

CONNEMARA PONIES



COMPILED BY

—MICHAEL J. O'MALLEY.—

V

FOREWORD

At the beginning of this century Michael O'Malley was concerned for the future of the Connemara pony. He believed that the use of unsuitable sires from outside the breed was in danger of eroding the best qualities for which the Connemara pony was renowned. His efforts to avert what he saw as inevitable disaster were unflinching and yet most of us had never heard of Michael O'Malley until his booklet came to light during my research for *Shrouded In Mist*. I am very grateful to his son Frank for allowing me to undertake a reprint of the booklet. Not only do the letters express his personal knowledge and beliefs but they provide a delightful insight into the way in which the Connemara pony was used and appreciated by those who owned him in those days.

As a tribute to Michael a donation from the proceeds of every copy of the booklet sold will be made to erect a memorial to him.

Pat Lyne
December 1986

PREFACE

MY AIM in compiling this Booklet is to show people, but especially Connemara Pony Breeders, in a handy form what others think of our ponies, with a view, and an ardent hope, that they (Connemara Pony Breeders) will, even at the eleventh hour, make an effort to save the breed.

The photographs are reproduced to show and prove there is yet left sufficient Connemara Pony blood to form the basis of a new and improved type of the old breed; and also to show a few of the many "Connemara-bred" gentlemen whose practical skill and intelligence are such as would ensure the restoration of the Connemara Pony, provided that skill and intelligence were utilised and exercised in a manner which, while being feasible, is very necessary for the success of the efforts made.

The one and vital question I respectfully beg to ask those of my readers who are in a position to assist in the revival of the Connemara Pony to consider is: How is the present breed of Connemara Ponies to be improved on? I always considered this to be the most important question, and, consequently, in giving my views some time ago on the subject, I gave the views, the thoughts, and the conclusion that a lifelong study of the matter enabled me to give; and as I had not then had the pleasure of having read Professor C. J. Ewart's able article on Connemara Ponies, which appeared in the "Live Stock Journal Almanack" of 1896, and which now appears in "Ireland: Industrial and Agricultural," I consider it a happy coincidence that my original views should be so much in agreement with his able and masterly views given in Chapter V., under the heading: "How To Improve the Connemara Ponies," in which he states:—

"There is in Arabia a tradition that all the best desert Arabs have descended from seven mares, sometimes spoken of as the 'Mares of the Prophet'. A like number of Connemara mares might be selected to start a new and improved strain of

Connemara Ponies. Given a number of mares, the extremely difficult question arises: What kind of sires should they be mated with? An answer to this question can only be obtained by means of experiments, by breeding with native and other sires, and then intercrossing in various ways, the best of the pure and mixed progeny.”

I have extreme pleasure in tendering the Press at home and abroad, and also the general public, my very warmest thanks for the kind and appreciable reception with which they all have hailed my efforts on behalf of the Connemara Pony. I have also great pleasure in appending the following list of names and addresses of gentlemen who will be glad to give, as well as those whose photographs are reproduced, their sound and mature views on pony breeding in the West:—

1. J. J. O’Loughlen, Esq., J.P., Zetland Arms, Cashel, Galway.
2. H. G. Connolly, Esq., Solicitor, Clifden.
3. John M. Lyden, Esq., Co. Councillor, Clifden.
4. H. A. Robinson, Esq., J.P., Roundstone.
5. G. B. Tuohy, Esq., Roundstone.
6. Thomas Coneys, Esq., J.P., Streamstown, Clifden.
7. P. J. Wallace, Esq., Renvyle, Letterfrack.
8. R. H. McKeown, Esq., J.P., Leenane.
9. P. J. O’Malley, Esq., J.P., Maam.
10. Thomas O’Malley, Esq., A.C.S., Maam.
11. M. B. Glynn, Esq., Gortroe, Cong.
12. James J. Dooley, Esq., Lake View House, Shrule.
13. John J. O’Grady, Esq., Cross, Co. Mayo.
14. The Messrs. Lynch, Bunsaniff, Maam Cross.
15. Michael T. McDonagh, Esq., Turlough, Rosmuck.
16. Edward O’Malley, Esq., Derrynish, Rosmuck.
17. M. B. Wallace, Esq., C.P.S., Tully, Ballynahoun.
18. Thomas Lyons, Esq., Tullaboy, Maam Cross.
19. Mark Geoghegan, Esq., D.C., Letterraff, Oughterard.
20. R. E. Willis, Esq., J.P., Oughterard.
21. William Roe, Esq. Oughterard.
22. Michael McDonagh, Esq., Derrylea, Clifden.
23. Michael Diskin, Dooras, Cornamona.

Connemara Ponies.



“A PLEA FOR THE CONNEMARA PONY.”

SIR,—Might I venture to ask you if you could find room to do that neglected and unjustly treated animal, the Connemara Pony, some justice, by inserting some views and opinions on the havoc rendered among that valuable breed of ponies by the seeming misunderstanding of the Department of Agriculture’s officials who have charge of our horse-breeding schemes, and by the apathy and indifference of the Connemara breeder in allowing the gradual extinction of their famous pony?

“As you are aware, the Department of Agriculture have spent thousands of pounds on what, no doubt, they thought the “improvement” of the Connemara Pony. What is the result of their labours and huge expense? I regret I must sorrowfully admit, as much as every other breeder in Connemara, that the result is everything but satisfactory. Instead of our hills, and our mountains being now dotted over, as of old, with that pleasant looking animal with the short, stout legs, the strong, thick neck and wide chest, the powerful back and deep barrel, and the full and intelligent looking eye, we have only to be content with a smaller number (quantity as well as quality having been reduced) of animals which, if not inferior to the old type, will arrest, nevertheless, the passer-by’s attention; for their sleepy and languid appearance is almost always sure to cause any thinking man to stand and put himself the question: Who is, or are, responsible for such an awful change from the old type?”

“The change, or the ‘awful change,’ I assure you, cannot be truly and fully noticed or realised by anybody like he who walks our mountains on a cold, rainy, wintry day, and meets with a big number of the improved type, and with one or two of the old type; for, while the latter, on seeing him come, will raise their tails and gallop away, assuring him by the act that the biting cold affects them but little, the former will stand their ground, and on coming up to them, no assurance on their part is necessary to convince him that they are in no spirit or humour for a gallop on such a day.

Their shaggy, wet coats of hair, their tottering, long legs, and the shivering of their lanky bodies make him, if he is the owner, feel somewhat uneasy and uncertain as to their safety on the mountains; so much so, in fact, that if he can at all provide them with shelter and hay in his yard, he will, there and then, have them carried home as carefully as he can, while your nothing-thought-of little pure Connemara is left behind to live as best he can; with the result that the balmy days of spring will find him thick in condition, and wearing a sleek, fine coat of hair, while he of the aristocratic family is well-nigh broken-hearted, waiting anxiously and pitifully for the first growth of grass, and the condition he is in and the coat he wears, are usually such that it is neither pleasant to think nor write of them.

“I cannot understand why this one fact of the difference in the endurance of the two types, the old and the new, should now not be sufficient to convince everybody interested in the welfare of Connemara and its people that the old breed is the one and only breed suitable for the scanty and hard enduring living our mountains afford our ponies. Last, but not least, whether is it the new or the old type that meets with the readier demand, and consequently gets the better price at our local fairs? I answer the old type does. Then, is it not monstrous to let this valuable breed die out?

“Luckily, I hope, I met some years ago with a few nice and promising colts of the real old type, and colts whose direct descent I had no doubts about, and on asking the owners did they intend selling them, the answer was, as I expected, ‘Yes,’ for unfortunately since our horse-breeding schemes were first introduced, all colt foals were got rid of as soon as was possible. However, I asked those gentlemen a few questions regarding the success or otherwise of the different horse-breeding schemes that were being tried, and I am glad to say I had no trouble in convincing them that by selling their colts they were doing themselves, their neighbours, and their country a gross injustice; for, as I assured them, I did not then know where in Connemara (and I know the county pretty well) could we find stuff so pure and so promising as those colts, with which could be laid the foundation of the revival of our old breed.

“What I would like to see the Department of Agriculture doing is to start a scheme on behalf of our Connemara breed, similar to that started on behalf of the ‘Irish Draught’ last year. If that step were taken, I assure you the revival of, and the proper recognition of, the Connemara pony would be sure, quick, and lasting.

“Yours, etc.,

“M. J. O’MALLEY.

“Rosmuck, Co. Galway.”



THOMAS HAZELL, ESQ., J.P.,

Cashel, Connemara.

A lover of horses in general, but takes special interest and delight in the pure Connemara Pony whose gradual extinction is a source of much annoyance to him.

“THE CONNEMARA PONY.”

