

Horse-breeding and Management

FRED. ADYE



JOHN A. SEAVERNS

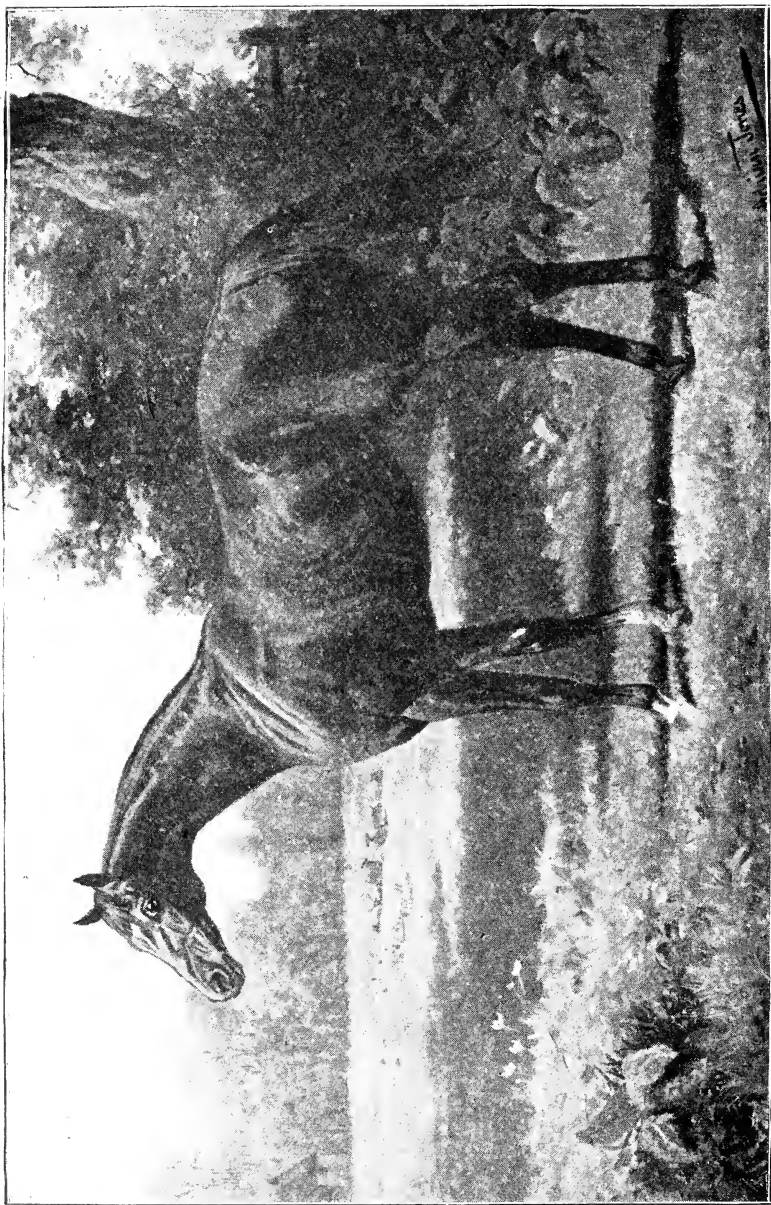
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HORSE-BREEDING
AND
MANAGEMENT



TRUEFIT. From a painting by Adrian Jones.

HORSE-BREEDING

AND

MANAGEMENT

BY

FREDERIC ADYE

AUTHOR OF

"THE QUEEN OF THE MOOR"

ETC.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS; AND SKETCHES MADE
BY THE AUTHOR

LONDON

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PREFACE.

THE ground being, as it were, already occupied by several standard works upon the general subject of the Horse, the writer of the following pages does not seek to vie with these, but merely to record some observations and experiences of one who has loved and studied the noble animal from his youth up, in the hope that they may prove acceptable to that large portion of the British public which shares in his admiration of the same, as well as to those more particularly interested in the breeding and management of young stock.

His thanks are due to those owners who have kindly lent him portraits of animals representing various breeds.

The chapter (IV.) upon "Breeding Army Horses" was first published the year preceding the outbreak of the South African War.

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CHAPTER I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF BREEDING AND REARING.

VASTLY as the various breeds of domestic animals have been improved since the establishment of the many agricultural and other associations which exist for this purpose, it is extremely improbable that we have reached finality of excellence in any particular species. The Smithfield Club, which celebrated its centenary at its show at Islington, found itself, some years after its inception, in financial low water, and the Duke of Bedford, one of its most distinguished promoters, is said to have expressed his opinion that the society might as well be allowed to drop, since it had accomplished the purpose for which it was

instituted. If this meant that the public interest in the matter had been so effectually kindled that it was unlikely again to languish, the remark is intelligible; but, if it implied that perfection in the type of agricultural stock had been already attained by it, such an opinion must be received to-day with sheer amaze, since it is in the highest degree improbable that the prize animals of that date would be looked at by modern judges beside the highly developed specimens which are the result of nearly a hundred years of further systematic breeding. Whether as great an improvement is to be expected in the future as has been achieved in the past is another thing; only, let us beware lest the desire to excel in the show ring lead us in a wrong direction—*viz.*, towards the production of a costly exotic, rather than the multiplication of the types of animals best suited to the various purposes for which our various kinds of stock are

maintained. The general principles of breeding are of course the same with stock of all kinds; but, since this work has for its theme the breeding of horses, we shall



SHEBINE.

Property of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Esq.

naturally apply them with sole reference to that interesting animal.

The most important point in breeding, as it seems to me, and the most essential to insist upon at the present time, is to go for quality rather than for mere size. Quality is not a thing easy to be defined, but it is

as obvious to the initiated as size is to the general eye. If size is wanted we can get size (nay, we are getting it, for all kinds of stock are bigger now than they used to be), but we should aim to get it gradually, not all at once.

This is true of other things: in ship-building for instance. The *Great Eastern* was a costly and gigantic failure, and for the reason that she was an anachronism. Gradually we have worked up to vessels of her size (the *Oceanic* is somewhat larger) but they have not been failures, because strength and speed have advanced in equal ratio with size and tonnage.

Now, if we breed horses for mere size, we make just the same mistake, and the result is a huge overgrown brute, soft and clumsy as a rule, and nearly always deficient in that quality and "character" which alone make the horse a desirable companion, or pleasant to use. We must, of course, breed carefully

for what is required, and a certain amount of bulk is essential for heavy draught work ; but for every other purpose activity and endurance are of far greater importance than mere size and weight.

For omnibus and tramcar work, perhaps the hardest to which horses are put, a horse of moderate size, say from 1000 to 1100 lb. in weight is always to be preferred ; for, if too light, the exertion of constantly starting the great weight of such vehicles is too much for them, and keeps them in poor condition ; while, if too large, the continual battering upon hard roads wears out their feet and legs, and they do not last.

On farm lands too, except perhaps on heavy clay, the moderate-sized animal answers best for general purposes. On a large arable farm I know, where many horses are employed, a former tenant, besides several teams of moderate-sized animals, used always to work one team of very large horses, and

another of quite small ones. When questioned as to their respective merits, he would reply that they each did about the same day's work, but that the small ones lasted longer, and were less expensive to buy and keep.

It will, I think, be almost always found that whenever any special achievement involving high courage, speed, or endurance, has been performed by either horse or man, it has been by an individual of small, or at most of average size, and very rarely by a large specimen of either race. The popular predilection then for great size would seem to be a mistake. We are continually being told that "a good big horse will always beat a good small one," though even this I am rather doubtful of, if the test be a long one; but one thing I feel positive of is, that he would not beat the good middle-sized one. In this, as in so many other things, *in medio tutissimus ibis*.

A very interesting consideration in breeding

is the respective influence on the progeny of either parent. It is, I believe, the opinion of all breeders of wide experience that no rule of absolute, or even approximate certainty can be laid down, so much seeming to depend upon the comparative vigour and strength of constitution of the parent of either sex. It has even been stated that there have been more instances than one of own brothers being used in the stud, in which one has got stock resembling himself in all particulars, even in the non-essential matter of colour; while the other, for some unknown reason, has begotten descendants so unlike as to be rarely recognisable as his offspring. My own experience, so far as it goes, is to the effect that the produce is apt to resemble the sire more nearly in temper, spirit, and, perhaps, in outward configuration; the dam in size, stamina, and constitution.

For this reason we should be the less

reluctant to breed from an unsound sire than from an unsound dam, on the expectation that any hereditary infirmity would be more likely to be transmitted by the latter than by the former. On the vexed question of "roaring" being hereditary, I am strongly of such opinion, for whereas I have frequently seen this infirmity inherited from the dam, I am aware of no case in which it has been derived from the sire. There is in my possession at the present time an animal which, so far as an individual case can, strongly supports this theory. The mare in question is by a son of *Governess* (an Oaks and One Thousand winner, but a rank roarer, which failing she transmitted to her son) out of a very good-winded mare. The offspring was a decided success, winning some sixteen steeplechases, many of them under heavy weights, and throughout her training never showing the slightest tendency to her sire's family failing.

On the other hand, she had not the best of hocks (though they stood long and severe work), and these, I regret to see, are reproduced in her foal, by a horse perfect in respect of his. Thus, in one particular animal, we find a double proof of the correctness of the theory that the dam is more likely to transmit defects of this kind than the sire. But this must be accepted rather as a general than an absolute rule, subject, as all natural rules are, to occasional variations.

Happily, it is seldom necessary to breed from any but constitutionally strong parents, but in the case of light horses we must bear in mind that the country is at the present time flooded with infirm and comparatively useless sires, prematurely broken down by injudicious treatment at a tender age. Still, many of those which come from a good old stock may be worth using with thoroughly sound mares of exceptional stoutness, but care should be taken

in their selection. The main principle in stock-breeding is to insure that any defective point in one parent shall be compensated by a corresponding excellence of that point in the other; and it should be remembered that a deficiency is more likely to be made good when not only the alternative parent, but the strain from which it comes, has excelled in that particular point.

With regard to the age at which horses should be allowed to breed, it stands to reason that the most vigorous, and therefore the most useful, foals are to be expected from parents in the prime of life; but what this is depends very much upon the way in which they have been treated, particularly when young. The general impression as to horses' ages is, I cannot help thinking, an erroneous one. How often do we hear of horses alluded to (generally, it must be admitted, by the inexperienced, but sometimes by persons who, one would think,

should know better) as being old at ten or twelve! True, many are practically made so by injudicious treatment before reaching maturity; otherwise a horse of such age should be in the very zenith and fulness of his powers—in the prime of life, as we say of mankind. For the span of years allotted to this animal, in ratio with the three score years and ten of man, is, I maintain, thirty, or at least twenty-five, rather than twenty, as seems generally to be supposed; while even were it the latter, it would surely be a mistake to reckon such an animal as the horse, which retains its vigour till so late in life, old when he has completed but half his normal existence! I do not account mine old at fifteen, and was until lately riding as hack a little thoroughbred mare, which went with all the spring and fire of a four-year-old at sixteen,—but she had, of course, done no work when young to hurt her. Also, I remember a

pair of well-bred chestnut leaders working a fast coach out of London, one of which was twenty-one, and the other twenty-four years of age!

In breeding, therefore, we need not consider a matron of the stud at all elderly at, say, from twelve to seventeen, since many mares have produced good foals when well past the latter age; as, for instance, *Priam*, *Crucifix*, and *Brutandorf*, whose dams were all past twenty when they were foaled. *Waxy*, again, begat his almost equally famous son *Whisker* in his twenty-second year; *Melbourne*, *Blink Bonny*, dual winner of Derby and Oaks, at nineteen; while the sire of the flying *Voltigeur* was twenty-one. We cite race-horses, be it understood, because it is only of them that reliable records have for any length of time been kept; but the principle is naturally the same with all breeds—except that we should bear in mind that the horse's

longevity is said (and there is a certain amount of truth in it) to be in proportion to his rate of speed. Thus the carthorse would be quite old at twenty, the half-bred at twenty-five, and the thoroughbred at thirty.

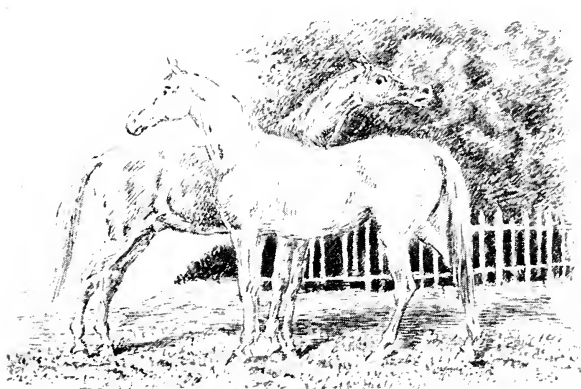
Two very young or very old animals should not be mated together, the progeny in such cases being apt to be weakly and undersized. Both vigour of youth and full maturity should be on one side or the other in all unions. Thus, if a young mare is chosen, say three or four years old, her mate should not be less than from eight to twelve; while if the mare is of mature age, she may be sent with advantage to a fresh young horse; and in this way the services of any animal it may be wished to breed from can be safely utilised at almost any age.

In the rearing of young horses two extremes would seem to suggest themselves for avoidance—namely, too much coddling and too little care. It must never be lost

sight of that the horse, as we use him, is required to live under quite artificial conditions. In his original state he lives entirely out of doors, finds his own shelter or does without it, and ranges over a wide extent of country to pick up his living as he can—lives, in short, a natural and therefore a healthy life. Subjected to the restraints of civilisation all these conditions are changed. He is confined in stalls or boxes, put to fast, or heavy and continuous work, and fed on a diet of highly stimulating character. He must therefore be reared accordingly.

Exposure to weather of all kinds I regard as an essential to the general hardening of his constitution, so the more he is out of doors the better; but at the same time this exposure should not be too severe, lest his growth and development be thereby checked. The modern custom with young horses likely to be of any value

is rather to over-feed them than otherwise, with a view to increase of size, and appearance, at any rate, of early maturity; but I am strongly of opinion that the forcing of any young thing is the reverse of judicious, and that the animal is likely to be stronger



“A Natural and therefore Healthy Life.”

in constitution and of greater vigour when in full age, if allowed to develop in a gradual and therefore more natural manner.

Do your colt well by all means, but do not overdo him, remembering that large supplies of stimulating food, and the vitiated air of

close stabling are not his native regimen. If to stint a colt for the sake of saving expense is bad economy, I consider the opposite extreme little wiser. It may pay to force a colt, as every young thing is now forced, for an early market; but if the object be, as it should be, the rearing of a sound, serviceable horse, which shall perform his work in life well, and retain his wondrous native vigour and spirit till well on in years, I believe an observance of these few broad and general principles which I have here attempted to indicate, to be highly advisable.

CHAPTER II.

INFLUENCE OF THE TURF ON HORSE- BREEDING.

THE Turf! What visions of delight the term conjures up to the lover of horses! Newmarket Heath, with its vast expanse of galloping ground; its labyrinth of courses; its historic Ditch; its memories of mighty equine heroes of the past, and their almost equally famous owners, trainers, and jockeys; its strings of modern racers, pacing with the inimitable lounging gait of the thoroughbred through its ancient streets to their spacious training tracks on the Race or Bury side; Epsom Downs, scene every year of the most remarkable and characteristic gathering of the British people, and equally interesting to the student of Turf lore for its historic

associations; Doncaster, where the clans of the north foregather to witness the struggle for the "Coop"; or the great St. Leger, where the Derby form is triumphantly vindicated, or, with equal frequency refuted by some flying filly in the mare's month, or colt which has wonderfully "come on" since the summer contest; Royal Ascot too, and "glorious" Goodwood, with many another arena of the national sport, less renowned, yet equally dear through personal association, or that glamour which enshrines the memories of famous horses and men. Despite numberless sketches and memoirs of its past glories, the full romance of the Turf has yet to be written, and when it is it should be a work of absorbing interest to a large proportion of the British public.

But what is to be said for the great argument which the apologists of the Turf have from time immemorial advanced on behalf of a sport which, intrinsically a noble and

beautiful one, has yet served more than any other to display the uglier side of human nature, and affords constant opportunities for the exercise of some of the basest chicanery of which the mind of man is capable—that its object is the improvement of the breed of horses? We believe this to have been the honest desire of those who introduced and first practised the sport of horse-racing in this country; but that any such commendable motive animates and inspires any considerable proportion of those now engaged in it, and particularly the ignoble army of welshers, gulls, loafers, touts, and tipsters which frequents almost every racecourse in the kingdom, is manifestly incredible. Yet is the claim that such has been the *effect* of the introduction of horse-racing in these islands by no means an idle one, for it is entirely to the importation of stock fit for this purpose that we owe the superiority in all kinds of light horses, for which we have

so long enjoyed a most enviable reputation. Indeed, we may go so far as to assert that, but for the extraordinary fascination of the sport of horse-racing, such animals as we can ride and drive to-day would still have been extremely rare in our midst. Not a hunter, hack, or harness horse, scarcely so much as a butcher's cob or greengrocer's pony, but owes the best of his qualities to some one or other of those pure-bred sires, with whose more or less illustrious names and pedigrees the British "Stud Book" teems.

It is indeed most instructive to trace the gradual improvement of the British horse from the inception of this sport to the present day. What horse was indigenous to the British Isles, or whence he was first imported hither, it is not needful here to discuss. It is an accredited fact that when the Romans invaded this country they found the horse in general use both for chariot work and riding purposes. Beyond this we have no

reliable authority, but are left to grope pretty much in the dark, from the time when Vegetius wrote in the fourth century on the veterinary art until the days of the Stuarts, in which that serious attention first began to be paid to horse-breeding which has since become so decided a national characteristic. Circumstances had long directed the attention of the Crown to this important matter. In the reign of Henry VIII., by which time we had acquired some knowledge of what was done by other nations, the need of a better horse supply was so much felt that an Act was passed forbidding the turning out of any entire horse that was over two years, and was less than fifteen hands high, on any common or waste land in certain counties, presumably those considered the best adapted for horse-breeding, which included Yorkshire, Lincoln, Cambridge, Suffolk, Northampton, Cheshire, Salop, Hants, Wilts, and Somerset, with some fifteen others, as well as the

Principality of Wales. In the counties not specified in the schedule the limit was fixed at a hand less. Weedy and ill-grown mares and foals were by the same Act (27 cap. 6, 1535) ordered to be destroyed; and owners of turned-out horses infected with any contagious disease were made liable to a fine of ten shillings.

Notwithstanding this and similar Acts, the scarcity continued so great that at the threatened invasion of the Spanish Armada we learn that no more than three thousand horses could be procured, and even this small drain upon the equine resources of the country involved some disturbance of the internal traffic of the kingdom, then carried on mainly by means of pack horses. Fortunately on that memorable occasion no cavalry was required, and, indeed, so far from depleting our miserable horse supply, the Armada proved actually a means of improving it; for on board the huge Spanish

ships were carried a considerable number of Andalusian stallions, then deemed the best in Europe, many of which, being saved, were of service in improving the native breed.

These Andalusians were horses of fine appearance and spirit, not very large, but compactly built, with lofty crests and action, but wide of chest and probably slow. Almost any importation of fresh blood must have been at that time of value; but though the rescued Andalusian, so far as he went, may have improved the appearance of the miserable garron probably in ordinary use at that period, it was not until the succeeding dynasty that any considerable advance was made in the speed of the native product. We are, in fact, indebted to the Stuarts for the foundations of our thoroughbred stock.

The first clear account we have of an Eastern, or pedigree horse being brought to this country was in the reign of James I.,

when a Mr. Markham, a London merchant, imported an Arab stallion from Constantinople, which he sold to the king for £150, a large sum for those days. The Duke of Newcastle, considered the best judge of a horse at the time, describes it as a "little horse, of a bay colour and no rarity of shape." He proved a great disappointment, neither he nor his progeny being fast enough to race. Matters more absorbing than horse-breeding now supervened to engage the attention of the Stuart kings, and nothing more was done until the Protectorate, when Mr. Place, who was stud-groom to Oliver Cromwell, introduced an Eastern horse, which appears in the stud book as *Place's White Turk*, but history records no more of him.

A real start was made, however, a few years later, when Charles II. imported four Barb mares from Tangiers. These *Royal Mares*, as they were called, crossed with horses belonging to the Duke of Buck-

ingham, and known as *Fairfax's Morocco Barb* and the *Helmshy Turk*, laid the foundation of our English thoroughbred stock; and with their produce nothing else was used for many years, until in fact nearly the end of the seventeenth century, with the exception of three mares of pure breed, known as the *Hamburg Mares*, which were taken at the siege of Vienna and sent to England in 1684.

But a few years later three very notable entire horses were imported, which exerted an extraordinary influence upon the English blood stock as already established. These were:—

The *Byerley Turk*, 1689, said to have been ridden by his owner, Captain Byerley, at the battle of the Boyne, and which, being afterwards put to the stud, became in time the ancestor of *Match'em*, and thereby of the numerous descendants from that famous sire.

The *Darley Arabian*, 1705, was sent to his brother in England by Mr. Darley, a merchant at Aleppo. This horse, said to have been the most beautiful ever imported, was probably a pure-bred desert Arab, and was reputed to have come, with a marvellous pedigree, from Palmyra. He became the sire of the *Devonshire*, or “*Flying*” *Childers*, as he was subsequently called from his tremendous pace, being reputed the fastest horse known in this country before the mighty *Eclipse*.

The *Godolphin Arabian*, 1724, supposed by some to have been a Barb and not an Arab at all, though of course the two were very similar in type and character. The romantic history of this horse is well known—how he was presented by the Emperor of Morocco to Louis XIV., but was so little valued by that monarch that he was presently degraded to the shafts of a Paris water-cart, wherein he was cruelly overworked by his

proprietor, but watched over the while by his faithful attendant till he was rescued and brought to England by Mr. Coke. Even here he was thought little of, and given no chance at the stud till he took one for himself, as is portrayed in Rosa Bonheur's last great picture, "The Duel," a fine copy of which has by a coincidence reached me from Messrs. Lefevre while engaged on this chapter. The influence of this horse upon our thoroughbred stock, transmitted chiefly through *Lath* and *Cade*, the offspring of his unions with *Roxana*, has equalled, if not surpassed, even that of the *Darley Arabian*.

From these three founts of pure blood all our best stock has been derived, and there has hardly been a racehorse of any eminence which could not directly trace his descent from one or more of these illustrious fathers of the stud. "The *Godolphin Arab*," "Stonehenge," one of our most reliable equine authorities remarks, "is very commonly

supposed to have been the last Eastern horse of any note to be used in the stud, with the exception of the *Wellesley Grey Arab* in the last century." This notion he controverts, and cites the names of the *Damascus Arab*, 1756, *Bell's Grey Arab*, 1765, and others. Any horse of pure blood from the East is, it should be understood, very properly admitted at once to the "Stud Book" as thoroughbred.

Having thus briefly, but according to the best authorities, reliably traced the influence of the Turf from the first importation of Eastern blood, we cannot but have arrived at the conclusion that such influence has been of the most beneficial character, so far as regards the improvement of our native breed of horses. When we reflect that every hack that has given us a pleasant ride, every hunter that has carried us safely and comfortably with hounds, as well as all the harness horses that, through the long period which elapsed before the adaptation of steam

to purposes of locomotion, afforded the sole means of transport through the length and breadth of the land at a quicker rate than four or five miles an hour, has owed the best of its speed and stoutness to this imported blood, and that this never would have been imported but for racing purposes, we must necessarily admit that the modern horse supply of this country is very deeply indebted to the Turf as an institution.

The question next arises, Is its influence as beneficial now, or likely to be so in the future? We are compelled reluctantly to admit that on this point we are unable to return so favourable an answer. The great extension of our modern practice of two-year-old racing, and the introduction of multitudinous sprinting scrambles for large stakes, with the absence of long distance races from the cards of most meetings, have naturally resulted in the development of a flashy, speedy sort of horse, which can

fly for five furlongs, but which has no stamina or staying power, and breaks down through unfair pressure at an age when his predecessor on the Turf was just running into his best form. The vexed question whether the modern racer would prove as stout as his progenitors, if he were given the chance to mature, is one we need not discuss, since he seems unlikely ever to be given that chance. It is no exaggeration to say that nine-tenths of our racehorses are hopelessly and helplessly used up before reaching maturity. Then they are sent to the stud, which is flooded with speedy broken-down crocks and jades, nervous and irritable in temper, their constitutions impaired, and joints and ligaments strained and injured by the severity of their early training.

Greed and gambling are, of course, responsible for this. So long as racing was indulged in by the noble and

wealthy as a sport, its effects upon horse-breeding for general purposes seem to have been distinctly advantageous, but now that it has become a business, and often a lucrative one, the Turf as an institution appears to have ceased to be of use in this direction. Lord Durham spoke very strongly on this subject at a recent Gimcrack dinner, and that such is the opinion of the Royal Commission we infer from the significant fact that the Queen's Plates, so long established for the purpose of improving the breed of horses in these Islands, and once competed for by the very cream of our racing studs, but of late years contested only by inferior horses (hence the term, most uncomplimentary to Her Majesty's patronage of the Turf, of "a mere Plater"), have been recently abolished, and the money voted for these plates applied to another purpose, which we shall come to discuss in a later chapter.

CHAPTER III.

STUD BOOKS, AND THEIR EFFECT ON BREEDING.

THE most notable feature in the modern cult of live stock has undoubtedly been the institution of the system of registration of certain lines of pure blood, which is now applied to so many breeds and kinds of domestic animals. While we should bear in mind that very considerable improvement was effected by pioneer breeders without such aid, we cannot but perceive how great must have been the need of some system of registration, and how beneficial is likely to be its effect upon the stock of the new century. One of the most certain predictions we can make in regard to it is, that it will inevitably witness the extended application

of the system to all such breeds as it does not yet embrace. Indeed, the ever-increasing demand for specimens of the purest strains in all branches of agricultural and "fancy" stock renders such extension a logical outcome of the present age.

The advantages of such a system are obvious. Our Stud, Herd, and Flock Books are of the greatest possible assistance to breeders; alike in directing them to the source of the purest blood, and enabling them to test by an infallible process the pretensions of animals offered to supply their needs. This depends, of course, upon the absolute fidelity with which such books are kept, and the strict exclusion of all animals which cannot trace their derivation from registered parents. That such rigour will cause the occasional rejection of animals superior in every respect, save that of unblemished or proven descent, to some of those admitted is a matter of course; but, being

the only safeguard, it is one which must be scrupulously observed.

The Stud Book (I use the term generically, to include all Flock and Herd Books, as well as those devoted to the registration of horses) once established, such animals only must be admitted into its sacred pages as derive their origin from parents already entered: otherwise there can be no guarantee of purity of blood.

In matters equine we have been most consistent. For more than a century and a half we have carefully preserved the pedigrees of our own pure-bred horses, and the single exception to this rule has been the admission to the volumes which contain them of imported Barbs and Arabs of accredited race. That our authorities are justified in admitting an imported horse of approved race to the Stud Book without demur is shown by the extraordinary precautions taken by the breeders of high caste

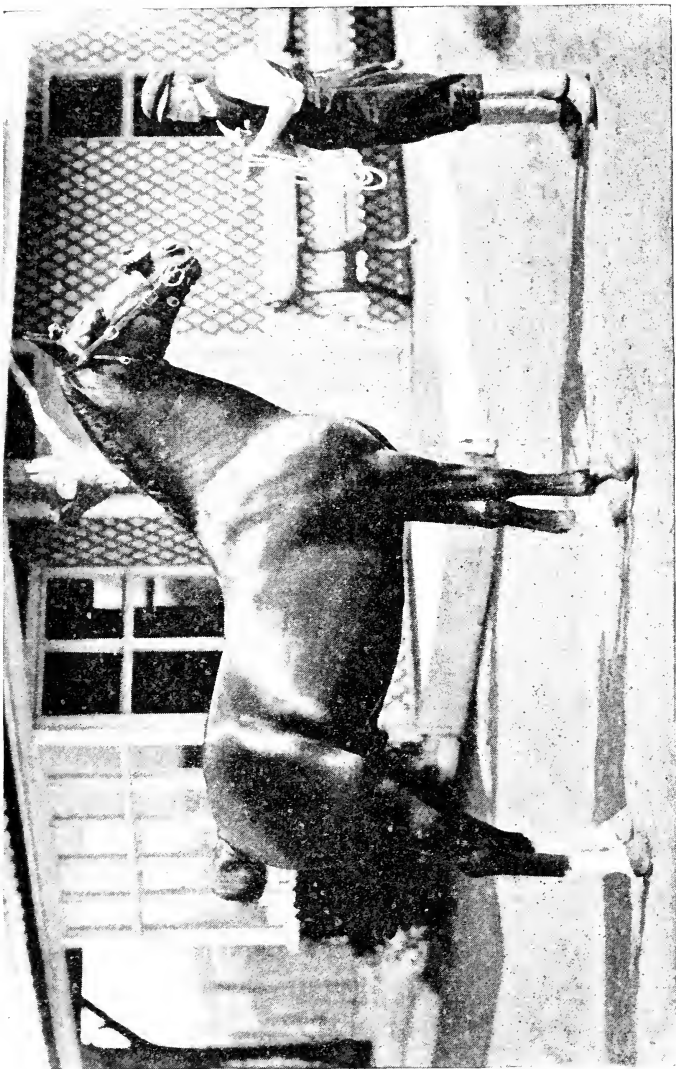


MERRY MATCHMAKER.
Hunter Stallion. Property of Sir Walter Gilbey

Arabians to ensure purity of blood. Certain ceremonies are observed at the covering of the mare, and on the birth of the foal a certificate is made out by the local authority, which must be done within seven days of its being dropped. "It has been asserted," "Stonehenge" remarks, "by Oriental travellers, that pedigrees exist which may be traced back for five hundred years!" When the *Godolphin Arab*, whose original name by the way appears to have been *Scham*, was presented, with eight other horses, by the Bey of Tunis to the King of France, his attendant, a Moor named Agba, wore about his neck an embroidered bag of camel's hair containing the illustrious history and pedigree of his precious charge. It was no doubt from the importation of these Eastern horses into this country that we learned the value of a reliable pedigree, and to record the descent of our own thoroughbred stock.

