

THE FARMERS DEPARTMENT.

FROM THE VILLAGE RECORD.

No one of correct taste, can read the lines which follow, without feeling that a charming picture of rustic happiness and humble life, is sketched in a manner which Goldsmith or Burns would have found forward to praise, and proud to imitate.

I once knew a ploughman, Bob Fletcher his name,
Who was old and was ugly, and so was his dame;
Yet they lived quite contented, and free from all strife,
Bob Fletcher the ploughman, and Judy, his wife.

As the morn' streak'd the east, and the night fell away,
They would rise up to labor, refresh'd for the day;
The song of the lark, as it rose on the gale,
Found Bob at the plough, and his wife at the pail.

A neat little cottage in front of a grove,
Where in youth they first gave their young hearts up
to love,
Was the solace of age, and to them doubly dear,
As it called up the past with a smile or a tear.

Each tree had its thought, and the vow could impart,
That mingled, in youth, the warm wish of the heart:
The thorn was still there, and the blossoms it bore,
And the song from its top seem'd the same as before.

When the curtain of night over nature was spread,
And Bob had return'd from his plough to his shed,
Like the dove on her nest, he reposed from all care,
If his wife and his youngsters, contented, were there.

I have passed by his door when the evening was grey,
And the hill and the landscape were fading away,
And have heard from the cottage with grateful surprise,
The voice of thanksgiving, like incense, arise.

And I thought on the proud, who would look down
with scorn,
On the neat little cottage, the grove, and the thorn,
And felt that the riches and follies of life
Were dross, to contentment like Bob and his wife.

THE FARMER'S HORSE.

The Farmer's Horse is an animal of *all-work*, to be ridden occasionally to market or for pleasure, but to be principally employed for draught. He should be higher than the road horse: about fifteen hands and two inches may be taken as the best standard. A horse with a shoulder thicker, lower, and less slanting than would be chosen in a hackney, will better suit the collar; and collar work will be chiefly required of him. A stout compact horse should be selected, yet not a heavy, cloddy one. Some blood will be desirable, but the half-bred horse will generally best suit the farmer's purpose. He should have weight enough to throw into the collar, and sufficient activity to get over the ground.

Farmers are now beginning to be aware of the superiority of the moderate-sized, strong, active horse over the bulkier, but slower animal of former days. It is not only in harvest, and when a frosty morning must be seized to cart manure, that this is perceived, but in the every-day work of the farm, the saving of time, and the saving of provender too, will be very considerable in the course of the year.

It has often been said, that a horse used much for draught is neither pleasant nor safe for the saddle. The little farmer does not want a showy, complete hackney. He will be content if he is tolerably well carried; and (if he has taken a little care in the choice of his

horse; has selected one with sound feet, shoulders not too thick, and legs not too much under him; and, if we keep him in good condition, and does not scandalously over-weight him,) the five days carting or harrow-work, will not to any material degree, unfit him for the saddle; especially, if the rider bears in mind what we have termed the golden rule of horsemanship, always a *little to lift* the mouth of the animal he is upon.

A farmer, and more particularly, a small farmer, will prefer a mare to a gelding, both for riding and driving. She will not cost him so much at first; and he will get a great deal more work out of her. There can be no doubt that, taking bulk for bulk a mare is stronger and more lasting than a gelding; and, in addition to this, the farmer has her to breed from. This and the profit which is attached to it is well known in the breeding countries. Wherever there are good horses, with convenience for rearing the colts, the farmer may start as a breeder with a good chance of success.

If he has a few useful cart mares, and crosses them with a well-knit, half-bred horse, he will certainly have colts useful for every purpose of agriculture, and some of them sufficiently light for the van, post-chaise, or coach. If he has a superior mare, one of the old Cleveland breed, and puts her to a bony three-fourths-bred horse, or, if he can find one stout and compact enough, a seven-eights, or a thorough-bred one, he will have a fair chance to rear a colt that will amply repay him as a hunter or a carriage-horse.