“SIR,—I have read Mr. M. J. O’Malley’s letter on the Connemara Pony with much interest, and can endorse his views on the subject. It is quite well known amongst breeders that the ponies got by the Department’s sires are quite unsuitable for enduring the hardships of the Connemara climate, and this storm-swept, exposed

tract of country during the winter months. The original pony was always of a hardy race, with great endurance, and could stand all weathers under the most trying circumstances. I have in my possession a pony about nine years and over, 13 hands high, that has done over 500 miles within one month, with the greatest freedom; is quite sound in limb and body, and in the pink of condition. She is very easily kept, free to drive, and when off work, is turned on the mountain, and comes into harness quite fresh and durable. My object in mentioning this is to the effect that if the Connemara strain could be improved in size and hardihood, there would yet be a great future for them for polo and harness purposes. It is generally believed that this pony originated from the Spanish breed who were shipwrecked on the West coast of Ireland centuries ago, and by the influence of climate and treatment, developed into what was known as the Connemara Pony. If the Department would take up the development of these ponies in a practical and proper way, there would be hundreds of Connemara farmers and graziers would take to breeding them, and push their interests in the best possible form.

“Yours”,

“R. H. McKEOWN.

“Leenane, Co. Galway.”

“SIR,—I have read with interest Mr. M. J. O’Malley’s edifying letter on the Connemara Pony, and it is much to be regretted that this equine animal, kept pure and intact on the Connemara mountain ranges for many generations, is likely to become defunct, through the wrong-doing or misunderstanding of the Department of Agriculture in laying out large sums of money in what Mr. O’Malley has set forth as the disimprovement of the breed. Although I have never lived in that part of the country, the breed, like the small black Kerry in the South is indigenous to Connemara, and it is much to be deplored that the hardy and original points of a breed which has apparently served its day and generation, should not be preserved intact. I understand Mr. Lushington Tulloch and one or two affluent residents in Connemara, in a philanthropic way, have done a good deal to improve the native ponies of Western Connacht, but perhaps Mr. O’Malley would give us some more enlightenment on this, and what is the average size and height and colour of the original Connemara Pony?”

“No doubt, the changed conditions of the times we live in, with motor cars and other means of locomotion for getting about has militated considerably against the general use and existing



B. J. LEE, ESQ, CLIFDEN.

Aged 55. About 40 years connected with breeding of Connemara Ponies.

demand for these small horses. There is still a good and growing demand for ponies suitable for harness and polo purposes, and if the Connemara stamp could be improved in size, action, and movement by the use of suitable stallions, to meet such requirements, there would doubtless be still a great future for them.

“Yours, etc.,

“PONY FANCIER.

“Co. Carlow.”

“A PLEA FOR THE CONNEMARA PONY.

“SIR,—In a recent issue of your paper, I read with pleasure a plea for the conservation of the Connemara Pony. Being only a simple ‘native,’ it is not for me to find fault with the Worshipful Board that direct the destinies of this much-managed land. Far be it from me to raise my eyes so high! But I may wonder and I have wondered, what the men of Connemara were about when they allowed a swarm of red-legged locusts to descend on them, armed with second-class returns and orders that resulted in the defacement of such characteristics of Connemara as were of value and worth preserving. From the clever, capable pony that could forage for its food, to the little black hen that could scratch for its living,

nothing was left untouched and all were undone. The case of the pony is the most touching—for what Irishman does not love a good horse?—and this horse was good—aye, and faithful and frugal and enduring far beyond the ways of a horse. Bred on the stony, storm-beaten Pins, and brought up on the red and black sedges of our far-reaching moors—neither hard fare nor exposure nor difficult ground tell on him. Centuries of pillion riding have made his powerful back and the ‘magnificent distances’ of his native district account for the long, steady, sweeping strides that so surprise one in a pony. The beast is full of surprises. One may find himself distinguishing himself as a hunter, or bowling merrily along under a carload of large stock jobbers, or being groomed into a picture of dainty equine grace for a dainty rider or a smart whip. There is nothing in horseflesh more adorable than the Connemara Pony. I wish that both he and Connemara would draw the line at trying to adapt themselves to the rearing of gawky ‘streels’ of unfit foreigners, and that, once and for all, they would recognise and assert their very distinct individuality, and insist on being nothing else than themselves. To the eye that cares for beauty and fitness, what sight can be more attractive than a group of Connemara Ponies camped in the rich gold of a ‘slieve ruadh’ butting crags, capped closely down to a straight line with the solid grey of a threatening day? Here and there in the group at ‘Samhain’ time—a background of dusky, north-looking, is a show of colour and of strength that suggest rent ‘sceilp’ of the crags above fashioned after graceful lines of a horse, and made to live. Who will help to preserve the Connemara Pony, and make of him what he was meant to be, a valuable asset to the Irish people, and a source of pride and profit to Connemara?

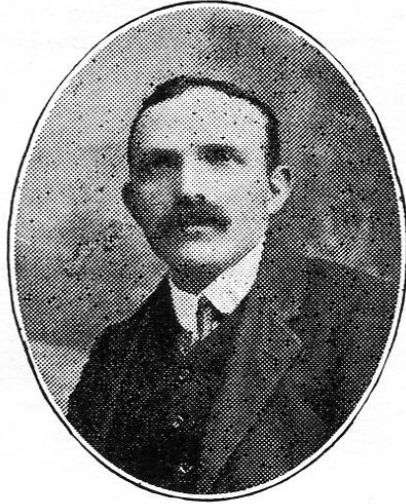
“M. NI. MAILLE.

“Connemara, 4th November, 1912.”

“THE CONNEMARA PONY.

“SIR,—I have much pleasure in replying to ‘Pony Fancier’s’ letter, and in stating that I have heard with much delight that Mrs. Lushington Tulloch has done for the Connemara and other pony breeds what none except the real philanthropist and genuine horse-lover and enthusiast would, or could do, individually, but I very much regret I have not had the pleasure of seeing and watching the result of her experiment.

“The Connemara Pony’s height can be anything from 13.2 to 14.3, and his colour, either grey, yellow-dun, roan, strawberry, bay or black. Anybody who is not already acquainted with the full



J. W. MONGAN, ESQ.,

The Hotel, Carna, Connemara,

Who has life-long experience of breeding Connemara Ponies and whose family for generations back are noted for the excellent qualities of their Ponies.

description and definition of a Connemara Pony will, I expect, be able to find the necessary information in a back number of the 'Connacht Tribune,' and should there be any more questions or points I may be able to explain, I shall be only too happy to do so.

“Yours. etc.,

“MICHAEL J. O'MALLEY.

“Rosmuck.”

“DEAR SIR,—I read with much interest your article on the Connemara Pony, and I trust you will not only succeed in forming a Local Committee, but also, with the help of the Polo and Riding Society, succeed in getting a grant from the Development Fund, and thus be in a position to save from extinction a most valuable race of ponies. Only those who have made a special study of the part played by the pony in the making of light horses can realise the importance of the work you have taken in hand—the importance of preserving a breed or race which, for countless generations has

benefited by having the weaklings eliminated by natural selection. Moreover, only those who, like Lord Middleton, have had a lifelong experience of hunters, can fully appreciate the part that the intelligence, docility, cleverness, and staying power of light horses have in great part been inherited from pony ancestors.

“Connemara has, by sending ponies annually all over Ireland, contributed far more than people realize to making and maintaining the reputation of the Irish hunter. What is now wanted is that the Irish Board of Agriculture, or a Local Committee under the direction of the Board, should do for the Connemara Pony what has been done for the Irish draught horse. It seems to me the one is almost as important as the other. If, when your Committee is formed, I can in any way assist, I shall be glad to run over to Galway.

“Yours sincerely,

“J. C. EWART.

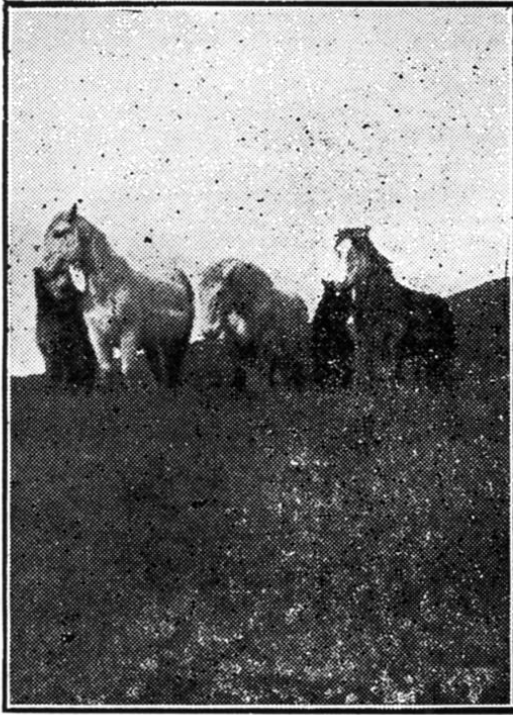
“University of Edinburgh,
“5th November, 1912.”

