

# HORSE SHOW BREEDING CLASSES

## APPOINTMENTS—THE GIG TYPE

By FRANCIS T. UNDERHILL\*

ANALYSING the evolution of the Show during the twenty years of its existence, it would seem that the heavy harness, saddle, hunter and pony classes fill best and create the most general interest. Hitherto the roadster classes have been well represented, and every effort should be made to secure large entries in these, the representative American classes. The breeding classes, except hackney, during the period when enthusiasm for this breed was at its height, and the trotting classes, in which a few prominent breeders took sufficient interest to make extensive entries, have never filled really well.

It would seem logical to deduce from this that New York is the place to show the finished product, rather than the producers. While this does not apply to the thoroughbred, or trotter, whose supremacy and superiority of blood is determined on the race track, it does obtain most emphatically with the classes which the exhibitor and the public have stamped with their approval.

New York is not a breeding center, and it is obvious that the breeder generally derives little or no benefit from the winning of ribbons and small money prizes with his stallions, mares or foals at the National Show, for the reason that he is not really taking part in a national competition. It is, of course, possible that, with very large purses, the breeder generally might be induced to compete, and, even so, it is doubtful if the public would be interested; nor are the conditions really suited to such an exhibit.

One great reason for the popularity of the classes which have practically made the show lies in the fact that they draw from the whole country, and even from across the sea, bringing the laurels of a really national victory to the winners. Now, why is it not best to recognize this fact, and either eliminate the breeding classes entirely, or endeavor to make them representative? The Association itself would be benefited, for in these days of specialists the general practitioner is at a disadvantage. After all, the breeder is best represented by the product of his stud. The awarding of a blue ribbon to a producing animal means very little, unless judged by what he has produced; and the frequent production of worthy show horses is sure to bring their breeder into the most desirable sort of prominence.

In my judgment, the following classes should comprise the prize list:

Trotters in harness, roadsters in harness, heavy harness horses (as at present, with possibly a few subdivisions), saddle horses, park hacks, hunters, ponies and draught horses in harness,

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With a proper distribution of the prize moneys saved by the eliminating of the breeding classes, the roadster and draught horse owners could be attracted, and the blue ribbon of the National Show made par excellence the trophy to be coveted, as being the token of a national victory.

The question of competing in the show ring with exhibitors of large wealth, who pay fancy prices for their horses, is often agitated. As a matter of fact, these men encourage the breeders throughout the country to produce good animals, and there is all the more glory to the man who wins against the long-priced ones. There is one point, however, which demands serious consideration, and which to my mind is a menace to the improvement of the harness horse; namely, the tendency to scour the country for high-stepping trotting stallions of good conformation, purchasing them at high prices, and gelding them for the show ring; thus taking from the producing field the very animals which would have been most likely to improve the type. The only remedy I can see for this evil is for judges to frown upon "slaginess."

Referring to decisions in the ring, which were particularly productive of comment, I may say that the Waldorf-Astoria Cup was awarded to Forest King, not because he is a typical gig-horse, but because there seemed nothing else to do. Lord Brilliant, badly driven, went short, and did not show his old-time form at all, and the mare Hildred was not, in our judgment, quite the equal of the winner. Forest King certainly lacks the quality necessary for a typical gig-horse, and is somewhat lacking in pace. In the championship where Lord Brilliant was awarded the ribbon, the little horse in Batonyi's hands was a very different animal, and for a time went with all his old fire and dash. He had pace and quality over Forest King, though he was not his equal in height of action. The hackney went better than he had previously, but the faster he went, while displaying extravagant all-round action, the more labored and unrefined his action became. (Old Sundown possessed the quality of reined action to a marked degree.) Therefore, taking everything into consideration, we decided that Brilliant was entitled to the championship, and Lord Golden, being of the same type, to the reserve.

It may be as well to refer to the Appointment Classes, in which the general improvement has been very marked. In fact, the only flagrant breaches of good form lay in the use of breast collars for gigs, and in the showing of tandems before gigs. One cannot properly judge a tandem unless the wheeler is shown between the shafts of a tandem cart, where he is called upon to do his necessary work.