

Horse-Breeding by European Governments

By ?

Next to Russia in quantity superior possibly in quality, comes the empire kingdom of Austro-Hungary. Hungary alone produces sufficient suitable horses to supply all the cavalry of Europe; and the efforts of the Government to encourage the breed of horses are well backed by the Esterhazys, the Palfrys, the Sinas, and other noblemen who maintain private studs, some of them containing five hundred horses.

The principle Government stud in Austria is at Lipitza, which is devoted entirely to the breeding of a race of pure Spanish blood, and of a cross between Spanish and Arab horses. But the most noteworthy establishment is that of Kladrup, in Bohemia—the private stud of the Emperor. It contains upwards of four hundred horses, and the personnel, including an English trainer, consists of ninety-eight persons. His Majesty breeds for the turf, and amongst other sires he possesses the celebrated horses Fandango and Blue Jacket, the latter of whom is very well spoken of. Everything is conducted with imperial magnificence—loose boxes, large paddocks, hospitals for horses, hospitals for men, immense stables 250 feet square, in the quadrangle of which the colts run loose all winter. Unfortunately, as with most of the stud farms, or rather stud domains of Germany, the pasturage is very poor, and it's want of succulence is visible in the young stock. The most notable product of the stud is a Spanish breed that was introduced by Charles V., and has been preserved pure for three hundred years. They are all black or white, and are used on occasions of State, like the cream colored Hanoverians of her Majesty, for the royal equipages. It must, however, be confessed that they are a sorry lot, with frightful heads, drooping quarters, and stilted legs—their good front action in no way compensating for their other defects.

But it is in Hungary that the Government studs are seen to most advantage, and of these the establishment of Mezohegyes and Kisber are especially remarkable.

The former stud occupies an immense domain of nearly 45,000 acres, and is exceptional in possessing excellent herbage. No fewer than 2,500 horses are maintained here; and for breeding purposes thirty-five stallions are kept, thoroughbreds, Arabs, Norfolk Trotters, Normans, and stud-bred horses. Here, however, as elsewhere, improvements in agriculture have led to the diminution of horse-breeding. The stock some years ago at this stud consisted of 7,500 animals; but everywhere on the Continent one hears the same remark, so often made in England, that it is more profitable to breed a sheep or a bullock than a horse.

The Kisber stud is devoted entirely to English thoroughbred and half-bred stock, and contains over six hundred animals. Amongst the thoroughbred sires may be seen Buccaneer, Daniel O'Rourke, Macgregor, Bois Roussel; and they are between two and three hundred English and Irish mares, who, for the most part, have been extremely well selected. The chief point of interest in this stud is that in selecting the best models of thoroughbred blood to breed from; and in aiming at a combination of the three great qualities of substance, speed, and endurance, none but sound animals, uninjured by early struggles on the turf, have been employed.

The other great State stud in Hungary is a Babolna, where Arabs only are bred; and formerly this breed enjoyed quite a European reputation. But whether from the poor soil which environs the stud domain

which has told upon the produce, or from other causes, the breed has undoubtedly deteriorated, and it now offers little worthy of remark. The stud consists of 615 horses.

When we leave the great horse producing countries of Eastern Europe, and approach further west we find a very different state of things. Up to the present century the two great military powers, Prussia and France, depended almost entirely on importation for the supply of their cavalry, even in times of peace. During ten years of the reign of Louis XIV upwards of four millions sterling were expended by France in the purchase of foreign horses. And although Government studs were established in 1717, it appears that so late as 1788 one-half of the French cavalry was mounted on animals supplied chiefly from Denmark, Holstein, and Oldenburg. So also in Prussia, when Frederick the Great came to the throne in 1740, the greater part of his cavalry were mounted on Polish horses, and on the produce of Mecklenburgh, Hanover, and Denmark. But the annual demands for horses by these great military powers are so large that the necessity for meeting them, and the danger of depending on neighbors who may cut off supply when war breaks out, have long engaged the notice of their statesmen. The peace establishment in France in 1850 consisted of 49,408 horses; and this force, on their average of one in seven for remounts, requires an annual supply of 7,000 animals. The peace establishment of the Prussian army in 1870 was 78,801, which, on the German average of eleven per cent, for remounts, requires annually over 8,000 horses. But these numbers need to be tripled or quadrupled when war breaks out; and losses caused by war exceed all calculations. For example, in the late Franco-Prussian war, the French estimate their loss in horses at 150,000. But a German writer states the Prussian loss exceeded a million horses---half a million by death, and the remainder disable by sickness or other causes. Figures like these cannot fail to rouse the attention of thoughtful politicians, and accordingly, for many years past, the State, both in France and Prussia, have been unremitting in their efforts to encourage the breed of horses.