‘THE CONNEMARA PONY’

Plea for the Regeneration of Famous Breed

THE many and varied inquiries received relating to my letter of a few weeks back, on the Connemara Pony, force me to further trespass on your courtesy. A few people have asked me to describe the size, height, and colour of the original Connemara Pony, and I have much pleasure in quoting the “Description and Definition of the Connemara Pony,” drawn up by the Connemara Pony Committee, at their meeting held in Clifden on November 15, 1911, with which I thoroughly agree, save in a few points, which I shall explain: “The Connemara Pony should be intelligent, active, and enduring, presenting the outline of a long, low powerful animal, covering a lot of ground. The action should be good and straight. The hobby should be of a yellow dun, grey, or bay colour, from 13 to 14 hands high, having the croup as high as the withers; the head should be larger than fine, with large jaws; the ears small and pointed; the distance from the occipital crest to the eyes relatively great, and the distance between the eyes from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 inches. The neck should be strong, and of medium length, the shoulders somewhat

straight; the withers of moderate height; the body, long and deep (girth from 63 to 70 inches), mounted on short, stout legs (foreleg measuring from 31 to 33 inches from elbow to ground), a good back; powerful loins, slightly drooping, rounded quarters; well-developed breech; short below the knee, with flat, hard bone (measuring from 6½ to 7½ inches under the knee); wide, open, well-formed hoofs.



FIVE CONNEMARA-BRED BROOD-MARES ON THEIR MOUNTAIN HOME

Owner, Colman Nee, Knockadara

A life-long experience has taught me that each and every point stated may be seen in a pure Connemara Pony. Still, I amend the few following statements, as I consider them somewhat misleading to the inexperienced: "The head should be larger than fine" is a statement that should read: "The head may be large and coarse, or small and fine." I consider that either a "large and coarse head," or a "small and fine head," is quite characteristic of the pure Connemara Pony. I would also alter the statement, "Mounted on short, stout legs," to "Mounted on short, stout, or fine legs." I

consider that fine legs are characteristic of the old type. You will get one pure Connemara Pony with a rather big, coarse head and stout legs, and another that is not one whit the more impure, with a small, fine head, and fine legs, the reason being that the former retains the characteristics of the small, wiry female ancestor that lived in a wild state on our mountains before 1833; while the latter retains the characteristics of the male ancestor, one of those lovely creatures of the Arabian family introduced by Colonel Martin in about 1883, when the much thought of Connemara Pony was first got by the infusion of the Arabian blood into the native blood.

Regarding the colour of the pure Connemara Pony, I wish to add to the list already given, roan, strawberry, and black. Experience teaches that liberal and careful feeding will be quickly and remarkably responded to by the pure Connemara Pony, inasmuch as he will far exceed the maximum height (14 hands) with which he is credited. I have known a mare that was removed when a week old with her dam from her mountain home to a nutritious grazing near the seashore, and after 18 months it was found that the youngster had grown and developed so much that she was bigger than her dam. At the age of 4 years this mare measured 14 hands $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

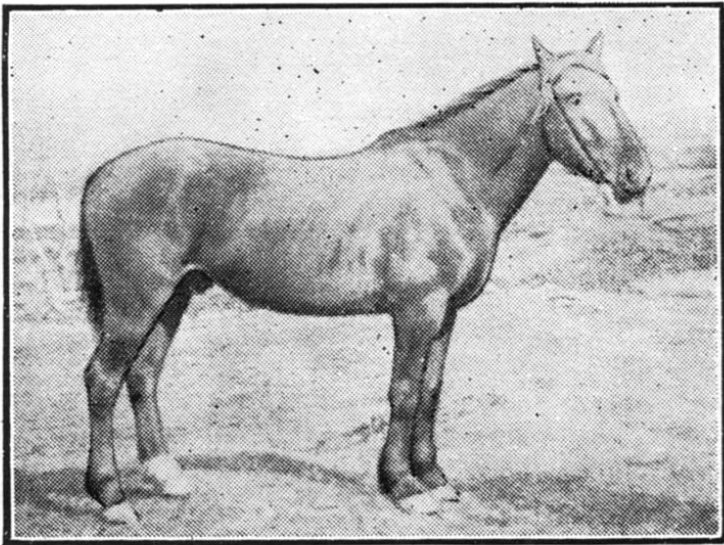
The Revival

Several people seem anxious to know how the revival of the Connemara Pony can possibly (possibly, mind you) be made a success. I emphatically tell those people that the revival, if conducted on the proper lines, and with a share of carefulness, is but a matter easily accomplished, highly interesting in itself, and of vital importance to Connemara at large. Therefore, if our Irish Department of Agriculture does not take the matter up, as they did last year for the Irish draught mare, and spend a paltry sum on our ponies of the thousands given annually for such purposes out of the Development Fund, are there not a sufficient number of ladies and gentlemen in Connemara, whose means and spirit, if favourably directed, could easily help the revival and preservation of those ponies. To quote Mrs. Norton:—

“Who said that I had given thee up?
 Who said that thou wert sold?
 'Tis false, 'tis false, my Arab steed,
 I fling them back their gold.
 Thus, thus, I leap upon thy back
 And scour the distant plains,
 Away! Who overtakes us now
 Shall claim thee for his pains.”

A Mountain Pony

Apart altogether from the now admitted fact that the Connemara Pony is the one and only pony most suitable and adaptable for our mountains, and consequently the surest source of profit to the Connemara Pony breeders in general, but to the small tenant farmer in particular, I ask: Is it not worth while making an effort in saving the breed from extinction, while by doing so, and bestowing a little care on our future breeding methods, we can be in a position to supply that increasing and ready market—the polo pony market—and, what is more, supply stuff that would, on a fair and square



CONNEMARA BRED STALLION

Height, 14h. 2 in. Colour, Bay. Owner, Thomas King,
Bornorane, Toombeola.

trial, fetch prices that should prove lucrative to the breeder? For, when we bear in mind that the present-day average market value of an "unmade" polo pony—that is, a pony 4 years old, standing 14-2, and showing the required physical qualities (speed, courage, strength, soundness and docility)—fetches a price from £35 to £55, it will be obvious that the revival of our Connemara Ponies should receive the attention it deserves. Of course, in the case of a pony that is trained and made, and has proved himself capable with the stick and ball, it is not unusual to see £250 and £300 paid. The only accepted or regulation height of the present-day polo pony is 14-2; but if the suggestion and proposition made some time ago by an

authority on, and a great pioneer of polo playing, is acted upon, it is quite possible that the polo playing requirements shall be increased ten-fold, since this gentleman suggested that the game should be classed and divided into No. 1, 2, 3, or, in other words, a class of ponies measuring from 13 hands to 13.2, a class from 13.2 to 14 hands, and the present class, 14 hands to 14.2. If these two extra classes were instituted, who will fail to imagine, and admit, what a useful and valuable asset our ponies should prove to Connemara? Some people will, perhaps, say that breeding for the polo market has already been tried in Connemara, and that it has been a failure. I know it has been tried, but I regret there was not sufficient care bestowed on the project to make it a success, and if not for the disastrous effect the project had on our valuable foundation stock (our good Connemara brood mares), I would not so much mind the failure in obtaining good polo ponies, though, as a matter of fact, I cannot say whether these ponies or foals turned out good or bad, simply because they were, as far as I know, all sold as foals at our local fairs to dealers who were always prepared to give a better price for any pure Connemara foal they could chance to get. If the officials of the Department of Agriculture, when sending in those thoroughbred stallions to the district, gave the reason they sent such animals, explained the importance and expected usefulness of their scheme, inspected and watched the progeny, selected the best and most promising for whom some provision was made that would enable the owners to keep and rear them on their mountain homes for, say, 3 years, when, if the ponies were faithful to their promise, they would show their qualification for the "unmade" polo pony, and when, I have no doubt, there would be very little trouble in getting the proper market for such animals—if the foregoing steps, or even some of them, were taken, I am almost certain the scheme would have been attended with some success; but why the old strain was neglected if we wished to succeed in polo pony breeding, is what I cannot understand, for I consider the purebred Connemara brood mare as one of the best, at least, if not the best, to breed from for polo ponies. In her we have all the vital and important qualities that are so essential in the polo pony, and then, if she is properly and judiciously mated, need we be surprised if she brings forth a foal that will some day make his mark in the polo field? When we hear and know the trouble English polo pony breeders experience in trying to breed ponies whose height will not exceed 14.2, and think of the little trouble we should have in breeding a 14.2 pony whose physical qualities, especially his endurance and stamina, if truly judged, should place him far ahead of his English brothers, we should really feel ashamed of ourselves for neglecting what should be our pride and delight. Take what Irish histories or books on the horse that you will, you are always sure of seeing something dealing with the fame of the Connemara pony. Even so far back as 1399, Creton, a French chronicler, who accom-

panied King Richard on an expedition to our shores, writes of them: "They scour the hills and valleys fleetier than deer," and again we read the interesting evidence given by the general witnesses before the Royal Commission on horse-breeding in Ireland, 1897, when Mr. Samuel Usher Roberts, C.B., who had then



PURE CONNEMARA PONY

4 years old. Ideal Harness Pony. Owner, T. Dooley, Esq.,
Lakeview, Shrule.

known the Connemara ponies for the previous 25 years, spoke of them "as an exceptionally hardy, wiry class of pony, showing a great deal of the Barb or Arab blood, and were without exception the best animals he ever knew."

