

VERMONT FARMER

ROYAL CUMMINGS, Proprietor.
T. H. HOSKINS, M. D., Editor.

NEWPORT, SATURDAY, OCT. 7, 1871.

VOL. I, No. 14.
Terms, \$1.00 per Annum.

Vermont Farmer

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY
AT NEWPORT, ORLEANS COUNTY, VT.

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TERMS:—One dollar per annum, payable in advance. All papers discontinued when the time paid for expires.

Advertisements inserted for 50 cents per inch, first insertion; 25 cents per inch, each subsequent insertion. Twelve lines of this size type make an inch.

When a blue cross is made against this paragraph it denotes that the subscription expires the next week. We shall be pleased to have it renewed, and give thus much notice in order that the subscriber need not miss any numbers.

"WHAT HORSES SHALL WE RAISE?"

A Criticism of a Paper by Col. E. S. Stowell,
published in the Farmer of July 15.

BY ALBERT CHAPMAN.

Having been as great an admirer of horses all our days as our friend Col. Stowell, and having always been a close observer of the results of breeding them, not only in Vermont, but at the South and in other States, and with not a little personal experience in the use of the different kinds or families, we are compelled to differ with him widely in the advice with which he closes his exceedingly interesting and able paper, and also from the soundness of many of his reasonings and conclusions, and we propose to state some of the reasons and give some of the facts that have come under our own observation to substantiate the correctness of our conclusions. In the first place we think the cases brought forward to prove the correctness of the change in the Col.'s views as to crossing small upon large animals are just such exceptional cases as always will follow the breeding of large sires upon small dams, and are always the marked cases that attract attention by coming prominently before the public, while the large number, or by far the majority of the produce from such crosses, are never known to the public outside of their own immediate neighborhood. Again, with a few exceptions we do not think the very horses he has named as great successes in such breeding, are desirable as horses of all work, gentlemen's driving or family horses, and if it was not for their extraordinary speed upon the track, they would never have been cited as examples of successful breeding by any one. And we think upon a critical examination, a large portion of them would be found already unsound, or kept from becoming so by the most careful care and management, and were they put to the same everyday drudgery, and have the same care of the real road or family horse, they would many of them soon have to be hauled off for repairs, as have some of the very ones named from the trotting track. Really the very result that would be expected by the violation of so old and plain a rule of breeding, is the production of loose, ill proportioned joints, that would be very sure to show their defects, and give way upon the first strain, or as soon as they were called to ex-

ert their powers in any useful service. Most of the horses named as successful examples of Col. Stowell's theory have been foaled with "great expectations" and have had the best of care, and developed to their greatest possible capacity, not as it was in the case of Ethan Allen constantly overtaxed in his colthood until his possibilities will never be known. The opinion of many of the best judges is, that had he had the same careful handling in his younger days as Dexter, that renowned trotter would not have stood so long at the head of the turf.

Again we must differ from the conclusion so general that tall, large horses possess such lasting powers in excess or beyond that possessed by moderate sized or even small ones. We really think the facts prove directly the contrary, and if the nature of things would permit a test of endurance upon the road, or at some useful occupation, such as we really need horses for, between the very celebrated horses Col. Stowell has named, and a select number of Morgans, Black Hawks, Canadians, or even Indian ponies, he so indiscriminately classes together, where each might endure the same daily wear and tear, and each receive the same common care, feed and attention, for a series of months or years, the result would most certainly stop some of this talk about staying qualities, endurance, &c., from that side at least. The vaunted endurance of the 16-hand horses vanishes quickly when called upon to follow the Indian on his ponies, or scout with mustangs of the southwestern deserts. As an example of endurance we would mention the fact that no large horse could ever stand a campaign with Flora Temple, and she is a small horse, and as we sincerely believe of Morgan stock. We also believe that a Morgan mare of moderate size was the first trotter that ever accomplished the feat of trotting 100 miles in ten hours or less. No one we think who has lived in Vermont and also in other states, and has been an observer of horses, but has been struck with the vast difference in the proportion of sound to the unsound horses in Vermont, over other states. This certainly cannot be ascribed to our driving slower, or having better roads, because just the reverse is the fact, but must be really ascribed to the fact that our horses although small, are not laid out any larger than they can be well finished up, and being of better material they are more lasting, and endure better than those of other states. Again we think Col. Stowell does that Percheron great injustice in classing him with the other draft horses, as requiring such rich feed and in unlimited quantities. He cannot have any personal knowledge of the breed, or he would have known that a moderate sized Percheron would do a much larger amount of work, and thrive well on an amount of feed, that would prove greatly inadequate to keep a 16-hand coarse horse in respectable condition, and the cost of raising a twelve-hand pound compact Percheron would in average prove much less than a 16 hand driving or track horse, while the chances of failures would be much in favor of the Percherons,

and he would at a much earlier age be able to earn his living without injury or lessening his value in the end. He matures at a much earlier age than tall coarse boned horses.