We have seen that the first establishment of Government studs in France dates from 1717, and the despotic government of the day was enabled to lay down many stringent rules as to the employment of horses, and the right of the state to seize suitable animals in the possession of private individuals. Many of these rules have remained to the present day, but the administration of the system being placed in the hands of the grandseigneurs in the different provinces during the periods of feudal supremacy, it gave rise to so many abuses that the cahiers of grievances, sent up to the National Assembly of 1789, were full of complaints as to the operation of the Stud Department. It was accordingly abolished by 1790.

In 1806, however, Napoleon I re-established Government studs, and a most instructive account of them is given by General de Lamoriciere in the work mentioned at the head of this article. The Lords' Committee report that military studs "have been tried and abandoned in France"; but we are wholly unable to put any sound construction on this sentence, on the assumption that their lordships were not acquainted with the facts. The French have never had any military studs, strictly so called, and the studs they have abandoned are those at the Hara of Pompadour and Le Pin, where thoroughbred stock from horses like the Baron were produced, and where a judicious system of breeding was introduced which was taught French country gentlemen how to raise animals like Gladiateur, Bois Roussel, and Reine.

For the systematic encouragement of horse-breeding in France the country has been carefully mapped and divided into twenty-seven districts, in which three classes of stallions are employed, namely: (1) Government stallions; (2) Horses of private individuals who have received premiums, and are classed under the term *approuves*; and (3) Horses inferior to the above, but who are allowed for want of better,

under the term *autorises*, to serve the public. It is penal for a private individual to employ any other stallion except for his own mares. For the information of private breeders, all the statistics of horse-production, horse-rearing, forage, and pasturage in each district, have been collected and published. The State encouragement of horse-breeding has been committed to two departments of Government, that of Agriculture and Commerce, and that of War. The former is charged with maintain stud establishments, supplying fit stallions to the country, instituting racing in breeding districts, offering premiums for the best animals who may be exhibited at the agricultural shows, and diffusing sound information amongst breeders. The Minister of War affords his support by the purchase of seven or eight thousand horses annually. To maintain this system in working order a special civil service exists, for which a very assiduous training is required, and which is much sought after by young men of the best families in France.

France is in no wise deficient in the number of horses it produces, which are estimated at above three millions, and, according to M. Moreau Jonnes, she has eight horses per hundred souls, whereas England has only seven and a half. Some of her breeds also are justly celebrated. The grey Percheron of the Paris omnibus, so well-known to all visitors of that gay capital, and the still stronger Boulognese horse, recommended themselves to English dealers for heavy draught where speed above a walk is required, and they may be noticed in many of our London vans, omnibuses, and cabs. The strong, active post-horse of Brittany, which is now but little seen since the introduction of railways, is also an excellent animal. But where France is deficient, where she had to seek the assistance of the foreigner was in the saddle-horse, or horse of action and breeding, whether the lower priced animal available for cavalry or the dashing steeds required for the Bois du Boulogne and the Champ Elysees. Great differences of opinion have existed in France as to the beneficial operation of Government patronage. The celebrated Dombasle in the last century stoutly objected to it, and maintained that it completely crippled private enterprise. M. Richard also, in the present day, a member of the French Chamber, and formerly Directeur de l'Ecole des Haras, has published a work, full of disparaging criticisms of the Government system. He asserts that since 1806 the state has expended more than four million sterling on the Government studs, and he states, on his experience as a veterinary surgeon and stud officer, that the results are most unsatisfactory. It must be admitted, however, that this gentleman writes under a strong professional bias, and seems to think that all would go right if veterinary surgeons were placed in authority at the Government establishments. He cannot, therefore, be cited as an authority against the maintenance of studs. The French Government have themselves, however, seen fit to limit the extent of their operations. The remonstrances of the Jockey Club, that the thoroughbred animals raised by the Government carried off all the national prizes, led to the suppression which we have mentioned of the breeding studs at Le Pin and Pompador. And General Fleury, who was Director General of the studs under the later Emperor, in his report of 1864, recognized fully that in some districts Government was competing injuriously with private individuals, and he procured the abolition of several stallion depots in the great breeding district of Normandy. On looking dispassionately at the question, it must be admitted that up to the present time the encouragement given by the state has been very beneficial. We have seen that at the breaking out of the French Revolution about half the cavalry was horsed from abroad; at the present day the French are mounted entirely on horses bred at home or in Algeria, and are able to send to England on an emergency some thousand animals. But it is in the quality of their horse-stock that improvement is chiefly visible. The selection of good English blood, both of the thoroughbred and roadster classes, has been made with great judgment, and the results are patent to every eye. A few years ago a French-bred horse on our race-course was