Should the present interest in the breeding

of live stock, and especially of horses, continue, our other most cherished breeds will soon be similarly provided for, for of making many Stud Books there is no end. Besides the time-honoured volumes known as *the "Stud-Book"*—*i.e.*, the General Stud Book for thoroughbred horses, published by Messrs. Weatherby and Sons—we have now the following institutions for the preservation and continuance of our various breeds of horses, many of which have their own duly entered and authentic pedigree records:—*A Royal Commission on Horse-breeding* (of which more in another chapter), *The Shire Horse Society*, *The Suffolk Horse Society*, *The Clydesdale Horse Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, *The Cleveland Bay Horse Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, *Yorkshire Coach Horse Society*, and the *London Cart Horse Parade Society*. Then for the lighter breeds there are *The Hunter's Improvement Society*, *The Hackney Horse Society*,

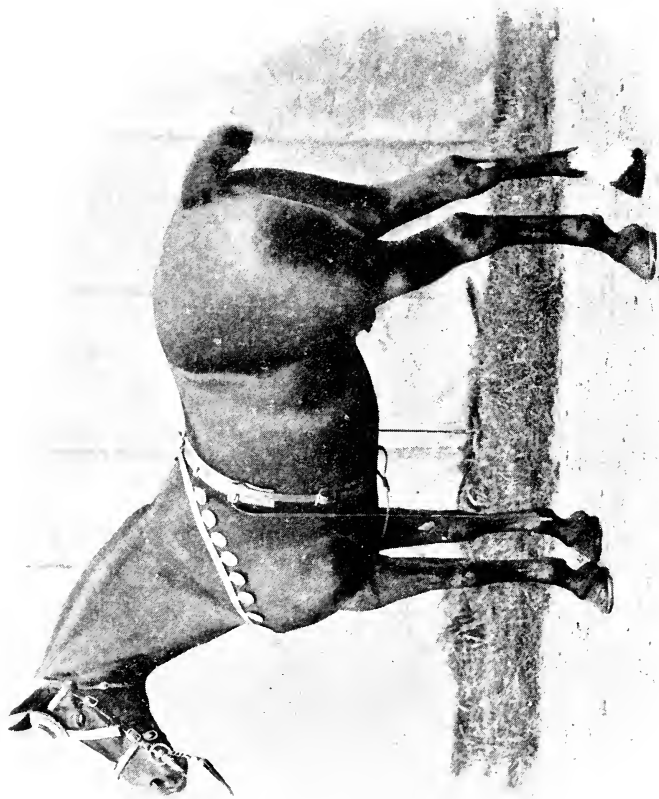


ROYAL DANEGELT.
Property of Sir Walter Gilbey.

and *The Trotting Union of Great Britain and Ireland*; while on behalf of ponies exist *The Polo Pony Society*, *The Association for the improvement of New Forest Ponies*, and *The Shetland Pony Stud Book Society*. From this goodly list, which is taken from the latest *Almanack of the Live Stock Journal*, we gain some idea of the care which is being bestowed upon the maintenance and development of the various breeds of horses in greatest use and favour at the present time. The only two important varieties not provided for would seem to be the Welsh and Moorland Ponies, for which two estimable breeds I would certainly like to see some similar provision made. Somewhat, indeed, has been done for them. The Polo Pony Society Council arranged with the Royal Agricultural Society of England for classes for Polo ponies at their Show at Maidstone in 1898, towards which the Polo Pony Society contributed

the sum of £210. In addition to these prizes the Council agreed to offer gold and silver medals for Polo pony stallions, mares, and geldings exhibited at shows, giving a specified amount in prizes for Polo ponies, and in addition to the section for Polo ponies, to open separate sections for ponies of the Mountain and Moorland breeds. Committees of inspection are being formed to whom will be relegated the task of approving ponies for these sections.

The grand result to be expected from the establishment of these numerous stud books, is, of course, a nearer approach to certainty in breeding what one aims to breed. Such has unquestionably been the result of the general "Stud Book," now so long established that its effects have had time to be fully experienced. Many blanks to one prize are no doubt the practical result in breeding thoroughbreds; but the disappointments are due rather to failure in performance than



HEDON SQUIRE.
Property of Sir Walter Gilbey



to defect of type. If the value of the horse depended upon his general aggregate of good qualities rather than on his individual and special power of achievement—that is to say, if the test to which he is subjected were a qualifying one, and not a competitive (since in a race, though all the horses may be good horses, only one of them can win)—then the breeding of thoroughbred stock would be reduced to as great a certainty as can be experienced in any such enterprise. For though a thoroughbred horse that is not quite speedy enough to win any of the short distance scurries, which seem now to constitute the popular notion of the noble sport of horse-racing, is generally (though, I think, erroneously) considered an almost worthless animal; yet, no matter how often a breeder draws a blank in this respect, he always gets what in effect he breeds for—*viz.*, a horse of the thoroughbred configuration and character, since no animal

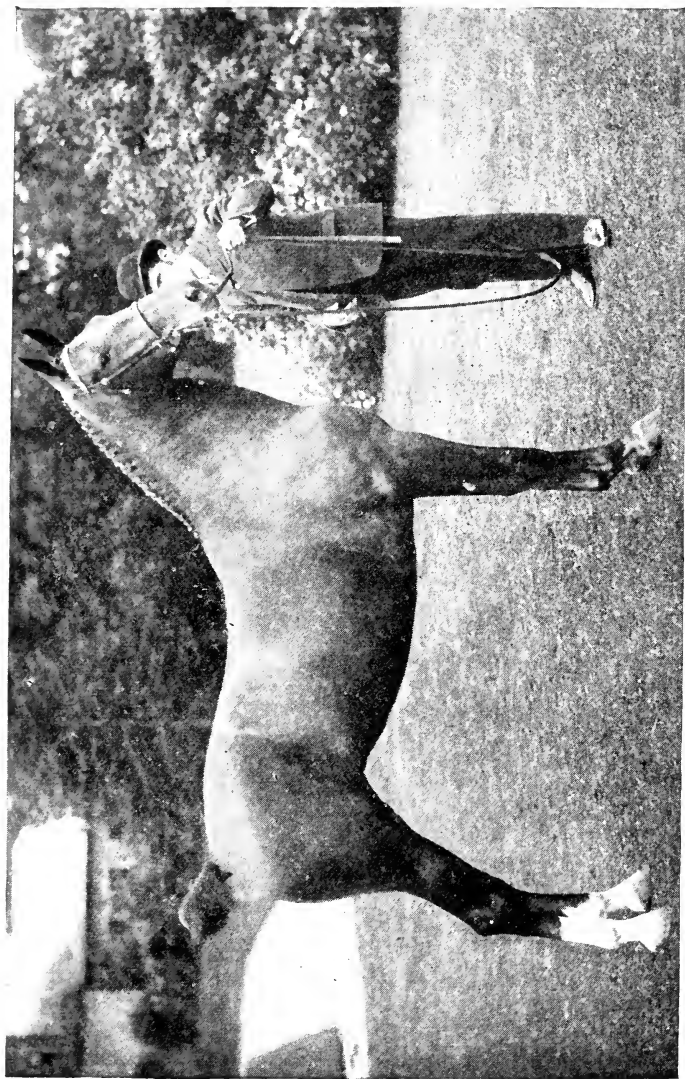
breeds more true to type. Now, it is just this breeding true to type which one is apt *not* to get in other breeds, unless it be with the mountain and moorland ponies aforesaid, which, left to run in a semi-wild state and breed according to natural selection, seem to retain their type from generation to generation. After due care and time the results attained in the case of the thoroughbred may be looked for in other breeds, which are now supplied with their respective "Stud Books." Time, it must be remembered, is quite as essential as care wherever nature has to be dealt with; the most that man with all his powers of precaution and God-given judgment can effect being to guide natural effort into the desired channel.

The best results, brief as is the time in which the system of registration has been applied to them, have already shown themselves in the case of the Clydesdale and other breeds of cart horse. Even the Cleveland

bay and the Yorkshire coach horse, which as types had, since the disappearance of fast public traffic from our roads, been nearly lost, are now in process of being revived and perpetuated by the same means; though that there will be very much demand for this class of horse in the future I rather question. They are undoubtedly unapproached by any breed in this country for fast yet heavy road work; but with lighter carriages and only short-distance driving (since in these railway days very few long road journeys are undertaken), the set of public favour seems rather towards the modern hackney type, short, smart, and quick, than those lengthy and upstanding, yet well-coupled horses, which would have so delighted our coaching ancestors could they have foregathered at some of our Northern and Eastern show rings in recent years.

It is in the breeding of this modern hackney that the greatest uncertainty seems

to prevail; but the reason of this is plain, for not only has this horse had little time yet to develop, but he is himself a very composite animal. The hackney, or roadster, as he was more commonly called, of the preceding and early part of the last century was a very different, and probably more useful horse than the present fashionable animal. He had no uniform characteristics, nor indeed, was he specially bred for his work. Before railway days it is obvious there must have been an immense deal more hacking work in this country than there is now, or will ever be again. Men of various classes rode "post," or on their own nags, on business or pleasure habitually, who now perhaps never cross a horse at all, save some few in the hunting season. And the nags they rode were as diverse in character as their riders. Yet I have not the least doubt but that where one safe and comfortable hack is to be found to-day



KNOWLE BELINDA.

Two-year-old Hackney Filly. Winner of many Prizes.—Property of W. A. Oppenheimer, Esq.

there were ten then. The best probably were obtained from a cross between descendants of the old English packhorse (said to have been a stout, well-shaped, and most serviceable animal) and the thoroughbred; or of the latter with the Welsh cob or Northern galloway, than which nothing could be better for a hackney. The modern candidate for the "Hackney Stud Book" and prizes is no doubt a more showy and symmetrical animal, but rarely with anything like the endurance or easy natural paces of his predecessor. Made up of so many different strains of blood, with an unknown ancestry comprising horses of all shapes and sizes, it is not surprising that he should, notwithstanding all the care taken on his behalf, not infrequently disappoint his breeder.

A horse, like every other creature, is a conglomerate of all or any of the points and characteristics of a long line of progenitors, and no one can tell in what proportion any

of these may be produced in a remote descendant—which or what of them the latest representative will, as our country folks say, most favour. This, as we have suggested, is especially the case with the modern hackney, because of the greater variety of, so to speak, his constituent parts. In any individual specimen may predominate the points of his great-great-great-grand sire, an immediate descendant of some famous old English entire pack-horse, or of his great-great-grand dam, a simple cart mare of the period; or again he may show most of the somewhat thick forehead and lofty action of the Norfolk trotter, or in a bad nick a coarse head and upright loaded shoulder combined with the slender bone and calf-knees of some weedy thoroughbred. The Stud Book will in time correct this tendency, and the hackney will presently breed more true to type. Then he will have more admirers than he

commands at present; though, personally, I fancy I should always prefer a short-legged thoroughbred, or nearly thoroughbred, horse for any kind of hacking work.

The main use of Stud Books, we may say, then, in conclusion, is to preserve an infallible record by which the breeder may clearly trace the descent of his stock from the purest sources; and if this register could be supplemented by a scale of points, and the degree in which these existed in the several animals whose names and numbers figure therein, it would be of greater value still. Mr. William Housman, in an article entitled "Aids to Judgment in Stock-breeding," which appeared lately in the *Live Stock Journal Almanack*, makes this suggestion, with the remark that "pedigree and certificate of personal character should go together." The obvious difficulty would be in the dimensions to which the Stud Book volumes, already sufficiently bulky, would

attain. If condensed forms of pedigree, with completion by means of reference, could make room for this further information, the innovation would be a great improvement. For the amplification and working out of this idea may also be commended a most valuable paper upon "Photographic Records of Pedigree Stock," by Mr. Francis Galton, F.R.S., read before the Zoological Section of the British Association a few years ago, at Bristol.

CHAPTER IV.

BREEDING ARMY HORSES.*

WE have little idea in times of peace, when it is often difficult to dispose satisfactorily of any light animal not of the highest class, how great would be the demand for any kind of horse during and after an European war. Possibly before the next occurs motor-power will have become fully established; but even then the demand for horses for the army would not be much diminished, and the supply even more difficult, since fewer would be bred. I well remember buying some ponies on Dartmoor some six or eight years after the Franco-German war, which so sent up the price of horses for

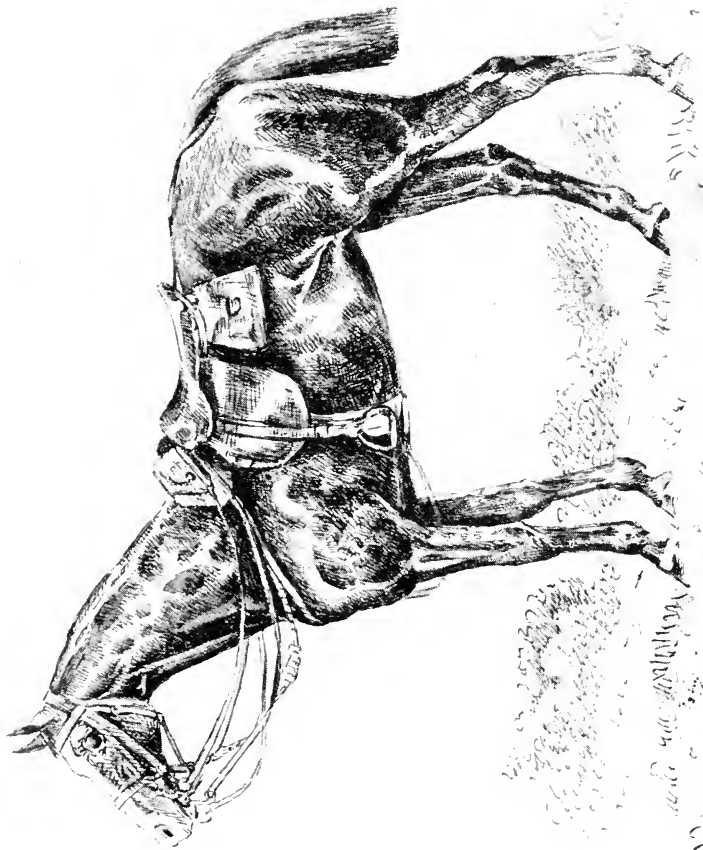
* This Chapter was written the year preceding the outbreak of the South African War.

several years that at that date a fair-shaped moorland pony, previously to be bought for a very small sum, fetched unbroken, almost unhandled, at three or four years old, from fifteen to twenty pounds. If, therefore, a great Continental war exerted for several years after its conclusion an influence even upon the small-pony market of Great Britain, what might not the effect be of a similar war in which this country was an actual combatant?

There is perhaps a popular impression that the British cavalry is the best horsed in the world, but the impression, if it exists, is a very erroneous one. Few regiments have a full complement of horses—that is to say, each has a considerable proportion of unmounted men, while the quality of the horses they have is nothing to boast of. The military manœuvres recently conducted on the spacious downs of Wilts and Dorset, in which a larger cavalry force was

employed than had ever been collected in England before, afforded an admirable opportunity for one interested in the matter to judge for himself. Some 50,000 troops of all arms were encamped in my immediate neighbourhood, and it was the unanimous opinion of such of the country residents (many of them fair judges on such points) as remembered the autumn manœuvres held in this same district in 1872, that the physique of both men and horses had greatly deteriorated from that of those employed on the previous occasion. Being able to remember something of the manœuvres held on Dartmoor in 1873, I was disposed to agree. Without committing myself to the opinion of a buxom housewife, who, standing with her arms akimbo, as company after company of Her Majesty's Militia and Infantry of the Line filed past her cottage gate, exclaimed, "What a lot of dirty little boys!"—their dirtiness at

least was honourable testimony of a long day's work under a broiling sun on our parched chalk downs and in dusty lanes—I will confine my criticism to the horses. Sitting one August afternoon on my pony at the centre of village cross-roads, in company of a farmer friend who is an excellent judge, I watched squadron after squadron of British cavalry file past at the conclusion of the day's work, and not a good horse, according to our views, could we discover among them (some of the officers' mounts of course excepted). There was great uniformity, it must be admitted, but it was an uniformity of bad points—all seemed to be both light and coarse, with plain heads, upright shoulders, no back ribs to speak of, and drooping quarters. It may be that, trained in the canons of the show ring, and used to our own admirably horsed Dorset Yeomanry, in which a large proportion of troopers used to ride serviceable

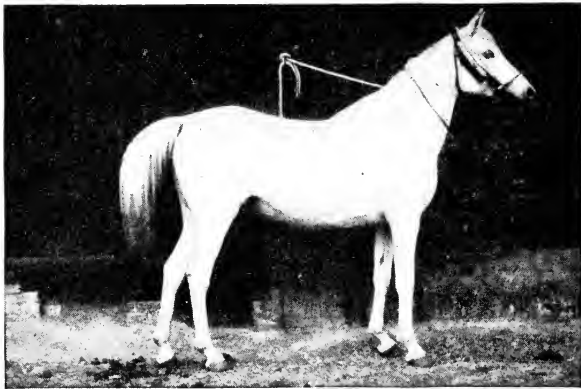


A useful type of Light Cavalry Troop-horse, by a Yorkshire trotting horse out of a thoroughbred mare

hunters of greater or less value, we were over fastidious; but, be that as it may, the average British troop horse of the present era seemed to us about fit for a country carrier's cart, or to go to plough on very light land. Nevertheless, they did their work, long hours of manœuvring under heavy weight and a blazing sun, and I believe did it well, so it may fairly be asked, What more would you require in horse or man?

Still, I fancy, and I believe it is the opinion of many cavalry officers who have served in that country (though *esprit de corps* might render them reluctant to admit it), that our Indian cavalry, at any rate in a long campaign, would ride round the British, mounted as the latter are; their horses, though smaller, being so much better shaped—and bred. To carry weight for long distances day after day, with perhaps occasional sharp bursts at nearly full speed, you must

have breed. It is the possession of this subtle quality which explains the wonderful efficiency of the Indian cavalry,* whose little horses, mere ponies as we should consider them, carry men quite as long, and



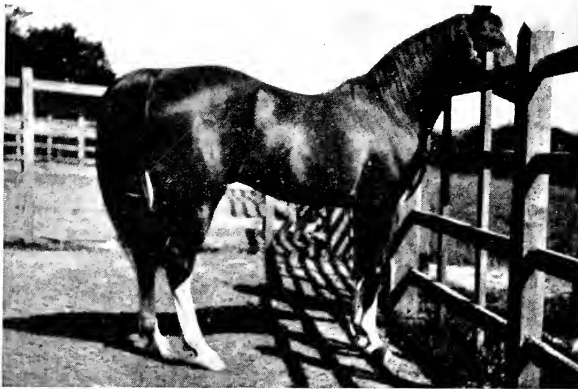
NEJIBA.

Property of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Esq.

probably often as heavy as our own, with such wondrous ease and endurance. Size in

* The native trooper, too, is an admirable horse-master. It is the opinion of many experienced officers, that, could Indian cavalry have been used in Africa, the war would not have lasted half as long as it did.

hands and inches, it must be always remembered, is no criterion of ability to carry weight at high pressure, any more than volume of flesh is, though it is the commonest of errors to suppose this. As a



MESAUD.

Property of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Esq.

matter of fact, in the hunting field in a long or very quick run you often see overgrown brutes, soft as they are big, for which the owners have given perhaps well over a hundred guineas, stopping and blowing and tumbling about, while some little well-bred

thing, which the thirteen-stone rider would suppose just fit to "carry his boots," goes on with ease and safety to the finish.

We are of course aware that the officers charged with the important duty of selecting cavalry remounts are men of the best experience in their profession, and very often good judges of a horse to boot, but they are of necessity limited as to price, and perhaps a little hampered by traditions of the past, when cavalry service was very different from what it is now, both as regards the duties to be performed, and the stamp of horses and men best suited to perform them. No doubt those horses, which so poorly satisfied our country critics at the 1898 manœuvres (but which, as we have admitted, seemed to do their work so much better than their appearance would lead one to expect), were the best that in sufficient numbers could be procured at the regulation price; but need they be so, if Government

would seriously take up the matter and make provision for the future? The Horse Artillery batteries were furnished with animals of far more satisfactory appearance, which is easily explained by the fact that a larger price is allowed for them, and that breed is by no means so essential for draft as for saddle work.

The general supply of horses has not of late years been equal, either in quality or quantity, to what it formerly was. Ireland has for long been our chief source of supply; and whenever you see a horse going particularly well with hounds, or an exceptionally clever jumper in field or ring, it is most likely an Irish bred one. But in the agricultural returns for Ireland in live stock for last year we notice a decrease of over 20,000 horses and mules; which, though counterbalanced by a corresponding increase in cattle, is by no means satisfactory from our point of view. Should this decrease

continue, how shall we be able to horse our army in the future ?

Our insular position relieves us to some extent from the necessity of being able to place our cavalry on a war footing at a moment's notice, an ability which is rightly deemed of the utmost importance by the great Continental powers ; and it has always been considered that in a nation so fond of horses as our own, the cavalry supply might well be left to the general enterprise of the country. We gravely question if, now that almost everybody is declining horse-breeding on the grounds that it does not pay, this theory is quite so safe as it was formerly considered. As a matter of fact no one in this country ever did breed for the army ; it would never have paid to do so. The army has had to buy whatever had not sufficient quality or style to attract the dealer or private purchaser. If breeders then are inclined, as seems to be the case,

to produce only a few animals of the choicer sorts, and the supply from Ireland continues to diminish, what will our cavalry do ?

It has been suggested that we could in time of stress draw our troop horses from the dominion of Canada. These horses have lately been imported in considerable numbers for omnibus and tramcar work, but judging from those I have seen I should hardly consider them very fit for cavalry remounts. Colonel White, however, who commanded a regiment of horse in that country, found them hardy, active, docile, and surefooted, a combination of virtues which should certainly commend them for this purpose ; while Colonel Soane Jenyns, C.B., some years ago confirmed this estimate by reporting to a Lords' Committee on Horse Supply that Canadians made first-rate troopers, being capital hacks, a little straight in the shoulder (bad enough fault in a hack one would think), and good fencers. He had bought,

he said, 180 of them, and was well pleased with them all; did not wish, in fact, for better troopers. Such practical experience must of course be allowed to outweigh any private opinion upon the subject. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that such supply could only be obtained after considerable delay, and would depend upon our uninterrupted command of the high seas. This we hope we shall, humanly speaking, always retain; yet under the happiest circumstances the ocean passage of troop horses must always be a precarious enterprise enough.

All things considered I am strongly of opinion that, whether or not we have to follow Continental nations in the matter of conscription, the time has already come in which we should follow their example in the establishment of Government breeding studs. The time, moreover, is propitious. Land is cheap, and the best—*i.e.*, the most

highly productive and therefore the most expensive to purchase—is not required for the purpose. My impression is that a better stamp of horse could be thus produced at less expense, than under the present system of purchasing what is not good enough for the private buyer. At any rate, I should much like to see the experiment tried by the establishment of eight of these *haras*, or Government breeding studs—say two in Ireland, one in Wales, one in Scotland, and one in each of the counties of Yorkshire, Salop, Cheshire, and Hants or Wilts. For, as matters are, the country is being continually drained of the best and most suitable sires to supply the Continental studs. France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Russia have for many years been systematically purchasing our best entire horses, *none of which*, except indirectly—*i.e.*, by chance private breeding—have therefore contributed to the army horse supply of the country

which produced them. This surely is not as it should be! We must confess that these foreign powers have been wiser in their generation than we, and by their superior enterprise have gradually denuded us of our best stock, till nearly all their cavalry are better horsed than our own.

Germany probably has the best cavalry in Europe, and has obtained it more economically than her great neighbour and rival across the Rhine. France's mistake has been to give too large sums for the celebrated winners of great stakes in this country; and Russia seems disposed towards the same error—*i.e.*, if her recent purchase of *Galtee More* at such an enormous price was intended, as was reported, for the benefit of her Government studs. The winner of the 1897 Derby was a fine horse in every respect, but he could never have been worth any such sum for Government purposes. Instead of giving £20,000 for a single horse, how much better

would be the purchase of forty thoroughbred sires, not speedy enough to win great stakes, but sound, staying, useful horses, "likely to get hunters," at an average of £500 apiece. The best racing action is not what is required for cavalry sires; a somewhat higher and less raking stride, with quicker turning power, being safer over rough ground, and generally more useful for manœuvring purposes.

But the efficiency of the German cavalry is no new thing. Frederick the Great had the best in his day, and won by means of it some of his greatest victories, as Kesseldorf, Rossbach, and Zorndoff. His light horses he drew chiefly from Poland, but mounted his heavy dragoons on stouter animals from North Germany. The amount of horseflesh used up when the great German army takes the field is enormous. Its loss during the war with France was computed at nearly a million and a half. Yet their system seems always to maintain a sufficient supply. It began

with three breeding studs, originally designed to furnish the royal stables with carriage and riding horses, but which were subsequently employed to breed covering stallions for country studs. Twelve such studs were established (which have since been added to), and prizes awarded, besides, to stallions kept by private persons and approved by official heads of depots, with subsidies also to good brood mares and foals. Something like this was doubtless the idea of the Royal Commission in the establishment of Queen's premiums, which we hope may be productive of good results. But what we want to see is the Government stud for the direct supply of the army.

What shall we breed when we have them? It is recorded that General Walker, our military attaché to Berlin some years ago (when probably our cavalry was better mounted than it is now), was much exercised to account for the superior endurance of the



ARABIAN THOROUGHBRED.

Prussian troop horses over our own. He was given as the chief reason, "the nearer affinity to pure Arab blood."* This would be sufficient explanation for me, but it is not one probably calculated to satisfy the military authorities at home, since the Arab has never been properly appreciated in this country. Some day perhaps, in some future campaign in which he happens to be brought into direct comparison with our present trooper, and is found to be going on for months after the latter is hopelessly done up or dead, we may have our eyes more widely opened to his extraordinary merits. Arab blood we have not in any considerable quantity, but we have what might with careful selection be made equally

* A critic, an expert judge and breeder, here demands of me, "Why go back one hundred and fifty years; the English thoroughbred is a perfected Arab?" My reply is that the Arab is much hardier. The thoroughbred, I believe, was a more useful animal one hundred years ago than he is to-day.

serviceable—the English thoroughbred horse, which is nothing more or less than the same thing, modified by our climatic conditions and system of keeping. The ideal light cavalry mount for modern warfare is a small, active, well-bred mare or gelding, with a dash of pony blood to make him hardy and handy; and such, by the establishment of the *haras*, could be bred in considerable numbers by crossing the slower and sounder of our thoroughbred sires with stout cob and galloway mares, such as are still to be found in Wales, Devonshire, and in some parts of the north of England. Whenever a civilian is so fortunate as to get hold of one bred like this, he invariably tells you (no matter his weight) it is the best he ever rode, and I feel fairly confident that military experience of such horses would be about the same. Veterans would possibly complain at first of their lack of weight and size for military purposes; but the conditions of cavalry service

are so changed that what used to be termed "shock" action may be regarded as obsolete. This arm in the future will consist of light horse, or very likely mounted infantry, for either of which strong, active, and well-bred horses will be wanted in larger numbers than we produce them at present.

CHAPTER V.

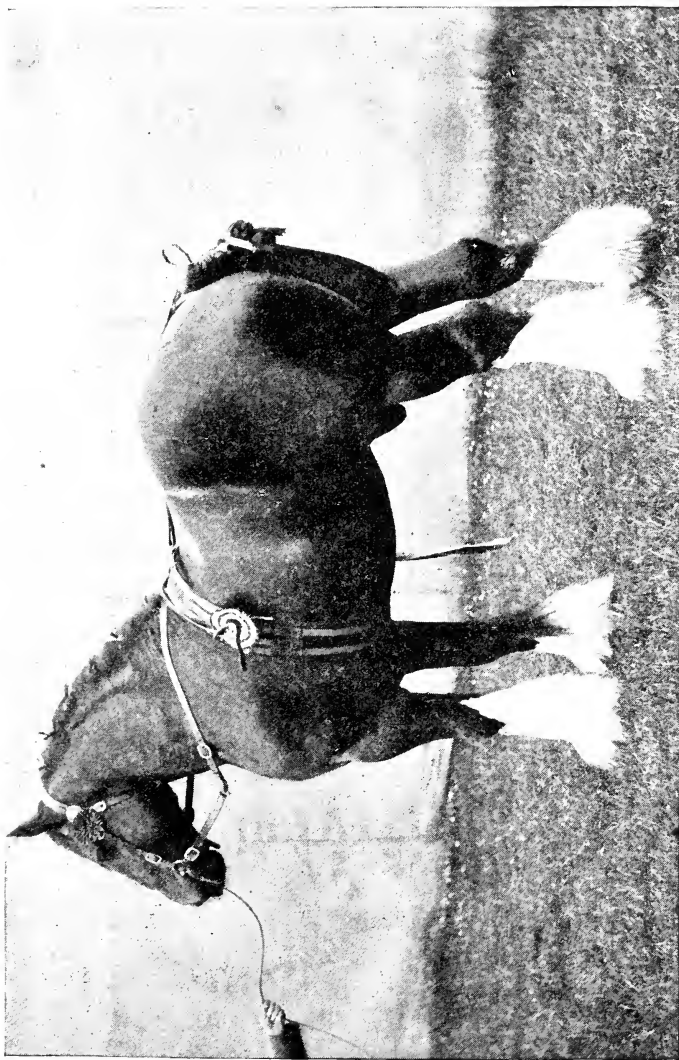
HEAVY AND LIGHT DRAUGHT HORSES.

DESPITE the invasion of the automobile car, the demand for draught horses of all kinds steadily continues, and the home supply being quite inadequate to meet it, the deficiency has to be made up by the importation of foreign-bred animals. This importation is now very considerable. Forty years ago the imports of horses to this country were only 2,087: the return for 1897 is 49,519. Our exports, however, show a corresponding increase—34,471 for 1897, against 1,574 in 1857. Our imports thus exceed our exports by 15,000, which does not necessarily imply that we are out of pocket by the transaction, since the value of the animals we export, consisting largely of thoroughbred stock—

Clydesdales and Shires, Clevelands and Hackneys—should be far in excess of our imports, which consist chiefly of Canadian and South American horses; though how far the newly developed trade with the Low Countries in the “sausage” or “extract of beef” horse may lower the rate of exchange is uncertain.

