

Evolution of the American Roadster.

Since the pastoral state of the human race, man has understood the hereditary tendency that exists in the perpetuation of a variety, and with this law of nature to assist him the American has founded a breed of horses that represents in no slight degree the nation's temperament.

Nervous and energetic, with courage and endurance that cannot be excelled, the American horse like the American citizen has become recognized by the whole world as a leader in the race of activity.

Since the American roadster can be traced to the thoroughbred of England, a brief review of the history of this horse will be both interesting and instructive.

"With the advent of Charles II, in the last half of the seventeenth century, breeding for speed and endurance on the race-course began to be conducted on a definite plan; the records of turf performances were carefully

kept, especial attention was paid to the pedigree of horses designed for the turf; and an aristocracy of blood came to be recognized in the horse of England.

With a view of forming a breeding stud, Charles II sent his "master of the horse" to the Levant for procuring suitable horses for this purpose. Three famous stallions and several mares were procured. It is believed by many that this was the foundation of the thoroughbred of today.

Although this is partly true, these horses cannot be said to be the ancestors of the famous racers, since it is well known that many Orient horses were brought to England during this period whose descendants have been distinguished upon the turf and recognized as thoroughbreds. Of these Orient horses one of the most famous, known as Darley Arabian, was the sire of Devonshire, or Flying Childers, whose great grand son Eclipse was never defeated on the race course.

The last of these that can be considered beneficial to the thorough-breds was imported in 1723. Since then many importations have been made, but none have ever made themselves distinguished on the turf or as progenitors of winners.

Thus we are led to believe that while the Oriental horse was prominent among the horses of Flanders, Normandy, Germany, and Spain, the promiscuous intermixture of which formed the foundation of the thoroughbred, still there is no doubt but that the Arabian horse is inferior in speed and endurance to the thoroughbred.

Of the Arabian horse I can give no better idea of his true significance than to quote from Sanders. "So thoroughly have our people been imbued with the idea that Arabia was the fountain-head from which all modern equine excellency has been drawn that to venture an opinion to the contrary has been equivalent, in the mind of the average horse essayist,

to writing one's self down as an ignoramus upon equine history, and yet it is doubtful if ever a race of horses has been more thoroughly overrated.

The greater portion of Arabia is, in point of fact, illy adapted to the rearing of horses, and prior to the days of Mahomet horses were scarcely recognized as a part of the possessions of the Arab, their riches consisting chiefly in camels, oxen, sheep and goats. But Mahomet was an enthusiastic lover of the horse, and while he succeeded in engrafting upon so large a proportion of the inhabitants of the eastern world his own peculiar religious tenets he also imbued his followers with a great degree of his enthusiastic admiration for the horse. Indeed, kindness to and love for this noble animal was made a part of the religious duty of all true Mussulmans, and from the days of Mahomet down to the present time the Arabian has held his stud, and especially his mares, in a sort of superstitious reverence.

Mahomet selected for himself a magnificent stud, and his followers to this day seek to trace the genealogy of their choicest horses to the mares that were his favorites. But their pedigrees divested of all high-sounding flourishes with which they are accompanied, mean but little and are altogether unreliable.

Starting with horses that were selected by men who were admirers and good judges of the horse, "there cannot be the slightest doubt that the care and skill of English breeders in selecting and coupling with the stoutest, best, and fleetest for successive generations has been a more potent agent in the formation of the English thoroughbred as it now exists, than the Arabian and Bard blood to which tradition has ascribed its superiority."

These horses in their native country were used almost exclusively as implements of war, as instruments of sport and ceremony, and were recognized as a luxury and

indication of rank and wealth.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century some English thoroughbreds were imported to America, both for sporting and breeding purposes. But the racing contests were unpopular with the majority of the colonists whose religious prejudices, and social education were opposed to it. In accordance with the public disfavor towards the race course stringent laws were passed prohibiting the running match.

The result of these laws was to introduce an entirely new feature into the "horse world." A gait that had before been undeveloped began to be cultivated. Thus the influences which originally led to the starting of the American breed of roadsters were more social than economic.

Being withheld from the privilege of running horses to test superiority, the horse that could lead the road in a trot began to be

popular. The trotter was at first however - a poor substitute for the fleet footed thoroughbred.

"It had a sort of encouragement from a great many thrifty people who were not sportsmen and it was in a measure looked upon as a sort of democratic sport in which even plow horses could take part."

The custom of timing trotters is first recorded as being done in 1806 on the Harbors race track.

