

FARM AND FIRESIDE.



Percheron or Norman Horses.

A Short time since I noticed an article in the Register giving an account of Mr. Dunham's breeding establishment in Illinois for Percheron or Norman horses, and it occurred to me that something of the history of this fine breed of fine draft horses might interest you and perhaps some of your readers.

The Percheron or Norman (as it is now frequently called) the draft horse of France takes its name from the province or districts of La Perche and Normandy where it was first found and most extensively bred. Perche is a high rolling country with a climate eminently suited for breeding horses. Its waters are tonic and its grasses sweet and remarkably nutritious. The horse is a great favorite with its inhabitants and is treated with the greatest kindness and care. In fact these people seemed to be a race of natural horse tamers. In the old feudal days of France the horse seemed to be the chief production of Perche Normandy, Orleanis and Bologne and the boast of the nobility, who owned the whole country, that they had more horses than they could count. The horses of these districts were noted at a very early day for their action, speed, strength, power of endurance, kind and gentle dispositions and the remarkable soundness of their feet and legs. No such thing as splint, spavin, ringbone, curb, hoof disease being known in Perche.

After the defeat of the famous Saracen chief, Abderame, by Charles Martel, on the plains of Vouville, the magnificent cavalry of the Saracens fell into the hands of the French as over 300,000 of the infidels were killed on that day, and their horses, like themselves were from the East. Upon the division of the spoils a large number of the horses fell to the men of La Perche, Orleans, Normandy and Bologne, who composed the bulk of the French troops. The captured horses mostly of the Arabian breed were crossed upon the horses of Perche and the other provinces mentioned, and bred to the fillies of their own get, out of the Percheron stock. The best of the produce of this coupling were bred together and careful skillful breeding continued until a race of horses was formed so remarkable for their kind dispositions, energy, strength, action, speed and endurance that it became the most noted in Europe. These horses were used to the Diligence or mail coach and carried the mails of France at the rate of from ten to twelve miles per hour over a hilly, rough country. A heavier class of them hauled the heavy, cumbersome mail-post or passenger coach with its heavy load of passengers and baggage at such speed as to attract the attention of all European travellers. The heaviest class were used to the omnibuses of Paris. Their patience, speed and power in this service, too, were no less a matter of comment by the travelling public. To the Diligence, which only carried four passengers, the mail agent, mail and driver, four of the light class of the most speed and bottom were driven. Five of the next class, two at the wheel and three in front, were driven to the mail-post coach and the heaviest class, weighing from 1,100 to 1,200 were used to the omnibuses. Their gray color, which they got from the Arabian horse, seemed particularly attractive both to the passengers and driver. The color could be seen better in the dark than any other, and much of France had to be traversed in the night. There also seem to exist a close feeling of companionship between the drivers and their teams and they liked most the color they could see best.

When railroads took the place of the Diligence mail-post coaches, this class of horses were no longer needed. The breeders of Perche and the other provinces devoted to raising horses had to turn their attention to raising such horses as suited expressmen, draymen, builders and contractors of Paris. They then imported large heavy stallions from England and where ever else they could get them to cross on their horses, to increase their size. This cross produced heavy, horses of but little stamina action. Soft and tender like the English draft horse, which had been raised on the best and richest food in a land where he scarcely ever saw the sun. When the produce of this cross were coupled together, the offspring were awkward, clumsy, listless brutes of almost no value at all. La Perche found the cross too violent and her noble race of horses almost ruined. She saw the folly of her action in her mad-haste in changing the size of her horses, and set about repairing the damage done. She went back to the Arabian blood from which she had derived so much benefit in founding her race of horses. These Arabian stallions were coupled with the best mares she had left and then coupled with the fillies of their own get. The largest, heaviest males and females, the produce of this coupling, with the best action, most speed and best disposition, were then coupled together, and this system of breeding conducted with great care and skill and with improved care was continued, never sacrificing disposition, action and speed to weight, until a race of horses was formed with fixed type and characteristics of sufficient size

and weight to have no superior as a draft horse in the world. The size has been increased from 1000 and 1200 pounds to 1600, 1800 2000 pounds while most of the style action and power of endurance and their patient and kind disposition have been preserved. The Clydesdale or Scotch draft horse was made in the same way, while he is a horse of fine action, and of wonderful power of endurance for a horse of his great weight. Less care and caution has perhaps been used in increasing his size and weight not to impair his speed and action, than in the Percheron or Norman horse. In England 2000 is considered a fair load for one of their draft horses, while 5000 pounds are often drawn on the streets of Paris by the French draft horse.