M. J. O'MALLEY,

Rosmuck.

“THE CONNEMARA PONY.

“SIR,—In your issue of November 29th, you are generous enough to welcome a full expression of opinion on the above subject, and Mr. M. J. O’Malley has certainly taken full leave of your kind offer, to the extent of two and a half columns. I do not intend to trespass on your valuable space to a like extent, but if this kind offer of yours is to ultimately lead to a tangible advancement of the claims which the real Connemara Pony undoubtedly has, then it is surely time that we had a reasonable definition of this animal, in order that we may know exactly what it is that we intend to breed. It is with sincere regret that I have perused Mr. O’Malley’s article, due to a vain hope that he might have given us a lead in this direction. He is evidently not in agreement with the definition of the Connemara Pony Committee, which held a meeting in 1901, for he extends and amplifies their definition to the generous limits of your space. I wish to condense as shortly as may be his ‘total’ results by adding the original definition of the Committee quoted by him to his somewhat sweeping auxiliary description. We shall then see the sort of animal which ‘a la O’Malley’ we are making our ‘Alpha and Omega’ in pony breeding.

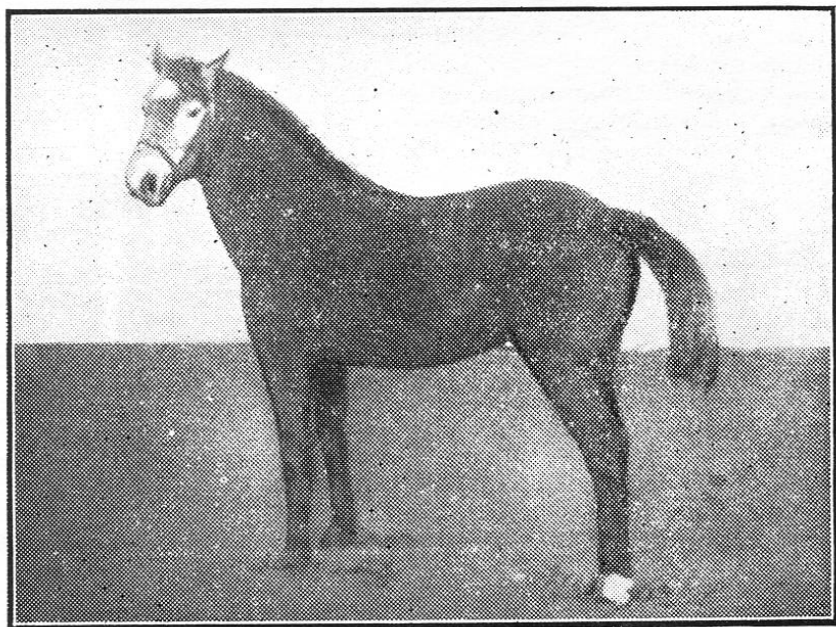
“Colour—Original description: ‘Yellow dun, grey, or bay,’ plus Mr. O’Malley’s ‘roan, strawberry, or black,’ or, as the poet so elegantly describes it: ‘any damn’d colour on earth.’

“Legs—Original description: ‘Mounted on short, stout legs (31-33 inches from elbow to ground). Mr. O’Malley: ‘Mounted on short, stout OR FINE legs. I consider the fine legs are characteristic of the old type.’

“So that the legs may be any length or girth, short or long, stout or fine. A pretty ‘type’ surely.

“Were Mr. O’Malley describing a mongrel of unknown ancestry and doubtful origin, which he had bought for an ‘old song,’ then his definition would be quite sufficiently explicit for a newspaper advertisement in which he wished to describe (as a seller) the beauties of the unknown beast which he had acquired, but surely when he sets out to fix a type so that breeders may be assisted, he might be a little more explicit. Let us continue his description: ‘The head should be large and fine’ is a statement, says he, that should read ‘or small and fine’ ‘I consider that either a large and coarse head or a small and fine head is quite characteristic of the pure Connemara Pony.’ Ye gods! just for a moment try

and imagine a deputation waiting upon the Irish Board of Agriculture and requesting a grant to further the development of a type of pony fulfilling these conditions. We are requested 'once more Connemara men,' to save 'our dutiful animal.' It is lucky indeed that he did not say our 'beautiful' animal. Surely, Mr. O'Malley, you can give us a better lead than this? Think again, or tell us what you really think is the type of animal that you wish to establish as the Connemara Pony, remembering that a type cannot be large and small, short and fine, big and little, coarse and fine in head, and,



THE IRISH DRAGOON

Pure Connemara Stallion. Height, 14h. $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Colour, Steel Grey.
Age, 4 years. Diploma awarded Olympia Horse Show,
London, 1912.

above all, roan, strawberry, black, yellow dun, bay, or grey in colour. If you will do so, I am sure you will oblige many readers, including—

“Yours, etc.,

“H. T. R.”

“THE CONNEMARA PONY”

“SIR,—Mr. ‘H. T. R.’ would not seemingly, if he had the honour of holding the editorship of the valuable ‘Irish Farming World,’ allow me, as you and some other editors did so kindly and generously, two columns and a half for my plea regarding the Connemara Pony. I now further intrude on your kindness by saying a few words in reply to Mr. ‘H. T. R.’s’ criticism on my letter, lest the public may be misled by his misconception of some of my statements.

“First—I wish to remind him that my letter does not imply or assert what special type of pony should be fixed upon. Neither does my letter imply or assert that I want all Connemara breeders to adopt ‘a la O’Malley’ type. I consider the laying down of the future standard type an undertaking not for an individual, but for a body, hence my failure to accept his kind invitation to state what type I wish to establish.

“Second—I meant my amendment of the original description of the legs to read: ‘or mounted on short, fine legs.’

“Third—I also claim that my amendment of the list of colours is correct, and I respectfully ask Mr. ‘H. T. R.’ if he is not satisfied with this confirmation of my previous statement, to find out how many different types of Connemara Ponies the Connemara Pony Committee, aided by their able and respected expert, Professor Ewart, found and could describe in 1901; and if yet he is dissatisfied about his ‘any damn’d colour on earth,’ he might cross the Irish Channel and find out what the many and varied colours were, and are, of the English and Scotch typical ponies. I hope these remarks will suffice to enable Mr. ‘H. T. R.’ to fully understand the letter and spirit of my statements.

“Yours, etc.,

“MICHAEL J. O’MALLEY”

“Rosmuck”

“SIR,—The conclusion I come to after reading your correspondent, ‘H. T. R.’s’ letter in last week’s issue of your paper, asking Mr. O’Malley to describe the type of animal called the Connemara Pony, was that ‘H. T. R.’ came into this world too soon. He should have waited till the Millenium, when everything

on earth would be made perfect, including the Connemara Pony, I hope. 'H. T. R.' appears to have no practical knowledge at all about breeding horses when he says any type of horses should be the same colour and size, the same heads, legs, tails, etc. Your correspondent's ideas are just like a great many that emanate from the Department's office in Upper Merrion Street. There is not a breeder in Ireland or anywhere else, including the Department, that can truthfully say all their stock are true to type; with the same size heads, legs, body, and colours; and if it were possible to breed them so, very few people would be satisfied, for everyone does not like the same colour or size in a horse.

"The Connemara Pony and the harness horses bred in that district were sought for from far and near to run in mail coaches and hackney cars. Their staying powers were well known to every jarvey all over Ireland. It is not so now since the advent of what the people in the West call the 'Government Stallions.' Some wisehead among the Government officials knew best the class of horse was required to improve the quality of the horses in Connemara, with the result of incompetent officialism, the majority of ponies and horses in Connemara are now a lot of unsaleable rubbish; and this district was noted for the best harness horses and ponies in the world. The friends of the Connemara horses are many, but they have a hard task before them to rebreed the same class of hardy horses again in the West that has been destroyed by blundering officialism.

