be carefully handled while being driven, avoiding all harsh usage, such as jerking or the use of whip, as whipping does no good. Switching is sometimes caused by dislike of the mate. They are usually high-spirited horses, and should not be driven with a slow mate. Take part of grain ration away; allow her to get a little down in flesh and spirit; work her as much as possible in season. If she cannot be worked without, try breeching harness; bore the breeching in center with large awl, and insert leather shoe-string; do up her tail, and tie it with strong cotton string; tie to the shoe-string, leaving about four or five inches length of shoe-string, so as to hold her tail down so she cannot catch the line. Continue to work her down until she forgets the habit. This tie, if neatly done, will pass unobserved. Having worked a switching mare for years, I am writing from experience.

Kent Co., Ont.

J. B. M.



Rosabelle 5th.

Two-year-old Shorthorn heifer, first in class at Smithfield, 1909.