Mr. Dickinson, a noted breeder both of running and draft horses in England, and who, of course like all other Englishmen, thought it was the best draft horse in the world, was so much struck with the superiority of the French draft horse over the English, at the International Exposition in Paris in 1855, that he bought a Percheron stallion and took him to England. He says that the draft horses in Paris walked nimbly along with twice the load of an English draft horse at a very slow pace. He says of the horse he took to England and called Napoleon that he never had so good, so quiet, so powerful a horse before. That he never got stabled in the mud with any thing "Nap" would not pull him out, that his colts were strong, powerful horses, remarkable for their kind, gentle dispositions and never needed any breaking. The Percheron, or Norman, or Bolonais (all the same horse) is different from the English draft horse. For with great and immense substance he shows a dash of blood. The neck is muscular and well turned, the shoulders large and very oblique, such in shape as would not be objected to in a riding horse, the bosom open, the fore legs magnificent and very short with great bone, hard sinews, with little hair on their feet, feet perfect in shape and sound, his back short and rather dipped, round shaped ribs, large loins, rather plain drooping hind quarters, very large thighs, long down and tightly joined together, with powerful, clean hocks and very short hind legs, well under him. This is a pretty correct description of a number one Percheron, Norman or Bolonais draft horse. They are all the same horse. They are all the same breed but differently named according to the province from which they come.

As I have leisure I will continue this sketch until our people have something like a correct idea of the value of this breed of horses. GEO. CHRISTIAN, Warren Farm.

Manures for the Garden. The effect of all new and fresh manures—the excrement of animals—is to engender heat in the process of fermentation. The manure from cattle—and of all animals that chew the cud—is adapted to light soils, that of horses, hogs and birds is heating in its effects and adapted to heavy soils. Of all manures of this class that of birds is the richest, a fact which those who keep much poultry and also cultivate a kitchen garden will do well to remember; but it should be thoroughly mixed with the soil, for in the fresh state, seeds in contact with it will not germinate, and the roots of plants are destroyed by its caustic action. But when it is thoroughly incorporated with the soil its effects are great in stimulating plant growth. Its superior value is on account of the urine it contains. Its immediate effects depend upon the quantity of soluble matter present, and this varies with its age. The soluble matter consists of uric acid, urate, sulphate, and carbonate of ammonia, combined with salt and sulphate of potash. Fermentation robs it of portion of ammonia, and hence it is advisable to collect it as often as once a week, and mix with it earth, plaster and a little salt. Treated in this way it does not differ much from Peruvian guano, which is considered the best of concentrated manures for general purposes.

Manure from sheep yards and pig sties is rich in nitrogen, and ferments or engenders heat rapidly. A liberal application of these and other similar manures from the sheds and stables turned under in the spring will render the garden soil warm, rich and malleable, and stimulate the early growth of vegetables.

Fresh manure from horse stables, is preferred to that of cows or hogs by gardeners because, weight for weight, it is considered one-third more valuable, especially on stiff soils. These manures are at hand on every farm and can be employed with immense advantage in the kitchen garden, (and a kitchen garden is something that is indispensable to a well-regulated farm.) Of other sources of manures that are valuable in the orchard and garden, it is not our purpose to speak at this time. Leaves, straw, and rubbish—the refuse of the farm which usually go to waste—might be utilized by composting with manure, plaster, lime, salt, ashes, etc., and added to the productivity of the kitchen garden and the quality of its products. The quantity of manures used by the most successful gardeners is very large, but they find that it pays. Their example and experience may be profitably considered in conducting the operations of a kitchen garden on the farm. There is no good reason why every farmer may not have a succession of fruit and vegetables

throughout the season. These palatable, and healthful and therefore desirable articles of food come at a time when they are most enjoyed and most needed. Nature demands, and furnishes them almost for the asking. It is a duty, and should be a pleasure to provide for a succession of them all through the summer. It requires some labor, and care and judgment, but the satisfaction brought by their presence, to say nothing of their health-giving effects—provided always they are not used injudiciously—amply repays for all the time and labor required in raising them.

