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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1907.

view of these facts, that the English racing stock is steadily becoming bay." Thus, Professor Ridgeway, and his whole book is of such extreme value that it is a pity he had no practical breeder of blood stock standing by him when he came to the above seemingly logical conclusions. It should have been pointed out to him that "natural specialisation" of colour had not nearly so much as he imagines to do with the results to which he calls attention. The accident of the arrival of Galopin on the scene was the main factor in establishing such a predominance of bays and browns; Stockwell and his sons, together with Hermit, had up to then kept the chestnuts going. Neither Galopin nor his son St. Simon ever sired a chestnut; many other Galopin and St. Simon stallions have the same characteristic; the line went to the top of fashion, monopolised the best mares, and the result that has followed could hardly have been otherwise under the circumstances, but it is entirely through Galopin and fashion that it has come about in such a brief period.

COLOUR IN HORSES.

The question of colour in horses is one that is constantly cropping up, and it is one which possesses a curious fascination with many breeders. The following should therefore prove of interest, as the remarks are made by an acknowledged expert on the subject:—

The "Special Commissioner" of the London "Sportsman" writes:— Professor Ridgeway, in his excellent book, "Origin and Influence of the Thoroughbred Horse" (Cambridge Universal Press), has much to say of great interest on the subject of colour, and he reasons that the Libyan or North African horses, which were uniformly bays, are the foundation of what we call blood, whereas all other colours are due to an admixture from European or Asiatic sources. He further argues that "the increasing efforts of breeders to produce greater lightness and speed are continually eliminating the Asiatic and European element, and accordingly dun and white have disappeared from, and grey, black, chestnut, and brown horses are gradually ceasing to be found in, our blood stock. But an increase of speed is gradually rendering the English thoroughbred a purely bay stock, and as from the earliest times of which we have any record the Libyan horse has been not only the swiftest horse known, but has been of a bay colour, we are justified in concluding that his bay colour is as fundamental as his speed, and that it is due not to artificial selection, but to natural specialisation."

There is no doubt a great deal in the above argument, but not so much as Professor Ridgeway infers from some statistics which he has compiled. He writes (page 441):—

"An examination of the colours of the winners of the Derby, Oaks, and St. Leger for the three decades from 1870 to 1899, inclusive, proves that not merely has grey disappeared altogether, and that black has almost gone, but that chestnut is also disappearing as well as brown.

"Table I. of the colours of the winning horses of the Derby, Oaks, and St. Leger from 1870 to 1899:—

Decade.	Bl. or					
	Bay.	Ch.	Br.	Bl.	Bl.	Bl.
1870-9	15	12	2	1	0	0
1880-9	16	8	5	0	1	1
1890-9	17	6	7	0	0	0

"From the above table," he continues, "it is clear that during the last third of the past century bay has been slowly gaining upon both brown and chestnut combined, and that brown has been gaining upon chestnut. Thus the dun element, which we have always believed from our previous investigations, when mixed with bay, gives chestnut, is steadily being eliminated, and our racing stock is becoming a breed of bays and browns, with a steady tendency to become eventually purely bay. The same tendency is shown still more emphatically if we take the colours of the first three horses in each of the three great races just named:—

Table II., showing the colours of the three first horses in the Derby, Oaks, and St. Leger, from 1890 to 1899:—

Decade.	Br. or B or					
	Bay.	Ch.	Br.	Bl.	Bl.	Bl.
1870-9	36	34	13	4	2	1
1880-9	42	28	16	0	2	1
1890-9	54	16	17	1	0	2

"Out of 90 horses bay had only 36 in 1870-9, but rose to 54 in the last decade; while chestnut, which was represented by only 2 less than bay in the first decade, has sunk to 16 in the last; brown has gained slightly at the expense of chestnut, rising from 13 to 17. There can be little doubt, in

I am not contending that Professor Ridgeway's reasoning as to colour is wrong in the abstract, but the premises on which he bases his conclusions are artificial and quite insufficient. It may be that the bay colour will ultimately wipe out the chestnut, and one reason for such an anticipation is that whereas a bay or a brown horse is at times so absolutely prepotent as regards colour that he never sires a chestnut foal, the converse of this has never yet held good with regard to a chestnut stallion; the stock of all such are often as not bays and browns. But it is early days to talk of chestnuts as disappearing, blacks as "almost gone," and greys as having disappeared altogether, when we have a chestnut like Polar Star and a black like Slieve Gallion to carry on with, and there are any number of good greys in France, nor is it so long since one of them, Holocaust, was thought by many a sure winner of the Epsom Derby won by Flying Fox, had he not fallen and broken his leg. There are a good many useful black horses about just now—for example, Black Arrow and Prince William.