allowed several pounds, but when the blue ribbon of the turf was carried off by Count Le Grange, and French horses are seen in every great race to be competing on equal terms with the best animals bred in England, our national vanity has led us to devise various causes for this success. The favorite opinion is that the French climate being milder than our own is more favorable to the early development of horses, so as to enable them to compete successfully in two and three year old races. Such, however, is not the French view on the subject, for they believe it to be wholly fallacious. In fact, the great breeding district for superior horses in France is Normandy, the climate of which differs but little from our own, and its pastures, to say the most of them, are not superior to ours. French success, in our opinion, has been founded entirely on the good selection which has been made in England of thoroughbred and roadster stock, and on the sound principles which have prevailed in their system of breeding, which have never allowed a faulty sire or dam to perpetuate its race however celebrated its performances on the turf might be. On this subject we are permitted to quote the following interesting letter from M. de Thannberg, who for nearly forty years was connected with the Government studs of France, and who is considered the highest authority in that country on all subjects connected with horse-breeding. In answer to an English gentleman who had addressed him several queries with respect to the English horses he had bought in this country, and averting to the opinion entertained by many breeders for the turf in England, that the climate of France encouraged an earlier development of the young race-horse, M. de Thannberg replied as follows:

“Paris, May 30, 1873

“The question you ask me respecting the merits of French and English horses would take a volume to answer. I will deal with them in a general way; and must commence by stating that I do not at all agree in the opinion that the French climate is superior to yours for breeding horses. The deterioration of horses in England is attributable to many causes. The first is, that having no Government stud for the conservation of the most approved types, private owners have been tempted by high prices to part with them, and have allowed their best animals to leave England. The second is, the system of racing now in vogue lends itself solely to gambling, and defeats the purpose for which races were first introduced.

“At the present day you disregard entirely the science of breeding, of which you were the first to establish the sound principles, and you seek only for speed. You care little about the shape or make of a horse, or whether he is suited to a particular mare; and you only seek for an animal that may be worked up to win one of the great two or three year old prizes, sufficient to compensate for the cost of rearing them; whilst in the former times the object was to produce an animal that combined speed, staying-powers, symmetry, and freedom from all unsoundness. What has resulted from blamable proceedings like these? Simply this, that a first-class stallion is scarcely now to be found.

“Foreign purchasers who go to England for well-shaped, sound horses have great difficulty in finding them; and at the same time they secure the few examples that they meet with. The third cause must be attributed to your practice, opposed to all sound principles, of putting animals of extreme youth into training. I am quite aware that it is asserted no greater work is extracted from them than is suitable to their age. But I cannot accept his reasoning, as I am convinced when an owner backs his colt for immense sums, much greater than the value of his animal, he will not hesitate to screw him up to the utmost point, to the detriment of his constitution, in order to win his money. I could say much more on your system of racing, but I pass over the class of thoroughbred horses.

“Allow me to say a few words on your Norfolk Trotters, or roadsters. I place the greatest reliance on this breed, for it has been the source of the great amelioration in our horses which has been produced in France. Although these animals are not very high bred, they are of very similar conformation. They invariably transmit to their offspring their qualities, their action, their courage—in one word, all that constitutes the requisites for a good troop-horse. Unfortunately for England, Norfolk stallions are becoming very scarce; foreigners pick them up wherever they find them, and the want is felt sensibly. My conviction has been long established that it is only Government that can ensure the preservation in its own country of the best types of animals. But you have in England a great authority, who enjoys a European reputation on this subject, as well as for his honesty as for his profound knowledge of horseflesh. I speak of Mr. Phillips (of whom I have bought horses to the amount of 80,000L at least), who could advise you as well or better than myself on all these questions. In fact it is owing to the purchases he made for the French Government that our successes on the turf and in the general improvements of our breeds are mainly due.”