Still, when we consider the large sum of money which these imported horses, at however low a figure they may sell, must represent, it seems a pity that our farmers and breeders should not divert it into their own pockets; but this seems impossible while horses which have cost nothing to rear on the wide prairies of the West can be offered so cheaply in this country. We are continually being told that horse-breeding does not pay, and it is, I suppose, true of all but the very best quality. “I cannot say that I have found that the case,” a farmer said to me lately, to whom I had repeated

the stereotyped remark; and the explanation of his optimistic view was that he had bred, with considerable judgment and a fair share of good luck, a class of animal for which there is always a good demand—namely, weight-carrying hunters. That is just the point: to make it profitable the breeder must consider what sorts of animal are most in demand, and must then use the very best blood he can obtain. Apart from racehorses and hunters, which require so much luck that the breeding of them becomes almost a lottery, nothing seems to promise better than heavy draught horses. When we come to study the price list of a modern sale of Shires or Clydesdales, and reflect that such prices are not realised just now and again at the dispersal of some famous stud, but whenever such animals can be put upon the market in sufficient numbers to attract buyers, it certainly seems as though the production of this kind of horse, at any rate,



BLYTHWOOD CONQUEROR.
Shire Stallion. Property of Sir Walter Gilbey.

must afford a fair margin of profit to those who hold land suitable for the purpose.

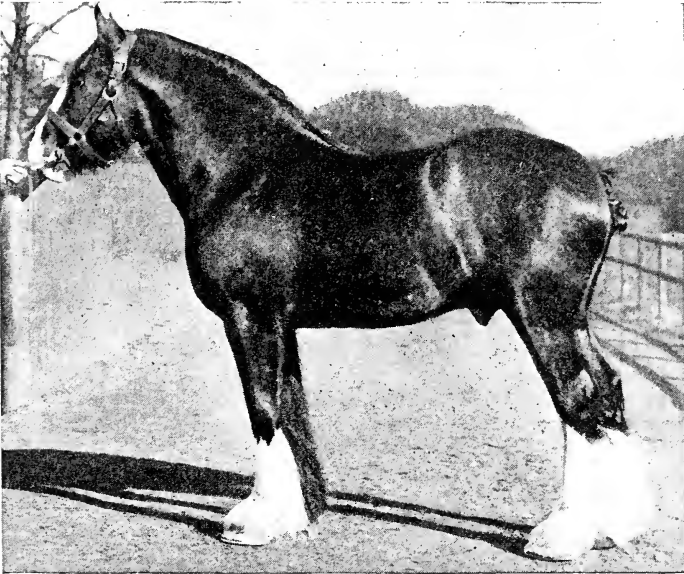
Nor is there fear of this demand being but a temporary one; the future is full of promise, the demand for big, weighty, sound draught horses, ready for street and wharf work, having been steady and increasing for some years. To say nothing of foreign buyers, our railway companies and other carrying agencies, merchants, brewers, and contractors, are always on the look-out for strong, active cart-horses, capable of moving great weights and drawing them at a brisk pace on hard roads; and from them prices ranging from £60 to £100 and upwards are readily obtainable for genuine articles. Only they must be of the right stamp, combining quality and briskness of movement with size and weight. Profiting by the object-lessons of the show-yard, buyers can now judge and pick their purchases, and in consequence the better the horse the better the price. Our old friends

Smiler and Pleasant, slab-sided and fiddle-headed, cumbrous and slow, impress no longer by their mere bulk, and are not in it with our Lancashire Lads and Lockington Beauties of to-day. Whatever may be said, and probably there is much to be said, as to the superior stoutness and cleverness of the old steeplechaser, hunter, or hackney which carried our forefathers on business or pleasure, there can be no question as to the great advance which has been made by scientific breeding in the British cart-horse. The services of improved Clydesdales in the north, Suffolks in the eastern counties, and Shire-bred stallions in almost every part of England are now available to every breeder; and if the farmer exhibits corresponding enterprise and judgment in selecting his mares, he is not likely to be disappointed in the result.

Thanks to frequent shows and illustrated articles, the general appearance and points of these three chief breeds of British cart-

horse are now widely known, but we may briefly note their main characteristics.

The Clydesdale, then, is reputed to have



SILVER CUP.

Clydesdale Stallion. Winner of Six First Prizes at National Shows.
Property of the Seaham Harbour Stud.

been the produce of an experimental cross between the native Scotch mares and six fine black stallions which the Duke of Hamilton imported from Flanders in the seventeenth

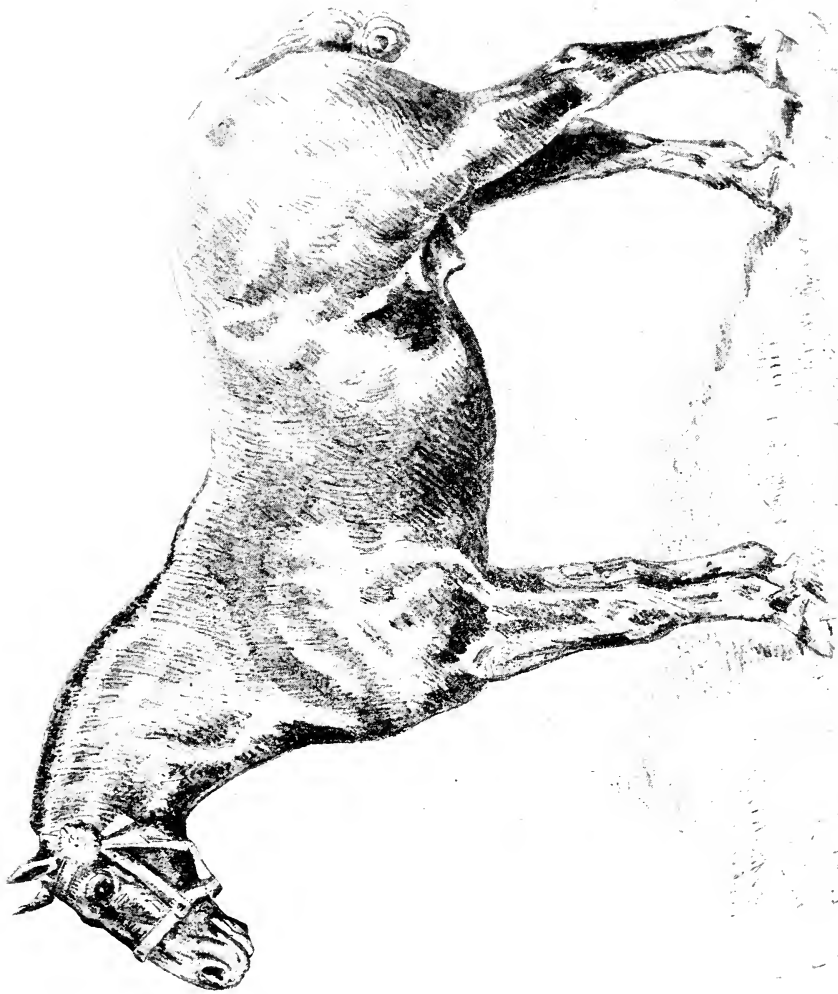
century, and kept at Strathaven Castle for the use of his tenants. From this initial cross in the county of Lanark the entire breed of Clydesdales is said to have sprung. We must own that this legend sounds a little apocryphal, since it hardly seems credible that the union of such heavy stallions as the Flemish with the small Scotch garron would have met with such signal success. Others say that it was with the old English pack mare, and, from all we have heard of the merits of this animal, this is far more credible a foundation of such a breed as the Clydesdale. The typical descendant of this cross, whichever it was, an upstanding horse of great power and utility, has for a cart-horse a fine intelligent head with expressive eyes and wide jaws, which, with his deep shoulder and well-arched crest, gives him a very grand appearance. For single cart work in a hilly country he is unsurpassed, while in ploughing competitions a pair of Clydesdales will

generally walk away from any opponents, and the stiffer the soil the more they show their superiority. The Clydesdale's strongest points in comparison with other cart-horse breeds are his legs and feet, which are almost invariably sound and strong. For work in a hilly country, and especially in the steep stone-pitched streets so often found in our northern towns, a pastern more slanting than is usually required in a cart-horse is desirable; otherwise a sufficient grip of the ground is difficult to obtain. The usual colour for the Clydesdale is either a dark brown or black, with white blaze and stockings, a rich dappled brown being a very favourite colour.

The Suffolk Punch, an old-established breed of much merit, is now more rarely met with than either the Shire or Clydesdale, though of late years there has been a considerable revival in this handsome and useful cart-horse. The Suffolk is a long, low, good-barrelled horse, almost invariably of

lightish chestnut colour, or sorrel, as it used to be called, often with a blaze and white foot or two, though I have seen some handsome specimens of a whole colour, generally then of a darker shade of chestnut. They are very docile and willing, and extraordinarily staunch in the collar, a whole team of them having been known to pull at a dead weight till they went on their knees together. Their chief defects are that they are apt to be rounder in the bone than is thought desirable, to stand a little back at the knee, and to have shelly and brittle feet.

And now we come to the latest development of the heavy draught horse—the cart-horse *par excellence*—the so-called Shire-bred, the chief characteristics of which admirable breed are a smallish head, a short, straight neck, with powerful shoulders springing out of a short, broad back, great depth of girth, full quarters, short cannon



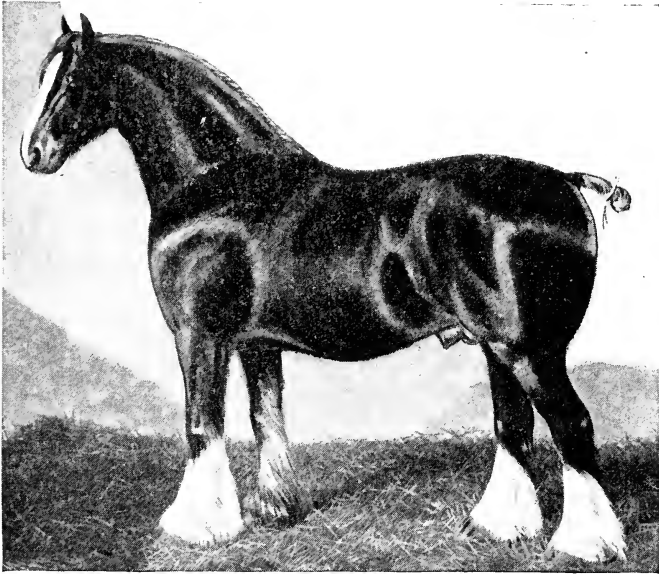
SATURN. Suffolk Stallion. Property of A. Smith, Esq.

bone, and fetlocks fringed with long, fine hair, the beauty or utility of which, by the way, I could never perceive. Colour immaterial, but black, brown, and the darker shades of bay are most in favour. The Shire should not be too big, but compact and weighty, and should measure 10 to 11 inches below the knee, girth from 7 feet 9 inches to 8 feet 3 inches, and stand not less than 16, but never more than 17 hands. In breeding it should be remembered that even in cart-horse strains the biggest mares do not necessarily produce the best foals. They cannot well be too *broad*, but may easily be too high. Never estimate a horse's size by its height, for this often depends on length of leg, which is not a sign of strength, but more often of weakness. Strong muscular development of the loin and straightish hind-leg are desirable, that the horse may be able to walk freely and well with a big load behind him. Breeders, too, cannot be too

particular about the feet of this horse, for while the Clydesdale has generally a good, sound foot with wide, open heels, it is often in the Shire too small and contracted. A good foot is of the utmost importance in so weighty an animal destined for heavy draught. So true is this that it is said that a Scotchman, in judging a cart-horse, begins invariably with the feet and works upwards, and unless these are satisfactory cares to go no further; while an Englishman pays most attention to the top and general configuration of the animal. By greater attention to both points in selection and breeding, we find now sounder legs and feet in the Shire, and better middle-pieces and stronger coupling in the Clydesdale.

Besides our heavy horse supply, there is also an immense demand for light draught horses, known to the trade as "Machiners." Machiners comprise pretty well every kind of harness horse, except those attached to

private carriages, which we see in the streets—*i.e.*, omnibus, tram, and cab horses, “vanners” and trappers generally. Hansom



NYN HITCHIN DUKE.

First Prize for two-year-old Stallions, London Shire Horse Show, 1893.
Property of J. P. Kidston, Esq.

cabs are very often horsed by the cast-offs of the training stable, but in the shafts of the four-wheeler you see almost every kind of animal that is too light or too old for

heavy traffic. The London General Omnibus Company owns about thirty-eight thousand horses, purchased at an average of £28 per horse, and the North Metropolitan Tramways Company employs some sixteen thousand, contracted for at £30 per horse. Considering that these are but two, if probably the two largest, companies of this kind in London, and that similar companies exist in every large town in the United Kingdom, and bearing in mind also the comparatively short period for which horses so employed last, we gain some idea of the enormous number which must somewhere be bred to keep all these wheels going. To speak of "light" draught horses in this connection may be somewhat of a misnomer—the horses must be light ones to get along at the pace required, but the work is heavy enough in all conscience, and it is only by the most generous feeding they can perform it at all.

The kindly but inexperienced passenger

(generally of the more compassionate sex), who sometimes commiserates the lean-looking cab or tram horse, fine drawn by severe work, as "half starved, poor thing," would probably be much surprised to hear that the same amount of stimulating food which such a horse puts away daily would render many of the sleek and aristocratic brethren, which haply she admires in the park, dangerous to ride or drive. The 'bus horse is usually a more bulky animal, who contrives to look as well fed as he is, for a certain amount of weight is absolutely necessary to start at frequent intervals so heavy a load as a full omnibus. Nearly all our omnibus horses are imported. Formerly Flemish horses were mostly used, and were very suitable for the work, being strong-limbed and sturdy, with particularly sound joints and feet, able to stand prolonged battering on the paved stones before the introduction of wood blocks and asphalt. The grey Percheron mares, too,

descendants of the stout stallions which, before the days of *La grande Vitesse*, used to trundle the heavy diligence along the *chaussées* of *La belle France* at their round, untiring trot, were well adapted to such work. Nowadays, Canadians are mostly used, and some of them seem useful animals enough; but, besides being very plain, they hardly look so well up to their work as the French horses did, and drivers tell me they are often soft. The tramcars can do with a lighter animal, for though very large they run comparatively lightly when once started, and on rails a very moderate pair of horses can pull a considerable weight at a smart trot.

We can hardly talk of breeding these light draught horses. You cannot rear a colt and keep him till he is sufficiently matured for street work, and make any profit on him at a contract price of £30; it would be a sorrier commercial enterprise than breeding

for the army. The majority of the horses thus employed must continue to come from countries where food and pasture are sufficiently cheap to allow of their being reared at a profit. Such English bred animals as you find engaged in cab and tramcar work must be either the frequent failures and misfits which render horse breeding so uncertain an enterprise, or else blemished or superannuated horses of a superior class which circumstances have degraded to this kind of labour. It is obvious, at any rate, that no one can deliberately apply himself to the business of their production.

The only kind of light draught horse which would seem at the present time to pay for breeding are carriage horses of superior class, and of these I would recommend the Hackney in preference to either the Cleveland bay or Yorkshire coach horse, for the reason that the heavy barouches and family coaches, which earlier in the century

made so stately a show in park and square, and which required big, upstanding horses with breed and fashion, are now rarely seen; but instead are multitudinous broughams, victorias, etc., which are better horsed by smaller and more compact animals with quick and lively action. These, when possessed of the requisite symmetry and style, are eagerly bought for town work and exportation; the second class find a fair market in the provinces; while the inferior produce, the misfits and failures as I have termed them, are very unlikely to be so bad as not readily to find a place somewhere or other in the ranks of the great army of light draught horses which daily earn their own and their owners' keep on the busy streets and roads of this great commercial country. Nevertheless, for long, hard, or fast work in light harness, horses of a well-bred hunter type are much to be preferred.

CHAPTER VI.

BREEDING PONIES.

OF all the charming animals in this world none is more so than a well-bred and well-mannered pony. He has so much pluck and endurance, and that generous kindly nature (not unspiced with a dash of mischief) which so endears him to mankind, and renders him one of the most useful and companionable of all the creatures appointed by a beneficent Providence to their service.

The pony proper is probably the horse indigenous, so to speak, to these islands. Not, of course, that it is at all likely that any species of *equus caballus* is really indigenous to them: I mean merely the earliest variety of horse to be discovered in

the annals of this country. The wild ponies of Exmoor, Dartmoor, the New Forest, the



BOADICEA.

Welsh mountains, and the Shetlands, were probably the horse of the British Isles, our

modern variations being due to foreign importations and graftings upon this original



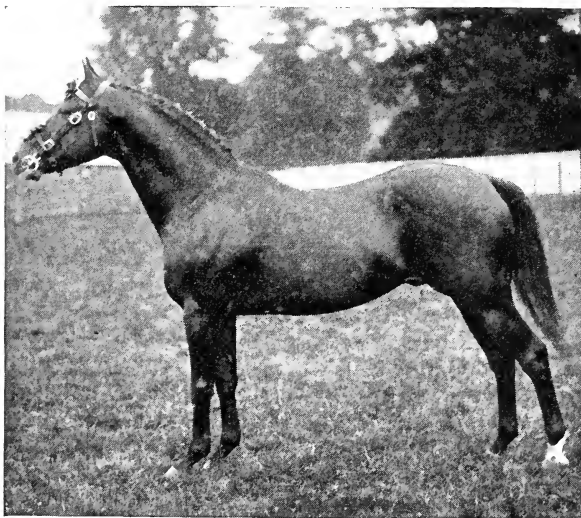
THE EARLY BRITISH HUNTER.

Statuette, by Boëhm.

stock. We read of no early British cavalry, but we do of armed chariots, and it is pro-

bable that the scythe-axled cars, which at first spread terror and devastation, equal to that caused by the elephants of Pyrrhus, in the ranks of the invading Roman legions, were horsed by these sturdy little creatures, which, though too small to carry armed men, were by their strength and spirit well adapted to this method of warfare; wherefore I imagine that Mr. Thorneycroft is incorrect in horsing Boadicea's war-chariot with a pair of fairly good-looking landau horses, which, as a critic lately suggested, would fetch £60 apiece at Tattersall's to-day; and that the mount of the early British hunter, an admirable statuette by Boëhm erected by General Pitt-Rivers in the Larmer pleasure-grounds, which he so generously maintains for the public benefit near his seat in Wiltshire, more accurately represents the horse of the period. This is a beautifully modelled group of a skin-clad Briton mounted on a sturdy, well-shaped pony—"round-hoofed, short-

jointed, fetlocks shag and strong"—which stands with ears pricked, nostrils dilated, the bronze almost instinct with life, alert, keen as his rider, who, with one hand on



ROSEWATER (late JOHNNIE DAY).

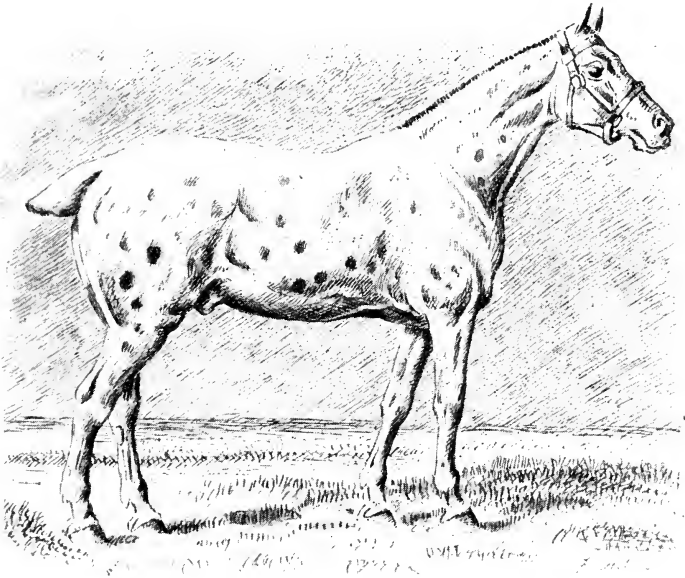
Property of Sir Walter Gilbey.

his raw-hide rein, his short spear firm grasped in the other, leans forward, scanning the country for the first sign of his prey. Be this as it may, the pony has been always

with us; but never, of late years at any rate, more valued than at the present time, when there is a constant and regular demand for ponies in all sizes of good shape and action.

But what is a pony? "Oh, anything under fifteen hands," says the modern hunting man, in his ill-judged contempt for little horses. "Anything below fourteen, from which up to fifteen it may be called a cob," explains somebody else. Mr. Milward, again, of Thurgarton Priory fame, one of the best pony judges we have ever had (the Milward Mondays at Tattersall's in former days were quite a feature in equine fixtures), disliked the term "cob," and never used it, pony with him covering everything under fourteen-two; whilst once more the animals which draw the Royal pony-carriages are well-matched greys of fifteen-two. For my own part I differentiate between pony and cob, not entirely by size, but also by character,

understanding by the latter a thick-set animal of from fourteen to fifteen hands: by the former a little horse with some breed in him, for choice as much like a miniature hunter



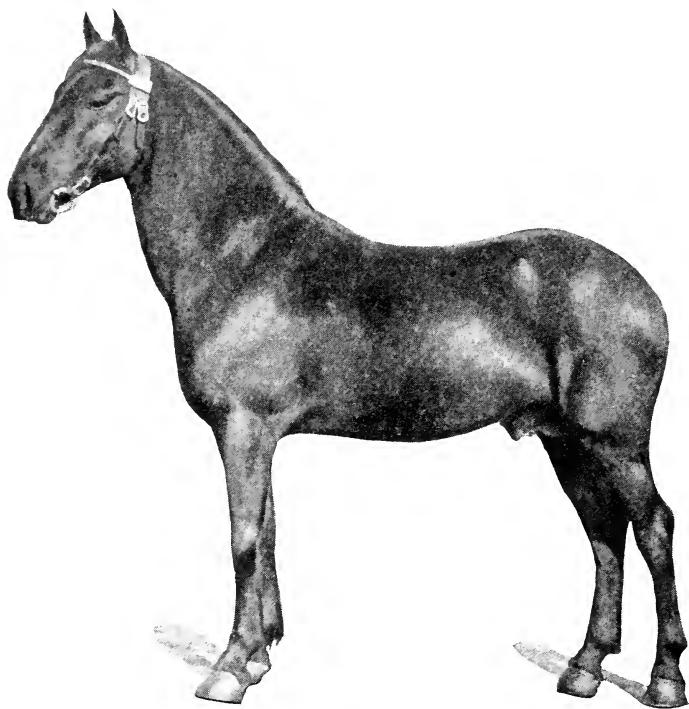
“That very useful animal, a cob-pony.”

as possible; while a strongly built one of smaller size—say, thirteen to thirteen-two—I should dub that very useful animal, a cob-pony.

The qualities of a good pony are many and remarkable: great power and speed in proportion to his size, for instance, with a general handiness which makes one say of a larger horse of undeniable cleverness that he "rides like a pony." These qualifications, coupled with wondrous powers of endurance, and courage unsurpassed in the equine race, make a really good pony a most desirable acquisition.

India is the great country for ponies: there he is most used and best appreciated. Hear Major Shakespear, the old "Shikari," on this subject: "Action is power, it is all in all; a horse without it may do to look at; while standing still he may appear a magnificent animal, but he is not worth a shilling. Never buy anything but a high-caste horse as a hunter. It is a common and fatal error to suppose that it is not necessary to have a blood horse for this purpose; but you had better have a blood

pony than a great, big, low-caste horse. Even as to price, count not the money you give



COMET.

Welsh Pony Stallion. H.M. Convict Prison, Princetown, Dartmoor.

for a real Arab; go and sell all you possess, and make him your own." It is, of course, the Arab descent of the little animal so much

in vogue in that country which accounts for his excellence; and truly wonderful were the capabilities of the little hunters (some so small as thirteen-two) on which this redoubtable sportsman speared hog, bear, and even leopards, over broken and rocky ground, intersected by nullahs and other obstacles, which render pig-sticking in certain parts of India the most difficult and exciting of all forms of hunting, from the horseman's point of view.

But we breed some good ponies in our own country, too, and our native wild or semi-wild stock, affords us a capital foundation on which to build what we want. The Welsh and Exmoor breeds have long been improved by the use of small thoroughbred sires; while of late the New Forest and Dartmoor ponies have also largely benefited by similar means. The original Exmoor (the truest specimens of which are in possession of the Acland family at Holnicote)

was a tiny animal, seldom more than eleven, at most twelve hands, but of great hardihood and endurance. He has, however, been greatly developed both in size and symmetry, first by Mr. Smith of North Molton, and then by the late Sir Frederick Knight, who ran for years near his place at Simonsbath a notable little stallion called *Don Juan* (I think by the Leger winner, *Don John* by *Harkaway*), as perfect a specimen of the blood pony as one could wish to see, and whose stock have achieved a great reputation. The Welsh ponies, too, were largely crossed early in the century with the thoroughbred, the best being bred near Wynnstay, where the farmers had the use of Sir Watkin's stallions for their mares. But unless we have to go back to the famous but somewhat mythical *Katerfelto*, the New Forest breed was the earliest to be influenced by the all-desirable strain of warm blood from the East; for, more than a century ago, about 1766,

no less a horse than *Marske*, the sire of *Eclipse*, was covering in this district. The Duke of Cumberland, who was Ranger of the Forest, first obtained him from Mr. John Hutton, of Marske in Yorkshire, after which place the horse was named, in exchange for a chestnut Arab. At the Duke's death *Marske* was sold at Tattersall's with his other horses, and bought for a trifling sum by a Dorset farmer, in whose ownership he covered country mares and Forest ponies at half-a-guinea. The farmer after a few years sold his unsuspected treasure for £20, remarking that he was glad to be rid of so bad a bargain! The vicissitudes, however, of equine fully equal those of human life, and a few years later this horse's fee as advertised by his last owner, Lord Abingdon, was £200, an enormous one for that, or any day. After this lucky dash of warm blood, pony breeding in the New Forest declined again, until the Prince Consort



DON JUAN.

A noted Pony Sire (taken when nearly thirty years old). Property of the late Sir Frederick Knight, of Exmoor.

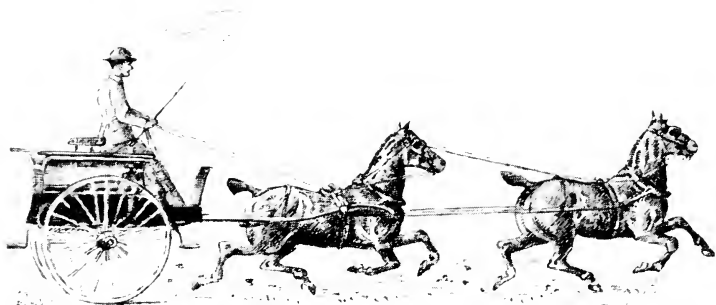
sent a grey Arab stallion, which was kept at New Park, and wonderfully improved the breed in this district, until the temptation to sell the most promising young stock as foals and yearlings again depleted the Forest of its best ponies.

The deterioration at length became so marked that some fifteen years ago a small association was formed by the Verderers and others interested in the matter, and a fresh start was made. Her Majesty the Queen graciously lent two Arabs of high caste, *Yirassan* and *Abeyan*, the latter the gift of the Imaun of Muscat; and besides these, two stallions were purchased from the famous pony stud of Lords Arthur and Lionel Cecil to run in the Forest. The result is already apparent in a considerable improvement in the young stock. I rode, as a boy, for several years a thirteen-two pony by an Arab out of a Forest mare, a fast and clever animal, and though I have

been very fortunate in the matter of hacks, I don't know that I have been much better carried since. But the average pony of that period, though hardy and useful, was apt to be bad-shouldered and cow-hocked. Some young ones which I have again now show, however, a marked improvement in these and other respects.

Taking then our native stock of pony mares for a foundation, and choosing such as are well made, short-legged, of good bone, and what is called "roomy," we may proceed to cross them in one or two ways—either with a small thoroughbred or a "Hackney Stud Book" sire. Of the two, with the intention of breeding ponies for my own use, I should prefer the former, because I not only so much admire the thoroughbred shape and make, but also prefer the long thoroughbred action, which steals over the ground without perceptible effort, and can be continued all day without fatigue to horse

or rider, to the lofty knee action so greatly desiderated for Show and Park purposes. Such, does not, however, appear to be the general taste, and it may pay better to use the Hackney cross, there being a good demand in London and our larger towns for



Spun like Clockwork round the Ring.

good harness cobs and ponies which arch the neck and bend the knee. A smart, quick pony is nice to drive, but I am no great admirer of what is justly called "extravagant" action. Still, that exhibited by certain well-known cobs and ponies in the show ring is, it cannot be denied, very attractive

to the general public. Among many fine performers of this class I recollect a pair of small ponies driven tandem, which for several years were quite a feature in the Bath Horse Show, whose knee and hock action were simply marvellous, and evoked roars of applause as they spun with the precision of clock-work round the ring. Nor do such ponies, as very high-actioned horses were once wont to do, now put down their feet pretty much where they picked them up; many of them, which can use the hind legs as well as the fore, having considerable pace. They are, of course, essentially harness ponies. Extravagant action is not pleasant to the rider, and the ponies which possess it have not generally what we call "riding" shoulders. Even in harness it is not desirable for ordinary work: the legs and joints soon give way on macadamised roads; indeed, I believe that the owners of our high-actioned show horses find about

an hour's work a day quite sufficient for most of them. In a long journey, such as the blood pony accomplishes with ease at a fast rate, the "Show" pony would probably tire of it after a very few miles in his *show* form.

The "Hackney Stud Book" horse, whether of Yorkshire or Norfolk extraction, in spite of his showy action and smart appearance, has many detractors.* It is alleged that he is soft and soon done with. This may be the case with some, especially with forced and pampered show-case specimens, but I do not quite see why it should be so, for modern hackneys trace back almost without exception to thoroughbred stock. The first, *Fireaway*, for instance, was by *Pretender*, a chestnut horse by *Marske*, the aforementioned

* A fresh dash of warm blood has again become desirable. Hackney owners would do well to cross their mares with blood horses of great action, such, for instance, as *Chibiabos* and *Erskine*.

sire of *Eclipse*, out of a mare by *Bajazet*, a son of the *Godolphin Arab*, thus tracing directly back to two out of the three great founts of pure blood in this country. *Shales* too, foaled in 1755, was another aristocratically descended trotting stallion, his sire being *Blaze* by *Flying Childers*; the dam of *Blaze*, known as the *Confederate Filly*, having also Barb or Turkish blood in equal proportions with English. Thus, the Norfolk trotter at any rate, so far as lineage goes, should have stoutness enough for anything; and, indeed, M. de Thaumberg, for forty years connected with Government breeding studs in France, declared in 1873 that the Norfolk sire had transmitted, not merely good action, but high courage and power of endurance as well. If, therefore, the strain has deteriorated since then I should be inclined to attribute it to the same cause as the degeneration of the thoroughbred—*viz.*, injudicious treatment. Probably neither

horses nor men are (in the average) so hardy as once they were, and probably also through the same cause, the softer way in which both live.