As to the absorption of chestnut, here is a phenomenon which I should like Professor Ridgeway to consider. Galopin and St. Simon having carried on without a chestnut flaw in any of their stock, we reach St. Simon's best sons, Persimmon and St. Frusquin, and find that they have not only dropped the family tradition of never siring chestnuts, but have in many instances got stock reverting to "the dun shade of chestnut" colour, which, he thinks, is being steadily eliminated. Moreover, it has happened, in Persimmon's case at all events, that some of his best stock have come of pale chestnut colour, Zinfandel, for example. Donovan (by Galopin) also sired a good many sons and daughters that were really "dun chestnuts," and in these cases it will be seen that the old European colour will still assert itself, for no Libyan horse or pure-bred Arab was ever known to be a dun. The one solid argument in favour of Professor Ridgeway's contention that the bay colour must ultimately prevail is that you do often find bay or brown stallions and bay or brown mares who never sire or produce chestnut foals, and no animal of chestnut colour ever has any such prepotency. At the same time, I should be very sorry to reach a period when the colour of Stockwell and Blair Athol has ceased to be, and I do not think, in point of fact, that we shall reach it for many generations to come. It would be the result of mating some yellow dun Celtic ponies with thoroughbred horses who, so far as their own kind go, have never sired chestnut stock. If it be correct that chestnut colour came originally from a mixture of a Libyan bay with Northern dun, a similar result ought to follow from such mating as I suggest, and Professor Cossar Ewart may extend his many experiments so as to take in this one.

In America recently there has been a lot of talk about "doping" horses for the show ring, but (says a New York paper) "stimulating a horse with champagne is not 'artificially preparing' him for the show ring within the meaning of the rules of the National Horse Show Association (New York). This was officially decided recently when J. Campbell Thompson asked permission of the management to give one of his high-steppers a small bottle. "Give him all the wine he wants," was the answer.

RACING CALENDAR.

- NEW ZEALAND.**
- FIXTURES.—1907.**
- February 20, 21, and 23.—Dunedin J.C.
 - February 20 and 21.—Woodville J.C.
 - February 26 and 27.—Rotorua J.C.
 - February 27 and 28.—Taranaki J.C.
 - March 2.—South Auckland R.C.
 - March 5.—Akaroa County R.C.
 - March 6 and 7.—Dannevirke J.C.
 - March 8 and 9.—Wanganui J.C.
 - March 9.—Waikato J.C.
 - March 13 and 14.—Napier Park R.C.
 - March 15 and 16.—Tolaga Bay J.C.
 - March 16 and 18.—Ohinemuri J.C.
 - March 18.—Opunake R.C.
 - March 18 and 19.—Greyouth J.C.
 - March 18 and 19.—Horowhenua Hack R.C.
 - March 20 and 21.—Southland R.C.
 - March 20.—Waipawa County R.C.
 - March 21.—Waimate R.C.
 - March 21 and 22.—Masterton R.C.
 - March 21 and 24.—Thames J.C.
 - March 22 and 23.—Westport J.C.
 - March 23.—Thames J.C.
 - March 30 and April 1.—Wairarapa R.C.
 - April 1.—Patea Racing Club.
 - April 1 and 2.—Feilding Jockey Club.
 - April 1, 2 and 6.—Auckland R.C.
 - April 20, 24.—Avondale J.C.

NOMINATIONS.

- February 22.—A.R.C. (special events)
- February 22.—Ohinemuri J.C.
- March 4.—Feilding Jockey Club
- March 8.—Thames J.C.
- March 11.—Patea R.C.
- March 15.—Auckland R.C.
- March 29.—Avondale J.C. (special events)
- April 5.—Avondale J.C.

HANDICAPS.

- February 23.—Wanganui J.C.
- March 5.—Ohinemuri J.C.
- March 11.—A.R.C. (special events)
- March 16.—Feilding J.C.
- March 18.—Thames J.C.
- March 18.—Patea R.C.
- March 19.—Auckland R.C.
- April 1.—Avondale J.C. (special events)
- April 8.—Avondale J.C.

ACCEPTANCES.

- February 22.—Taranaki J.C.
- February 22.—South Auckland R.C.
- March 1.—Wanganui J.C.
- March 8.—Ohinemuri J.C.
- March 19.—Thames J.C.
- March 15.—A.R.C. (special events)
- March 20.—Feilding J.C.
- March 22.—Auckland R.C.
- March 25.—Patea R.C.
- April 12.—Avondale J.C.

REMINDERS TO OWNERS.

Nominations for the Easter Handicap, Brighton Hurdles, St. George's Handicap, Autumn Handicap, and Autumn Steeplechase to be run at the Autumn Meeting of the Auckland Racing Club close with Mr. Hartland, the secretary, on February 22, at 9 p.m.

Acceptances for the Easter Handicap Brighton Hurdles and Autumn Steeplechase are due on March 15, on which date general entries for the A.R.C. Autumn Meeting are also due.

Nominations for all events to be decided at the annual meeting of the Patea Racing Club (other than local events) close with Mr. R. W. Hamerton, the secretary, on Monday, March 11, at 8 p.m.

Nominations for all events to be decided at the annual meeting of the Ohinemuri J.C. close with Mr. H. Poland, secretary, Paeroa, on Friday, February 22, at 9 p.m.

Nominations for the Avondale, Autumn, Steeplechase, and Railway Handicaps, to be run at the autumn meeting of the Avondale Jockey Club, close with Mr. H. H. Hayr, the secretary, on Friday, March 29, at 9 p.m.

General entries for the Avondale J.C. Autumn Meeting close on Friday, April 5.

Nominations for all events to be decided at the autumn meeting of the Thames Jockey Club close with Mr. W. H. Poits, the secretary, on Friday, March 8, at 8 p.m.

Nominations for the Easter meeting of the Feilding Jockey Club close on Monday, March 4th, at 3.30 p.m., with the secretary, Mr. E. Goodbehare.

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