In Prussia we find the phases of the horse question very much in accordance with those of France. The state gives great encouragement to horse-breeding, and maintains large studs. From depending almost wholly on foreign supply, the Prussian army is now entirely horsed from indigenous sources, and German writers believe that their cavalry is the best mounted in Europe. Horse-breeding is also much taken up by Prussian landowners, and the German stud book enumerates eighteen private studs of English thoroughbred stock, one of which, Count Renard’s, in Silesia, produced Hochstapler, the winner of a good race at Newmarket in the present year, and second favorite for the Derby. To make the resemblance still more complete, an active party exists who entirely deprecates the interference of Government in the matter.

Prussia, for military purposes, enjoys great advantages over France with respect to cavalry, for although she has no strong, active breeds like the Boulongese and Percherons, nor, indeed, any cart-horses whatever, all her animals used in agriculture are sufficiently light to be available for employment in war when required. And requisitions, it may be observed, are a casualty that a horse-breeder in the great military empires of Europe must take into his calculation.

Besides thirteen stallion depots, which contain above fifteen hundred sires, and which are distributed, like those of France, over the empire under careful superintendence, Prussia possess three great breeding establishments, Trakehnen, Graditz, and Newstad.

Trakehnen is situated on an immense sandy plain of very poor soil, with indifferent herbage, near the Russian frontier, and was established in 1732 by Frederick William I., with some English thoroughbred stallions, and mares from different quarters, Barbs, Lithuanian, Germans, &c. At present it contains a horse population of nearly 1,200 animals. Of the eighteen stallions reserved for the stud only, there are six English thoroughbreds, one Arab, three Anglo-Norman, and eight stud-bred horses (Trakehnen). The other stallions are distributed over the country.

What this stud is chiefly celebrated for are three families of carriage-horses, black, bay and chestnut, each of which has attained a distinct type through systematic care in breeding. Every year purchases to the amount of forty horses are made for his Imperial Majesty’s stables at Berlin, if suitable animals can be found; but the Trakehnen breeds are falling off, and a recent visit to the Imperial stables showed that the best horses it contained were Norman. Graditz is also a very large breeding stud, containing about 500

animals, and presents, amongst others, four English stallions, and fifty-two mares, all thoroughbred. The acquisition of Hanover and Holstein must have added greatly to the resources of Prussia in horse production.

A late careful inspection, however, of the studs in Prussia did not lead to favorable conclusions. The extremely poor pastures amid which the establishment are placed evidently tell with injurious effects on the young stock; yet a Prussian officer lately informed General Walker that he attributed the excellence of the Prussian troop-horse to the scanty fare on which he is brought up—a Prussian mare and foal having frequently to wander twenty-five miles a day over the sandy plains to get a bellyful. Races of the best breed seem to deteriorate, and the constant infusion of fresh doses of blood from English and Norman studs clearly show that Prussian breeders do not choose to rely on their own stocks for perpetuating their breeds. Certain it is that English dealers who now, in default of suitable animals at home, resort largely to the German market, pronounce that the good-looking, well-bred animals, whom they buy in Germany, undistinguishable in appearance from English horses, and nearly allied to them in blood, are soft animals without bottom. In horse dealers' language, a well-bred English horse has three lives, a German only one.

If the establishment of studs by the Government has proved successful in France and Prussia (and it will have been observed that even there it is matter of controversy), the same cannot be affirmed of our possessions in India. On this subject we have some interesting information in papers just laid before Parliament by the India Office.