In recommending the thoroughbred cross I include as a matter of course the pure Arab, since such is admitted without question into the British "Stud Book"; and when you can get him I know nothing better to use with pony mares than this. Very few are likely now to be imported into this country for some time to come; the enterprise of such lovers of this superlative animal as Mr. Wilfrid Blunt and the Honourable Miss Dillon, not having, I regret to say, through lack of patronage and support, met with the success it deserved. Nothing of course, as Major Shakespear assures us, can surpass the Arab blood for hunting, but every light-weight imagines now-a-days that he must ride a big horse; and the occasions for distance riding being now so infrequent,

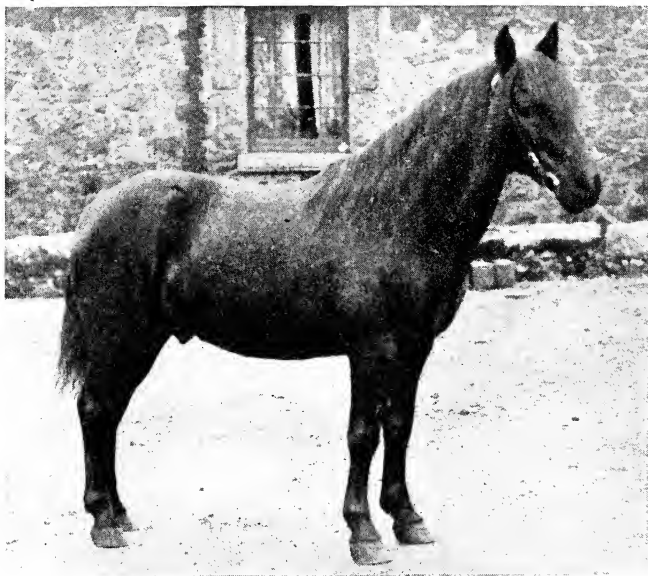
there is little demand for fast and enduring roadsters. Comparatively few people use hacks at all, and those who do seem to think more of the showiness of their action than of the ease and comfort to the rider of being mounted, as our forefathers used to say, on a "bit of blood." I know of no nicer hack than a cross between a thoroughbred or Arab sire and an English pony mare; while a second cross of blood is always likely to produce that first prize of pony-breeding, a first-class Polo pony. Some useful ponies, it should be remarked, have been bred the other way about, by crossing a small thoroughbred mare with a Norfolk trotter. Lord Calthorpe's celebrated pony stallion, *Don Carlos*, was bred in this way; but, from his portrait, he looks more like harness than saddle.

As to which of our native breeds your pony mare should be chosen from, it is pretty much a matter of individual fancy. The

Exmoor, thanks to Sir Frederick Knight and Mr. Smith, are now better than the Dartmoor, and I rather prefer either to the New Foresters.* If not quite so big, they have prettier, brighter heads, and I think are even hardier and more sure of foot, the sheltered lawns and heath-clad slopes of the Forest affording greater protection and easier going than the steep tors and rock-strewn combes of the wild western moors. With the Welsh ponies I am less familiar, but many think them better than any; while the Scotch Galloway mare, if she still exists in her integrity, must, I should fancy, be very hard to beat. Young ponies should be reared on as hilly and broken ground as possible, lest they lose one of

* A South-country dealer with whom I talked lately told me he considered the New Forest pony the best of the three breeds, on the grounds that it had more fire and spirit; and certainly the two I have now are full of it, as were those I rode in my boyhood. Still, I fancy he did not know the others so well.

the most valuable characteristics of their race, that marvellous cleverness, by which they seem unable to put a foot wrong when going at speed over a rough and difficult country.



HOTSPUR.

Pony Stallion, bred by Lord Arthur Cecil, used on the Prison Farm,
Princetown, Dartmoor.

CHAPTER VII.

QUEEN'S PREMIUM SIRES.

THE royal patronage of the Turf, which extended over a period of some two hundred and eighty years—*i.e.*, from the reign of James I. to that of Queen Victoria—may be said to have terminated officially with the substitution of Queen's Premiums for the Queen's Plates. That our present King continues to run horses (and has, indeed, as Prince of Wales, to the general and his own delight, actually twice won the chief prize of the British Turf) the country accepts as a welcome and very practical proof that its great national sport still enjoys the personal sympathy of the royal house. Nevertheless, many persons, while fully recognising the futility to which the

contests for the Queen's Plates as an encouragement to the breed of horses in this country (the purpose for which they were instituted) had been reduced, are, I suspect, somewhat regretful that the official patronage of the Crown should be thus entirely withdrawn from it; for the simultaneous abolition of Her Majesty's breeding establishment at Hampton Court must, we suppose, be accepted as further proof that such severance is to be final and complete. The circumstances leading up to this change seem to demand a brief retrospection, which, with apologies to the *cognoscenti*, I will proceed to give for the benefit of those who may be less conversant with such matters, and yet not without interest in them.

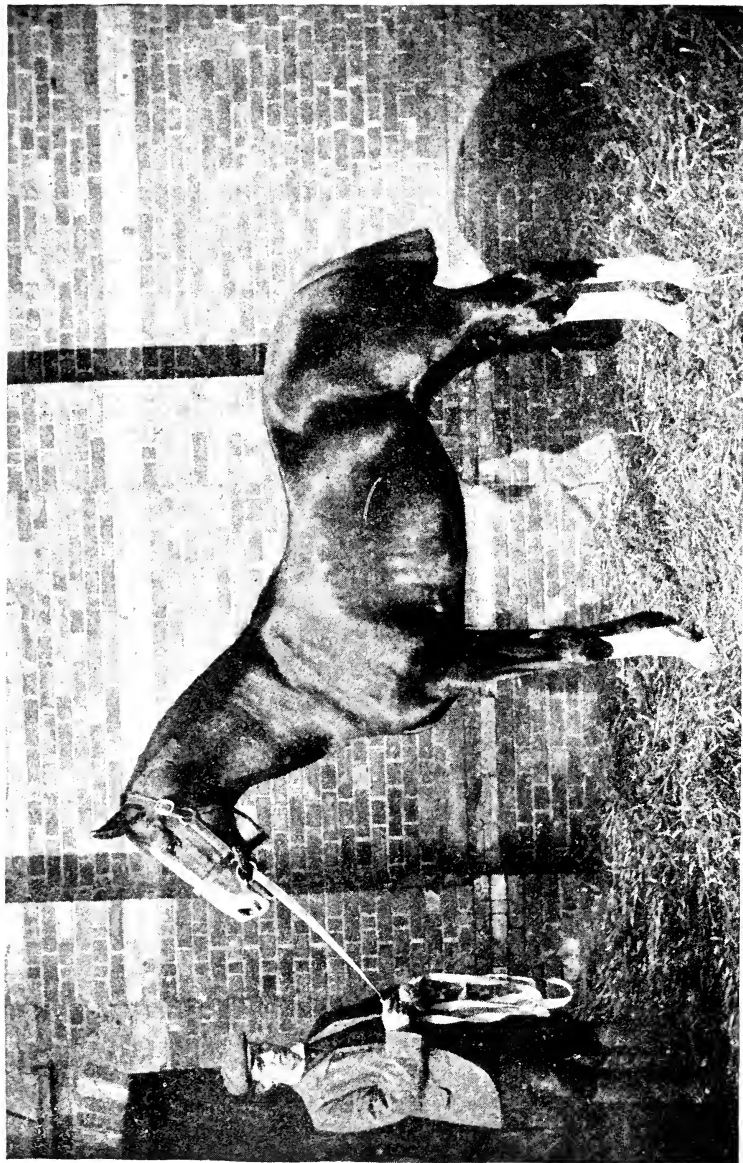
The earliest prize for winning a horse race in this country was a bell; but this was soon superseded by cups, bowls, and similar pieces of plate, of which those given by the Crown for "the encouragement of the breed

of horses " were most esteemed, both for their intrinsic value and the prestige which naturally accrued to the winning of a royal prize. These King's Plates formed, therefore, the chief event at most race meetings. They were run for at first in heats of four miles, and with a minimum weight for four-year-olds of ten stone four; five-year-olds were given eleven stone six; while six and aged had to put up no less than twelve stone.

So long as these conditions were maintained there can be no doubt that the Royal Plates were of considerable value, in eliciting from the small number of racehorses then in training those most likely to transmit substance and staying power, no less than speed, to their progeny. Unfortunately, however, during the later reigns, weights and distance were gradually lowered and shortened till the Plates no longer served their purpose, and, moreover, they came

presently to be farmed by a very few animals. The celebrated *Fisherman* was a noted performer at the game. Walking, as the custom then was, from meeting to meeting, and being about the stoutest horse of his day, he fairly swept the board, winning in five years one hundred and twenty races, including the Queen's Plate at almost every provincial meeting in the kingdom, from York to Plymouth and Salisbury to Carlisle.

With the introduction, however, of the classical races and valuable handicap stakes, the esteem in which the Royal Plates were held gradually declined. The owners of the highest class horses kept them for more important stakes, and only inferior animals were entered. Of these, it was generally known by collateral running which alone had a chance, so only two or three came to the post, and the race as often as not resolved itself into a walk over, until at



ERSKINE.

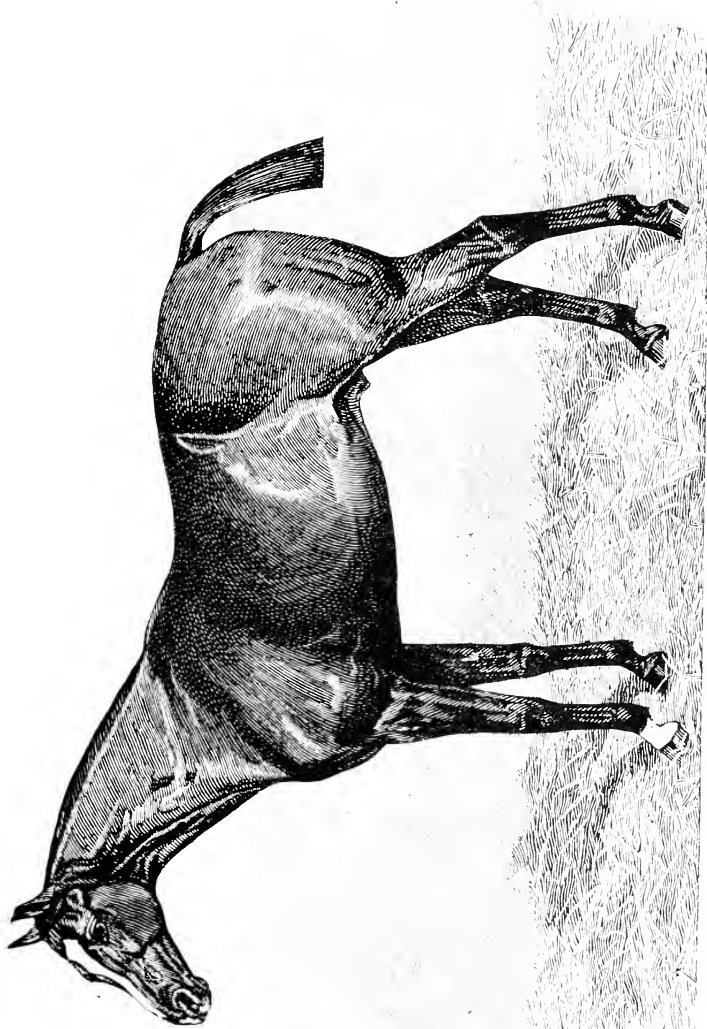
A thoroughbred Sire of marvellous action, eminently suited to cross with hackney or trotting mares. Property of the Compton Stud Company.

last the expression "a mere plater" came to be applied as a term of contempt to a fourth-rate racer, only fit to run for Her Majesty's Plate at a small provincial meeting! With the subordination of the love of pure sport to the vulgar greed of gain which is gradually undermining the British Turf, it seems as though the handicap system were destined to carry all before it; and there is reason to fear that, unless there should be a reaction (a consummation devoutly to be wished by all true lovers of a noble sport), even such grand trophies as the Ascot and Goodwood Cups will in time go the way of the Queen's Plates, and the proud title of "cup horse" fall presently into the same obloquy as the "mere plater."

The state of things thus indicated could not, of course, be allowed to continue. It was alike contempt of court, so to speak, and sheer waste of Crown money voted for

a purpose it no longer subserved. Hence the substitution, on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding, of Queen's Premiums for Queen's Plates. This constitutes a fresh departure in the State encouragement of horse breeding. The object of the new system is, of course, identical with that of the old; only instead of continuing to encourage third-rate racing, of which there is enough and to spare, it applies itself directly to the stud—that is to say, it gives prizes to horses on their entering the stud instead of during their racing career.

In this way it was considered they would go to a better class of animal than of late years had been the case. It does not, however, necessarily follow that this will be the consequence of the alteration. The premiums are given entirely for "points," neither the actual performances of the candidates nor the merits of their ancestry

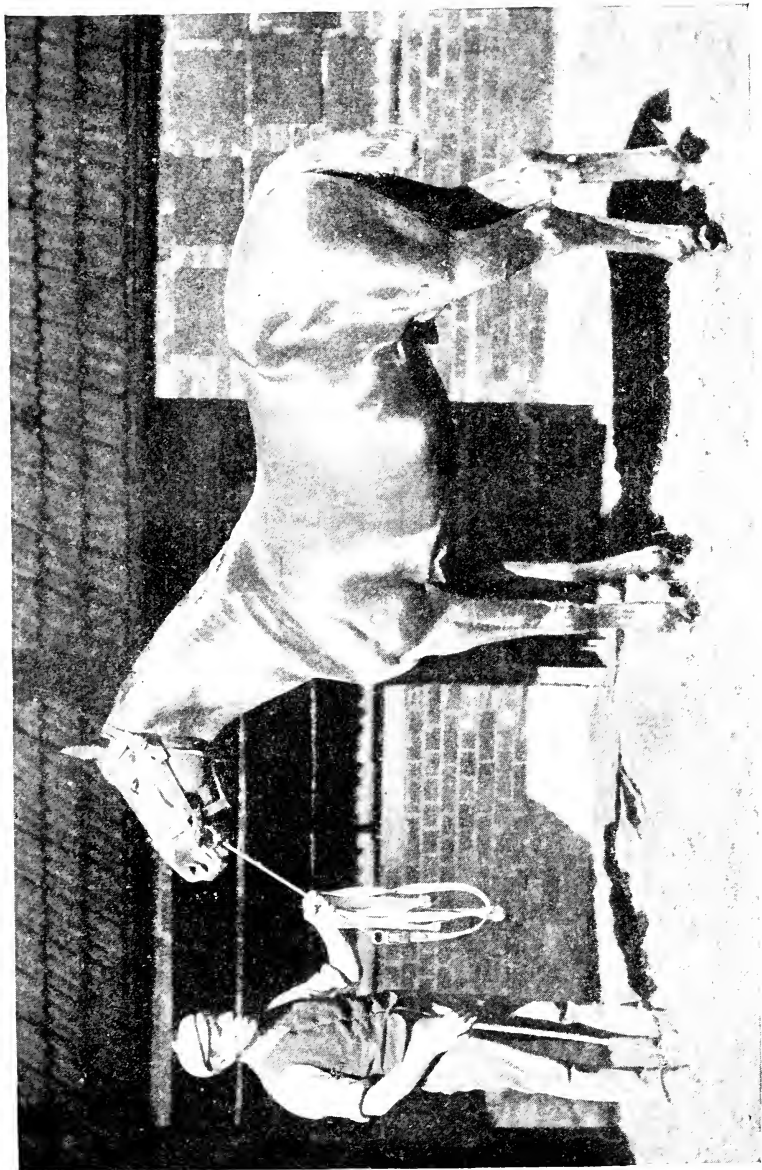


MARIONI.

By Macaroni out of Queen Marion by King Tom.

being allowed the slightest account. It is not, of course, in any degree essential that they should have run at all, though, as a matter of fact, many of our finest premium sires have been very fair performers in their racing days. All experienced persons know how very possible it is to have a magnificent looking horse, which may yet be deficient in the qualities which constitute the chief value of the thoroughbred—*viz.*, stamina, stoutness, and speed. A horse, therefore, which has performed creditably on the Turf, and particularly in races of at least a mile and a half in length, has shown that, at any rate, there is something in him ; and, if to this capacity there be added good points and approved soundness, we should have a sire admirably qualified to fulfil the purpose of all Queen's Plates or Premiums—*i.e.* (to avail myself once more of the original phrase), the improvement of the breed of horses in this country.

An admirable specimen of such a horse would have been the late Lord Bradford's famous *Chippendale*, who not only during his illustrious Turf career ran with great stoutness under heavy weights (for these days) in long-distance races, and won in his turn in the best of company, but wound up by gaining first prize at the Royal. Many distinguished foreign and other visitors came to see this fine horse, and the most critical judges could find no fault in him, so perfect was he in make, shape, action, disposition, and all good equine qualities. Of course, so fine a performer would have been far too valuable a horse to send up for a Queen's Premium, on winning which he would have had to cover at a low fee instead of the high one which he naturally commanded; but he was just the type of horse I would myself have chosen for a Queen's Premium, because he united the attributes of almost a great racehorse with the best points of the show



YARD ARM.

A celebrated Hunter Sire. Winner of many races and prizes. Property of the Compton Stud Company.

ring. As a sire of racing stock he was not a conspicuous success, though many mares of the highest class were sent to him; but this does not in the least discount my opinion that he would have been the *beau ideal* of a Premium horse.

Superlative speed in the progeny of the latter is neither expected nor desired; but rather a combination of the recognised good points of the sire with some of his pace and stoutness. Many of our fastest and most successful Turf performers of the present day would be among the last I should choose as Premium sires, albeit I should be equally reluctant to confer a premium for fine appearance only.

At the 1898 show and competition for Premiums at Islington—the eleventh which the Royal Commission has held for awarding them (the first having been at Nottingham in 1888), it being also the first year in which the rule excluding horses over twenty years

old came into force—there were 116 entries. Forty-nine of these having been selected by the judges in the preliminary inspection as worthy to compete for the twenty-nine premiums of £150 each, three only of their number were rejected by the veterinary inspectors, which may be regarded as very satisfactory, so many of our modern thoroughbreds being subject to “roaring,” and other hereditary complaints.

No fewer than thirteen of the sires which ultimately won premiums on this occasion were successful also in 1897, while five others had gained them on previous occasions. The chief honours fell to *Marioni*, who then won his eighth consecutive premium. This is a horse I know well, for he won his first four in this district (D.), being then the property of the Compton Stud Company. Sold by them for £1000 (for *Ruddigore*, a similar class horse and of the same colour, a very rich dark chestnut, they obtained, I believe,

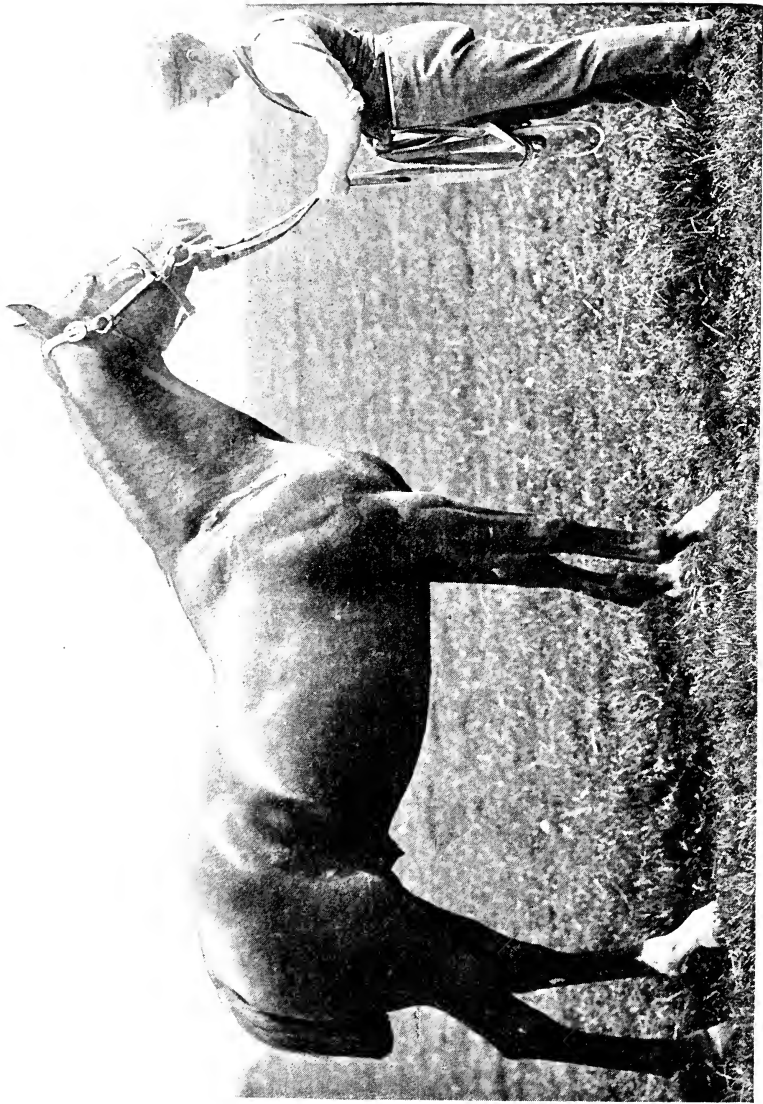


SCOT GUARD.
By Strathconan.

£3000), he has since won four times in District C., and now, with still seven years before him (for he is but thirteen) before reaching the age limit, he will have to move elsewhere, since by the regulations drawn up for their awards a Queen's Premium may be won only four times in the same district. A horse named *Homely* runs him close, having won six times, *Button Park*, a horse which won some races for the Duke of Beaufort, claiming the same score; while several others are credited with five and four wins apiece.

This Compton Stud, by the way, of which *Marioni* was a chief ornament, is worth describing, for the system on which it is run is, I believe, almost unique. The Stud, situated at Sandley, near Gillingham, Dorset, comprises some eight or ten splendid stallions—thoroughbred horses of superb appearance and enormous power, chosen by Captain Fife, Captain Phipps Hornby, and other promoters

of the company, all first-class judges, as likely to get hunters, and generally improve the character of horses in this district. Nearly all the horses thus selected have won premiums; or, when they have not, it was because they were too good to be shown for them; for, since a premium winner is bound to serve a certain number of mares at a low fee, it is obviously more to the owner's interest not to enter for these prizes a superlatively excellent animal, which without such recommendation can command a high fee. Thus those grand horses, *Yard Arm* and *Pantomime*, both the property of the Stud, do not compete, though gaining the prizes, if they did, would be a foregone conclusion. Besides several other stallions of similar stamp, including *Scot Guard*, now snow-white and twenty-two years old, yet still perhaps the handsomest topped horse in England, the Compton Stud possesses that fine racehorse



PANTOMIME.

Champion Produce Group Winner.—Property of the Compton Stud Company.

*Amphion** (covering at 150 guineas), and *Crafton*, as well as an Arab and a smart little horse suitable for crossing with cob and pony mares, to the service of which he is restricted.

A most notable feature of this Stud is an annual two days' show of young stock sired by their horses, past or present, with sales each day by Messrs. Tattersall, held in September. This is a great convenience, both to local breeders and purchasers from a distance, who have thus a large number of promising colts and fillies from which to make their selection. That intending purchasers sometimes return disappointed is owing to the dearth of good mares to send to such horses as the enterprising directors of this Stud Company have got together, the time-honoured delusion that any mare

* *Amphion's* fee is reduced to 45 guineas. *Crafton* is dead, and his place is filled by *Suspendor*. The services of both these horses are restricted to thoroughbred mares.

will do to breed from yet obtaining in this as in other localities. But, as Mr. Albert Muntz has well remarked in a useful little paper on this subject, it is difficult to overrate the importance of good mares in breeding. Scarcely any offer, travellers have frequently assured us, will tempt an Arab to part with his brood mare, so that mares of the highest caste are very rarely in the market at all.

We English have been less wise in this respect than certain Continental nations. Though a really good brood mare should be a small mine of wealth to her owner, nearly every one is tempted by a good price, and in consequence foreigners have for years been draining this country of its very best. Of those which remain we must make the utmost use; and with the object of producing, first, a high-class hunter, or, failing this, a good charger or general purpose horse, the breeder who possesses a mare of the right stamp—

long, wide, roomy, and low, with good bone and sound constitution—can hardly do better than send her to a King's Premium sire, when, if the new Government system be thus properly supported, the result can hardly fail to be satisfactory to all concerned. Much must still be left to the individual breeder's enterprise and acumen; but His Majesty's Premiums may at least be expected to do more for the breeding of superior horses in this country than the Queen's Plates can have done, at any rate in the later degenerate stage of their existence.

CHAPTER VIII.

MULES, AND THEIR ADAPTABILITY TO ENGLISH NEEDS—AGRICULTURAL AND GENERAL.

It is by way of being a remarkable fact that the mule, which has been found so useful for general purposes in almost every other country, should have been so little utilised in this, where horse labour has been from time immemorial so extensively employed. In France, Spain, and Italy, in particular, the services of this hardy and enduring hybrid have been largely used; while in America the greater part of its agricultural, and probably nearly the whole of its street car and military transport work, usually done by horse here, is performed by it; the superior merits of the

mule for most purposes in which appearance is subservient to utility being generally admitted. These merits are said to be greater endurance, capability of labour, freedom from disease, longevity, and economy of keep—a catalogue of virtues so conspicuous that it is believed by those best acquainted with the animal that, were these qualities better known to English employers of horse-labour, the mule would very soon be as generally used in this country as it already is abroad.

The popular British idea of the mule is that it is an animal of small size and power, somewhat larger and better than a donkey, but of course utterly inferior to the most indifferent horse for any kind of work. This appears to be a very mistaken estimate, founded entirely upon insular inexperience of an animal, our acquaintance with which is usually limited to one or two chance-bred specimens, which have been treated as

donkeys most undeservedly are treated in this country—that is, with utter contempt and neglect. I say usually, for there are some high-class mules employed in England, but they are very few and far between.

To understand the merits of the mule those of the donkey must be first appreciated, and this of course cannot be until that much abused animal is rationally treated, since it must be apparent to every reflective person that, were the horse treated as ungenerously as the ass has habitually been, he would either cease to exist, or become dwarfed to the size and capacity of the scrubbiest pony. Now, the distinguishing traits of the ass are hardihood, endurance, sureness of foot, and immense strength for his bulk, while for “gameness” at a dead pull he is unsurpassed, if not unequalled, by any breed of horse. I had my eyes opened to this conspicuous merit in the

donkey many years ago by a remarkably pig-headed and hard-mouthed specimen which was my property as a small boy. Given to me as a foal, he ran loose on uncommonly good keep for a donkey till he was four or five years old, by which time he pretty well defied the whole strength of the establishment to break him. He was not a particularly big donkey, though larger than a Shetland pony which I had at the same time, and enormously strong. He taught us all to ride, and in so doing was said to have imprinted an indelible mark upon every juvenile member of the family. But I remember well how once when I had driven this donkey to the hayfield, it was desired to move a loaded waggon while the horses were gone with another load. The donkey was attached by chain traces to the end of the shafts, which were held up by two men. Away went the waggon, as though drawn by a team of Suffolks, till

the front wheels stuck in a grip. Then thrice or four times did that glorious donkey pull till he went on his knees, and such was his staunchness that, though he had never been asked to draw a weight before, he stuck to it till at last with a mighty effort he dragged the waggon out.

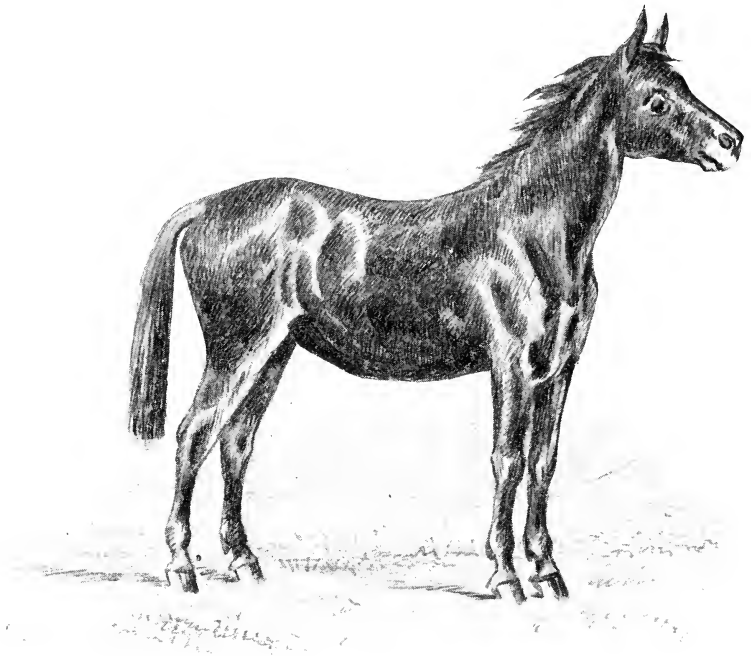
Now, it is this quality and others that distinguish the ass, which it is claimed are found in his offspring the mule, united with the superior size, spirit, and speed of the horse; and the union of these attributes it is which makes him such an extremely useful animal. Interesting information is sometimes supplied to the painstaking inquirer. Thus a lady, whom I questioned concerning the employment of mules in South Africa, from which country she had lately returned, told me that there were mules, but that people did not ride or drive them much, they were kept mostly for breeding! The value of this information

may be estimated in the light of the fact that the hybrid is incapable of production, notwithstanding alleged instances to the contrary.