"Yours,

"FOND OF TILLAGE"

"THE CONNEMARA PONY"

"SIR.—Having lived for years in Connemara, and admired its hardy ponies, I read with great interest Mr. O'Malley's letter of 29th November, which, though questioned by 'H. T. R.' in letter of 6th December, I consider Mr. O'Malley right in the main. My acquaintance with Connemara was before the Department was created, and in my view at that time there were three varieties of the pony. The first was met between Oughterard, Clifden, Roundstone, and Carna, an unimproved pony with a strong head and jaw, short strong legs, and any colour. The second, a cross with the Barb introduced by Mitchell Henry, of Kylemore, late M.P. for Galway, and producing a grand pony in the district from Clifden to

Letterfrack and Leenane. I have seen two of those stallions at Kylemore with a massive head, neck, and body, fine legs, dark colour ticked with grey. I append a description of the Barb, taken from a publication of 30 years ago:—

“‘A fine variety of horse brought from Barbary. It has a large and clumsy head, a short and thick neck, a broad and powerful chest, with long, slender legs. It has great speed and endurance, and fine temper.’

“The third variety, an ideal saddle and harness pony, was raised around Castlebar—bay or black in colour (the former said to be the best), a small fine head, legs rather fine, but muscular, and about 14 hands high.

“At the Horse Breeding Commission of 1886, a Tipperary gentleman stated the best hunter he ever crossed was bred from a Connemara pony. I do not know anyone more capable of giving an opinion of their worth than Mr. McKeown, of Leenane, whose testimony and appreciation I admire. I heard many complaints of the Department having introduced soft, unsuitable Hackney Stallions, and in the years succeeding the Hackney introduction, the foals, yearlings, and young ponies meet in the droves in the Leinster fairs as they came from Connemara, were, to say the least, sadly deteriorated. I once owned a half-bred Connemara, and bred from her, by a thoroughbred sire, a cob, and there was nothing in harness able to hold the road from him. He was perfectly quiet, with great courage and temper. I think any Committee for the improvement of the pony should look to the Barb as a foundation cross. Wishing the movement God-speed.

“Yours, etc.,

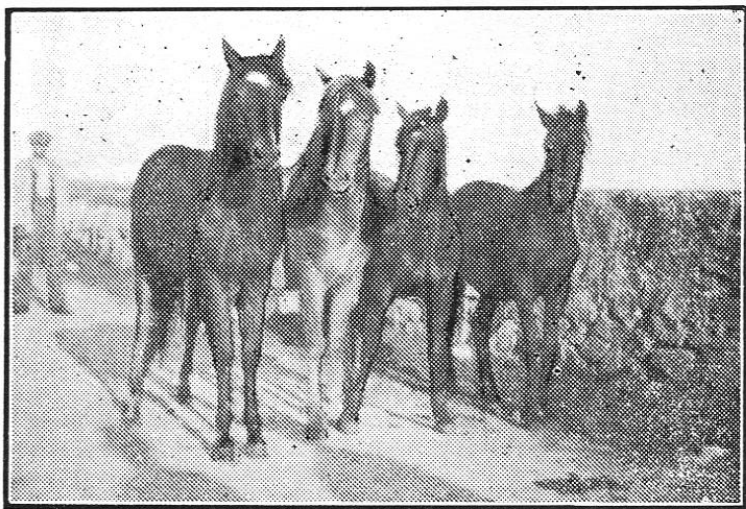
“HUGH DEADY”

“Duhallow, 15th December, 1912”

“SIR,—Justice and honesty force me to have a few words to say regarding the letter appearing in your issue of the 7th inst., from your correspondent, ‘H. T. R.’, who apparently has found fault with Mr. O’Malley’s plea for the Connemara Pony which appeared in your issue of the 29th ult.

“Having read both letters carefully and impartially, I consider the criticism of ‘H. T. R.’ on Mr. O’Malley’s letter to be both unkind and uncourteous in some of its statements, whether inten-

tionally so or not 'H. T. R.' alone can say. Mr. O'Malley's letter does not express or imply in any part of it that he leads, or wants to lead, others in fixing any special type of Connemara ponies; and the types he mentions, whether right or wrong, he considers to be the right ones. But 'H. T. R.' asserts that Mr. O'Malley does want to lead in fixing the type of the future Connemara pony: and he implies plainly in saying that Mr. O'Malley got two and a half columns of your valuable space, and again, using the ironical expression, 'a la O'Malley,' that Mr. O'Malley's letter failed to give any help whatever in fixing a correct or acceptable type. With



GROUP BRED BY MR. WALLACE TULLY

reference to the colours of the old type or types stated by Mr. O'Malley, 'H. T. R.' very uncourtously and with very bad taste uses the slang expression, 'any damn'd colour on earth,' which expression no poet, living or dead, has ever used. In Mr. O'Malley's letter the expression—"mounted on short, stout legs, or fine legs"—evidently meant 'mounted on short stout or short fine legs,' which (Mr. O'Malley's expression) though correctly elliptical, 'H. T. R.' assumes to mean short, stout legs and long fine legs, on which assumption he rallies Mr. O'Malley on his inconsistency in fixing a type. Why 'H. T. R.' gives only a nom-de-plume is best known to himself, but Mr. O'Malley, in a manly, straightforward manner, writes his letter over his own name.

"Yous, etc.,

"FAIR PLAY"

“THE CONNEMARA PONY

“SIR,—I have been reading with interest the correspondence going on in your columns about the Connemara Pony, but to one unenlightened in this interesting, and, apparently, hardy breed of horses, little of an educational nature has been gathered as to what is the proper type of pony. Most of the writers bewail the fact that the original type has either departed, or is being bred out by injudicious mating with foreign sires, which those in authority, or some well-meaning people imbued with the spirit of improving these small horses in an erratic and evil moment, have introduced. Your correspondent, Mr. Hugh Deady, refers to three different varieties of ponies in close proximity to each other. Did these differ in size, hardihood, constitution, and endurance, would probably be the kind to propagate and the type to fix. Perhaps Mr. Deady, who has lived for years in Connemara, and must have a wide knowledge and experience of these ponies, could give us some more experience of his close observation of the breed. Mr. O’Malley seems one of those genuine warm-hearted residents of the West whose heart is set on the improvement of the breed, or rather, in getting back the type that has been lost in these ponies by the injudicious and reckless use of unsuitable sires. Perhaps he would let us know more fully what was the original type; how it was kept up, and how these ponies differed from the varieties now to be met with roaming on the Connemara ranges. It would be interesting to many of your readers, as well as to myself, to have some idea of the sizes of the original pony indigenous to that part of the country compared with the existing ones, the result of varying experiments.

“Yours, etc.,

“PONY FANCIER”

“THE CONNEMARA PONY”

“SIR,—In connection with the correspondence now going on in your columns, I may mention that I have a Connemara pony that was 29 years old on August 4th, 1912, and has had 13 foals, two of which I got prizes for. She is a nice dark bay, with black points, with a fine chest, and stands on nice, strong legs. She was a splen-

did pony on the road when young. She was bred from a pure Connemara mare and a pure Arab sire. I have been told I have got the best pony blood in Ireland, and would like those gentlemen who are writing to your paper to see them. My old pony stood 14.2 hands high when she was young, but now, like all the old, she is growing down. She is an old age pensioner, and has been for the past three years or more, as she was over 24 years old when she had her last foal.

“Yours, etc.,

“(Mrs.) S. M. BAIRD”

“Ullard House, Borris”

“THE CONNEMARA PONY”

“SIR.—In reply to ‘Pony Fancier’s’ courteous request for further information on the size, action, and staying powers of three types of pony described in my original letter, they differed little in action and size, but much in staying power. The first were a 13 to 14 hands rough agricultural pony, accustomed to carry astride in two baskets seaweed from the seashore to the farm, or manure on to arable patches, or cart turf to the homestead. The second were working in another country, and worked more in cart and trap, and were a good suitable pony with speed and stamina. About 13½ hands high. The third were the best and most enduring ponies, up to 14 hands high, and game horses. Some judges say showy action is the result of little work, and when work gets hard, the action gets low. Be that as it may, I never saw a praying Connemara pony; stepping over their rough mountain pasture—over the boulders on the sea shore and rough mountain passes with their loads gives the required action.

“In 1876 I lived beside two men who each kept a Connemara pony. One worked in a butcher’s cart, a 13 hands, brown pony—a marvel to travel. With four men up, he would wear down any big horse, but owing to a sloping croup, he could not be taken as a typical pony. The second, a 14 hands high bright chestnut with a blaze, a whole horse with a medium head, having hairs hanging from cavity under cheek bones, gave the head a sort of square appearance, but if removed gave a presentable head, small ears, neck rather short, a good wide chest, well sloped shoulders, a good short back, well sprung ribs, close couples, deep quarters, croup fairly high, and a sound set of strong legs, under a stout barrel, with a long underline. This animal was not well kept, but he was a

wonderful animal, taking his common cart and following any side car from town to town, and did a lot of heavy carriers' work in my view. He was then 20 years old in 1878.