At a jockey club dinner in 1818 it was declared that it was impossible for a horse to trot a mile in three minutes. On a wager of a thousand dollars a horse named Boston Blue trotted the mile in three minutes and won world wide fame for the performance. This may be considered the starting point of the American breed of horses.

Gentlemen of wealth began driving what were then fast trotters

to their pleasure wagons. Friendly "brushes" on the road did much to stimulate the growing interest in the possibilities of the trotter.

While horses with unknown ancestry constantly appeared in the field yet it was early recognized by horsemen that most of the horses that showed more than ordinary ability as "goers" were of a higher standard of breeding.

In 1788 a thoroughbred named Messenger was imported to the United States. The second generation of this horse's offsprings almost invariably showed more than ordinary action as trotters, and so many of the leading trotters of the time were closely related to Messenger that an infusion of Messenger blood was sought after by almost all improvers of the American horse.

By 1830 it can be said that trotting as an American sport was firmly established, and from

that time until the present the American roadster has been improved in a scientific manner until he has gradually lowered what was then considered the miraculous performance of a mile in 2:32 down to the truly wonderful 2:04 gait trotted by Nancy Hanks in 1892.

This wonderful breed of horses that has sprung into existence during the last century is the product of American thought, breeding, and cultivation. With the thoroughbred as a fountain-head from which to draw courage and endurance the foundation was laid for the breed of American horses which now have a world wide reputation of excelling all other breeds as trotters and progenitors of fast and enduring roadsters.

The American horse, although a conglomeration of many breeds and types of horses, has

a strain of thoroughbred blood in him to which he owes not a little of the repute gained by his feats on the turf. Indeed from good authority I may say few famous trotter's pedigrees can be traced back four generations without finding Messenger blood.

Mambino a son of Messenger showed a natural tendency to trot and this quality was inherited by many of his progeny. The most famous of Mambino's off springs was Abdallah who in turn was the sire of many noted horses both as trotters and progenitors of the breed. The most noted of these was Rysdyk's Hambletonian. As this horse is noted among American horsemen as a leading progenitor, a brief summary of him will be given.

Through his dam and sire he had direct, four courses of Messenger blood, receiving from his sire four parts in thirty-two,

and from his dam five parts in thirty-two of this blood, showing that he was much intred to Messenger. Hambletonian was foaled May fifth, 1835 and the immense value of this horse in the improvement of the American roadster can be best realized when we know that so great was he prized as a getter of fast colts that five hundred dollars was paid for his services.

His most celebrated son was Dexter who in his time had the undisputed title of "King of the turf."

Dexter's dam was by Sully American Star, grandson of Durock, by the imported thoroughbred Diomed, who was noted as being sire of many fast colts. In 1867 Dexter went a mile in 2:17 $\frac{1}{4}$, this being the fastest mile ever made in harness up to this date. This splendid record was made when Dexter had had but three years of turf experience. No doubt had he remained on the course he would have

greatly reduced this record, but shortly after this feat, he was purchased by Mr. Bonner for thirty-five thousand dollars, and retired from the race.

While Dexter was reaping for himself the glories of the turf, there appeared in the equine arena a bay mare that was soon to be acknowledged "Queen of the turf." This was Goldsmith Maid. Although she was foaled in 1857 she did not do her fastest mile, of 2:14 time, until 1874 when she was seventeen years old. Like other famous trotters she was in the line of messenger descent, being three sixteenths direct from Messenger.

As we continue to come nearer and nearer to the present time the number of fast roadsters has become so great that to be able to drive a faster horse than our grandfathers ever saw is not an impossibility to a man of but moderate financial standing.

A few of the most famous horses that serve as land marks that show the progression in speed, of the American horse, after the time of Goldsmith Maid are given in the following table.

1880.	St. Julien.	Time	2:11 $\frac{1}{4}$.
1884.	Phallas	"	2:13 $\frac{1}{4}$.
1884.	Jay-eyesee.	"	2:10.
1885.	Maid S.	"	2:08 $\frac{3}{4}$.
1889.	Artell	"	2:12.
1891.	Nelson	"	2:10.
1891.	Allerton	"	2:09 $\frac{1}{4}$.
1891.	Palo Alto.	"	2:08 $\frac{3}{4}$.
1891.	Sumol	"	2:08 $\frac{1}{4}$.
1892.	Kremlin.	"	2:07 $\frac{3}{4}$.
1892.	Nancy Hawks.	"	2:04.

We may boast without fear of contradiction that the United States is recognized as being first in the production of valuable animals by equine fanciers of the whole world.

J. D. Riddell.