The mule, as most persons are aware, is the offspring of the union between the horse and the ass, and may be bred either from stallion pony and female ass, when it is called a mute or hinny; or from the Jack donkey and mare, which is the mule proper. The former is smaller and more pony-like, with longer mane and finer ears; but it is of very little value compared with the latter, and in consequence is but little bred in Poitou, which province is the headquarters of the mule-breeding industry in Europe. Few persons in this country, where the mule is so little esteemed, have perhaps any idea of the extent to which they are bred in this part of France. Mule-breeding, as there carried on, forms a great local industry. Ten years ago (we learn

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on the authority of Mr. Sutherland, who has had great experience of mules, and in conjunction with the eminent naturalist,



Mute or Hinny—produce of Stallion Pony and Jenny Ass.

Mr. Tegetmeier, has written an exhaustive book on the subject) there were some two hundred mule-breeding establishments in

this province, mostly in the department of Deux-Sevres, which comprised no fewer than 50,000 mares, of which 38,000 were devoted to the production of mules, the remainder being used for maintaining a breed of horses suitable for the purpose, which is called *race chevaline mulassière*; and probably, so great has been the demand for large draught mules, these numbers have considerably increased during the last decade. The sum annually realised by the sale of these mules has been estimated at over eleven million francs, which would amount to some £451,000 of our money. The Poitou mare, *la jument Poitevine mulassière*, used for the purpose, is a big heavy cart mare, with large barrel and big bone, bred mostly on the marshes of La Vendée, land very similar to that on which the nearly extinct black Lincolnshire dray-horse was reared. The Poitevin breeders (who by the way seem to labour under

many stupid and senseless prejudices in the management of their stock) formerly imagined that their mares had a special and unique capacity for producing good mules—that they were, as they phrased it, *intérieurement mulassières*; which was of course pure imagination, since when a superior class of mare from Normandy and Brittany was introduced, the produce, as might be expected, improved proportionately.

The Poitou Jack, or *Baudet*, as he is called, said to be of Spanish extraction, used for crossing with these mares, is an animal which would surprise those acquainted only with the English donkey. With shaggy, unkempt coat and heavy head, garnished with enormous ears (often by reason of their great length carried horizontally like those of an ear-lopped rabbit) he presents an uncouth and extraordinary appearance. Moreover, from long confinement in a dark and dirty stable, and want of exercise, he is often

extremely vicious. In height he is generally from fourteen hands to fourteen-two, of great girth and immense bone, frequently as much as eight and a half inches below the knee, the measurement of a big English thoroughbred horse "likely to get hunters." The American-bred Jacks are often higher than the Spanish or Poitevin, some attaining to sixteen hands; but this is no advantage, since increase of height means generally only length of leg, which is not desirable either in horse or ass. The tallest Jacks it is considered (and it is just as one would imagine) do not as a rule get the best mules. The favourite colour for a Poitou Jack is a dark brown, generally with a white or mealy coloured belly and muzzle; a grey-coated one, which is the most usual colour of the ass in this country, being less valued, though with no very apparent reason.

Like the Arab with his mare, the Poitevin

is very reluctant to sell his *baudet*, and a really good one commands a large price, generally from £100 to £400; a particularly fine specimen having once, it is alleged, fetched as much as £1000.

It is generally supposed that, in the cross, the donkey influence predominates over that of the horse, and this certainly seems to be the case, both in appearance and characteristics, in regard to the mule, but it is not so apparent in the hinny, or jennet, as it is sometimes called. One which I knew was quite as much like a pony as a donkey. Very few of these are met with in England, but in Ireland they are more common, especially in Tipperary and Mayo, where a good Welsh pony was stationed a few years ago for the express purpose of breeding this animal. For trotting work in light carts the jennet is more suitable than the heavier-bodied mule, and being the offspring of two such enduring animals as the pony

and donkey, he naturally inherits this quality, as well as that of longevity. He is also extensively used, I believe, in the Neapolitan district, and in the Island of Sardinia.

The mule, Mr. Sutherland remarks, has been aptly described as “an animal with no ancestry and no hope of posterity.” For his mother’s sake, we trust not from pride, he loves to consort with horses rather than with members of his father’s family; so much so that the presence of a quiet old mare or pony will prevent a team from straying when outspanned on veldt or prairie. Nevertheless, when in the course of that instructive conversazione of camp animals, which occurred on a memorable night of panic, and which was so faithfully reported by Mr. Rudyard Kipling (who evidently knows camels and mules as well as he knows Thomas Atkins and the Competition Wallah), the battery mule was

grossly insulted by being called the son of a Malaga jackass, he valiantly defended the reputation of his sire, who, he declared, could "pull down, bite, and kick into rags" any horse he came across. And what the mule claimed for his sire he can do indifferent well for himself, as Billy was about to demonstrate when the timely interposition of Two-tails with terrific trumpeting silenced both disputants.

The general impression as to mules is that they are incurably vicious and bad tempered, but this their friends say is a libel, the temper of the mule when properly treated being quite equal to that of the horse. He is said, however, to be of extremely nervous temperament, and if this be so it fully accounts for his evil repute, since nervousness is very commonly mistaken for vice in the horse, at least by persons not very conversant with that animal's idiosyncrasies.

The chief use which the British Empire makes of the mule is for military service abroad. For this, as a transport animal, whether in pack, saddle, or draught, he is unsurpassed, while his utility in the screw-gun, or "donkey" batteries, as they are familiarly called, has been tried and proved in many campaigns. Major Leonard thus testifies to his merits: "The mule is about the handiest and hardiest of all pack animals. He can work in any country and under every condition of climate, but is especially suited for mountainous regions. He will go over any ground, no matter how steep or rocky. His toughness and endurance are perfectly marvellous, and it is wonderful how long and on how little he seems to live and even to thrive." This officer also bears witness to his amiability when properly treated. The pack mule, in his opinion, should not be over thirteen hands, every inch beyond rendering him more difficult to load ;

any saving of time in this respect being obviously of great and frequent importance in campaigning. For this reason the *Razza*, or Italian Jack, is more suitable for getting pack or battery mules than the Catalan or Poitevin, the latter also being apt to give his offspring too thick a coat, which is undesirable in a hot climate.

With regard to the adaptability of mules to agriculture, these are their chief qualifications. Their working life is longer, in the ratio of five to three, than that of the British cart horse. They will live and thrive and do hard work upon food which would reduce a cart horse of equal size to a skeleton. They are indifferent to extremities of climate, hot or cold. They are never sick or sorry (this of itself should recommend them to the British farmer, for the fatalities of a large cart horse stable are often something tremendous). They can, if required, work much longer hours, and do not mind the

dead, continuous pull of field machines, which seems to distress so many horses. They are



The Mule proper, from Spanish Jack and Cart Mare.

both quicker walkers and, weight for weight, stronger than cart horses. It is this point

of inferior weight, perhaps, which would tell most against them with our farmers. "Weight," they say, "is essential; however light our land, we have constantly heavy machinery to move, and for this we must have weight. We want one team at least of horses which would turn the scale at a ton apiece." Now the Poitou mule, bred from the Spanish Jack and the big cart mare of that province, is very large, often sixteen, and sometimes even seventeen hands high, and bulky; and no doubt still bigger mules could be bred from our Clydesdale or Shire-bred mares,—but none would approach this weight. Still, with one such team of heavy draught horses for this special kind of labour, it is probable that the rest of the work on a large arable farm, or the whole of it on a smaller holding, could be more expeditiously, and certainly more economically, performed by mules than by horses.

Mules have already been tried in this country for heavy draught, and have, I believe, in every instance, given satisfaction. Many years ago one of our great brewers—Messrs. Allsopp, if I remember rightly—used a team of immense animals, of about seventeen hands, for dray work; and at Badminton teams of big mules have long been employed in farm and general cart work; while in Hampshire, Mr. Scott, of Rotherfield, has also bred a number of large mules from English cart mares with distinct success. The only hindrance which suggests itself to the general introduction of this useful hybrid into this country is the matter of expense, the big mule being at present more costly to buy than the average cart horse. Farmers, at any rate, have very little spare capital at the present time available for experimental purposes, but if there once existed mule-breeding establishments in this country, I believe

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that the gradual substitution of this animal, for some at least of the horses so extensively employed in farm labour, would result, for the reasons above stated, in a considerable saving of expense.



A THOROUGHBRED BROOD MARE AND FOAL.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BROOD MARE.

THE future of horse breeding in this country is a thing not easy to forecast. Mechanical traction is certainly gaining ground, yet still seems to cause no diminution in the number of horses required for the various uses in which the animal has been from time immemorial employed. With each fresh visit of the country dweller to Town he sees more vehicles propelled by motor-engines running to and fro through the streets of the Metropolis, and more electric trams in its suburbs; yet the thronging crowd of the horse-drawn carriages appears denser than ever. In a few years, we are constantly assured, the horse will have disappeared from London streets; in a few decades he will be

kept for purposes of sport and amusement only ; while in a century or so the last few specimens of a moribund race will be preserved in the Zoological Gardens, in the parks of wealthy noblemen, or conveyed round rural districts in travelling shows, to afford country folk an opportunity of seeing for themselves what the beast of burden used so extensively by their forefathers was actually like.

Meanwhile, the horse is apparently as much in vogue as ever. The railways, it was once thought, would exterminate him from the roads ; and they certainly have superseded him for long journeys, a day's ride or drive being now rarely undertaken, save in certain wild and remote districts ; or very occasionally for mere pleasure, where time is of no importance. Yet, as a matter of fact and experience, with the development of our railway system more horses have been employed than ever.

It is, however, difficult to imagine that the same result can attend the development of motor-traction upon the highways: though, as we have suggested, it is impossible to prognosticate with any certainty. It may be there will be a reaction when the novelty of the new mode of locomotion has worn off. The bicycle seems already to be waning in popularity as a pleasure conveyance, though retained for use, and it may be the same with the auto-motor. Travelling at an extremely high rate of speed in a smelly car, amid clouds of choking dust, and a self-created whirlwind which necessitates an almost Arctic outfit, may conceivably lose its charm, and cause a reversion to the pleasanter modes of our ancestors, who were quite reasonably contented with a slower pace, which was not incompatible with enjoyment of the surrounding scenery, combined with the superior comfort of a well-horsed vehicle, or the springy paces of a good hack.

So far as we can see, while motor-power will be more extensively used for trade and business purposes, horses will be for a long while yet kept for sport, pleasure, ornament, and warfare. Fewer will perhaps be bred: those of superior quality. The ordinary drudge and general-purpose animal, even the as yet indispensable van and cart horse, may largely disappear: but the race horse, the hunter, the park hack, the smart pony, and possibly another type or two, will be with us for some time to come. The heavy draught horse, which at the present moment is one of the most (perhaps *the* most) profitable animals to breed, may or may not be almost immediately superseded by mechanical traction on our farms and roads.

It will be sufficient in any case to premise, that any remarks made in this chapter in regard to the late-foaling mares are intended to apply as fully to the cart mare as to

those intended for the reproduction of our lighter breeds.

In the selection of the brood mare we shall, of course, be careful to eliminate all animals afflicted with any congenital or hereditary disease, such as she may be likely to transmit to her offspring; while remembering that blemishes, being the result of an accident, due more often, perhaps, to careless or injudicious management than to any natural defect of the animal itself, do not count. We have already expressed the opinion, based upon observation and experience, that of the two parents the dam is the more likely to transmit such natural defect or infirmity than the sire; though the prudent breeder will of course do his best to ensure that both parents shall be free therefrom.

As to shape and make, due regard must of course be had to the stamp of animal desired to be produced. The general characteristics required in the brood mare are

that she should be long, low, on short legs, standing perfectly straight on her four feet, and what is called “roomy”—that is, with good barrel, well-sprung ribs, and plenty of width across the loins. Bone also is essential, but in the case of thoroughbreds less size of bone is compensated by its superior quality. As is well known to experienced horsemen, the bone of the pure-bred horse is denser and closer in substance than that of the coarser-bred animal, more resembling ivory in grain and texture. So well indeed is this fact ascertained that bone-crushers have affirmed that the machine works harder, and they can tell by the sound of it when the *tibia* or cannon bones of a thoroughbred are passing through the mill. This does not mean that we should not desire bone in a thoroughbred, but that he can do with less than we might be content with in a horse of inferior breed. Any defect (and few animals are equal in all their points)



SAXON KITTY.
Shire Mare. Property of Sir Walter Gilbey.

in the dam, we shall seek to compensate by corresponding excellence of that point in the sire; bearing in mind that such compensation is more likely to be obtained when such superiority has been a characteristic in the stallion's family or tribe, than when it happens to be an advantage more peculiar to himself.

With regard to age, we consider this of less consequence than constitution. The horse, reasonably and naturally treated, is a longer-lived animal than is popularly supposed, and an individual so treated retains its vigour often to a later period than may generally be thought possible. While it is a mistake, therefore, to conclude that any aged and worn-out animal will do to breed from when it can no longer work; if one has an old favourite of the right conformation, which was not overworked in her youth and has a good constitution, she may be used for some years

after her work is done, with profit at the stud. Often a mare will breed when quite old, in some cases over twenty, though we do not say she will *begin* to breed at any such age. From ten to fifteen she probably will, so it is advisable to put her to horse at that age at the latest. A modern custom is to have a mare covered at three years old, so that she may have bred a foal by the time she is herself fit to be put into regular work. This plan is often now adopted with good results, the young mare thus helping to pay for her keep before she can actually earn it. Should this plan, however, be adopted, she should be sent to a horse of mature age, say eight years at least, since it is not advisable to breed from two very young or two quite old parents; one at least of them should be in the full vigour and prime of life.

Before being sent to the horse, the mare, if in work, should be relaxed a bit in con-

dition; while, if thrown up and turned out to grass beforehand, the better chance there will be of her proving in foal. With some mares this precaution seems to be superfluous, with others it is essential; but all should be tried repeatedly through the season, since the surest breeders may turn. I have a thoroughbred mare at the present time, which seems to make a point of having her foal as late in the year as she can, so that unless we had persevered with her she might never have given us one at all.

Late foaling is a disadvantage when the offspring is intended for racing, since the thoroughbred, in whatever month born, has to date his age from January 1st; so that one born in June is considerably handicapped in a weight-for-age race, either at two or three years old; and the same applies also to foals intended for showing, where so much favour (a great deal too much probably) is shown to mere size and early development.

For others it does not so much matter. Indeed, it is often more convenient that the foal should not be born until there is some grass for the dam; for, besides the question of expense, he thrives best on this, and soon begins to eat a bit for himself. When a mare has so managed her affairs as to foal very late in the year, it is sometime advantageous (if she has plenty of time before her) to let her miss out a year, to come in early the next; and this is what I have done with mine.

In a natural state the mare foals very easily, and also in a domesticated condition, if judiciously treated, she seldom encounters trouble. It is desirable, in the latter case, that she should have regular exercise (in the former, of course, she takes it for herself), and a moderate amount of work, if performed at a slow pace and with no heavy haulage necessitating muscular strain, even up to a day or two of foaling, is distinctly beneficial.

When her time arrives, she is best left absolutely alone, and in a vast preponderance of cases all goes well. When a presumably valuable youngster, for whose procreation a high fee has perhaps been paid, is expected, there is naturally a degree of anxiety on the dam's behalf; but the less this is manifested the better. Careful watch may of course be kept, but it should not be obtrusive, nor should the mare be interfered with without the most absolute necessity. For it often happens that the greater care exercised, the less happy the result, and *vice versa*.

A rather recent experience affords a remarkable confirmation of this opinion. A thoroughbred mare, winner of many steeple-chases, though sent to a sire well known as "a sure foal-getter," had missed the year, while her previous foal by an equally good horse had proved a disappointment through a bad attack of "joint-evil," a form of synovial

inflammation, which sometimes assails well-bred foals. It was contracted, we thought, in this case by the foal being caught in a heavy thunder shower the first time he went out into the paddock from the box in which he was born. Anxious to secure her next foal from any similar mishap, the utmost precaution was observed, and he was apparently doing well; but about the fourth day he suddenly began to "scour" and in an hour or so was dead; cause unknown; possibly something noxious in the grass supplied to the dam. Next year she produced a fine filly foal to the same horse, which was dropped at a distance from home, in an open run sheltered only by a coppice, into which the animals could not actually enter, amid drenching rain, which, with cold nights, continued for days after its birth. I was away at the time, and when I heard that the foal had been born a day or two before it was observed (for it was a

large enclosure) and exposed to such fearful weather, I quite expected another case of joint-evil, or worse; instead of which I found the youngster as lively as a basket of kittens, and she did as well as possible through the wet summer. And such has been my personal experience. Only three foals have I ever had born indoors, of which one died, and another got joint-evil; my others have all been foaled in the open, and no harm has happened to any one of them. Therefore I would advise that any mare due to foal not earlier in the year than May be left out and allowed to take her chance; for I believe that chance to be the best she can be given. Nature evidently makes some provision to protect the newly born creature from the effects so commonly produced by wet and cold upon those subjected to artificial treatment. With thoroughbreds intended for flat-racing, and therefore foaled early in the year, the cla-

borate precautions usually taken may possibly be necessary; nevertheless, my own opinion is that the less any horse is regarded as a tender exotic, and the more hardily (consistently, of course, with fair and humane treatment) he is reared, the more useful and satisfactory an animal he is likely to become.

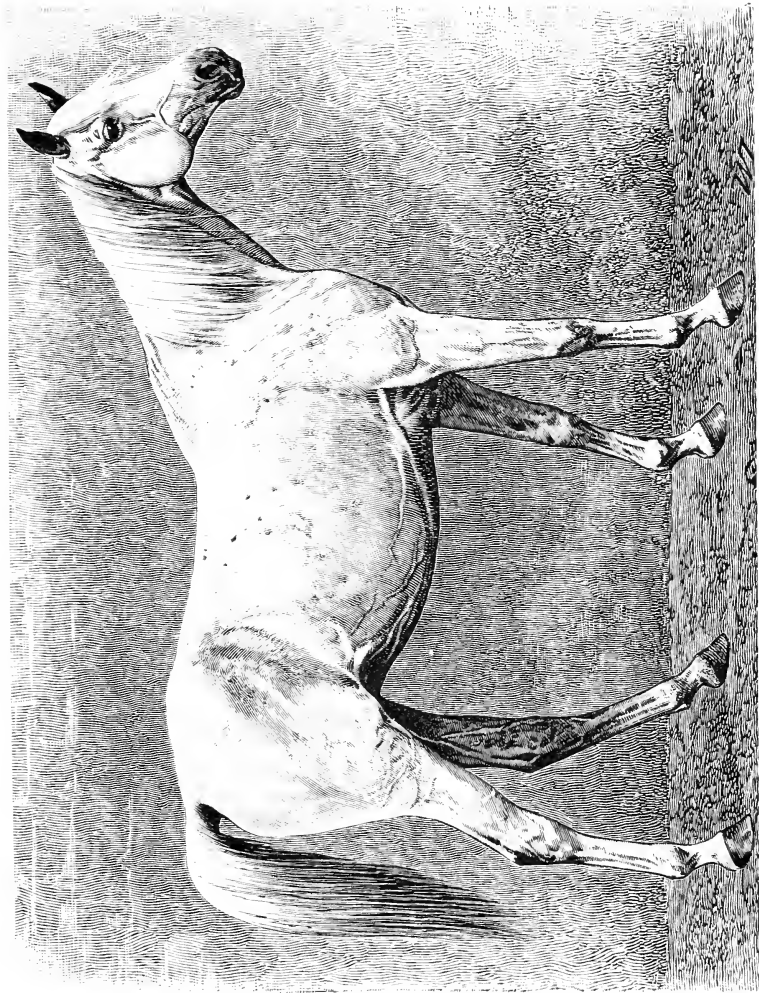
The chief danger incurred during the long period of gestation, which is normally eleven months (though the mare is very apt to anticipate, or go beyond her time) is that of slipping the foal. This mishap is most apt to occur about the fourth or fifth month, and when once a mare has met with it, it is likely to happen again. The only precaution which can be taken is to keep the mare as free as possible from excitement of any kind, particular care being also taken to keep her from the proximity of any other animal which may have miscarried; it being generally admitted that, either

through sympathy, or some other cause, such mishaps are practically contagious.

This not being, even in the slightest degree, a veterinary work upon the horse, we will leave the subject of parturition entirely to the experts, merely remarking that while the mare usually produces her young with as little difficulty as any animal, none seem to succumb sooner when anything does go wrong. In any case, therefore, of difficult or protracted labour, recourse should be had promptly to qualified veterinary assistance. One precaution should always be observed. If the mare is to foal within doors, care should be taken that there shall be some other mode of ingress than by a door which opens (as most doors do) inwards. Otherwise, if the mare should go down close to the door, her weight would render it impossible to be opened in case of need.

At the time of foaling the mare should

not be too fat. Not only does excessive fat interfere with the nutrition of the fœtus, but it renders the act of parturition more difficult and precarious, while also it increases the tendency to inflammation. Nevertheless, she must, of course, be well nourished. If the autumnal grasses should be scanty, or innutritious, as they are apt to be in certain seasons, a brood mare which has been highly fed all her life will require a feed or two of corn in addition; but in an average season she will do very well till near the end of the year, when carrots, parsnips, or, when they come in, mangolds (of which many horses are extremely fond) may be allowed with her hay, and occasional bran and linseed mashes. Brood mares at work, too, are all the better for some sort of green food; lucerne, when it can be procured, being particularly suitable, and sainfoin, but vetches are less to be commended. By observing these precautions



ARAB MARE.

two great ends are attained—the mare is kept in a cool condition, while the fœtus is well nourished.

Some care must be taken of the mare at the time of weaning. This may be when the foal is six months old, though, if the latter seems at all delicate, or the mare is not wanted, it may be left with its mother a month or two longer; but not later than this, if the mare is again in foal, since to suckle the foal at foot and nourish the fœtus within at the same time will be too severe a strain upon her. After the foal is taken from her she should be milked a little, but not too much, and less day by day, when the milk will soon dry up. Experience teaches. The first mare I bred from, as she had not been sent to horse again and I did not want her to use, was allowed to wean her foal at her own discretion. That answered all right, but the second foal I weaned at six months, and

put the mare into work. My groom, however, made the mistake of milking her too long. He used to draw off the milk and give it to the foal in a pail—treated her, in fact, like a milch cow. In consequence, getting one day overheated, for she was a very free and fiery goer, she developed mammalitis, by which the mammary glands became hard and callous, and the ducts being probably obstructed, it was deemed inadvisable to breed from her again, the vet. considering she would be unable to suckle her foal. I had cause to regret my inexperience when, some few years later, this good mare met with an accident which incapacitated her from further work, at a time when her first foal was the most successful steeple-chaser in the West of England, and her second about the most useful all-round animal I ever possessed. However, no one has more surely to buy his experience than the student of the horse.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE REARING OF THE FOAL.

DURING its suckling period the foal does best at grass with its mother, care being taken that it be in a suitable pasture, free from holes, barbed wire fencing, and other traps, to avoid risk of blemishes and worse mishaps. In regularly laid out paddocks, which as a rule are found only in breeding establishments, it is usual to have a guard-rail inside the actual fence, towards which it is also a good plan to have the ground slightly made up, to minimise the risk of the foal running into it when he gallops about, which a healthy one will do for hours at a time.

All grasses do not equally suit young stock ; some seem even deadly. I remember a very rich riverside meadow in the Midlands

into which to introduce the dam was said to be certain death to the foal, though she herself would be unharmed, and wax as fat as a prize bullock. Limestone is considered to be the best soil for young horses, as conducive to the formation of bone. My ideal run for a foal is a wild country like the better parts of our western moorlands, the slopes of the Welsh mountains, and lawns of the New Forest, where the summer grass, though short, is sweet and nutritious, while the wide range affords abundant exercise, and the broken nature of the ground makes him quick and clever on his legs. On such runs, particularly, of course, in the New Forest, horses in bad weather find sufficient shelter for themselves; but, if the mare is confined in a small enclosure, she should have a shed or hovel * to run under. Very

* The old-fashioned furze hovel, warm and dry, is as good as anything, when some one can be found to build it; for this, like many another old-world and simple thing, is almost a lost art.

seldom, however, do horses avail themselves of such shelter when it is provided for them, the fact being that in a natural state they are almost indifferent to rain. If you catch a rough pony on a drenching day, when he is fairly dripping and glistening with the wet, you will find, on turning back his coat, that he is warm and dry underneath, the skin seeming to exude an oily scurf which is impervious to wet; while no doubt, too, the hoofs of animals are non-conductors of damp, otherwise they could not stand about in slushy or boggy ground with impunity, as they do.

In enclosed runs for young horses the white or Dutch clover should be assiduously encouraged, and there should be a constant supply of water, that they may drink when inclined. Few grooms, by the way, seem able to understand that a regular supply of water is as essential to a horse's well-being as his daily food. A notable case in point

occurred in my neighbourhood some few summers ago. An owner going abroad, his horses were turned out in a good-sized park, where was sufficient grass and good shelter, but absolutely no water at all. This necessary element was supposed to be taken to them from a well worked by a gas-engine, which supplied the whole establishment. Their attendant, however, neglected to supply them properly, and in consequence they were reduced to a state of semi-starvation—to skin and bone, in fact—though they had enough to eat. The reader will be prepared to hear that the person in charge had meanwhile by no means neglected to supply himself with sufficient liquid refreshment.

The practice of the age—we will not here discuss its advisability—being to force all young pedigree stock to the earliest possible maturity, the foal is usually fed as soon as he can eat. At the end of a month or six weeks he will generally eat a few bruised

oats, chopped carrots, linseed mashes, etc.; and animals intended for either racing or showing are thereafter usually fed three times a day. First one, then two quarterns of oats are allowed, and so on, with the result that thoroughbred foals dropped early in the year are sent up for the autumn sales as big and furnished as yearlings were under the old treatment. Half-breds, and cart horses also, are no doubt sooner saleable for good feeding from the first; but, apart from market considerations, we should perhaps do as well to let Nature alone, and content ourselves with doing the mare well, and leaving her to do the foal. The more naturally a young animal is treated the better chance there would seem to be of its developing a sound constitution, and thus retaining its vigour to a late period of life. Mindful of the many game and capable old horses I knew in my youth, when they were more often than not left unbroken till four years old, and seldom

worked till six ; and seeing how many, deserving a better fate, are now used up and worthless before they are middle-aged, I am no great advocate for the forcing and pampering of young stock now so generally in vogue.

After being weaned, whether or not he has been so before, the foal should certainly be fed, unless at such times as there may be plenty of grass, than which nothing is better to keep him growing. But to what extent the youngster should be fed with corn must depend a great deal on the quality of the particular animal, and the purpose for which it is intended. It is, with those who breed to sell, a question of debit and credit account. Two quarterns a day, which are enough for any ordinary animal at grass, will cost £5 or £6 a year ; and thus, by the time your colt is four years old, he will have cost you from £20 to £24 more than he would have done had you just let him

pick up his living, with a bit of hay in the winter, as was formerly the practice. Now £30 to £35 is often about as much as you can get for an *average* animal of that age unbroken; and if there be added to the bare cost of keep the expense of the covering fee and his share of the wages of his attendant, etc., it is somewhat difficult to see where your profit in your colt is coming in.

Great numbers of useful animals are brought over by Irish dealers, and sold at an average of perhaps rather less than this, from which we are bound to infer that Irish colts can rarely be corn-fed at all, or they could not be sold at English fairs at the prices the English breeder has to compete against. In short, any English farmer who is fond of a bit of horse-dealing (a thing which personally I hate and detest) will tell you that he can do better by buying a colt out of an Irish drove than by breeding him

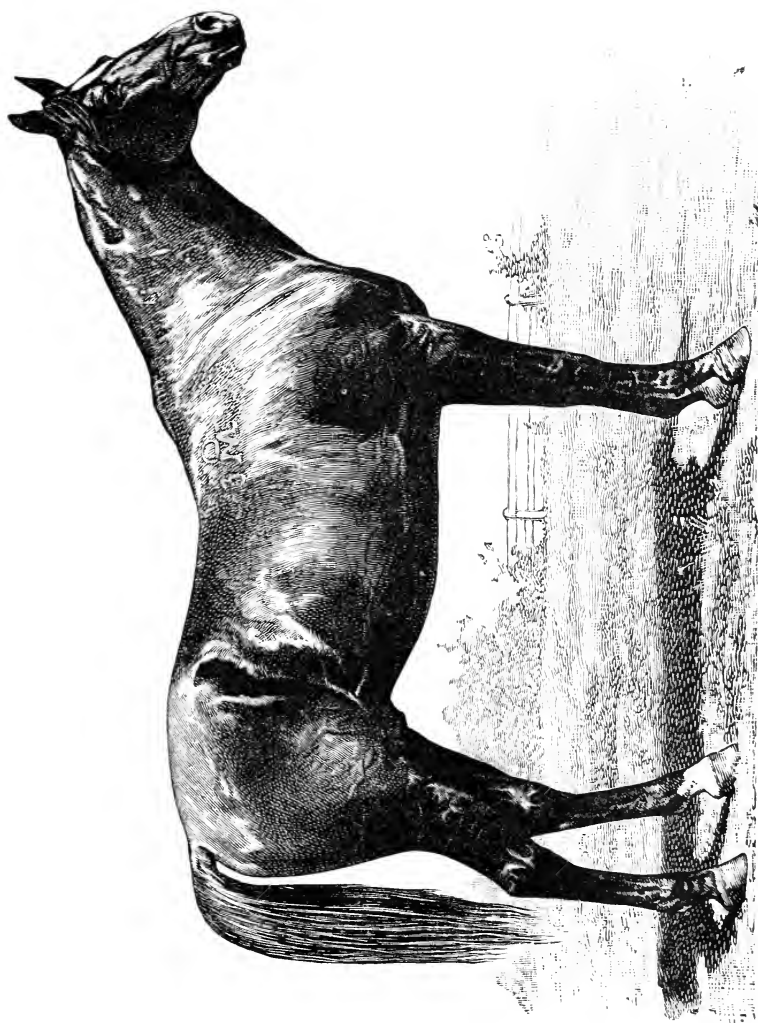
himself. Anything very good will, of course, make more money ; but the best quality Irish horses no longer appear at our horse-fairs as they used to do in the palmy days of Horncastle and Barnet, Weyhill and Britford. They are picked out beforehand by English dealers, who run over several times a year for the purpose. How the second- and third-class horses can be bred up, even without corn, to be sold at such prices as rule in an English fair field, is a thing which no English breeder can understand. All he knows is that it cannot be done here. Yet it was once. A Devon squire and master of harriers assured me lately that his father always used to say : “ Whenever you can get £1 a month for your colt, sell him ; there is fair profit in that ! ” All we can say is, there could not have been much corn-feeding there, and probably there was no need of it. Devon grass is, like Irish, plentiful, and good enough in itself. Yet what pleasanter or

more useful animal is there than a good Devonshire cob?