"In Clifden I met the best pony I knew. Bought at Castlebar, 14 hands high, she was a bay with a small head and ear, a bright eye, fairly long neck, good shoulders, and a good breast, a good, strong back and well sprung ribs, close couples, while good and deep, she seemed as round as a cylinder, good bunchy quarters, croup well up, a long underline, and standing on a set of medium steely legs, the muscles of which stood out like whipcord. She seemed to say as you looked her over, 'I'm game for anything.' Two performances of this pony I give. I knew her to travel 20 miles, 13 of the 20 carrying four men on a sidecar to races, then to be stripped, saddled, mounted, and run in a two miles race, which she won from fresh horses; and to travel her twenty miles back with car and load same day. On another occasion I knew her to take 4 men 32 miles against the wind and a Connemara storm, and go back seven miles to Clifden still a fresh horse—all home-bred ponies tired. These give the best impression I can give of what was bred from 41 to 54 years ago in Connemara.

"It is said the pony first came from Spain. Perhaps the Armada or the merchants trading between Spain and Galway brought these ponies. If so, the originals must be the Barb, which the Moors brought from Barbary to Spain, and the Barb would thus be a desirable cross. One thing is certain, the prepotency of the Connemara pony would assist it to breed out the traits of the Hackney if a few good sires of the old stock were forthcoming.

"I am, Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

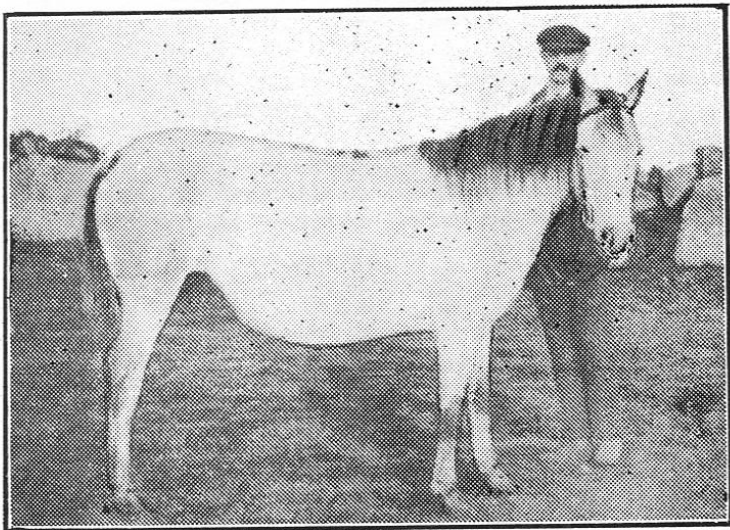
"HUGH DEADY"

"Ballyclough, Mallow
31st December, 1912."

"THE CONNEMARA PONY"

"SIR,—The interesting correspondence going on in your columns on this hardy breed of ponies has brought out a great deal of enlightenment and information that your reader admirers of the breed for their intrinsic worth and value, and living very remote from the Connemara ranges, had little idea of. It should make people who are fond of and have facilities for travelling interested in

exploring the country they are bred in, and seeing this hardy race on their native heath. I noticed, I think, mentioned in your paper that a Committee was being formed to further the interests of these ponies. This is a step in the right direction, and it was a pity that a move was not made sooner by those who knew the breed best, and the mating of them before the genuine old material was lost or contaminated with hackney blood. Your correspondent, Mr. Hugh Deady, seems emphatic about the prepotency of the Connemaras



CONNEMARA BROOD-MARE

Name, Mynish Lassie, Height, 14h. 1½ in. Colour, Grey.
Age, 8 years.

with proper mating, breeding out any bad strains of blood and with careful propagation and attention, the breed should be resuscitated again in its original type with the selection of good sires.

“The old Irish draught horse, after it had nearly become defunct through the persistent and importunate efforts of one or two enthusiastic admirers, has been revived, and surely, with a few years of mismanagement by some prominent officials who tried to boss and control the Connemara pony breeding, this retrogressive step may be counteracted. These general purpose little animals are admirably adapted for doing the work on badly laid out and mountainous holdings, with rocky and primitive roads to them. They are so strong of limb and so sure-footed that they can negotiate narrow tracks and rough roads where other types of horses could hardly dare venture. Their hardihood activity and speed in

carrying their owners and families up and down the country is remarkable, while under kindlier treatment and hard feeding when selected and purchased for harness purposes there is no breed can come up to them for speed. Like others of your correspondents, I would like to know more about them, and perhaps Messrs. O'Malley or Deady would let us know at what age they generally breed with their mares, and if it gives greater strength to the fillies to leave them for some time before mating. To what age have they known a Connemara pony to breed? or how many foals will they produce on an average on their native mountains?

"I have noticed that the people in the Highlands of Scotland have held a meeting for the purpose of reviving and keeping up the true stamp of their Highland pony. They seem to be bred under the same natural conditions in the mountainous districts of Scotland, though I have not heard of any experiment being tried for crossing them with the Connemara. The meeting was unanimous about starting a Stud Book for the breed, and similar conditions seem to be the only thing to keep the Connemara pony intact and unimpaired in type and form.

"Yours,

"ANOTHER PONY FANCIER"

PROOF OF ITS STAYING POWERS

SIR,—It is with much pleasure I accept 'Pony Fancier's' invitation to further explain my experience of the old and the new types of Connemara pony. First of all, I wish to thank him for forming a correct opinion of my views and efforts on behalf of this pony, for, truthfully, I have set my heart on the improvement of the breed to the advantage of all Connemara pony breeders, as well as to the purchasers of our ponies, provided the necessary co-operation and assistance are forthcoming; and should neither co-operation nor assistance come forthwith, I can at least, and shall certainly do so, carry on the improvement individually to such an extent as will sufficiently repay me for any trouble the movement may cause me.

Well, now for my experience of a few of the old type. I remember my father buying a small, jet black mare, about 20 years ago. She was sixteen years old, standing 13.3, with a rather long, hollow back, a small fine head, exceptionally small ears, full, clear intelligent-looking eye, and short clean flat-boned legs. This mare was never used for any class of work, but lived all her life on the wild and scraggy Creggaun mountain, where she annually, since

she was a four-year-old, bred and reared a foal, consequently her appearance in her sixteenth year was not such as to attract the attention of many buyers at the September fair in Galway, where she was exhibited for sale. My father was at the fair also, trying to sell another horse, and as neither he nor his neighbour sold, they both started for home together and though my father's horse was much bigger, and ten years younger, yet he could no more keep abreast of my 16 year old 'Blackeen' than he could fly, notwithstanding the fact that my poor 'Blackeen' was carrying an awkward 14 stone rider. Before they reached home, 'Blackeen' was bought by my father at a reasonable price, and though he did not expect much from her in the shafts, he got her in next day, when he was pleasantly surprised to see how cheerfully she took to harness, and her first run convinced him that she was glad 'the scene was changed' for her; and moreover, that he had purchased an animal deserving of good care. For eight years she did his harness work in the finest style possible, in fact, wonderful, for at that time the M.G.W. Railway line to Clifden was not finished, and the journey to Galway, 33 Irish miles, was always done by car. 'Blackeen' would leave Rosmuck at 6 a.m., get but an hour's interval for feeding, etc., in Oughterard, and get into Galway at or before 11 a.m. Even to this day my father glories in telling us of starting with 'Blackeen' from here one morning and getting to Maam Cross, ten miles thither, just as the long car was starting from there with a pair of horses that were practically fresh, having only come from Bunscaniff, a matter of two short miles. 'Blackeen,' on hearing the rattling of the coach or car and the thumping of the horses' hooves in front, pointed her small ears, and so much as said, 'I am game!' The long car rattled along at top speed, while 'Blackeen' took up and kept the rear in a delightful style, I believe, got into Oughterard where another change of horses to the long car was made, while 'Blackeen' was swallowing a white drink; the journey again resumed and finished in Galway, where it was found the long car horses were covered all over with foam, and with heaving flanks and dilated nostrils, while the noble 'Blackeen' had retained her jet black colour, and showed neither heaving of the flanks nor dilation of the nostrils, but seemed keenly disappointed the journey was ended so soon. In addition to doing her work so well during these years, she also bred and reared two foals (fillies), and when she was sold, at the ripe old age of 24, she realised £1 over what was paid for her, and could, as the old men say, 'be sold as a filly.' 'Blackeen's' history might appear rather sweeping, but I challenge and invite contradiction in any single statement I have made. The foregoing is but one of several similar instances I can quote of the superiority of the Connemara pony. Not later than three years ago did I, myself, part with another small Connemara mare whose history is quite similar to that of 'Blackeen's' so far as her worth and qualities were concerned, and was different only in colour and

size. The last one was a cream, with black points, and stood only 13.2. Thank God, a few members of her family are still to be had.