In India it would seem, although the horse has been known from time immemorial, he has never been used except for war and parade; and therefore except for war purposes there is but little demand for him. India, under native rule and in a chronic state of warfare, maintained large troops of horse in the armies of its native princes, and various breeds were celebrated; but so soon as the British Government became established and order prevailed throughout the land, the supply of horses diminished, and the Government found a difficulty in procuring sufficient animals for its mounted force. Accordingly, in 1794, the Government-General established a breeding stud in Bengal. Unfortunately, the locality was extremely unsuitable, for the climate is relaxing, the country is for some months under water, and the population, most unused to horses, knew no other method to deal with the animal than to keep him tied up during the whole twenty-four hours of the day. But there was no choice at that period, for the red absorbing line had not then included more propitious sites. The studs became gradually extended with our power, and have now assumed such large proportions that the Indian stud officers assert them to be the largest breeding establishments in the world. With regard to their results the language of the late Commander-in Chief is not too strong. Lord Sandhurst pronounced them to be “ a gigantic failure”. The price of a troop-horse which they furnish to the service amounts to the most fabulous sum of 212l., according to the estimates of Government, and the studs are able to furnish only 550 horses annually for the remounts wanted for the Bengal army. At the same time, these studs have so grievously failed in accomplishing the object for which they were instituted; they have had the collateral effect of stifling private enterprise. The once famous Bheema Thuree mare and the Kattywar horse are almost extinct, and foreign supply is alone resorted to filling up the ranks of the British cavalry. The Duke of Argyll has very properly brought this costly experiment, which has now lasted eighty years, to a close; and Lord Northbrook, whose experience at the War Office stands him in good stead in these and kindred matters, to dealing with a vigorous hand in reforming abuses which have had so long its existence, and which are protected by so many vested interests.

In giving a general review of the breeding establishments in Europe it would be unpardonable to pass over the attempts which have been made to improve indigenous breeds by the introduction of Arab blood. The large part which Arab and Barb sires have played in the production of the English race-horse is so obvious that it has long been a favorite experiment amongst horse-breeders to recur to good Eastern blood. By no one was this experiment so fully conducted as by the late King of Wurtemberg. His Majesty, whilst Crown Prince, rode through the last campaign against Napoleon I. an Arab charger which he subsequently sent into the stud he had established near Stutgard in 1810. But it was not till he came to the throne, in 1817, that the stud attained the large proportions which it maintained till his death, in 1864. His Majesty took extraordinary pains to obtain the best blood from all parts of the East. By his marriage with a Russian princess he was enabled to procure some very high-bred mares from the Caucasus, and he sent special commissioners to Hungary, Russia, Syria, Constantinople and Egypt for the purchase of horses. At the royal sale at Hampton Court, on the death of William IV., he bought the splendid black horse Sultan, said to be the highest caste Arab ever brought to this country, and which had been presented to that monarch by the Imam of Muscat. In 1857 the King also obtained from the late Prince Consort another Arab that had been similarly presented to the Queen by the Imam. Altogether his Majesty succeeded in procuring for his stud no fewer than 38 horse and 36 mares, all of pure Arab blood and birth, and in 1861 the authors of the handsome volume at the head of our article which describes his Majesty's breeding establishments, state that the stud contained over one hundred brood mares, fifty-one of which were Arabs. It will thus be seen that during a half century and more, during which the stud was conducted with royal magnificence, every opportunity was afforded for trying the effect of Arab crossings. Frieberr von Hugel, who was chief of the stud, writing, it is true, in the lifetime of the King, speaks most favorably of the results so far as the breeding of pure Arabs was concerned, According to him the produce became bigger and stronger than their parents. It is to be appreciated, however, that, as in India, where the breeding from pure Arabs was also a long term attempted, although the produce became much longer in the legs than Arab-born horses, what is gained in size is lost in symmetry and compactness. Abbas Pacha, late ruler of Egypt, made a shrewd remark to von Hugel when he was describing the pure Arabs in the royal stables at Stutgard: "Even if you succeed in getting hold of genuine Arabs, you will never breed real Arabs from them, for an Arab horse is no longer an Arab when he ceases to breathe the air of the desert."

With respect to half-bred stock, the crossing of Arabs with Wurtemberg mares failed signally, as it did with Russian and Polish mares, but it succeeded better with those from Persia and the Caucasus. With sixteen English hunting mares imported in 1816, and crossed with Emir, an Arab horse purchased at Damascus, an excellent strain of carriage-horses was produced. A similar importation of Yorkshire and Irish mares in 1828, which were crossed with another Arab, Mahmoud, laid the foundation of the present fine breed of carriage-horses, which are to be seen drawing the royal carriages, and averaging seventeen hands in height. The King's favorite colors were black and grey. From the English mares and Mahmoud descend the greys, whilst the blacks owe their origin to mares procured from the Trakehnen stud in Prussia. As a general result it is found that though the first generation from Arabs and English mares, even when the latter are under-bred, is very satisfactory, the further produce is doubtful, requiring great skill in the selection of dams, and recurrence to thoroughbred English or Arab blood is generally quite a failure.