It may be assumed, then, that in the future only horses of high quality and special designation will be produced, or at least aimed at; the day of the general utility nag being apparently nearly over. The practice of forcing the young stock with large quantities of stimulating food will, therefore, probably be continued, in view of an early sale. The difference in value of a racehorse, hunter, or polo pony reared on corn, and one brought up without it, would be tremendous; and the high price which will be demanded (nay, which is already demanded for the best specimens) when, in the course of years, few horses, and those of very high class, will be bred, will doubtless recompense the outlay. At present, except in the case of extraordinarily good animals, the price does not.

With regard to the polo pony, an asset

in the horse business of ever-increasing value, judicious feeding of the foal will be of the utmost importance, since, while bone and muscular development are essential, the inevitable result of too much good keep will be increase of size; and the standard already is a difficult one to attain. Plenty of exercise, preferably on broken ground to make him clever, and not too much stimulating food, will probably be the best treatment. When a breed of the required stamp (and the typical polo pony is one of the sweetest and most delightful creatures in existence) is fully established, he will, nevertheless, continue to be a most expensive animal to buy, from the fact that he will have to be kept so long before he is fit for his work. This cannot be till he is at least five or six years old. Before that age he will not be able to stand the strain of starting for sudden and sharp bursts of speed under weight, or the quick turnings and



GIDRAN XXXIX.

twistings involved in his ten minutes' high-pressure play. Nor must he be put to other kinds of work until of the proper age, lest he should lose that dash and *verve* which are essential to the game. The polo pony is, therefore, pretty sure to be a long time in the breeder's hands, and so must always bring in a high price to prove remunerative.

The two animals which at present make the quickest return for early feeding are the thoroughbred and the cart horse, but of the former scarcely five out of every hundred foaled are good enough to win races, and nothing is so unsaleable as a thoroughbred which is not; while it seems quite an open question whether the latter, flourishing as he is at the present moment, will or will not be, in the course of a few years, almost or entirely superseded by mechanical traction.

Abundant exercise is of the utmost importance to the foal, as to all young animals, while the more hardily he is brought up,

consistently, that is, with his due development and even (as opposed to forced) growth, the better and more useful a horse he is likely to prove. He should, therefore, where it is possible, run out of doors all the year round. If there is no hovel, he should in winter time be brought into a loose box (not situated in a hot stable, but in some out-building or barn-end) at night. In frosty weather, lest he should slip and injure himself in the paddock, he may be kept in, when a straw yard (if it be not a liquid manure tank, as straw yards sometimes are) with an open shed, is an ideal place for him.

Horses, being gregarious in their natural state, love company in a domesticated one, wherefore two or three foals together do better than one alone; and though when highly bred they will often fight, as a writer in the "Badminton Racing Book" aptly observes, "like bull-dogs," it is seldom that any serious accident occurs, though famous race-

horses have borne their "paddock scars" throughout their career. Horses, fortunately, are pretty tough. I have seen a thoroughbred foal kick his mother in play till her ribs resounded like a big drum, but she only whisked her tail round at him, as at a fly, and continued grazing. There is risk, however, in letting a well-bred foal be with heavy, older horses, though sometimes these will be very good, and play with the youngster as gently as a strong man will play with a child. A very favourite old cob we have, a black gelding of rare shape and character, is at present performing the part of dry nurse to a yearling thoroughbred filly. He keeps with her wherever she goes, and runs open-mouthed at any horse or other animal which ventures to approach his precious charge.

Last summer, by the way, an extraordinary scene occurred, which might have been amusing had it been witnessed under less

anxious and exhausting conditions. I had, perhaps incautiously, ridden into the place, a large park-like enclosure of many acres, where the foal was running with her dam, the old black cob, and a lot of others which did not belong to us, on a smart little bay cob mare but lately broken to saddle. Dismounting to look for the brood mare and foal with my field glasses, the bay cob broke away, and there was a stampede of all the horses in the place. Singling out the brood mare, of which she had always been rather jealous, the wicked little brute went for her like a fury, and a regular duel with their heels ensued, the two mares backing, squealing, and flinging, while the thuds, as one or the other landed, resounded through the field. The black cob, fast and clever in his day, but now pretty stiff, who was chaperoning the party, at once joined in the fray, and getting between the combatants

drove off the little bay again and again. The pony mare, being, of course, shod, and, as I knew, a hard kicker, I was very anxious for the foal, who naturally kept close to her dam for protection in the scrimmage, which was a sort of flying fight all round the field amid a mob of excited horses. Run as I might I could seldom get near enough to help my good old black, who chased the little bay about till he was nearly blown. Once in his efforts to drive her off he went heels over head, turning over like a shot rabbit. Presently my little groom, who was outside, came to my assistance, but it was not for nearly two hours that we succeeded in separating them and catching the pony mare. It might have taken us all night but for the gallant assistance of my good old black. Nothing, happily, was hurt, but it was rather stronger exercise than one desires on a warm summer evening. This old cob had previously

attached himself to a cart mare and her shire-bred foal, and I noticed that he kept an eye on those also whenever the fight drifted in their direction. If any one should be in want of a thoroughly reliable equine nurse, he may apply to the writer.

As to when is the best time for the castration of the colt, opinions seem to differ. The operation used generally to be performed between the age of one and two years, but the more modern practice is to perform it before the foal is weaned, at about five months old if sufficiently developed. It used to be contended that early castration hindered the development of the neck and crest; but even if this is the case I do not know that a thick, stallion-like neck is any ornament to a gelding in either saddle or harness. It has long been the custom in this country, as in most others in Europe, to castrate almost every colt not intended for the Turf, because of the extra

trouble the stallion gives. Perhaps the custom is a little overdone. Certainly two, at least, of the three or four geldings which I have myself regularly used as hacks and hunters (for I have mostly ridden mares) well deserved, for their make, shape, character, action, and soundness, to have been left entire.

There is very little danger attendant on castration, if it be performed (as it always should be) by a qualified veterinary surgeon, but it should not be done in hot weather. In this, and in all other operations involving pain, chloroform should be used. The additional expense of an anæsthetic is not very considerable; and even if it were much greater than it is, we surely owe all the consideration we can show for an animal which contributes so much to our pleasure and convenience as the horse.

CHAPTER XI.

HANDLING AND BREAKING.

THE foal should be accustomed to being handled as early as possible; as soon in fact as the dam, or the foal himself, will allow. Care must be taken of the former at the first few visits, since the best tempered and most affectionate of mares are sometimes transformed into perfect furies by their all-absorbing solicitude for a new foal. I have myself been driven out of a stable by a mare, which at ordinary times was as fond of me as my terrier is; and it was perhaps lucky for me on that occasion that an athletic training had made me pretty quick on my legs. The maternal is the strongest of all natural instincts, and it is always a thing to be reckoned

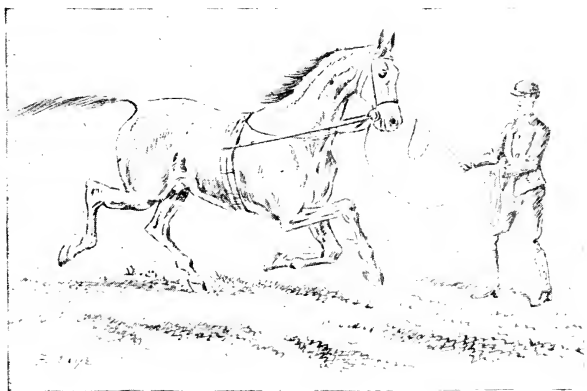
with in approaching a young mother, ever eager to protect her precious baby from unpremeditated assault. Sometimes the mare is violent even with her foal, more from blind excitement probably than from any wish to harm her offspring ; but I was present once when a mare actually kicked her foal's eye out, and it was left sticking to the side of her box, a gruesome sight ! A very difficult and risky task I once had, too, in separating a high-spirited blood mare from the body of her dead foal. Instinct unenlightened by reason is on such occasions a truly pathetic thing to witness, and might form a subject worthy the portrayal of a stronger animal painter than the world has yet seen, good as some have been. But on this sad occasion the beautiful afflicted creature was not savage ; she would let me pat her, and seemed indeed to find some consolation in her master's presence ; but leave her foal she would not ; and it was

not until the next day that with great difficulty we got her away, when in the course of a few hours she seemed absolutely to have forgotten her loss—*si sic omnes!*

At most shows and sales the youngest foals are now required to be led, so it is best to get them used to the halter or cavesson as early as possible. But it is not always easy. Some foals are very bold and will come up to you, and let you touch them almost from the first; others are shy as fawns, and will dodge round the mother (or she will interpose herself) whenever you attempt to caress them. One we could never get near till it was weaned, and with the utmost difficulty then. Great caution and patience are needed; for foals have been known to jump up into a manger in panic on being approached, and there is always risk of a nasty kick for yourself, or a broken leg for the foal, if matters are unduly pressed. When once the headstall has been

got on it is best to let the foal wear it, when he can very soon be brought to hand. It is easier, too, to teach him to lead while with the dam, since he will naturally follow wherever she is led.

The handling thus begun should be kept



Lunging the Colt.

up, continuously, or at any rate at intervals, till the colt is over a year old, when he may be bitted and driven about with long reins, taught to stop, to go on, to back, to turn and bend himself, etc.; but perhaps the less lunging in a circle is resorted to

the better. This is useful enough in certain cases, as for older animals which from being stopped in their work are over-fresh, or from any cause unfit to ride ; as well as to teach a young one to bend and flex his joints, but in breaking the colt it should not be resorted to merely to save the breaker trouble. On the whole it is rather to be deprecated than encouraged for youngsters, since while bones and ligaments are still soft and tender there is risk of strains and other injuries resulting from the practice. In lunging nearly every colt manifests a preference for going one way or the other ; but he must be driven equally both ways, lest he should acquire uneven paces by habitually going shorter on the inside legs than on the outer ; also to prevent his mouth becoming duller on one side. As a rule the colt should not be mounted before he is two years old (unless you have by chance a very light-weight quiet lad who may be trusted with him),

though he may be accustomed to carry a dumb jockey, or a lightly stuffed sack securely girthed (for it must on no account slip round), so as to become used to having something on his back at an early age.

Riding for many years not much over ten stone, I used to mount my own at two years and ride them, but not out of a walk, for a few weeks or months, as I had time, and then turn them out again until they were three. With a man to lead for the first lesson or two, I never had any trouble; but then they always knew me so well that they were never afraid of me. This I believe to be the main thing in the successful handling of young horses; you must not be afraid of them, and they must not be afraid of you; save with that salutary awe and reverence as for a higher power. Mutual confidence is thus established from the first between horse and rider. You must not expect him to do a thing properly until you

have taught him how; and then he will have confidence that you will not ask him to do anything which he is not able to do. This mutual confidence is not of course to be acquired very quickly, but it is very valuable when established; if you retain the animal for your own use, it continues through life; while if you sell him it can readily be transferred to any new owner who will treat him in the way he is accustomed to.

The more gradually and imperceptibly the colt is broken, the nicer and better he usually is for service in after life. In this consists the chief value of amateur, as opposed to professional breaking. Formerly nearly every colt was, as soon as he was of an orthodox age, "placed" as a matter of course "in the breaker's hands," nothing perhaps having been done with him before; now a considerable number are broken at home. The professional breaker cannot, of course, take years over the preliminary training of

each animal, since no one would pay him to do so. He has therefore to crowd into a few days, or weeks at the utmost, during which the animal, particularly when high-spirited or nervous (as so many of the nicest are), is frequently overtaxed, the work which the owner (or his groom, if competent, which few grooms are) extends over the whole period of the animal's infancy. The result is often satisfactory enough if the animal is to be sold as "quiet to ride and drive," or is put at once into regular work at home; but it is obvious that the mutual confidence, or friendship as I may call it, which I consider so valuable, has yet to be inspired and established. This is why I like home-breaking best, if it be undertaken by a competent person. Not that the most capable of amateurs can do it one whit better than a good professional colt-breaker (these are by the way now few and far between), but that he can do it more gradually; and, as all

skilled in the science of the Preceptor are aware, the more gradually knowledge is acquired the more constantly it abides, and the better it is. The modern practice of home-breaking was no doubt introduced, or rather we may say suggested, by the famous American breaker, Rarey, who, if I remember rightly, visited this country somewhere in the late fifties, and revolutionised our system of breaking. His tying-up and laying-down tactics (useful as they may have been in the reclamation of savage or intractable horses) I have never had occasion to resort to, but his "mutual confidence" theory was perfectly sound, and is what every breaker should seek to establish between himself and his equine pupil.

A most excellent and kind-hearted Quaker lady, who used to scold me a great deal (vicariously, I suppose, for I was always immensely fond of animals, and generally supposed to be good to them) for the cruelties

practised upon "poor dumb creatures" in general, and horses in particular, insisted that "breaking" was quite a wrong word to use, and that we should rather say "training" the horse to do what we want of him. In idea she was quite right, but inasmuch as it was already appropriated for quite another thing, to wit, the preparing a horse for a race, I had to explain that the term was unavailable. Her notion apparently was that breaking meant reducing a young and generous creature to obedience, by the tyranny of sharp bits, heavy cutting whips, and lacerating spurs. Now, to break the colt's spirit by dominating him in such severe fashion is the last thing any competent breaker desires to do: rather, he would direct it, by the gentlest effective agencies, into right courses, and teach the young animal to control itself, which my sympathetic Quakeress would certainly have admitted to be essential in the case of the young of her

own species. Still we do want a better word perhaps to differentiate our own methods from those of the professional, who has to break his charges to ride and drive in the shortest possible space of time. The French expression *manége* would do ; but this again is used to denote something else—the higher branches of equine education, as practised in the *haute école*.

While commending this “mutual confidence” doctrine to the amateur breaker, and also to riders and drivers generally, I would strongly deprecate any playing with the colt. Playing with an animal means as a rule teasing it, in a benevolent sense of the term. Dogs enter into this and seem to understand it ; but they are perhaps the only animals who quite enjoy it. All young creatures, however, love play, pure and simple ; and the colt will readily learn a game, and you may have some fun together with impunity. But it is a dangerous game.



KISBÉR.

“Horse” play is proverbial for rough sport ; and it must be remembered that the horse is a very much heavier and stronger animal than his human playmate. Some day, perhaps, when you are not thinking of it, *he* begins a game, and though it is all in good part and entirely devoid of vicious intention, you sustain some injury, which causes you to regret having initiated the practice. I remember, for instance, the case of a man who used to amuse himself by making his horse rear in a roomy box, probably by way of showing off and looking pretty (for rearing is rather an elegant, though undesirable accomplishment) ; but one day failing to avoid a descending hoof, he got a nasty crack on his head from his quite innocent, but too formidable playfellow. A stable boy I remember being killed outright, through a foolish habit he had of flicking with his rubber at a horse’s quarters as he passed, and adroitly avoiding the playful kick with

which this senseless practical joke was acknowledged by the animal. One day the kick, a harder and longer one perhaps than usual, was not evaded, and there was a vacancy for a stable lad. Never go up beside your horse in the stall without a kindly word to warn him of your approach. While there, pat and caress him as much as you please, and he will be delighted with your attention; but make it a rule from the first never to play with or tease him.

When not teased, horses are, as a rule, as even and reliable in temper as any animals I know; but I recall as I write a most ludicrous, though painful, instance to the contrary. Many years ago, down in South Devon, I was showing *Queen of the Moor* (a mare which afterwards became almost the idol of that sporting county), as a three-year-old to a rather important gentleman, who was churchwarden of the parish in which

I was staying, when he incautiously stooped with his back to the manger, and in orthodox fashion passed a critical hand down her fore-legs. I ought, of course, to have racked or held her head up, but she was so quiet, and I had besides no idea of what he was about to do, so omitted this precaution. "Nice filly," he remarked; "perhaps a leetle light of bone"; when, at that moment, to my horror, round came the filly's handsome golden head, with ears laid back, and an expression in her luminous eye I had never seen there before, and—great Scot! (the most innocent ejaculation I am acquainted with) there ensued an agonized yell, as her nippers closed with a snap on the most salient portion of her critic's person, and the churchwarden performed a standing broad jump towards the stable door, which I am sure he could never have accomplished with the best of runs under less stimulating circumstances. Whatever made the mare do such a diabolical

thing I can't imagine. She had never attempted to bite any one before; nor did she, so far as I know, ever do so again. Either she must have been too thin-skinned to endure the slightly disparaging criticism on her bone (she had $7\frac{1}{2}$, which wasn't so bad for a small thoroughbred one of fifteen hands), or the opportunity was absolutely too tempting to be resisted. It was a painful experience for me, as well as for my portly and august friend; and ever since, when showing a horse, I have taken firm hold of his head.

Whether horses are ever positively vicious unless made so by the injudicious treatment of mankind, I do not know; all I can say is that none I have had to do with have been so. "Mad" *Chillaby*, *Merlin*, *Cruiser*, and *Von Stroon* seem certainly to have been ferocious creatures, unsafe for any one to approach; but it is rather difficult to decide whether they were made so by bad treatment;

or might, at any rate, if carefully handled from foalhood (I don't know if any of them were or were not), not have developed the savage tempers for which they were notorious. Training, no doubt, renders some horses extremely irritable, and they have been known to retaliate in a terrible manner for the severities to which they have been subjected in the course of it. *Ellerdale*, for instance, would scream with rage when she heard Tom Dawson's voice; and *Mentor* would manifest his wrath in equally unmistakeable terms directly he beheld Matthew of that ilk; while *Muley Edris's* revenge upon Fred Archer will still be fresh in our readers' memory. A stud-groom named Lawson once told me, too, of a mare, which so resented something which had to be done to her foot, that she waited for his father when he returned from his dinner, and struck him dead as he re-entered her box! The excessively high feeding and severe work accorded to

horses under the old-fashioned system of training, combined with occasional punishing finishes on the racecourse, were naturally calculated to act upon certain equine temperaments, and provoke in extreme cases results of this lamentable description, while vicious tendencies so engendered may conceivably prove hereditary; but we may lay it down as a general axiom that the temper of the average horse is formed for good and ill during the period of his early handling and breaking. Further, it may be boldly asserted that there is no animal in creation more amenable to kind and gentle treatment.

Most young horses, like young people, have a will of their own, which generally manifests itself in their wanting to go their own way instead of the rider's, as soon as they have become accustomed to the sensation of having some one on their backs. At first they are usually somewhat overawed by the novelty of the situation; but after a ride or

two they generally begin to display this self-will by trying to turn homewards, refusing to pass some particular point, or insisting on taking one road instead of another. Generally a sharp pulling together, with a touch of the spurs, or a smart stroke of a cutting whip (only sit tight) down each shoulder alternately, as rapidly administered as possible, will correct this; but sometimes a colt will be very persistent, twisting round and kicking or plunging, sometimes rearing, time after time, as you continue to urge him forward. But, whatever he does, you must never give way: stick to him, and keep him there all night rather than let him beat you; for, if he has done so once, he will certainly expect to do so again. Nevertheless, I believe it is best not to continue active fighting after the first bout—*i.e.*, not to rouse the full combatant force of so vigorous and high-couraged an animal as the blood horse, but rather to possess your soul in

patience till he gets tired of it, when often he will move off of his own accord in the required direction.

No one who has not a fairly strong seat and good hands should attempt the task of colt-breaking; but, even though there may be no misgivings on the part of the rider as to the consequences, it is unwise to thoroughly rouse the temper of an animal which, however gentle of disposition, can manifest extreme violence on occasion, if it can possibly be avoided. If you absolutely cannot from the saddle induce your colt to go the way you wish, it is far better to get off and lead him by it than to let him triumph over you. It is certainly in a way a "climbing down" on your part; but the point is that he does not recognise his partial victory in having obliged you to dismount, if he still has to go your way and not his.

This, be it remembered, does not denote vice, but mere coltish stubbornness; and

most horses give up these tricks entirely after being ridden regularly for a little while. There is sometimes at first great difficulty in getting a young horse to go through water. This arises chiefly from timidity and dread of the unstable element, which the animal sees will not support his weight. It is generally to be overcome by a little tact and patience. One man I knew, after repeated trials and a vast exercise of this latter quality, actually attached a carthorse in trace harness, and dragged the refuser through a ford, thinking that having once been through it he would go again; but I believe this heroic measure did not have the desired effect. One colt I have lately been breaking, which would at first make a fuss about crossing a six-inch runnel across a road, will now splash through anywhere; but it took quite six months to overcome his repugnance to water. There are seasoned hunters too who will jump anything they are

asked except water. The best way, of course, to get them to face this dreaded element is to turn them out for a few hours daily, when one has the chance, in a water meadow, or any field across which runs a brook or a wet ditch; when they will soon learn to jump it, and henceforth cease to fear the glint of water, which will stop many an otherwise good one in his stride.

Colts are still broken to harness mostly by the professional horse-breaker, though farmers will often break their own by putting them in trace harness between two steady old horses, when they cannot do very much damage, and soon learn to go up into the collar. But horses broken in this way, if they are ever to be nice to drive, require also "mouthing" by being driven with long reins about the roads; and it often happens that there is no one on a farm with the time, patience, or hands requisite for this. By far the better plan is to have the colt regularly

broken in double harness beside a steady break horse. We sometimes hear the opinion expressed that the colt should be put into single harness at once, since he must go through this experience sooner or later. In this opinion I do not concur, though I have driven several horses for the first time in this way myself, and have never had any trouble with them; but have only (wittingly) attempted it when I have been without the appliances for breaking in double harness, and had good reason to believe from previous observation of his character, that the animal was of a tractable disposition, not easily alarmed, and by no means likely to give way to panic, whatever happened. With an animal of the contrary disposition I should consider such an experiment a tempting of Providence.

I used the word "wittingly" with intention, for I once did this very thing without any such assurance unknowingly. It hap-

pened in this wise. A farmer friend was in the habit of kindly lending me a horse if I was short of one, or had extra work. One day meeting his groom I said to him: "Ask your master if he can let me have a horse to drive to-morrow." Next day the horse, a big weight-carrying animal which I had never seen before, came over, was duly put to in the dogcart (which was a trifle small for him), and I drove two lady visitors to a garden party. The horse was perfectly quiet, but seemed to go a bit "green," particularly down hill, so I thought perhaps he might not have been in for some little time. What was my surprise when I met my friend a day or two later to hear him say: "Much obliged to you for breaking my horse to harness the other day; *he had never been in before!*" The man had told him I wanted one to *ride*. I quoted the title of one of Shakespeare's best-known plays; but it was a thing I

would not wittingly have done, with ladies on board, for untold gold.

But once I did pretty much the same thing on Dartmoor, knowing what I was about. A friend wanted to catch a train, the nearest station then being at Horrabridge, seven miles off. I said: "Well, I have only a pony mare here which is very quiet in saddle, but so far as I know has never been driven; if you like to chance it, I don't mind." Chance it he did, and we accomplished the journey in safety, down some steepish hills too. Still this is not a sort of thing I should recommend; the results in either case might easily have been very different. I cite these instances merely to show how readily some good-tempered horses, when quietly handled, will adapt themselves to unaccustomed circumstances.

So much depends upon the temperament of the individual animal. Lately I had two nice ponies, a black gelding and a bay mare,

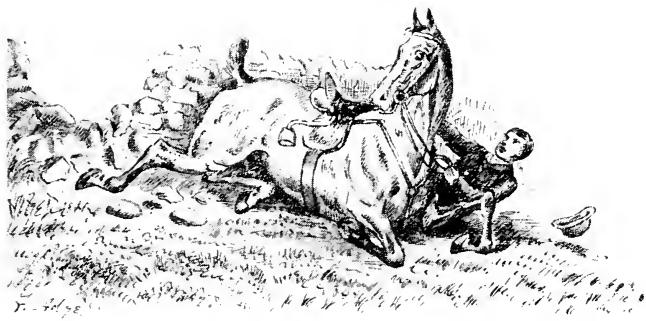
from the same dam by different sires, to be broken to harness. Having studied them both from foalhood, I knew what might be done with one, and what must not be done with the other. The black I put to in single harness and with my groom beside his head drove him quietly off; he reared once or twice in an ornamental way when I had to pull him up, but did nothing else, and in a few days went into regular harness work. The bay, a Robin Hood, I knew was quite another pair of shoes; so having no double tackle I sent her to a professional breaker on whom I could rely, with a diagnosis of her character. She gave him a lot of trouble; unable to do much harm alongside a powerful break-horse, after kicking all she knew (which was a good bit), she sat down in the breeching and let him pull her along. It was days before she would go into her collar, and when put into single harness she broke two shafts; but was not

so bad as a Basuto pony the breaker had at the same time. He rushed, cart and all, into the river and fell, and they had to go in and hold his head above water, or he would have been drowned. Yet both went beautifully in time.

Too great care cannot, in short, be taken in breaking horses to harness. In saddle, things are somewhat different. A horse may buck and plunge, get rid of his rider, gallop off, and neither be a penny the worse; in harness serious results may follow from the same sort of manœuvre, while there is pretty sure to be damage to something or other. Moreover, a horse that has once given way to panic in harness, even if he escapes injury at the time, is hardly safe to drive again. It is in harness that the advantage of having established friendly and confidential relations with your horse so often comes in. On many occasions, with horses of the highest spirit (and I do not care for any which are not so)

when we have found ourselves in difficulties say on a dark night in a furious storm on the Moor, a cheery word from the familiar voice has kept them quiet while I have got out to take our bearings. Horses almost rival dogs in their reliance upon their masters, and not only know their voice, but their very footfall. In former days when I used regularly to put up at the old Plough at Cheltenham, where is one of the largest stable yards in England, the ostler said to me, "Wherever she is standing, your mare knows your step, and whinnies the moment you set foot in the yard." It is not from mere sentiment and love for the animal that I would commend the diligent cultivation of these friendly relations, but for precautions of safety as well. A horse will generally avoid touching a fallen rider, if he can; probably he will be extra careful if that rider is his dearest friend. Only once have I been kicked by a horse in getting up

after a spill in hunting, and then it was not by my own, but by a big impetuous young mare sent me to be ridden, who was a bit too eager over the stone walls of the Cotswolds.



A bit too eager over the stone walls

CHAPTER XII.

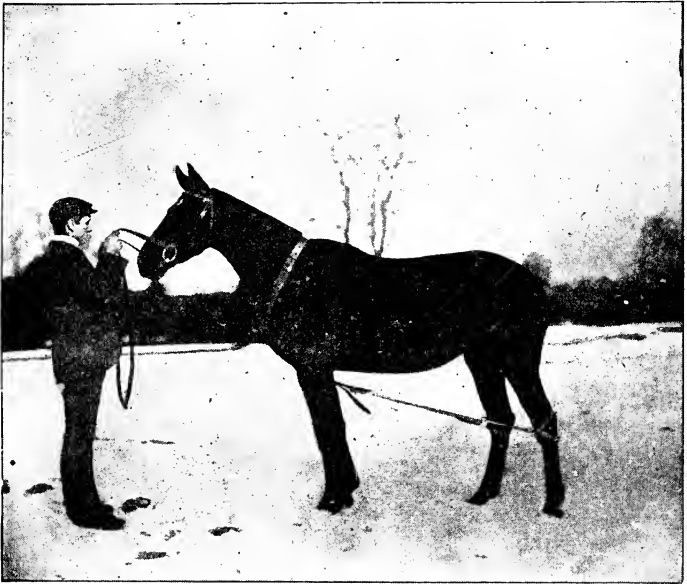
ON ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION.

OF the larger mammals domesticated in this country the mare is perhaps the shyest and most uncertain breeder, and this irrespective of her breed. Cart mares, hacks, and thoroughbreds (especially the last and first, by reason of their superior value) continually disappoint their owners, by failing to recompense the outlay in trouble and expense incurred in sending them, perhaps a considerable distance, to horse.

Few persons without actual experience perhaps realise how uncertain an enterprise horse-breeding for this particular reason is. I, for one, did not for a while. I was so lucky in my first venture, getting a fine foal from a single service (the mare was

not even tried again), and again with my second, that I thought it was all quite easy, and that failure must necessarily imply bad management somewhere. It was, therefore, a surprise to learn, as I did by some subsequent disappointments, how precarious a matter it really is. It has been calculated, indeed, that a stallion has on the average to perform at least three services for every mare he gets in foal; while statistics compiled on behalf of the French Government (France being a great breeding country both of horses and mules), comprising the entire number of mares covered by the stallions in the National haras and its various dépôts, and extending over a period of several years, show that these horses, though kept and handled in the most approved way, only succeeded in getting about half their mares in foal; the percentage being, one year with another, from forty-eight to fifty-two. Again, we are assured,

in the United States any horse which succeeds in impregnating a like proportion of mares is regarded as what we call a sure



THE IMPROVED CALIFORNIA SERVICE HOBBLER.

This is to show method of Hobbling for Service.