The mare needs not to be idle while she is breeding. She may be worked moderately almost to the period of her foaling, and with benefit rather than otherwise: nor is there occasion that much of her time should be lost even while she is suckling. If she is put to horse in June, the foaling time will fall, and the loss of labor will occur, in the most leisure time in the year.

There are two rocks on which the farmer often strikes, he pays little attention to the kind of mare, and less to the proper nourishment of the foal. It may be laid down as a maxim in breeding, however general may be the prejudice against it, that the value of the foal depends a great deal more on the dam than on the sire. The Arabs are convinced of this, for no price will buy from them a likely mare of the highest blood; and they trace back the pedigree of their horses, not through the sire, but the dam. The Greek sporting men held the same opinion, long before the Arab horse was known. What chance horse of winning have I? inquired a youth whose horse was about to start in the Olympic course. "Ask the dam of your horse" was the reply, founded on experience.

The farmer, however, too frequently thinks that any mare will do to breed from; and, if he can find a great prancing stallion, with a high sounding mane, and loaded with fat, he reckons on having a valuable colt; and should he fail he attributes the fault to the horse, and not to his own want of judgment. Far more de-

— Bishop Hall, who wrote in the time of Elizabeth, intimates that such was the opinion of horsemen at that period. He asks in one of his satires (Lib. iv.)

—dost thou prize

Thy brute beasts' worth by their dams' qualities?
Say'st thou this colt shall prove a swift pac'd steed
Only because a Jennet did him breed?
Or say'st thou this same horse shall win the prize,
Because his dam was swiftest Tranchepee?

pends on the mare than is dreamt of in his philosophy.

If he has an undersized, or a bleached, or an unsound mare, let him continue to use her on his farm: she probably did not cost him much, and she will beat any gelding; but let him not think of breeding from her. A roomy mare with some blood in her, and with most of the good points, will alone answer his purpose. She may bear about her the marks of honest wear (the fewer of these, however the better); but she must not have any disease. There is scarcely a malady to which the horse is subject that is not hereditary. Contracted for curb, spavin, roaring, thick wind, blindness, notoriously descend from the sire or dam of the foal. Mr. Roberts in that useful publication "Veterinarian," says, "Last summer I was asked my opinion of a horse. I approved of his formation with the exception of the hocks, where there happened to be two curbs. I was then told that his sister was in the same stable; she had two curbs. Knowing the sire to be free from these defects, I inquired about the dam; she also had two confirmed curbs. She was at this time running with a foal of her two years old, by another horse, and he also had two curbs."

The foal should be well taken care of for the first two years. It is bad policy to starve or half starve the growing colt.

The colt, whether intended for a hunter or carriage-horse, may be earlier handled, but should not be broken-in until three years old, and then the very best breaking-in for the carriage horse is to make him carry a little of his living. Let him be put to a harrow or light plough. Going over the rough ground will teach him to lift his feet well, and give him that high and shewy action, excusable in a carriage horse, but excusable in no other. In the succeeding winter he will be perfectly ready for the town or country market.

LONDON SHARPEERS.

A correspondent of the Metropolitan tells a good story of them. He had been robbed of his watch and safety chain without being aware of the depredation, and, he proceeds:

"I was mentioning my adventure at dinner and wondering how I could have been robbed so easily on the part of the thief and so unconsciously on the part of myself, when one of those practical wags whom one occasionally meets in Society, and who happened to be of the party, declared with a look of lamb-like innocence, that he saw nothing at all strange in it; "for," said he, "the London pick-pockets are so expert, that put your money when you will, they'll have it."

This I, suspecting nothing, ventured rather to ask, whereupon the gentleman—or so must call him—said that he would be twenty pounds that, put my money where I pleased, a London thief should get it away from me by being Thwarting Cross and the Royal Exchange. This seemed to me, having conceived a little project of mine own for its frustration, a contrivance next to impossible; so when he said he would bet the twenty sovereigns, I said, Done, and he said, Done: who was done eventually you shall hear.

The only condition imposed upon me was to carry my property: to this course I consented, and then came out the depth of my contrivance and the ingenuity of my precautions. "A Guinea," said I to the gentlemen, "is the property I mean to preserve, and in order to do so, I mean to carry it in my mouth."