

erb; for "like does not get like" Put the ever three parts bred stallion to the equally ever three-parts bred mare, and can we do so with the assurance that they will reproduce anything as good as themselves? Most decidedly not. The great point, the very foundation of the personal excellence of the animal we have before us, centres on his being by a thoroughbred horse—a recommendation of which his own stock in turn would be as signally wanting. Nothing can be finer, as the experience of our last Christmas shows went to prove, than the first cross between the short horn and the Aberdeen cow; but what would be the result of crossing these crosses? Disappointment, uncertainty, and a thorough sacrifice of all purity of type either from one breed or the other. A man who went in this way for generations might eventually do something towards establishing a new variety of breed; but this, with such sorts as the short-horn and polled, already at our hand, will be scarcely worth the time and trouble; and I am not very sanguine of any enterprising individual presenting a better material for making a hunter than that he can get direct from the thoroughbred horse. What are the three great essentials of the modern hunter but speed, power, and courage? and where shall we get these but direct from the sire? There is nothing less warranted than the supposition that the English race-horse has deteriorated in strength or endurance. If you begin galloping him at a year and a half old, to wear him out in running and "rying" before he is three years old, and his means furnished. This is no proof of all he might have been had its powers been husbanded, like those of his ancestors, any of which, under like circumstances, he would have fairly distanced over a four-mile course. *Pace* is now the sword of the chase, and the best hunters in Gloucestershire, either for fencing, weight-carrying, or stoutness, are and long have been pure thorough-bred. These are the horses that take money, and next to these the three parts bred, by a thorough-bred stallion out of a well-bred mare.

But Jonas Webb, even at the acme of his success, culled his rams, and many a short-horn that we never see, has, like Brummel's neckties, been fastidiously put aside as "a failure." With the thorough-bred horse, however, it is not so; here, unfortunately, there are no failures. Those of the highest degree go to our famous turf studs to serve at their fifty or thirty years; others of almost equal excellence are bought up for the foreign market; while many of a similar stamp are put at prices varying from ten to twenty guineas. Such horses are beyond the farmer's reach; but instead of looking for something in the next degree—and without the charge of mere fashion or high performance, might well answer the object—our rider is too often content with the very worst that offers. People who live by travelling stallions are not often men of much capital, and

they go as a consequence, more for a cheap horse than a good one. With a flaming card of all a great-grand-sire has done, or what this very horse may have accomplished over a short course at a light weight, they associate an animal whose appearance alone should condemn him—narrow, weedy, and leggy, with scarcely a point in his favour for getting hunters, and very possibly full of all sorts of defects, natural and otherwise. The fee still is a small one, and so the mischief is done. A man pays 25s. where five guineas would have been a saving, and the thorough-bred horse gets a bad name, plainly and very palpably, if a customer would only make use of his eyes, from being unfairly represented. Considering the infinity of good or evil they are capable of producing, it is really a question whether horses ever should be allowed to travel without a license, the more particularly when we see how few people take the trouble to judge for themselves. It is said that every Englishman is either a judge of a horse or thinks he is; but one can scarcely credit this when we find such a number of weeds and cripples year after year earning incomes for their owners. Although nag-breeding may not pay, it is remarkable how many men still continue the unprofitable pursuit.

And now as to the remedy. The notion of encouraging farmers to breed a better sort of horse is by no means a novel one. The offer comes, in the first instance, by way of some recompense for the privilege of riding over their land, or to ensure their good-will for the hunt. Hence we have had Farmers' Plates and Hunters' Stakes, neither of which can be said to have thoroughly answered their object. The so-called hunter just "qualified" by showing at the cover-side a few times, and then went back to lead gallops for a Derby favourite, or to vary his performances in the field by winning a Royal Hundred. The Farmers' Purse, given by the gentlemen of the Hunt, has been often enough still further from its original intent. A sporting inkeeper or a hard riding townsman would just "qualify," again, by taking the requisite number of acres of ground, and bargaining for a plater in due time previous to the race coming off. Then, by the aid of a *quasi* gentleman rider who could sit still at a finish, the "*bona fide* farmer" Boniface would pocket the purse, as the donors looked on year after year in glum disappointment, murmuring occasionally to each other that this was not exactly what they meant either! Perhaps, however, next to losing, the most unfortunate thing that could ever happen to a real tenant farmer was to win one of these same Farmers' Plates. It has given more than one man of my acquaintance his first taste for the turf: another result as little intended by the founders of the prize. But, let the members of the hunt not yet altogether despair of what they may do in this way. Of late years the purse has taken a far more popular form, and in place of being contested as a plate on a race-course, it is