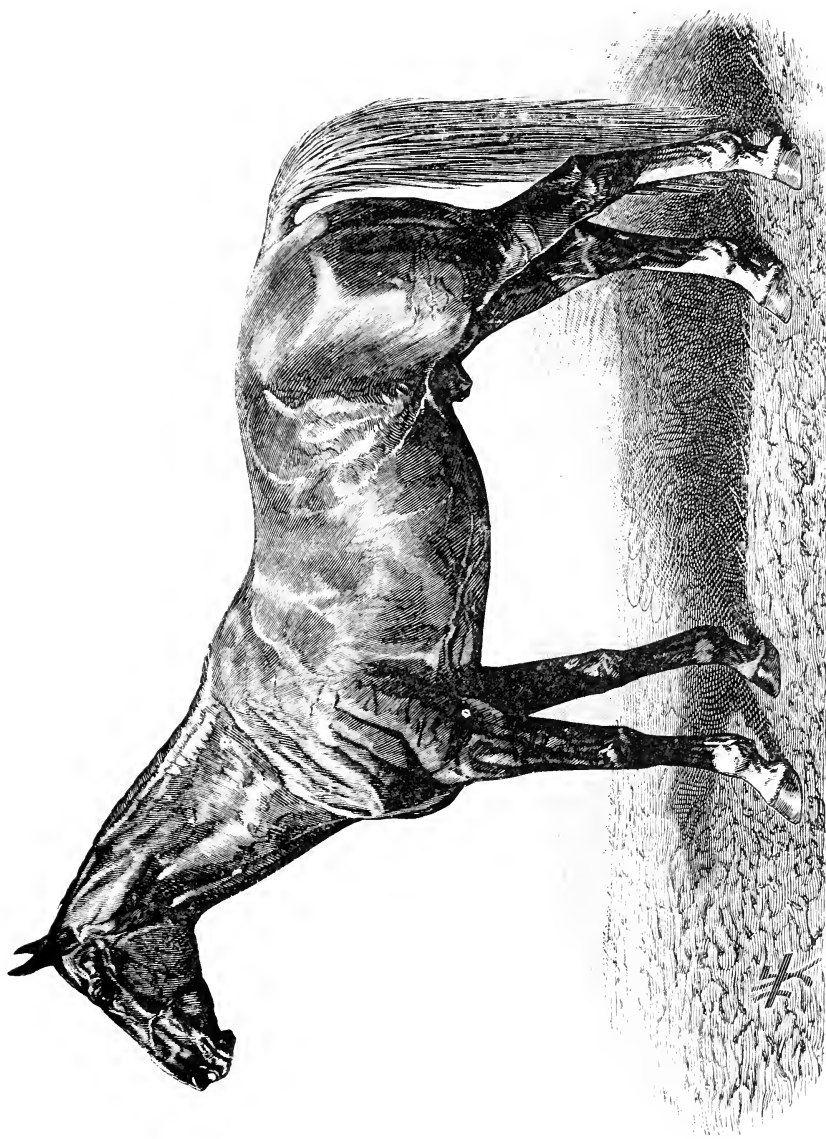
foal-getter. In this country the evidence collected by the Royal Commission on Horse-breeding showed a slightly better average, some 60 per cent.

It is, of course, in all breeding establishments maintained for profit, a matter of the utmost importance that every mare shall, if possible, produce a foal every year, the loss being considerable with an animal so long in gestation if she fails to do so. If only half the inmates of the haras breed each year, it is obvious that every foal reared must repay the keep of two. The attention of breeders was, therefore, directed, through these ascertained facts, to the theory of artificial insemination—*i.e.*, the introduction of semen into the uterus by other means than that of natural copulation.

Some opposition has, as might be expected, been made to this practice of artificial insemination. Two or three of the objections advanced against it we may briefly consider, before pointing out the advantages claimed for it by its supporters. It has been alleged that it is an interference with the course

of Nature, and, therefore, an impious and unholy thing. Against this is quoted the old maxim, that “He who makes two blades of grass to grow where but one grew before is to be accounted a benefactor to his species”; the argument being that, similarly, he must be a benefactor who by these means gives us three so useful animals as the horse where only two were produced before. As a matter of fact, no one can really control or alter Nature, though man would seem to be allowed to direct its operations, so far as he can, to his own profit and advantage. At least, it may be alleged that there is, at any rate, no inhumanity or cruelty involved in this practice, which is perhaps more than could be said of the opposite practice; to wit, the ruthless gelding of ninety-nine-hundredths of our male horses, against which, so far as I know, no voice has ever been raised.

Then there was the objection that foals



VERNEUIL.

thus artificially procreated would not resemble the sire, or be so strong as those begotten by the natural process; but this, of course, has proved groundless, the offspring being necessarily and obviously the natural produce of the sire in the one case as in the other, while it also appears fully as robust.

Also there is what is called the "biennial" argument to be considered. This is based on the assumption that, if a mare breeds only once in two years, she throws a colt superior to what she would be able to produce if prolific every year. This sounds reasonable enough, and it is undoubtedly the case that animals (such as the dog), which can produce twice in the year, may become exhausted with such rapid production, and should therefore be discouraged in the exercise of such fecundity. But this does not seem to be the case with a slow-breeding mammal like the mare. There is, at any rate, no re-

liable evidence to the effect that a foal dropped after a year of idleness is in any way better than another which was foaled in the regular annual discharge of maternal duty. Breeders, therefore, are naturally inclined to set aside the biennial theory and breed a foal, if they can, from each mare yearly.

It is claimed by the advocates of artificial insemination that such desirable result is largely facilitated by this process. The operation is said to have been known in Europe for a hundred years, and used by the Arabs for an unknown period; but it is only of late years that practical experiments have to any extent been made, and these chiefly in the United States of America. A farmer in Illinois undertook to thus artificially impregnate twenty-two mares which were alleged to be barren, and which, at any rate, had been previously covered for several seasons without result, and ac-

tually succeeded in getting sixteen of them in foal by these means. Another breeder gives as his experience that out of seventeen mares which had refused to stand to a horse (some of them for several years) nine fine and healthy living foals were procured in the same way.

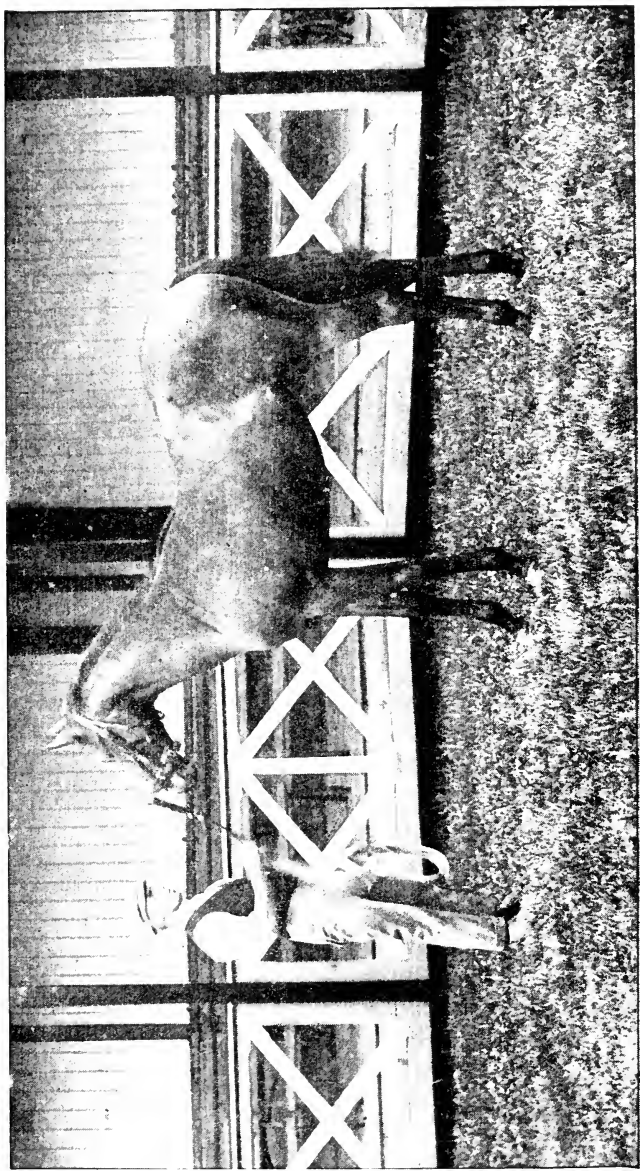
The practice as yet is by no means general, and only one case, so far, has come under my own personal observation. This was a mare named *Brimstone*, some few years ago a noted winner of point-to-point steeplechases in Wilts and Dorset. After repeated trials and disappointments, both with thoroughbred and carthorse sires known as sure foal-getters, she was at last successfully impregnated, and produced in due course a strong foal, by means of insemination. Most of us who have bred at all have been at some time or other disappointed, by the repeated refusal of some valuable or favourite animal, whose good qualities we desired to

perpetuate, to accept the attentions of the horse, or her failure to “hold” when she has done so—which disappointments the use of the inseminator, it is claimed, would in most instances have obviated.

The most notable instance in this country has been, so far, the *Trenton—Sandiway* filly. This beautiful mare was bred by the late Duke of Westminster. *Sandiway* had been repeatedly served by *Trenton*, and as often “turned.” As a last resource, the day before she returned to Eaton, recourse was had to the inseminator, and the mare immediately took. In due time she was delivered of this valuable youngster, which, though a late foal (May 13th), made as a yearling 5,500 guineas under the hammer.

The operation, too, has occasionally answered wonderfully in the case of aged mares. A cart mare, for instance, by means of it, dropped her first foal at fifteen years.

Another advantage claimed for the system



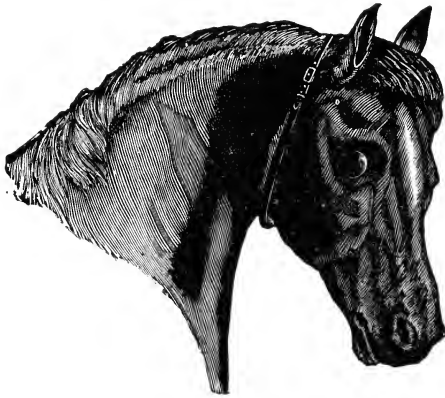
SANDFLAKE, BY TRENTON—SANDIWAY.

is economy of service in the horse, since by the process two mares which happen to be in "use" at the same time may often be impregnated from one service. The generative powers of certain highly prized racing sires might thus be conserved and utilised, to the profit alike of owners and subscribers; and in this way an aged hero of the turf might still beget as many foals as a younger and more vigorous sire.

There are many causes of sterility in mares, which (this not being in any way a veterinary work) we need not enumerate or discuss, but will content ourselves with saying that convincing evidence has now been collected to prove that most of these can be remedied by means of insemination, the percentage of prolific mares being by artificial aid as ninety to fifty before its adoption. Nor does it lie within our scope to describe the operation. Suffice it to say that it is not a complicated one, though it must, of course, be performed

either by a veterinary surgeon, or one otherwise thoroughly acquainted with the interior anatomy of the mare.*

* For particulars alike of the methods of operation and the instruments required, we cannot do better than commend to the reader the pamphlets on the subjects issued by Messrs. C. H. Huish & Co., of 12, Red Lion Square.



CHAPTER XIII.

ON COLOUR.

AT the completion of this little book on the Horse, I was reminded that I had said nothing on the subject of colour; but this was rather as a matter of course, since it has long been an accepted fact with practical horsemen that colour has nothing to do with either the animal's temperament or his merits.

In the older works upon the horse we find an entirely contrary opinion prevailing, and various attributes assigned to the animal according to the colour of his coat. My belief is that there was never anything in it, and that the old saying that a good horse cannot be a bad colour, is correct enough. Most persons, however, have their

favourite colours, while it cannot be denied that some are more pleasing than others to the eye; but no one, I think, is entitled to claim any particular merit as a general attribute of any especial colour, or to condemn any colour on other than æsthetic grounds.

A few remarks upon colour may, nevertheless, not be without interest. Bay, I suppose, is still the commonest colour in this country; but what infinite gradations of tint do this colour, and chestnut, afford! Of twenty bay, or twenty chestnut, horses in a stud, you would hardly find two of exactly the same shade of colour. Bay ranges from a pale, or mealy bay, as it is called, almost approaching a dun, through a series of tints called bright, sherry, or blood-bay to that which is perhaps the most beautiful colour for a horse of all—a very dark bay, which is apt to be called brown. A mare of this lovely colour I rode for many years; looking down from the saddle

on her fine sloping shoulder was like gazing into the wine-dark depths of an old-fashioned mahogany dining-table, kept as such an article of furniture was in the days of our youth. A very rich bay I have now is exactly the colour of a horse chestnut, more nearly matching it, in fact, than any chestnut horse I ever saw. The darkest bay is generally to be distinguished from a genuine brown by having black points, while a brown has often, too, a tan muzzle, which again is sometimes the only thing to distinguish it from a black. So nearly do these three colours, through the range of tints in the two former, blend, that it is common in racing entries to describe an animal thus: b. or br. colt So-and-so; or, br. or blk. filly Something-else. I think the most difficult to determine that I ever knew was a mare named *Beatrice*, which ran in some hurdle races in the West of England many years ago. What she really was was a light

and brightish bay, with legs, mane, and tail of the same colour, which made her look as much like a chestnut as a bay, and as a chestnut I remember she was entered. A positively black horse, except among the Shire and Clydesdale breeds, is now somewhat rare. A real black is distinguished by a bluish tint in the higher lights; but what used to be termed a “mulberry” black—*i.e.*, a black of warmer hue tending to deep ruddy brown on the flanks, the colour in fact of a ripe mulberry—is less uncommon, and is a very handsome colour. The most noticeable thing has been, during the last few decades, the increased prevalence of chestnut, due undoubtedly to the more general use of pure blood.

In a show-yard class of hunters, or in the field for a race, chestnut is now as often as not the predominant colour. This again has a most extensive gradation of tints, ranging from sorrel, as it used to be called,

through shades of paler or brighter gold, to a deep rich liver colour, and a chestnut that is nearly black. This colour is the most of all subject to white markings, a large majority of chestnuts having white reaches, or blazes, with one or more white stockings, the white often extending well up towards the hocks or knees. Of greys, too, there is a considerable variety; of which the ticked or "flea-bitten" is perhaps the breediest and most sporting-looking, it being probably generally derived from Arab blood. It is well-known, by the way, that the foal which will by-and-by be white is born black; but it may not be so well known that the skin of a white horse is usually black, while that of a dark-coloured animal is light.

Another curious thing is the difference in colour caused by clipping; the light coat often becoming darker, and the dark lighter through this process. Horses some-

times will come out the most curious and unexpected colour on being clipped. One pony I was riding turned out a blue; while another, which the lady who later did me the honour to become my wife was driving at the same time, became a pink one; the latter in his normal condition being a very light dun, or cream colour; mine a dun of a deeper shade. Dun, by the way, is not a bad colour for a cob or pony, and it is said that when there is a list or stripe along the spine of a darker shade, the animal is sure to be a good one. Greys are far less common in England than they used to be, and have almost disappeared from our thoroughbred stock; which is a curious fact, since it was, and is still, one of the commonest colours in the Arab. It is still very prevalent in France; in some parts you see scarcely anything but greys, due, no doubt, to the Percheron and Poitevin breeds, which I

believe are almost universally of that colour. Of late years in the streets of Paris it has been less predominant, though when I first visited that city it was the prevailing colour in cabs and omnibuses. At that time, too, there was a large proportion of greys among the London omnibus horses, the ranks of which were then largely recruited from Flanders and other parts of the Continent.

A blue or steel roan, or a red roan or "strawberry" colour, looks handsome in harness, and many very smart cobs and ponies are of this colour; but it is not a "breedy" one, being derived chiefly from the Norfolk trotting blood. It used also to be a prevalent cart-horse colour, though it is seldom now found among pedigree Shire stock, while I do not remember ever seeing a roan Clydesdale.

Any "bizarre" colour, such as pie-bald, skew-bald, or spotted grey (*the best pony*

I ever was on was of this circus colour, and he was a wonder over a country as well as on the road, and a fine stayer to boot, having, I suspect, Arab blood in him), is only suitable for cobs and ponies, and any so coloured should be well shaped and of fine action, since they are sure to attract everybody's attention.

Notions used to exist, as we have premised, even among experienced horsemen, that different colours betokened different temperaments. Thus a bay, brown, or grey was considered to be generally sound, honest, enduring, and temperate; while blacks, though some of them might be game and staying, were apt to be sullen and vicious; chestnuts, fiery and hot-tempered, and frequently, if of a light shade, also soft. All I can say about this is, that while the very hottest animal I ever myself rode was a beautiful dark bay, and the three next most excitable I have known all greys; the two most temperate and tranquil

animals I have owned were both chestnut; and the only two blacks I have possessed were of a most affectionate and willing disposition. So much for my own personal experience of this instructive and edifying theory.

But I think these antiquated ideas have been exploded among horsemen for many generations. Chestnuts are apt to be fiery, no doubt, but it is because of their breed rather than of their colour. When properly handled, they give no more trouble than horses of another colour. The general-purpose horse, too, of former generations was generally a bay, brown, or grey; and so it became customary to attribute his many excellent qualities to his colour.

The old prejudice against white markings still seems to linger among a few old-fashioned persons. Only the other day, on my way to a large sale and show, I chummed in with an agreeable elderly clergyman, who

desired to buy a well-bred little horse of 14·2, which must be a chestnut, to match another, and enlisted my assistance in his choice. As I had never seen the other, it wasn't a very easy task; nor is selecting a horse for another person an office I at any time desire. There were lots of chestnuts in the show, as there always are wherever a number of well-bred ones are gathered together; but my friend, it appeared, objected to white, and quoted antediluvian maxims, I believe in verse, as to what was to be expected of horses with one, two, three, or four white stockings. I tried to reason with him for his own good; but it was of no use, and finally, I think, he went home without buying, though there were some useful animals there. The bays, which were naturally freer from white, he would not look at, being persuaded that a pair of horses must necessarily be of the same colour, though I essayed to convince

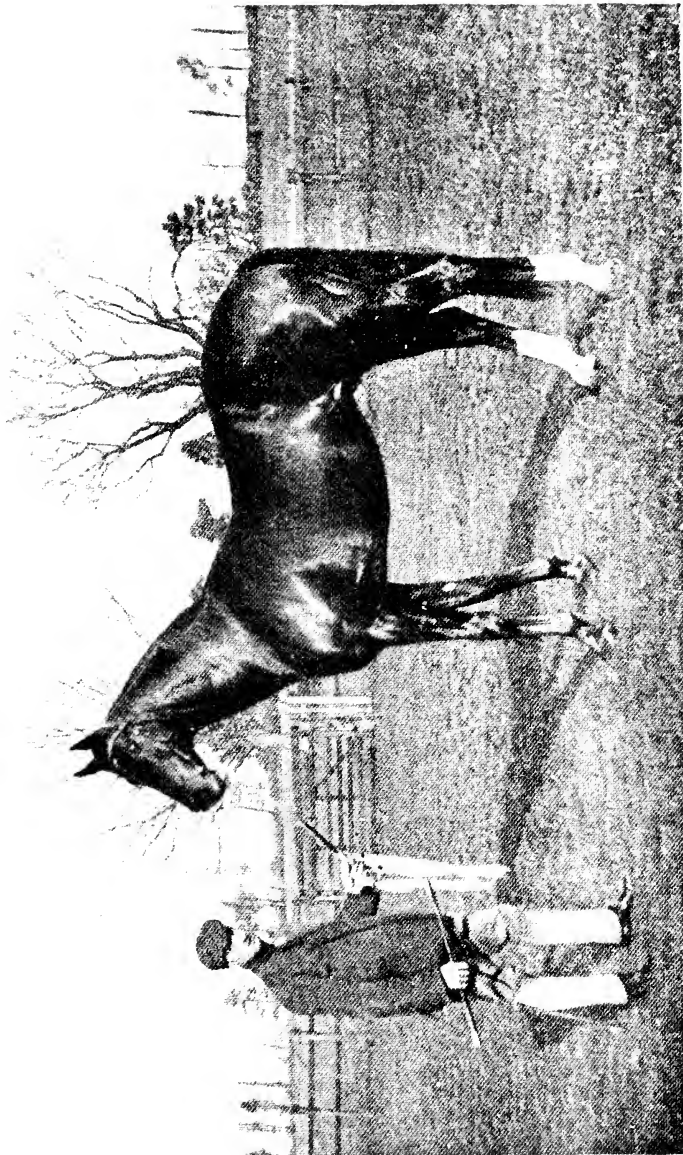
him of what is certainly the case—that it is of far greater importance that they should be of similar stamp, action, and pace, than either that they should match in colour or be free from white markings. I rather like a mixed team myself. A bay, for instance, generally looks well alongside a black, brown, chestnut, roan, or grey, provided both animals are of like character and step well together.

In breeding, the foal is in a great majority of cases the same colour as one or other of its parents, but I do not think it is more likely to resemble one than the other. No instance, I believe, has been known of two chestnuts producing anything but a chestnut; but it was perhaps unusual that a dark bay mare of mine mated with a very dark chestnut horse should have produced a bright golden chestnut, much lighter than either parent.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON RACING.

FEW are the folk who do not in their hearts love horse-racing. Many, from principle, from prudence, or from circumstance, abstain from sharing in the sport, but nearly all have an open or secret sympathy with it. It is indeed a fine sport, taken on its intrinsic merits, and apart from the fraud and chicanery with which the greed of man has ever surrounded it, but which common-sense obliges us to regard as its accidental, rather than necessary, concomitant. The spectacle of the most beautiful animal on this earth, which I take to be the thoroughbred horse, galloping with his free elastic stride, and striving with generous emulation (as he will when fairly handled) to surpass his fellows,



AMPHION.

A celebrated Sire at the Compton Stud.

contains surely nothing in the least demoralising ; but, on the contrary, is one which should call forth the nobler, rather than the baser, instincts of human nature. Indeed, we could imagine the sport being so conducted—say, in an ideal Platonic Republic—as to be one of the purest and most healthy of the numerous forms of recreation which are so essential to the well-being of a nation.

But, corrupt as the sport of horse-racing has unfortunately become in general estimation, the roguery practised is, I feel sure, very far less universal than is imagined by that highly respectable portion of the community which, naturally attracted by the inherent fascination of the sport, nevertheless holds aloof from it through a righteous horror and personal dread of the trickery with which it is so commonly associated. There are many rogues undoubtedly engaged in the game, and many horses are not run to win.

But few, save the initiated, realise the inevitable uncertainty of the game. By no means every case of in-and-out running is to be attributed to dishonesty. One instance will suffice to show what I mean.

A horse is backed by the public (possibly by its owner as well, though of that they are unaware), and the public naturally expects that horse to beat others he has beaten before, when meeting them again on the same, or perhaps even slightly better, terms than then. On this occasion he fails to obtain a place, when unfair play is immediately imputed to somebody, and the conviction remains with the disappointed backer that he has been swindled. Yet he has no real grievance at all. He had nothing whatever to do with that horse, and was under no necessity to back him: he chose to do so at his own risk, and, as a matter of fact, was not cheated. The horse could not be got so fit as he was on the previous

occasion ; the race was run in a different way ; or (and this I suspect is the commonest cause of such disappointments) it was run on quite a different course. Few persons, probably, are aware of the immense difference this makes. A good horse, no doubt, should be able to run well on any course ; but, as a matter of practical experience, very few indeed are at their best alike on a level course, one with more or less sharp gradients in it, and one which finishes on an incline ; or again when the ground is hard, and when they have to gallop through mud. Once more, the race-horse is one of the most sensitive of highly organised creatures ; like human beings, he has his good days and his bad ; and clever indeed would be the trainer who could make sure of delivering him at the post practically the same animal on each occasion he is called upon to run. In nine cases out of ten in which a backer considers himself to have been swindled, I believe

his disappointment could be accounted for in one or other of these ways.

One of the most remarkable features in the development of the Turf as a national institution is the tremendous increase in the value of the stakes contended for; and the question naturally occurs whether this has been advantageous or prejudicial to the Turf's best interests? For my own part, I should welcome, were it possible, a return to its primitive simplicity in every department of the sport. The more racing can be kept to its proper function and *métier*, sport pure and simple, and the less it is allowed to become a business and speculation (at present it partakes largely of the character of both), the less inducement there is to owners and managers of studs to cheat, dissemble, and run cunning; and also the less temptation to the credulous and oversanguine in the reports of fabulous fortunes made, as it were, in a moment out of what



SLIPPING THE FIELD FOR THE RUN IN.

Corrie Roy and Chippendale, 1882.

ought to be a mere pastime. But the time seems unfortunately to be nearly past when sport was sport, and work work, a liberal dose of the former being the natural relief and antidote to the over-pressure of the other. It is manifestly a mistake (I believe a very grave one) to import the absorbing energy and mental strain which are essential, in so competitive an age as the present, to the successful conduct of business, into what should be a pure and complete relaxation from the cares and toils of life.

How many persons, again, now concern themselves with this sport without the least knowledge of or acquaintance with its noble subject! The Englishman, we are assured, always loves a good horse, and no doubt he generally does when he knows him; but as a rule he picks his fancy out of a printed list, and often fails to recognise the animal which "carries his money" when he is able to go and see him run. Generally, perhaps,

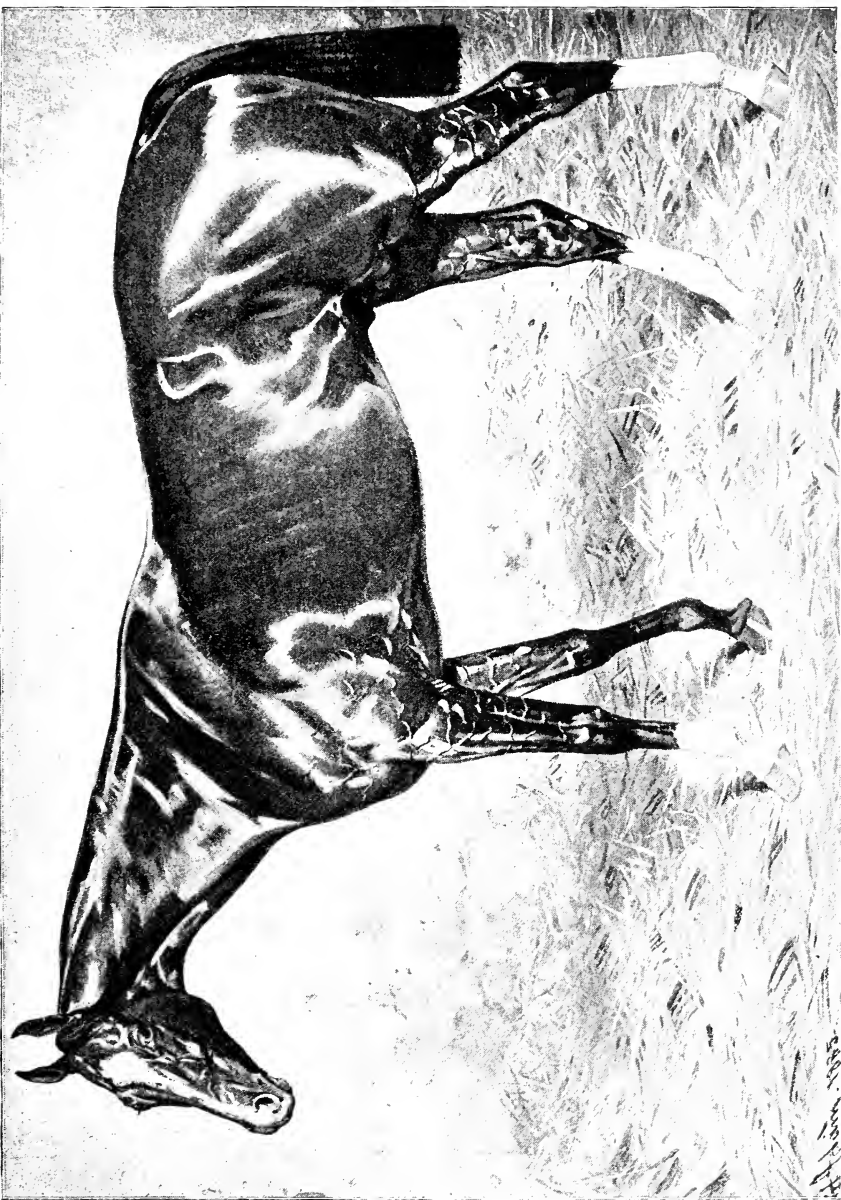
he has never seen him at all. A trainer friend of mine once told me that, while waiting with a horse-box at a Midland junction, an unoccupied porter sauntered up, and asked what he'd got in there. "*Sally Brass II.*," was the reply. "What! good old *Sally*? Let's have a squint at her, young man. She've a won me many a quid, but I've never set eyes on her yet." So the great raking *Sally*, a frequent winner in her day, standing near seventeen hands, and covering more ground in her stride than I think I ever saw a horse do, was exhibited to her humble admirer to his immense satisfaction and joy. Well, one likes the interest the honest fellow took in his selected favourite; but can it be a very wholesome interest, that purely monetary one, which a man in his position takes in a horse trained so far away, and which, but for this casual glimpse of her in a railway box, he would probably never have seen at all?

The enthusiasm of the Yorkshire tykes when on the Town Moor a Whitewall-trained favourite ran home a gallant winner of the great St. Leger or the *Coop*, was natural and healthy enough; as was also the joy when the locally trained colt of the old Squire or Lord-Lieutenant of the county carried off the Queen's Plate at a provincial meeting; or when Mr. Tom's, Captain Dick's, or Master Harry's mare won the open steeple-chase over a stiff natural course at the Hunt races. But this systematic backing of the unknown horses of unknown owners by post and wire, or in the bar-parlour of the sporting "public," is another thing altogether, and little likely to benefit those addicted to it.

The extraordinary advance during the last few decades in the value of stakes has necessitated the multiplication of gate-money meetings. These, I imagine, are less enjoyable, as well as less healthy, than when racing is held upon open down or heath. Newmarket,

Epsom, Ascot, and Goodwood, the Doncaster Town Moor, and the Knavesmire at York; the Lansdown course at Bath, and Stockbridge (now, alas! no more), where the Bibury Club* held its meetings for so many years, are examples of the fine old-fashioned racecourses whereon generations of men have enjoyed their favourite sport. And how far more enjoyable, and more genuinely “sporting” as well, the glorious old pastime seems to be on those open spaces, where every one who loves to see a good horse gallop may do so free and unfettered, than when cooped up in crowded stands and enclosures, while the horses run round a “soup-plate” course for gamblers to bet on, for all the world like *les petits chevaux* in a Continental Kursaal! New racecourses must now invariably be enclosed, that the gate-money may flow into the coffers of the administration;

* The Bibury Club now holds its Annual Meeting on Salisbury Race Course.



ST. GATIEN.
From a painting by Emil Adam.

while many a pleasant little meeting held formerly on a breezy down or heathelad common has died out, because owners are no longer content to run for a silver cup or a twenty-pound sweepstakes, as they were when sportsmen loved sport for its own sake rather than for that of gain. Well would we like to see these old country meetings revived, and others like them instituted; for though we know there were rogues and ruffians then as now, yet there was more spirit and fun in the thing when country gentlemen ran their horses for the public as well as their own amusement, and the rural race-goer, if he betted at all, backed the colt he had seen playing beside its dam in the breeding paddocks, or which was trained upon the downs above his native village.