We have no means of judging as to the profit and loss of this royal establishment, but its beneficial operation in the welfare of the country is undoubted. At the commencement of the century the cavalry of Wurtemberg was supplied chiefly from abroad, but not the home resources are all sufficient, and five or

six hundred high priced horses are exported annually. It seems, however, that under the present King the stud has dwindled greatly away. The demand for Arab chargers, which was so great when an Arab was in all strictness a royal hobby, has given way to calls for the larger and stronger horse more suited for military purposes. The four-year-olds which used to sell at the royal annual sales under the late reign at the average of 125L., each, now fetch only 67L., and the number of Arab mares has diminished to seventeen.

Another great breeder of Arabs—the greatest according to Baron Hugel, since King Solomon—was Abbas Pacha himself. A child of the desert, for he was brought up in Arabia, where his father was Governor of Mecca, he displayed throughout life the greatest love for the horse. His stud contained over a thousand horses of the purest blood. As an example of his reckless expenditure in relation to any horse of reputation, von Hugel tells the following story. The Pacha had resented Her Majesty Queen Victoria with a grey stallion of the purest breed and of great size, but the animal (like all Arabs we many say en passant) was not esteemed in England, and was sold to India. The Pacha, on hearing the fate of his much-prized animal, was extremely nettled, and sent into Arabia for the Bedouin who had bred him, of whom he inquired whether he should recognize the horse again: The Arab replied that he should know him out of a thousand. Whereupon the Pacha sent him to India in company of a trusty agent, and they returned at the expiration of a twelve-month with the high bred grey, Saklavi Durbi, whom they had obtained at an expenditure of five thousand guineas. We suspect the whole story is fabulous, but it is illustrative of the character of the Pacha.

Near his stud in the desert, Abbas Pacha built himself a splendid palace, the Abbassie, and laid the foundations of a city, with grand aqueducts, avenues, and gardens, where he compelled his nobles to dwell; but a few years after his short reign all culminated in ruin, and his stud was brought to the hammer at Cairo, in 1860. At the time of sale only three hundred and fifty animals were left, for the successor of Abbas Pacha, a madcap youth of eighteen, had given them away right and left to every one who managed to approach him with a well-turned piece of flattery. Von Hugel attended the sale on the part of his royal master, and had to give exorbitant prices for the two stallions and three mares which he purchased, but which were of the very highest caste. The sale lasted three weeks, and the bids were made in English guineas. On one day 26 horses fetched 5,00 guineas; aged mares, 20 years old, were sold at from 180 to 250 guineas; colts and fillies, from 300 to 700 guineas each.

These prices sound astonishing to an English buyer of horses, for it is notorious that the Arab is not a favorite in the country. He has been tried over and over again by breeders for the turf, but the intermixture of fresh Arab blood has hitherto proved wholly unsuccessful. The Arab is in fact not a race-horse, and an ordinary plater would probably beat the best animal ever bred in the Nejed. He is also too small for a hunter, too short for harness, and, from his shambling action at slow paces, is indifferent as a hack. What endears him to the inhabitant of the East—his powers of endurance, his docility, his sound constitution, his sureness of step under excitement mid rugged ground or broken ravines—all or most of these qualities are lost on breeders who wish to produce a winner of the Derby, a high-stepping carriage horse, or a hunter that can go in the first flight across Leicestershire.

Our limits do not permit us to dwell longer on such a fascinating topic to all lovers of horseflesh as the Arab horse, whose qualities are celebrated by no fewer than eighty-six classical authors in Arabic and Persian, according to Hammer-Purgstall.