“The New Type”

“So much for the old; and now, here goes for the new, or ‘improved’ type of Connemara pony. Fourteen years ago I bought a filly foal, a Connemara Hackney cross, a beauty no doubt to the eye; I stabled her at night in winter, fed her carefully, and cared for her every want most discriminately till she was a three-year-old, when I got her trained to harness, and I allowed her twelve months to get gradually used to work. At four years old she was certainly an animal you would feel proud of, she being endowed with such docility and gentleness, while her easy, swinging, buoyant trot was such as seemed hard to surpass. But unfortunately, when she reached the stage at which endurance and stamina were required, she disappointed me keenly. However, by careful treatment, she held her post in harness for two years, while I was able to allow her two days’ rest after a day’s hard work; but at the end of the third year in harness her wind got bad, in fact, she got broken-winded, when I was glad to part with her for a very small price. No. 2, a gelding 7 year old, bought for £25, could trot with four on, ten miles an hour, but if he had ten miles more to go it was the best of your plan to allow him to double the time for doing it, while you need not again take him out for at least two days. His wind stood the battle but barely six months, and after six months more of worry and trouble in trying to restore, or even partly so, his many lost constitutional powers, I despaired of his recovery, and had him turned out on his former mountain home, where, after some months, he regained somewhat of his former appearance, when I had him sold at Galway fair for £9. 10s. He was not fully broken-winded, but really he was more useless than one of another breed that would be suffering from the ‘incurable.’ No. 1 was a bright chestnut, standing 14.2, and No. 2, a bay, standing 14.1.

“Type to Establish”

“As your correspondent has asked me so courteously to state what type I would wish to establish, I have pleasure in stating that the type I wish to see finally established is that in which will be found to the greatest extent, irrespective of any hard or fast rules as to colour or size, that endurance, hardihood, and peculiar constitution which were and are characteristics of the real old type; and which are, in my opinion, compatible with and absolutely necessary for even a fairly happy life on our cold, bleak, and exposed mountain ranges. Hence, my aim is to breed a pony from the best of what is left of the old stock, who (the pony) will be able to live his

life exclusively on his mountain home, and though, as he naturally will welcome the summer months with a beaming smile, yet he will not, necessarily, fear the severity of winter, and neither will he wear a grin on its approaching days. Having got the indispensable en-



CANNON BALL,

Winner of Several Prizes at Local Meetings and Shows. His latest success being the winning of the Farmers Plate at the Oughterard Races from a field of twelve. Owner, Harry Toole, Leam, Oughterard.

durance, and should a lack of speed be noticed, my next step would be to find and introduce a pure Arabian, or a full thoroughbred sire of a suitable size, and with suitable points, who would have proved his hardihood and speed qualities, and mate him with only the hardiest, the best shaped, and cleanest limbed Connemara mares obtainable; place the progeny who should rough it in the usual way, under observation, select at six months old a pair or more of the

colts and fillies who would be considered having stood the test of the mountain life most satisfactory. These selected animals I would place the first winter on rough pasture somewhere near home, where I would have a shelter erected for them, and give them sparingly of oats and hay, just sufficient to guard against growth being arrested in the least. The severity of winter being over, and that spring growth of sedge peculiar to our mountains having appeared, I would have them removed to the mountain, where I would leave them till the following winter, and as long into the same as they kept 'decline' away, when I would have them removed to their former shelter, and sparingly fed as before. The second spring, that is, when they were rising two years old, I would send them back to the mountain once more, and come weal or come woe, I would leave them there till the following spring, when I would take back the colts and prepare them for doing a little stud work that year. On the progeny of these colts and the hardy Connemara mares I would rely for our future pony, provided the said progeny were endowed with the necessary endurance, and with the admirable and appreciable speed our endeavours sought.

“‘Rome was not built in a day,’ neither will the Connemara pony be improved on by introducing foreign blood, be it what it may, and expecting good results in a year, two, or even three years, for a pony who is expected to live and thrive on our mountain ranges must possess the hardy qualities acquired by his parents and his grand-parents from the climatic conditions under which they lived, and thereby become indigenous to the Connemara mountain. Such are my views and opinions on pony breeding in Connemara; but I do not, in the slightest sense of the word, want anybody to agree with me if his own comprehension and experience of the subject do not enable him to think as I do.

“What I hope everybody to agree with me in is: that the Connemara pony should, and ought, be revived, no matter how the revival takes place, and therefore I expect that all who can will lend a hand in reinstating this pony on the Connemara mountains.

“Yours, etc.,

“MICHAEL J. O'MALLEY

“Rosmuck.”

“Mr. M. J. O'Malley's contribution on the subject of the Connemara pony, published in our current issue, contains food for reflection. Many of our readers are well aware of the merits of the Connemara pony, and considering these, it is extremely hard to understand why the type should be allowed to become extinct. Across the Channel active steps are being taken to preserve the

mountain and moorland breeds of ponies, premiums being offered for stallions, something on the principle of our own horse breeding scheme. Surely what is being done by the English Board of Agriculture could also be done in this country. Connemara ponies are claimed to be superior to those that are receiving so much attention,



W. LYONS, ESQ.,
Bunakill, Connemara.

Noted for his desire and success in always breeding the best
and the purest of the pure Connemara Ponies

namely, the Dartmoor, Exmoor, New Forest, Welsh, Fell and Highland. We should like a full expression of opinion from our readers on the matter."

"For some weeks interesting letters have appeared in our correspondence columns pleading for the preservation of that hardy

and useful equine breed that has long since become famous as the Connemara pony. This week, Mr. M. J. O'Malley, of Rosmuck, who has led the discussion, contributes to it immensely by an interesting special article. For some years past, our contributor has been putting forward every effort to save the 'Connemara' from the complete extinction that seemed so certain. Whenever and wherever he found specimens of the old type, he sought to make the owners realise the value of the animal, and to rid them, where necessary, of the fatally false action that the hackney and half-thoroughbred mongrel were more saleable. The task is not so easy as it seems, for even Connemara people will be found to assert that it is impossible to revive the type of pony that in years gone by, without advertisement and without, as it were, 'pushing,' was the chief glory and pride of the Western Province, and a source of considerable profit to the breeders. As a polo pony, the little Connemara animal could scarcely be excelled, but apart from this, his 'staying powers' render him a most valuable animal for other purposes. Lack of interest and shameful indifference have almost heralded his doom. Let us hope that it is not yet too late to undo the mischief. Mr. O'Malley is prepared, at a week's notice, to call up for inspection from several parts of Connemara, a number of typical Connemara brood mares, and three or four Connemara stallions, whose descent and whose pure blood can be traced back to the Connemara pony of years ago. Here, surely, is the means to revive a type of horse which should possess a strong interest for every lover of Irish horsebreeding, and, indeed, for every friend of Irish industries.

"A Farmers' Association"

"In this connection, the need for a strong working farmers' association in Co. Galway will be apparent. Owing to the operation of the Land Acts and other causes, considerable improvement has, of late years, taken place in farming conditions in Ireland. This improvement is, by contrast with the past, particularly emphasised in the West. But an association treating of and dealing with the particular and ever-growing requirements of farmers, is one of the pressing needs of the present time. Farmers have interests which only a community or a combination of practical agriculturists can successfully deal with. The development of these interests largely rests in their own hands, and can best be achieved by mutual goodwill and co-operation. A farmers' association, where all the enlightened agriculturists of the county would meet on a common ground for the furtherance of common interests, would inspire the one and promote the other: not alone could the interests of the tiller of the soil be upheld and defended, if necessary, but his lot would be made brighter and happier, and with outlook enlarged by the association and the mutual help of his fellows. The reports of horseshows throughout the county, to which we gave prominence

some weeks ago, and the report of the first ploughing match ever held at Moycullen, which we print this week, denote that a new spirit is operating amongst the farming community. It is, indeed, time that we should cease to look over the hills for the unattainable, and settle down self-reliantly to make the most of the things we have. Our utmost sympathy and support goes out to Mr. O'Malley in the valiant efforts he is making to transfuse with new life and vigour a once-proud industry. We feel, however, that more than individual effort is required, and that a strong force of organ-



CONNEMARA LIFE

A little known phase, Husband and Wife Going to Market.

ised opinion will be necessary to make our Department of Agriculture see what we want (rather than what they want us to have), and realise that we must not be impeded in the effort to attain it.”