For some reason or other racing seems to have become less interesting in itself (we exclude the spurious excitement of betting) than it used to be; and this, we think, is

largely due to the almost universal forcing of our young blood stock, which necessitates their retirement from the Turf at a correspondingly early age, so that nowadays we seem to lose sight of a good horse almost as soon as we have got to know him. Few now are able to stand the severe strain of training beyond a season or two, and consequently the contests for the cups and other time-honoured trophies become less and less interesting year by year. We never see now, for instance, such a field as fought for the Ascot Gold Cup some thirty years ago, when the great Continental champions *Boiard* and *Flageolet* finished first and second, while behind them were *Doncaster*, *Gang Forward*, *Marie Stuart*, and *Kaiser*—that is to say, the first three in the Derby, the Oaks winner, the three placed in the Leger, and the first, second, and third in the Grand Prix de Paris. What a galaxy of equine talent to contest a trophy which

it was then the pride and glory of the noblest in the land to win and own!

Our great three-year-old races too, though, of course, not so much affected by the same cause, seem somehow to be less exciting than of yore. Too often the Derby, the fields for which are much smaller than they used to be, is a one-horse race.

There has been, it is true, of late years an occasional close finish, as between *Sir Hugo* and *La Fleche* in 1892, and *Persimmon* and *St. Frusquin* four years later; but when shall we see again such a field for the Blue Riband of the Turf as when the mighty dark *Blair Athol* galloped home in front of Lord Glasgow's splendid colt *General Peel*, with the favourite *Scottish Chief* third, and behind these the brave *Cambuscan*, beautiful *Ely*, *Coastguard*, and *Birch Broom*, all good enough, perhaps, to have won three Derbies out of four, but in 1864 beaten out of place by superior merit? Or, again, but

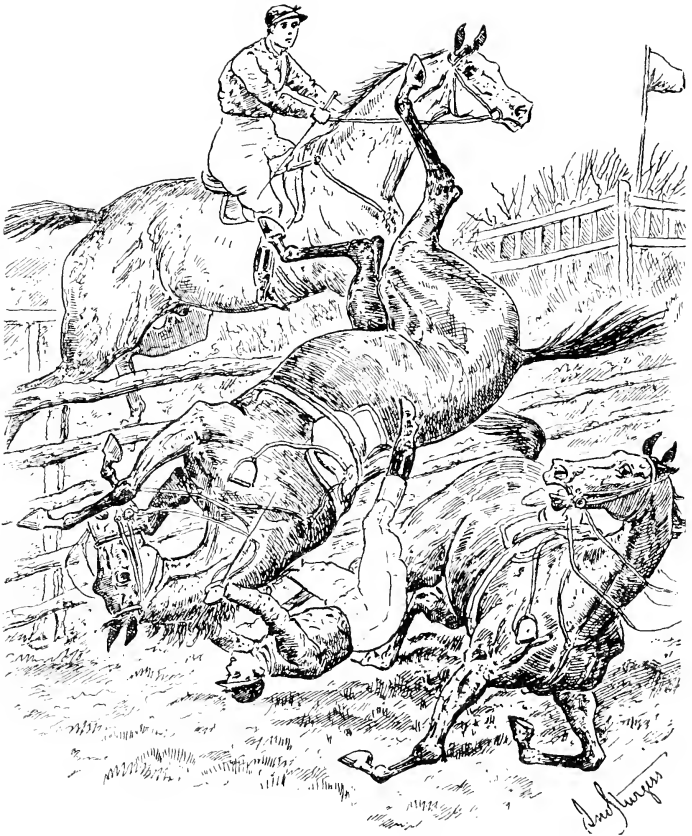
three years later, when *Hermit*, galloping as Chris Flemming declared he had never seen a horse gallop before (after breaking a blood-vessel but ten days previously), beat handsomely *Marksman* and the stout-hearted *Fauban*, with such horses as *Plaudit*, *Julius*, and the Middle Park winner, *The Rake* (who had met with a similar mishap), “squared” like hacks in their rear! I don’t know if horses were pluckier in those days, but I think owners were. At least, they did not all seem so mighty afraid of a horse with a big reputation, but would have a “cut at the cracks” again and again, often with satisfactory results. They seemed to think more, too, of the glory and honour of winning than of the mere value of the stakes. Thus Custance, the ex-jockey, referring, in his “Riding Recollections,” to the Queen’s Plate at Lincoln in 1867, contested by *Regalia*, *Lord Lyon*, *Sundeelah*, and *Rama* (on which last he had the winning

mount), pertinently asks, "What would they think in these days of the winner of the Two Thousand, Derby, and St. Leger, the winner of the Oaks, and two other horses worth at least three thousand pounds each, running two miles for a hundred guineas?"

The reluctance which owners of the present day so often exhibit to match or otherwise run their successful colts against horses of equal reputation, is due more often to dread of lost prestige than to actual decline of sporting enterprise. An unbeaten record means such a lot to a colt when he retires to the stud—which, by the way, he is apt now to do at far too early an age. Still, the most successful animal has no right to be called a "century" horse, or to pose as a champion of the Turf, unless he has met and conquered, or at least received forfeit from, the very best of his compeers. Great disappointment, therefore, was felt a few years ago by the partisans of either horse

when *Flying Fox* and *Cyllene* did not meet, as it was expected they would, in the Champion Stakes—an encounter to which every one would have looked forward with as much interest as when *Voltigeur* was about to meet the famous *Flying Dutchman*, or *Hermit* the equally famous and flying *Achievement*.

Speaking of *Flying Fox*, what an enormous sum that equine hero realised at the sale of his late lamented owner's stud! Over thirty-seven thousand pounds for a single horse, and that one of no particular beauty, or, perhaps, very remarkable performance, since the lot he had had to beat were decidedly moderate! How our forefathers would have opened their eyes! And well they might; for if the sum expended on *Flying Fox* is regarded as an investment, it is not very easy to see, especially since the horse is not to be again trained, how it is to be made a remunerative one.



TURNED A COMPLETE SOMERSAULT.

From a Drawing by John Sturgess.

XV.

ON STEEPLE-CHASING.

THE origin of this sport is by no means so remote as that of flat-racing; in fact, steeple-chasing, as we understand it, is hardly yet seventy years old. The earliest form of it was, as the name suggests, the point-to-point. A church spire or steeple, by reason of its height and shape, is very often the most conspicuous point in a landscape; and to this selected point, from some other given point affording a convenient view of it, the competitors had to make the best of their way across country, the only proviso being that no one should ride one hundred yards of roadway at any one time. The line chosen in the very hard-riding days in which the sport was instituted was,

we may be sure, generally a stiff one; and very little of the race could have been visible to the spectators, unless indeed these rode alongside, or after, the actual competitors, which from old prints we gather they were allowed to do. It was doubtless on this account that, the sport becoming popular, the flagged course (first on one side only, and then on both) superseded the point-to-point, which, however, has lately been revived at hunt-meetings. The flagged course was made as nearly circular as possible, so that a large number of spectators could, by taking advantage of any adjacent eminence, or from the elevation of a stand, see pretty well the whole of it, without trouble or risk to themselves. At first the flagged course was as purely natural as in the point-to-point; Aylesbury, St. Albans, Leamington, and Warwick having been some of the earliest and most notable of cross-country fixtures.

The avowed object of steeple-chasing was of course identical with that of flat-racing—the encouragement of the breed of horses. Both hunters and cavalry horses were thought to have degenerated from their old form and powers, in consequence of the abolition of long-distance racing, and particularly of racing in heats. It was considered that if weights were raised to a minimum of twelve stone, to be carried over four miles of hunting country, the natural result must be the cultivation of a class of animal of superior stamina and capacity. In process of time, however, the fatal mistake was made of adopting, and for the same reason, the system of handicapping employed by the Jockey Club. Inferior animals were let in at lower weights, while superior ones were brought to their level by such crushing weights (from the racing point of view) as 13st. 6lb. and 14st. There was perhaps some reason for this

innovation when we remember how those two most famous horses, *Gaylad* and *Lottery*, both belonging to the same owner, swept the board for years; but it was fatal to the improvement theory all the same.

For some reason or other the sport of steeple-chasing has never taken the same hold on the public that flat-racing has. Sporting journalists love to allude to it as the illegitimate game, though why racing horses over a country should be considered less "legitimate" than on the flat is a thing not easy to understand. Possibly it is because this sport has never been under Jockey Club rules, being, as is generally known, regulated by the National Hunt Committee, a body, however respectably composed, with by no means the same prestige and authority as are possessed by the august corporation, which from the very centre of horse-racing, Newmarket, directs

and supervises every "legitimate" race-meeting in the kingdom.

Yet steeple-chasing had a good set-off; many noblemen and gentlemen at first supporting it, and giving good prices for horses in hopes of winning its prizes, or failing this, of possessing valuable hunters for their own use. Finding, however, that they were seldom allowed to win, while their horses were generally spoiled for hunting, they gradually abandoned the sport to a lower class of supporters; and although there has been somewhat of a revival in the interest taken in it of late years, steeple-chasing is still regarded with a great deal of not altogether unjustified suspicion, by men who are ready enough to own and run horses under Jockey Club rules.

From the spectator's point of view the unpopularity of steeple-chasing as compared with flat-racing is not so easy to understand. One would rather have expected it

to be the other way about, and the jumping game to have proved more attractive to the public than the more monotonous proceedings of the race-course. But such is not the case, almost any flat-race meeting being more largely attended than a cross-country fixture; always excepting the Liverpool Grand National, which draws every year a crowd of North-countrymen and Midlanders as huge as that which assembles on the Town Moor to cheer home the winner of the great St. Leger. Possibly steeple-chasing would have acquired a greater hold on popular interest had its earlier conditions been maintained; and particularly had the old-fashioned natural course with its greater variety of jumps been continued. But this has almost entirely disappeared, and one course is almost a facsimile of another, the only important difference being in the size and height of the artificial fences. Great, I remember, was my sur-

prise on first seeing the Grand National course at Aintree; and I must own also to a little disappointment as well—not certainly with the size of the fences, which were big enough in all conscience, great, spreading, stiffly built erections, with a low guard-rail on the take-off side, and wide on the top, many of them, as a dining-room table is long. But somehow or another I had pictured to myself for years a very fine natural course, with Becher's and Valentine's brooks like the Langton brook or the Whissendine, to which the grand thoroughbreds engaged would come racing down and cover some sixteen to twenty feet of water in their stride. As a matter of fact, it being a very dry spring, there was not a drop of water in either; and both, moreover, were nothing but small ditches, and so overhung by the outward slant of the fence that any horse which cleared the latter must clear the ditch too. Notwithstanding the thoroughly

artificial character of the fences, it is of course a grand sight to see a field of twenty to thirty horses, comprising the finest chasers of the day, charge such obstacles like a regiment of cavalry, and cover the four miles and a half at a pace imperceptibly slower than that attained in doing a mile and a half on the flat! When this is done, as by *Father O'Flynn*, in 9 min. $48\frac{1}{5}$ th sec., we gain some idea of the condition a candidate must be in to have any chance of Grand National honours. Equal condition, though the pace is reasonably somewhat slower, must those stout chasers require, which yearly, in the distant but very sporting county of Devon, negotiate the most terrific specimen of a natural steeple-chase probably yet surviving. But to do this course justice let me give the graphic description of it by an eye witness:—
“I had this week the unusual pleasure of attending Totnes Steeple-chases. The various



“THE FENCES WERE BIG ENOUGH IN ALL CONSCIENCE.”

events are of no general interest, but the course is; and it should prove to the most pig-headed advocate of regulation fences, that every country is the best judge of its own. On this Totnes course they pass under a railway arch, with a narrow margin of pathway between them and the river, over which they have also to make their way before getting into the country; and they go up what appears to be an exceeding high mountain, with banks and other formidable fences. You see them afar, against the horizon, on the brow of the hill, and then the descent commences, with a jump or two downhill also, one of them being a bank. At the foot of the hill they land into the hard road, gallop along it nearly two hundred yards, then turn sharp into the river Dart once more, a man with a red flag on the road waving it in the horses' faces to prevent their shirking the turn. Through the river they plunge—

and so home over made-up fences. I saw five finish in good shape over this course, and the sight was well worth seeing."

Well do I remember a former friend of my own (he met, alas! with the end naturally to be expected of him, being killed by a fall with a horse in Australia) undertaking to ride an ineffable brute called *The Shah* over this remarkable course. He had no expectation of winning, but had backed himself to get round, and finish within fifteen minutes of the last horse but his own delightful mount. A truly sporting wager this, and one which excited rather more interest than the actual race. After *The Shah* had done his best to crush his rider's legs on either side the railway arch, tried to lie down in the river, and practised all the devilments in his repertoire, which were numerous, I believe my friend lost his bet by a minute; which was nearly as good as a win, con-

sidering the difficult (and to most riders extremely unpleasant) task he was attempting. Another characteristic reminiscence of my hard-riding friend was a "Pounding" match to which he had challenged a gallant subaltern in one of Her Majesty's foot regiments. Poor E—— had a brown horse called *Blazes*, a real sporting-looking old crock, just such a stamp as Leech loved to put his hard-going undergrads. on. His antagonist rode a little, nearly thoroughbred bay mare, a marvellous jumper. After setting each other some terrific leaps in cold blood, E——'s horse got stranded across a high stone wall, very wide on the top, and hung there with his jock standing on the wall astride him. "Might he get down?" Certainly, but man and horse must descend together or lose the match. Down sat E—— again and plunged in the rowels. Poor old *Blazes* made his final effort, a mighty plunge, and down came

wall, horse and man in a chaotic heap, unfortunately on the wrong side, and the match was lost. The scene, which a crowd of sporting people turned out to see, was one worthy of Lever. A Pounding match, it should perhaps be explained (for this horribly dangerous form of steeple-chasing is now I suppose extinct, that in which my friend took part being very likely the last), consisted in two competitors riding out into a country, and setting each other alternately the most formidable leaps they could find, until one was "pounded," *i.e.*, could not get out, when the other was declared the winner. Jack Mytton and Dick Christian, by the way, would have made ideal exponents of the game. A clever trick in connection with this form of sport is said to have been practised by a man who taught his horse to jump a roadway, which his opponent naturally crossed at a gallop, thereby not taking a jump which was

set him, and losing the match, though he could hardly be said to have been "pounded."

With regard to any beneficial effect which the sport of steeple-chasing may have had upon horse-breeding, it is precisely the same (neither more nor less), as that exerted by flat-racing. The great mistake was ever to have assimilated the two branches of the sport. As at first conducted, chasing did undoubtedly encourage the breed of weight-carrying hunters, since only such, when thoroughbred or nearly so, could get over a big natural country at the pace required. Such horses as *Vivian*, *Grimaldi*, *Gaylad*, *Lottery*, *Peter Simple*, *Rat-trap*, and *Chandler*, full-sized yet not leggy, strong without being clumsy, high-couraged yet temperate, and capable, several of them, of carrying sixteen stone to hounds, were just the class of animal for which there is now so great a demand. These few notable horses for some years carried all

before them; but in order to secure large fields and a paying attendance weights were reduced, the handicap system borrowed from the Turf, and fences cut down to suit the mob of thoroughbred cast-offs, which being useless on the flat were sent to try their luck at the cross-country game.

Horses jump as well as gallop in all shapes and sizes; and though many of our best performers have been fine animals of great apparent scope and power, as were those just mentioned, there have also been many first-class steeple-chasers whose appearance would (except, perhaps, to a particularly discerning judge) have belied their performance. Thus *Dragsman*, a noted chaser of his time, was said to have been a coach-horse to look at; but he cut down a field of first-rate horses with great ease, and ran four miles in the record time of his day. The *Lamb* too, as every one knows, was a mere pony, being bought on

account of his small size as a boy's hunter; yet he won the Grand National twice; while two other winners of that great race, Lord Coventry's famous mare *Emblem*, and *Casse Tête*, were lean, light, wiry mares, of mean appearance perhaps, but all muscle and quality, built high behind like greyhounds, with immense length from hip to hock, giving them great stride and enormous jumping power.

The revival of the Point-to-point at hunt meetings forms an interesting feature in modern steeple-chasing. This form of racing has, no doubt, afforded a great deal of pleasure both from the competitor's and spectator's point of view; for though the race is seldom, perhaps, exciting, there is always the personal interest in some particular horse or rider to give it a zest. Nevertheless, I have seen two or three remarkably close finishes; and one—in which a gallant captain, after turning a

somersault over a gate into the last field but one, and actually landing on his feet, beat by a short head an honourable member of the House of Commons, who had meanwhile been engaged in extricating his horse from the last ditch, in which he was reposing to recover his wind—was really sensational.

The great objection to these races is that the course selected being invariably a severe one, and horses frequently inadequately trained for such an ordeal, they often suffer considerable distress, and not infrequently break their backs or necks through sheer inability, when blown, to rise at their fences. The percentage of falls on the number of horses which take part in these races is enormously high; and owners should see to it that their horses are properly prepared before being allowed to start in them, lest they incur the charge of cruelty to animals, which every true sportsman is careful to avoid.

It is wonderful what some hunters will do when this simple precaution is observed. A gallant little horse of my acquaintance, after winning the light-weight race at one of these hunt meetings over three and a half miles of stiff country, actually came out again, and carrying fourteen stone ran a good third for the Welter too*. He was fourteen-three, and quite home-trained, but the name of that little horse's grandsire was *Blair Athol*.

* A horse now is very properly no longer allowed to start for both races.



CHAPTER XVI.

SOME GENERAL REMARKS.

How few people seem now-a-days to adopt riding as a form of regular exercise! They will ride to hunt; even hunt to ride, as Masters of Hounds, not without reason, complain; but very few care enough for the exercise to hack about the country, either on business or for pleasure, as used to be done by considerable numbers. The Row seems as popular as ever, while the delightful tree-shaded avenues of Continental cities, such as the Bois de Boulogne of Paris and the Bois de la Cambre of Brussels, still attract equestrians; but in most rural districts one now rarely meets a horseman; scarcely ever, out of the hunting season, a horsewoman. Our very children are growing

disdainful of their ponies, and long for bicycles and motor-cars. It is the spirit of the age ; and apart from the exigencies of the chase and warfare, equitation bids fair soon to become almost a lost art. Yet how pleasant and healthy an exercise it is ! Better surely for health, at least, than all the whizzings and whirrings of mechanical locomotion. A few yet, mindful of the old prescription that “the best thing for the inside of a man is the outside of a horse,” join what *habitués* of Rotten Row term the “Liver Brigade” ; but apart from that time-honoured resort few ride for business, health, or pleasure. The enclosure of, and building over of, so many heaths and commons in the vicinity of our larger towns might be supposed to account in some measure for this, since it must be confessed there is little pleasure in walking and trotting along monotonous miles of macadamised roads ; but even in rural regions of moor and

heather, wide stretching downs of splendid turf; and grassy ridings through wood and dell, the horseman is becoming a rarity; a cavalcade, unless hounds are out, never seen. Yet what more delightful exercise than that afforded by the smooth, elastic paces of a perfect hack, mouthed and made by a master hand?

To acquire good hands, as the horseman terms it, early practice and a naturally sensitive touch are both required. A heavy-fisted or otherwise clumsy person seldom attains them. It is by reason of this natural delicacy of touch, so often an attribute of their sex, that ladies so frequently have good hands—better than any man's, I have heard it said. But this is not so. I have known men with "hands" which no woman's could excel; while, moreover, when I have seen a horse's mouth mercilessly jagged about, and the whip unnecessarily used, it has (I regret to say) been nearly as often by an uninstructed

lady driver, as by a butcher's or baker's boy, entrusted with the conduct of that most sensitive and obliging animal, the horse, without a proper training in the art of managing him. Why, in so humane a country as this, persons should be allowed the control of man's most faithful servant without a previous course of instruction has always been beyond my comprehension. It might well form a subject of Technical Instruction, and I would commend it to the consideration of our County Council Committees. To see for instance, the average carter trying to back by main force by means of a thin-worn ring-snaffle in the unfortunate animal's mouth, and the strength of his own brutal arm, the entire weight of a bulky earhorse and loaded waggon, because he does not know that a horse cannot back as much as he can pull, or that when his hind legs are fully extended the poor creature can make no further effort till he has been allowed to

collect himself, is a sight to make an angel weep, or a man of ordinary sensibility swear !

Good hands denote not merely an acquaintance with a horse's powers and proclivities, and a quick and rapid concert with the same; but a sympathetic give-and-take sort of touch, which while restraining and controlling him, does not worry the animal, or impede the free carriage of his head and neck. Hear Gervase Markham, an experienced horseman of the reign of James I., on this point; whose words, written so long ago, are well worthy their survival to the present day :

“ This slight precept I will bestow upon him (the rider or driver) that he have a constant sweete hand upon his horse's mouth, by no means losing the feeling thereof, but observing that the horse does rest upon his bit and carry his head and rein in a good and comely fashion; for to goe with his head loose, or to have no feeling of the bit, is both uncomely to the eye and takes from the horse all delight in his labour.”

It also takes all delight from the rider when his horse's mouth has been spoiled by some heavy-handed groom; wherefore, unless you have a man who can ride, exercise your saddle horse yourself, or have him led, and lend him only to one who knows how a horse should be handled. Good horsemen differ themselves somewhat as to the kind of mouth they prefer. Some have no objection to being pulled at; but to my mind the lighter and more sensitive a horse's mouth is, so long as he will go up to his bit, the more pleasant he is either to ride or drive. A hard-pulling animal which will only stop when he chooses (however he may assist an inferior rider to keep his seat by allowing him to hang on to his head) is a particular nuisance in the hunting field, since he may carry you on top of the hounds, smash your knee against a gate post, or capsize one of the field before you know where you are. Therefore, in making

your horse, spare no pains to give him a really good mouth. As a hack, do not consider him properly broken until the merest turn of the wrist, with the corresponding pressure of a loose rein upon either side of his neck, will suffice to bend him. Many otherwise temperate horses will, of course, pull a bit in the excitement of the "Niagara-like" rush, as some sporting writer has aptly put it, of the "gone-away," and especially those that only occasionally enjoy the treat of a day with the hounds. If you want a good day's exercise, by the way, accept a friend's offer of a mount on one of his phaeton horses which was hunted a bit in his youth. Some horses, again, however regularly they are hunted, will pull all day till they are done. But to really enjoy hunting, the less you have to consider your horse the better, since it is obvious that the more attention you have to bestow upon your mount, the less

opportunity you have of watching the work of the hounds, in which the real sport of the chase consists.

It is interesting to observe the way in which a clever, made hunter will keep his eye on the hounds, and watch for himself every turn in the chase. For this reason a hard puller, though, perhaps, less unacceptable to a hard "goer," is objectionable to the genuine fox-hunter, to whom a snaffle-bridle hunter is always a real treasure. It is well known that many pulling horses will prove more amenable to an easier bit than to one of increased severity; but the most difficult of all as a hunter is the well-bred one which will not stand a curb, but which you cannot possibly hold with a snaffle. Some recommend a gag-bit for such cases, but the only animal to which I ever offered this alternative resented it nearly as much as she did the ordinary double bridle. "It is a sin ever to put a

curb on him," you sometimes hear it said of a nice-mouthed horse, but I do not see this. If the rider has decent hands he will not abuse his power because the curb is on, while it is there for immediate use if required. That very celebrated maker of hunters, Dick Christian, tells us he always put on a double bridle from the first. Horses should, I think, be accustomed to different kinds of bits during the process of breaking; it helps to make their mouths. A very well-broken horse with a good carriage of the head and neck will hardly need a bit at all for hacking. I remember once riding a big, strong four-year-old for miles, without knowing it, on the nose-band of her bridle, the bit having slipped out of her mouth through the check straps having been buckled too long. The addition of a nose-band to the bridle, by the way, helps to control a puller, and sometimes a net used to be put over the nose and mouth

for the same purpose, but this I have not seen for a long time; the effect of it, I should fancy, would wear off as soon as it ceased to be a novelty.

Work, perhaps, is the best antidote to pulling, though I have never seen tried a recipe said by Custance to have been suggested by one Tom Oliver to a pertinacious gentleman who was bothering him on this subject: "Oh, put two men and a boy on him three days a week; if that won't stop him, nothing will." That is a fair story, but I like better one told of Assheton Smith. He rode hunting a horse which had run away with every one who had ridden him. "And did he run away with Smith, too?" was the inquiry of a man who was not out of a friend who was. "Not he," was the reply; "Smith ran away with him, and he could never go fast enough for him any part of the run!" That was all very well for a story, but, as we all know, there is a

preponderance of days, at least in the provinces, when no such opportunity occurs for thus taking it out of an inveterate puller.

Ladies often make admirable horse-breakers by reason of their sympathy, excellent hands, and superior patience. "Carries a lady" now-a-days is not so important a qualification as it was in the days of long-skirted habits. No horse I have broken has seemed to care whether it was a man or a woman who mounted him. Still, it is not advisable that a lady should first mount the colt. She would be at a disadvantage. The side seat can never be quite so strong as a man's, while there is obviously far greater danger of her being mixed up in case of a fall. The ideal mount for a lady is a thoroughly broken animal of easy paces, well up to, or a bit above, her weight. Formerly, a pretty, weedy horse, with a graceful neck and peacocky style, was pronounced just the thing for



A LADY'S HORSE—STRONG, FAST, AND CLEVER.

a lady; but now-a-days we recognise the fact that a woman rides much heavier, in proportion to their relative weight, than a man does, and a lady's horse should therefore be chosen accordingly, with, if possible, a stone or two in hand.

A lady relative once told me a delightful story illustrating the way in which a lady's horse is sometimes prepared. Staying some years ago at a country house, she was roused one morning by a great clatter beneath her bedroom window, and on looking out beheld a groom leading a horse, on the back of which two helpers were with difficulty sustaining a giggling and dishevelled housemaid. The motive of this strange proceeding was explained by the circumstance that the horse was one of a batch going up for sale next day, and was advertised in the sale list as having been "ridden by a lady!"

With regard to not driving a horse which

you ride, the objection, I think, is often exaggerated and overdone. "Oh *dear* no! he's much too good for leather," is often the contemptuous reply to the question asked (perhaps of a most moderate animal): "Does he go in harness?" As a matter of fact it does not in the least degree harm the best of hacks or hunters to be driven, so long as they are not required to lean forward and really pull. We should indeed be most unwilling to use the horse we habitually ride singly in a family waggonette, or the wife's Victoria; but as one of a pair in a light phaeton, or singly in a Ralli car, two-wheeled dogcart, or American trotting waggon, his action and spring remain unimpaired. Many men now drive their hunters for light work in double harness; and in cases where they do not require absolute rest, it is one of the best ways of summering, as possessing the advantage of not letting them out of condition.

As to turning out: it is undoubtedly the best as well as the most economical treatment for any animal not required for use, except for stale horses when the ground is hard (and it often becomes very hard indeed in hot dry summers). Then a loose box or barn end is preferable, with peat-moss or sawdust for litter, and fresh-cut green food in lieu of hay. For stale and overworked horses a winter's run is most beneficial; or, better still, a salt marsh in summer or autumn.

It has not lain within the scope of this little book on the Horse to dilate upon any of the important subjects of Stable Management, Veterinary Treatment, Buying and Selling, etc. Standard works embracing these subjects exist, which contain a vast amount of information upon them, and go into the minutest details. One or other of these every horse-keeper will have by him, and constantly refer to: but valuable as

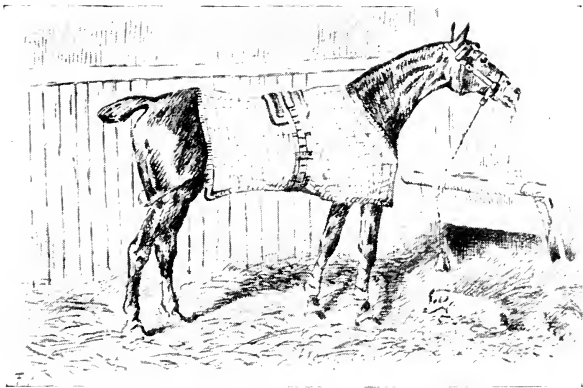
such works are as aids and guides to knowledge and treatment, it is principally by personal acquaintance with, and careful observation of, the interesting animal himself that the tyro learns about him; and we may say without exaggeration that the horse affords a study for a lifetime. No situation is more helpless than that of one who in mid-age (as circumstances require so many to do) sets up a saddle horse or carriage, without previous experience. Such an one is utterly at the mercy of his groom, who may be, in small establishments usually is, a mere gardener or cowman, whose ignorance of the animal he is required to attend is often surpassed only by his self-confidence. Any reader so situated we strongly advise to assume at once himself the office of "Master of the Horse"; otherwise the man will be his master as well as the animal's. Many will proffer him advice. "In a multitude of counsellors there is safety," we are upon

high authority assured. Nevertheless, in this case, in the multitude of counsellors there is likely to be confusion. My own particular counsel would be, not to ask the opinion on this point or that of every man you meet, who knows, or thinks he knows (as men mostly do), all about a horse ; but go to the one among your friends who you think is the mostly likely to know, explain the state of the case, and follow implicitly whatever advice he gives you. Buying a horse for a friend, or even recommending one, is often a thankless office. His friendship may, or may not, go so far as to perform this service for you ; but you will at least find that his own store of experience in horsekeeping is readily at your service ; and it will profit you far more to avail yourself of this than to let your own servant impose upon you either his own ignorance, or that of *his* friends. Capable grooms, willing and able to dress a horse as he should be dressed, are, it may

be remarked, at the present time, extremely scarce ; being mostly absorbed in large training and hunting stables.

A good horse in good health and condition is one of the most delightful possessions which this world affords—a real *κτῆμα*, as an old college friend used to designate anything very choice or precious ; and he is well worth your best care and appreciation. The Arab's love for his steed is proverbial throughout the world ; that of the English horse-owner, not of the baser sort, vies with his, and the object of his affections fully deserves his pride of place in the Englishman's heart. Whatever his future may prove to be, his past merits our gratitude and esteem. In courage, temper, and generosity of disposition, he surpasses all animals, save man's other favourite, the dog ; and, as with the latter, his finest qualities seem to be developed only in a domestic state. Breed him well, break him well, and treat him

well, and you have for the (alas, all too short!) term of his natural life a faithful friend and comrade, who will cheerfully and constantly expend to their utmost limit his wondrous strength and energy in your service. Therefore, as the word of command is given to our mounted soldiers standing at ease: "Make Much of your Horses."



Faithful Friends and Comrades.

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