We cannot resist, however, giving one extract from the pages of Mr. Palgrave, who alone of the Europeans has been admitted into the interior of the royal stables at Riad, the capital of the Nejed. After stating that “the Nejedian horse is considered no less superior to all others of his kind in Arabia than is the Arabian breed collectively to the Persian, Cape of Good Hope, or Indian; and that in Nejed is the true birthplace of the Arab steed, the primal type, the authentic model,” He continues: “Nejee horses are especially esteemed for great speed and endurance of fatigue; indeed, in this latter quality, none come up to them. To pass twenty-four hours on the road without drink and without flagging is certainly something; but to keep up the same abstinence and labor conjoined under the burning Arabian sky for forty-eight hours at a stretch is, I believe, peculiar to the animals of the breed. Besides, they have a delicacy, I cannot say of mouth, for it is common to ride them without bit or bridle, but of feeling and obedience to the knee and thigh, to the slightest check of the halter and the voice of the rider, far surpassing whatever the most elaborate *manege* gives a European horse, though furnished with snaffle, curb, and all. I often mounted them at the invitation of the owners, and, without saddle, rein or stirrup, set them off at full gallop, wheeler them around, brought them up in mid-career at a dead halt, and that without the least difficulty or the smallest want of correspondence between the horse’s movement and my own will. The rider on their back really feels himself the man-half of a centaur, not a distinct being. This is in great part owing to the Arab system of breaking in, much preferable to the European, in conferring pliancy and perfect tractability. Nor is mere speed much valued in the horse unless it is united with the above qualities, since whether in the contest of a Arab race, or in the pursuits and flights of war, ‘doubling’ is much more the rule than ‘going ahead’, at least at any distance.

Mr. Palgrave’s account of his horsemanship—and he is evidently a good rider—enables one to understand the figures on the Elgin Marbles, where the horseman without saddle or bridle are seen guiding their animals at a full gallop by the gentle pressure of their fingers on the neck.

What is chiefly interesting to horse-breeders, however, in the few pages which Mr. Palgrave devotes to the subject, is the description of the soil on which this celebrated race is bred. With most of us the current belief was that the Arab horse is reared in the desert, and sharing the tent of his Bedouin owner, partook at long intervals of such scanty fare as the arid sands of Arabia produced. On the contrary, the Nejed, or central uplands of Arabia, are clothed with rich pasture suitable to every kind of stock, and are indented with well-watered valleys, where cereals and clover are grown in great abundance. The soil, above all, is limestone, the most favorable of all for the production of horses.

From the foregoing survey of what is being done to encourage horse-production in Europe, it appears to us that an obvious moral may be drawn. The Continental Governments are main actors in all that relates to the production of horses; and it is to England chiefly that they look for fresh blood. In England, private enterprise alone furnishes the supply, and her animals are eagerly competed for by purchasers from all parts of the world. The decision of the Committee of the House of Lords, that Government studs should not be established, so as to be brought into competition with the efforts of private individuals, is in our judgment entirely sound, and will be disputed by none who have looked closely into the subject from an English point of view. State patronage has always been at a discount in England, and the small sum of 6,000L. a year, now given for Queen’s Plates in support of racing, might be dispensed with to great advantage; for certainly no class of horses require less encouragement at the hands of Government at the present moment than race-horses. If this grant were abolished, and a sum say of 20,000L. per annum were allotted for premiums to be distributed, in addition to their own prizes, by the various agricultural

societies, as suggested by various witnesses before the Lord's Committee, all would be done in the way of direct encouragement by the State that is necessary for stimulating to the utmost the private enterprise.

What, then, is the conclusion to be drawn from the evidence taken by their lordships and from the facts which we have culled from foreign writers? It is exactly the same we ventured in this journal some years ago, when bringing to the notice of our readers the increasing price of horses. We then indicated that country gentlemen and occupiers of home farms, might turn their attention most usefully, and not without profit, to the breeding of superior half-bred horses. The course of events in the last ten years, the increasing demand for horses, and the growing wealth of the world, not only justify the opinion then given, but enable us to reiterate it with much greater confidence.