A personal use of Percherons for four years taught us much of their value, as well as their adaptation to all common labor, the cheapness with which they can be raised, and kept, and the almost certainty of their proving sound and useful, has given us a very high opinion of their merits, and we are of the opinion that an infusion of Percheron blood, through a compact, moderate sized specimen of the breed, would give us much better farm horses than we shall get from any coarse 16-hand horses. They have been used for a number of years in Chester County, Pa., with excellent success, and the results have been a class of horses that have sold at highly remunerative prices, even when raised on lands that are much higher priced than ours.

Col. Stowell instances some cases of successful breeding small horses to large, coarse mares, among which he classes "Nonesuch" and puts her dam among the large, coarse ones. We do not see the justice of this as Mr. Baldwin's mare is not large, being less than 15 hands high and a remarkably fine and clean mare. We certainly think she more justly may be cited as an example of successfully breeding moderate sized, and fine horses to mares of clean make, fine bone, and moderate size.

While we claim greater average success will follow breeding from moderate sized, compact stallions upon our mares as they run, we are not without many cases that can be cited as extraordinarily successful examples from this system of breeding, and we cannot believe that the average prices we now obtain for our horses, are as low as Col. Stowell has rated them. As an instance, take the stock of the Young Ethan Allen horse of Mr. Henry DeLong in Cornwall, as one of the class of small stallions, and no one knows better than the Col. that if he will average all the stock sold from the horse, that were over four years, the average prices would be quite as high as he rates the class of horses he proposes to substitute for them, i. e., from three to five hundred dollars.

Do those who pay high prices for driving horses generally prefer those of 16 hands? we think not, indeed we are of the opinion, that those of medium height, say about 15 hands, (or about the height of our Vermont horses,) are in better request, and bring better prices on the average, than those of 16 hands. And we think that the record will show very considerably, that those who have gone to the front and staid there for any length of time on the trotting track have been horses of about that height or less. Dexter is only about one inch over. Goldsmith Maid is about 15, Thos. Jefferson and Lambert about the same, Ninon or Young Pochabontas (that has been reported as beating Dexter in three straight heats last season in a private trial) still smaller, Nonesuch is barely 15 hands, while Ethan Allen (whose

time in either of three heats beside a running mate, has never been equaled in public, by any horse for even a single heat) is smaller still. Flora Temple and Hotspur are below the average height, as well as a very large number of horses of lesser note.

Of the horses of larger size that have recorded good time and made themselves famous, very few of them have been able to withstand the wear on the track that would enable them to be trotted often in close races; or be for many years able to keep their places at the front, and preserve their soundness, and probably a much larger proportion of medium sized horses have been withdrawn from the trotting track in a sounder condition than of those above medium sized.

We think the computation of the cost of keeping our smaller horses not a fair one when he makes no distinction between the cost of raising them, and the rangy 16-hand horse. Our smaller horses cannot in the nature of things cost so much to raise, and they will at a much earlier age begin to safely earn a part of their living, and from their more willing, tractable dispositions, and greater intelligence, be more sure to come out safely broken than the high bred and rangy horses he proposes to substitute in their stead. Under this head we think the Col.'s picture of selling 4-year-olds of these rangy slow maturing horses at remunerative prices, more vivid in his imagination, than we shall ever realize in the future. Our Morgans proverbially mature much earlier than any other good horses, and they have rarely been saleable before older than four years, and as the coarser horse matures so much slower, and has to be used during his period of growing with so much greater care, that much larger prices will have to be obtained to realize equally as large profits. The history of the Hambletonians in Vermont is proof of the fact that coarse horses mature slowly, and cannot safely be put to any but very light services until their loose joints become matured and settled together, and unless they were compacted and settled together by an infusion of Morgan blood, they have not been ready for market or service at near as early an age as our Morgans, and the expense of keeping between 3 and 6 years (while the Morgan is earning his living) will require a large margin to be deducted from the profits of the coarse horse.

Again we do not think Col. Stowell is warranted by the facts in stating that we have no longer a demand for our horses because they are small. We sincerely believe that we are receiving as good an average price for our horses as they are elsewhere. If we are mistaken in this, it is because we have permitted our best horses to be always bought up, and taken away to improve those of some other sections, until they have improved theirs by such an infusion of our own blood, as to make them of a better average quality. In short so to Morganize them, as to make them better Morgans than we have left.

If this is the case, let us take warning and preserve our best breeding blood in the future, and if necessary procure some of the very best we have sold and return it to its old home, and hereafter instead of bartering our "birthright for a mess of pottage" retain our very best stallions and mares at home at whatever cost. Vermont retained her supremacy in sheep, not by selling her Golden Fleece, Sweepstakes, Gold Drops, or Green Mountain, although their owners were tempted by fabulous prices, but by retaining them for use and improvement at home. So if she would maintain her supremacy in horses, she must retain her best stallions and mares for her own breeders. It is the system of selling her best, and breeding from those inferior that needs reforming, not an infusion of better blood, for truly there is no better blood, nor better horses for gentlemen's drivers, or for all work than Vermont Morgans.