“Dear Sir,—As you have asked me my opinion re the improvement of the Connemara breed of ponies which is becoming extinct, and as this has been a vital question to me to rear at a profit an animal of that class where no others could live, owing to coarse pastures and boggy land, I beg to offer you a few suggestions

from my experience. Being, as my father had been during his lifetime, the most extensive pony breeder living in Connemara, I am very much interested in anything connected with the above improvement. What I would suggest is, to get a pure Arab stallion a little over 13 hands; have him located somewhere about Rosmuck, and another, say, at Roundstone or Ballinahinch, if practicable, as it is only from Oughterard to Maam Cross and the localities mentioned, that the pure old strain exist. I remember about the year 1860 a Mr. Beckett brought an Arab stallion (grey) to Ballinahinch to try and improve the ponies for the tenants around that locality. My father chanced to buy a mare, first cross, of this breed, out of which he got some excellent ponies in after years, I keeping a colt for stallion, and whose gets were again better (2nd cross), being much more hardy in standing the winter better, and lighter to get over the soft, boggy land, and when let run to four or five years, could scarcely be surpassed for shapes and speed. I run a considerable number of Connemara pony mares, and would, with my neighbours, gladly see the old breed resume the characteristic record of the old time, as, if not, the breed in two or three years hence, will be extinct. Apart from what I write you, there is a very interesting sea story of how we first got the Connemara ponies. Many years ago there was a cargo of Arab horses being sent to Spain from Africa, but outside the Island of Boffin the ship got wrecked, and some of them (Arab horses) managed to land on this Island, and from the pastures being so poor, they eventually became small, but retained the rare wild, level action and shapes, and after a little time got scattered out on the main land.

“I am, Sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“WM. LYONS”

“Boffin Lodge, Bunnakill,

“July 4th, 1913.”

“House of Commons,

“24th Feb., 1913.

“Dear Mr. O’Malley,—I have read with much interest your letters in the ‘Irish Farming World’ on the Connemara pony, also the correspondence which your letter evoked. I have intended for some time to write to you in order to express my admiration for the efforts you are making to revive the Connemara breed of ponies.

“On various occasions I have appealed to the Agricultural Department and to successive Chief Secretaries, to do something towards encouraging the revival, but I appealed in vain. It was only the other day I spoke once more to T. W. Russell, and his reply was simply, ‘Everybody wants money for everything!’ Only those who know what the Connemara pony was in the days prior to the introduction of the Hackney stallions, can appreciate your efforts to undo the stupid work of Commissioner Wrench, and I sincerely wish you God-speed in your patriotic efforts.

“My first trip to the Citie of the Tribes was made from Ballyconneely, fifty-six or fifty-seven English miles, and the pony that my father drove on that occasion was a black mare called ‘Bessie,’ a pure Connemara breed. Leaving home early in the morning, we reached Galway in the early afternoon of the same day, and we started for the return journey the next morning. Except for feeding, there was no delay. At the end of the 114 miles, ‘Bessie’ was as fresh almost as when she set out. In these days the Connemara pony could do journeys of that length ‘without turning a hair,’ and if we are to see that admirable breed revived, the thanks will be due to you for the interest you have awakened in the subject by your interesting letters in the Press, and by your individual efforts to preserve and improve the breed.

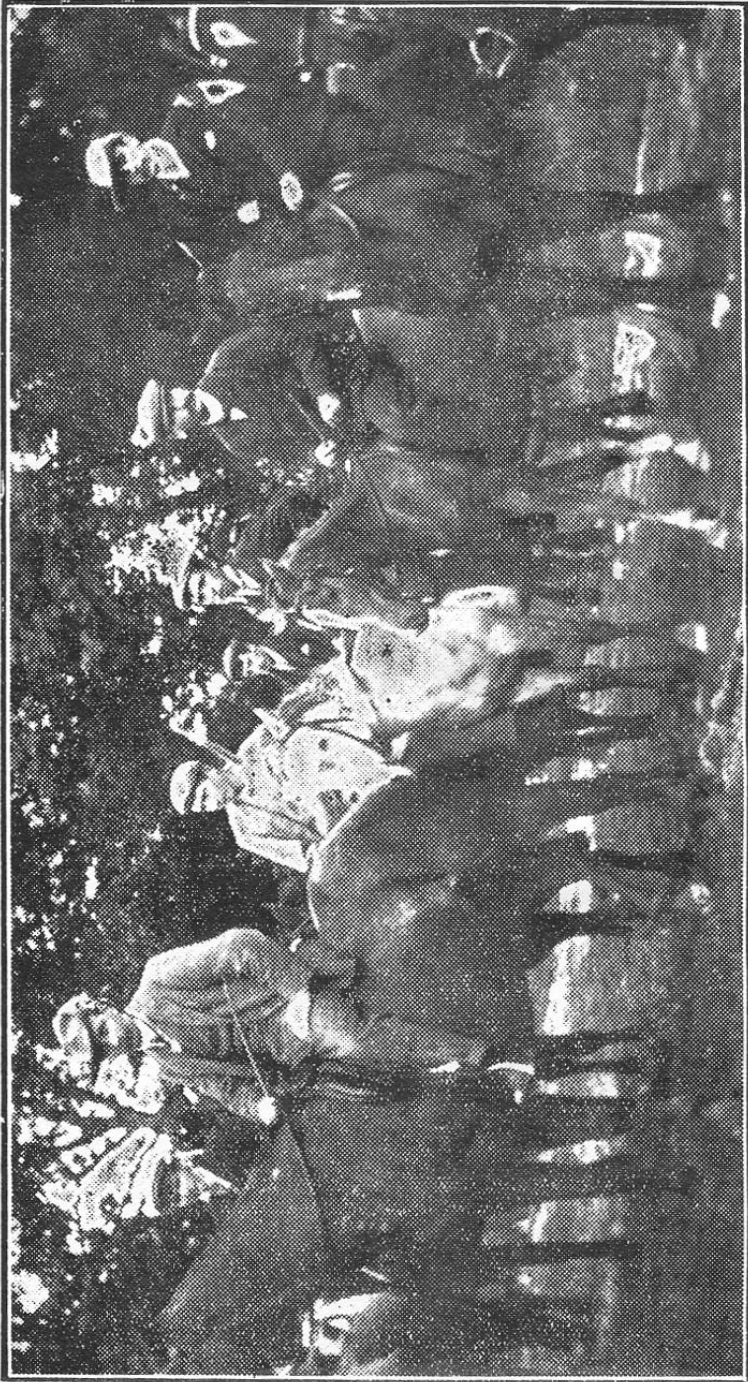
“With best wishes, I remain,

“Dear Mr. O’Malley,

“Yours very sincerely,

“WILLIAM O’MALLEY.”





THE CONNEMARA CAVALRY, RECESS, 30th JULY, 1903.

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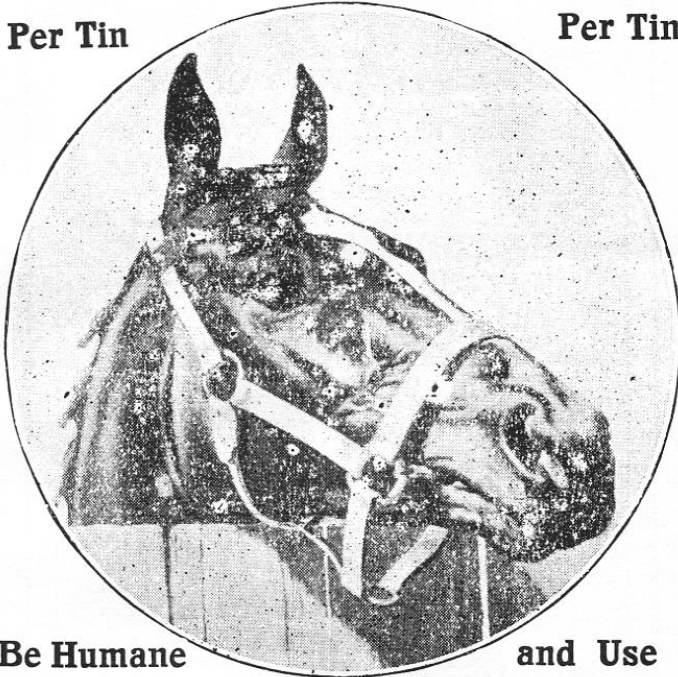
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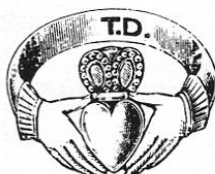
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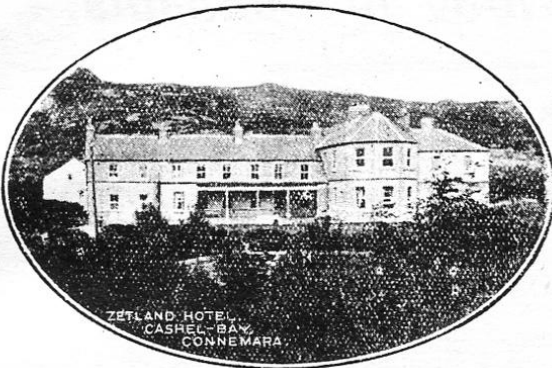
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