The British Isles possess advantages in climate, soil, and forage for the production of the horse which no other country in Europe can boast of. Every county is, more or less, traveled by stallions of good blood, and many noblemen and country gentlemen keep a horse for the use of their tenants and neighbors. Lord Vivian told the House of Lords that when a boy nothing but cobs were to be found in Cornwall; but now, since the introduction of good thoroughbred blood into the county, he is able to mount himself with good hunters; and his lordship is well-known as one of the best heavy weights across country in England. The same results have followed the introduction of good stallions into Devonshire. But it is said continually that horse-breeding does not pay, and undoubtedly it does not, unless good judgment and careful attention are employed. Much exaggeration, however, is often employed as to the cost of production. A great authority lately stated in the Times that four-year old horses could not be produced under 50L. or 60L.; but it is certain that the Irish breeder finds himself well compensated when he sells his trooper to the Government for 30L. If present prices continue, and the probability is that they will increase rather than diminish, to breed a horse of the commoner quality will be found a profitable operation for the small farmer, even without capital. A Percheron breeder calculates that he can produce his animal up to the age of eighteen months at a cost of 4L., the first six months as a suckling costing him nothing, and the keep for the next twelve months being covered by the sum above mentioned. At eighteen months a Percheron colt earns his living by light operations on the farm. Granting that the cost in the British Isles would be something (but not a great deal) more, the prices which an average cart horse colt is now fetching—30L. for a yearling, 40L. to 50L. for a two-year-old colt—will well remunerate a breeder. We need to have little fear but that with present prices the falling off in cart horse supply will soon be filled up. It is obvious that the profit in breeding such an animal at least equals that in breeding a bullock. So also for light cavalry, there is no doubt that Ireland can well supply at the present regulation prices our annual demands for light cavalry, especially, since it has been determined to take them at the age of three years and a half. Indeed, the unwise reductions in price introduced by the Horse Guards for the purchase of troopers after the Crimean war have been mainly instrumental in inducing English farmers to sell their mares, and to give up breeding troopers.

It is to the production of the superior class of horse—the animal that cannot be used to a profit till he is four or five years old—that attention need chiefly be given. Here the small farmer who can breed a cart horse or trooper without any perceptible charge is chiefly in straits, for a valuable animal at three and four years old needs much care, superior provender, and is subject to divers casualties, without rendering the least return for his maintenance. Undoubtedly, a good roadster from Norfolk or Yorkshire, that sells at four years old for two hundred and fifty guineas, is highly remunerative to the breeder; but that breeder must be a man of capital. Here, again, England possesses advantages unequalled in Europe. We have a

wealthy landed aristocracy devoted to country pursuits, and farmers employing larger capital in developing the resources of the soil than are to be found elsewhere. To the same class of men who have produced our best strains of Short-horns and Herefords, Southdowns and Cotteswolds, we may look for an increased supply of the animals now most wanted—weight carrying hunters, high-stepping amciners, and trotting roadsters. Our great landowners have not hitherto operated in this direction, but have turned their attention mainly to the production of thoroughbred stock. It is patent, however, that although breeding for the turf is on the increase, the pursuit has been abandoned by many of our most eminent noblemen and country-gentlemen, who were led into it originally by sheer love for that noble animal, the horse, and by a hearty desire to benefit their neighbors and tenants. We believe fully that a breeding establishment for such half-bred stock as we describe, if conducted with skill and sound judgment, would prove more remunerative, and infinitely more useful, than four out of five of all the racing studs in the kingdom. Indeed, Lords Combermere and Charlemont assured the Select Committee that they have for some years conducted breeding establishments with this object, and have found them very remunerative.

The witnesses before the Lord's Committee have pointed out a real danger to the maintenance of our good breeds, when they describe the eagerness of foreigners to buy up our best mares, and the tendency—nay, the necessity—of the humbler class of breeders to sell them for the first tempting price that offers. Here it is that our great landowners may step in with advantage. Their parks, their paddocks, their stables, their home farms, are all at hand for the purpose. Undoubtedly horse-breeding is attended with many casualties; on the other hand, foot and mouth disease and pleuro-pneumonia are confined to sheep and cattle. If the Orloff Trotters were produced by the skill and perseverance of a wealthy landowner in Russia, it is incredible to suppose that our great landed gentry, who are addicted to horses, with the superior advantages they possess in soil and climate, and with the judgment and experience they would bring to the task, would not produce equally advantageous results. An annual sale of weight-carrying hunters at Badminton, or of Norfolk Trotters at Sandringham, if the establishment were conducted on the principles we indicate, would attract all the horse-buyers of the world. We will conclude this article by describing such a stud as we desire to see instituted in England by some of our great noblemen and landowners; and we would even suggest that it might worthily occupy the attention of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales. The Marquis de Croix, who spent his younger years in England during the emigration, and here probably acquired his love for horses, established a stud more than thirty years ago on this his estate at Serquigny in Normandy. His object has been to breed superior half-bred horses for the saddle and harness; and he has used mainly English blood; and especially Norfolk Trotters. His stud consisted at the beginning of 1873 of sixty one horses, with three stallions, one of which, Norval, a roadster of English blood but bred in France, would win a prize at any of agricultural meetings.