Household Recipes. Please give receipt for making syrup, for table use, from sugar. My trouble with it is that it always granulates soon after making and forms a hard crust on the bottom of the cup or vessel containing it. Loda Ill. A. M. C. To Make Syrup.—Mix two pounds of sugar with a pint of cold water. Bring to a boil, and cook rapidly for ten or fifteen minutes, without stirring. Remove the saucepan from the stove to a cold surface, so as to stop the boiling suddenly, then skim, and strain while still very hot, through a flannel bag, which has been wrung out of hot water. Do not make a large quantity of syrup at a time, and keep it closely covered. If made too thick, or left exposed to the air it will crystallize. Please tell me how to make crackers and also ginger bread like that which we buy at the grocery. South Fork, Ill. Mrs. M. A. T. Crackers.—Rub a quarter of a pound of butter into a quart of sifted flour, add half a teaspoonful of salt and mix into a stiff dough with sweet milk—Lay this on a floured board and beat it with the rolling pin as long as time and muscle will permit. The longer the better, but it should not be less than an hour, and the dough must be frequently turned. Roll it out very thin and cut round into whatever size you may desire, prick each one deeply, wash the surface with milk and bake hard in an oven moderate enough to give only a light color. Crispy Starch Crackers.—Measure three cups of flour, one of Peaches or starch, half a teaspoonful of salt and a heaping one of baking powder. Sift these together four times, then rub in a tablespoonful of butter and half a small lard and mix into a stiff dough with sweet milk. Knead enough to make the dough smooth and firm but do not handle unnecessarily. Roll thin, cut, prick with a fork and place on tins; let stand five minutes then brush the tops with milk and bake ten minutes in a hot oven. Out Meal Crackers.—Mix three cups of the finest oatmeal with a pint of rich milk. Set it in a cool place for six hours. Mix together a cup of Graham flour, a teaspoonful each, of salt and baking powder and a teaspoonful or less of sugar; work them into the oatmeal, until you have a firm smooth dough, adding more milk if needed. Sift Graham flour on the board and roll the dough out thin. Cut into squares, brush over with milk and oil on greased tins. Bake in a moderate oven ten minutes or longer but be careful that they do not scorch. Graham Crackers.—Mix together one cup of white flour, three of Graham, a tablespoonful of sugar, half a teaspoonful of salt and half a teaspoonful of baking powder. Rub in a tablespoonful of butter and make rather a stiff dough with sweet milk; knead until smooth. Roll out on a floured board, cut into square or oblong shape, place on greased tins and bake in a hot oven for ten minutes.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR HORSES WHEN THEY ARE SWEATY.—Horses found to be perspiring easily, especially if they seem to be at all disturbed in their breathing, should not be pushed. To hurry a horse in this condition is quite likely to fasten lung difficulty upon him. You will observe this by the quickened breathing, after the horse is put into his stall, especially if the weather is cool, he is very likely to have a chill. This is a congestive stage, the blood leaving the surface and concentrating upon the lungs, bronchial tubes or throat, or upon all three at once. This should be guarded against by rubbing the surface dry as soon as the horse comes out of his drive; on no account allowing him to stand for one moment in a draught of cold air. Rub him dry and blanket him well, observing carefully whether or not he stands with his back humped up, and whether he eats his ration or not. If he stands in the position named and leaves his feed untouched, then you have reason to anticipate. Reaction will come off, and you are liable to have a case of acute inflammation of the throat, bronchia or lungs, and to determine which, being able at the same time to institute a safe plan of treatment, a competent veterinary surgeon should be called.

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