

The Cruelty of Frosty Bits.

The other day an inquisitive youngster tried touching his tongue to a piece of iron on a 30-below-zero night. To his no small surprise, the prehensile organ stuck to the metal, and was withdrawn with considerable difficulty and pain, which continued more or less for several hours. The incident at once suggested to us the cruel practice many grooms and teamsters have of putting bits into horses' mouths without warming. Sometimes they hold the bit in the hand for a moment and blow their breath upon it, but, as a rule, this warming is very superficial, and scarcely modifies the frostiness of the ends and rings of the bit at all. That sudden application of cold iron or steel to the mucous membrane is most disagreeable to the horse, is plainly evident from the reluctance with which he takes the bridle and the way he throws back his ears. The wonder is that irritation and inflammation is not often set up. Doubtless many owners argue that if it causes no apparent injury to the parts, it cannot hurt the beast, for such is the indifference of this still semi-barbarous age that man gauges all things pertaining to animals solely by the effect on the usefulness of his servants, not by their comfort at all. It is an easy matter, if the harness room is at or below freezing temperature, to take the bridles into the house before breakfast or dinner and get them well warmed through. If the housewife objects to the smell of the bridles in the kitchen, ask her whether she would rather have them put on the horses freezing cold. She will withdraw her objections. Women's instincts are true. He who considers the comfort and welfare of creatures intrusted to his care has one grand trait of the true nobleman, and may rest assured that he is laying up richer treasure in Heaven than the man who either thoughtlessly or callously subjects men and animals to needless suffering and then pours millions out for charity or the church.

Common Sense About Care of Horses.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Now is the time, if ever, when horses begin to show the results of lack of care in feeding, grooming, stabling, exercise, etc. If they were heavily fed, and kept at hard, steady work during the fall and early winter, and then had their rations reduced at once to an amount hardly sufficient to enable them to hold their own; and at the same time retired from outdoor life to stand, first on one foot, then on the other, in a close stable, they are certain by this time to show the effects of such treatment. If the horseman is experienced, he will know that no domestic animal is so hard to "fit up" as a horse in a badly run-down condition.

By proper feeding, however, along with judicious exercise, this can be done, and at such a time a good condition powder is a great help, though many of the stock foods and condition powders for sale are hardly worth taking into the stable. There are some good kinds to be had, however, and the one given below, though nameless, is among the best. The ingredients and quantities are as follows: 6 lbs. flowers of sulphur, 6 lbs. Epsom (not Glauber's) salts, 2 lbs. bicarbonate of soda, 2 lbs. saltpetre; all thoroughly pulverized and mixed. This should be fed at the rate of a heaping tablespoonful twice daily in grain. It may be necessary to dampen the feed, to prevent the powder sifting through and lying uneaten in the bottom of the box. Fed this way it is a very mild medicine, and will have no apparent effect for a week or ten days, when results will be seen. A glance at the formula will show that this powder acts on both the digestive and excretory systems.

Exercise, however, is no less necessary than good food and care. If light work is not convenient for your purpose, let all the horses, great and small, old and young, spend a part of each day in lane, paddock, or stock-yard, and if the day be fine and not too cold, they may with profit be left out nearly all day. The only weather I would except is a cold, rainy day, which chills a horse quickly, and does more harm than good. Even on a pretty cold day, i.e., down to several degrees below zero, if calm, a horse will take no harm as long as he is busy and stirring about, but when he stands with his back humped up and head down, put him in the stable at once. If clothing is used in the stable at any time, let it be light, otherwise the warmth of the blanket will make the horse's coat so thin and light that he is certain to take cold as soon as he leaves the stable.

Another important item in the care of horses is proper watering. Many horses get only one drink daily in winter, and that of ice water. The result is that the horse, being thirsty, takes in a large amount of cold water, which so chills the stomach as to stop digestion for some time, if nothing more serious results. It is far better to water twice or even three times daily, as by this means the horse takes only a small amount each time, which prevents chills, even in the case of ice water. A feature of too many stables is a row of narrow, uncomfortable stalls. Let the stalls be wide enough to give the horse plenty of room to lie down at ease, and give plenty of bedding. The fact that a horse has manure stains on his side is no proof that he has passed a comfortable night. Indeed, it is plain evidence that he has not, for no horse enjoys lying on wet straw or bare boards. Moreover, be sure that the stall is not drafty, for a horse can stand a cool stable far better than a warm one with a cold breeze playing over him every few minutes. In short, keep the horse comfortable during the night as well as during the day, and see that the stable is well lighted, for the sake of his eyes.

Last, but not least, see that your horse's teeth permit him to eat in comfort. And right here a word of warning may not be amiss: Do not let any one rasp down the face of a tooth, except in case of one being out of place by reason of having no mate in the other jaw, or for other reasons well known to the veterinary dentist. Be sure that the corners and edges of the teeth are smooth, so that they will not cut or scratch the tongue or cheek, and then leave well enough alone. I repeat it: let no one rasp the face of a tooth. As well expect to grind grain with a smooth-faced millstone as to have a horse chew his food properly with smooth teeth. It is against nature.

To sum up: Keep your horse comfortable. When he is not resting let him have freedom if the weather permits, and give him good clean food, but not too heavy, three times a day about an hour at a time. Avoid all sudden changes of food and treatment. Here, as everywhere, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and the horse that is well cared for from the time regular work ends in the fall until it begins again in the spring will almost certainly be in better condition to go to work, and will be longer "in the ring" and more serviceable at all times.

Brant Co., Ont.

HORSE LOVER.

Care of Stallions.

On the general principle that a work horse should spring from a work mare and stallion able to work, writes Dr. A. S. Alexander, in Live-stock Report, it is evident that there is something wrong with the pampered stallion, seeing that he does not work, is too fat to work, and indeed never has been trained to work, and so never has had his muscles developed by labor. In the long run, breeding horses generation by generation for many years, any weakness due to one cause or another must become the legacy of the animals so bred, and the weakness of stallions that have been pampered is a weakness not only of muscle but of constitution, and this weakness inevitably is transmitted to their progeny.

On the contrary, the stallion that works and has come from work stock may be expected to transmit work capability, and that means strong constitution, which is evidenced by the power of his colts to stand up and suck. This strength of constitution, this power for work, comes from natural living and ample exercise; the opposite attributes—weak constitution and inability for labor—come from unnatural living and luxurious idleness, or idleness in unsanitary surroundings.

While there is a show of caring for the stallion during the breeding season, which lasts from the first of April to, say, the beginning of August, that "show ceases when the season ends, and too often the stallion during the subsequent eight months of idleness is secluded in a dark, dirty, damp, badly-ventilated box stall, away from the sight and sound of other horses, shut out from God's pure air and sunlight, and stays there until the "conditioning" season comes around again. We could tell of pure-bred stallions kept thus for months in a dark basement, and given no exercise whatever, and but little grooming, while fed heavily upon corn, which goes to make fat and produce heat, but does not tend to build up muscle and generate vim and vigor, virility and work capability. Is it any wonder that under such untoward and unsanitary conditions the hairy-legged stallion develops "grease," and stinks to heaven or the other place? Is it any wonder that the clean-legged stallion becomes "stocked" in his limbs, sluggish, vicious, lifeless and partially impotent under such circumstances? Is it to be wondered at that the pure-bred pedigree fails as an apology for weakness in progeny and fewness of offspring? Surely these are but the natural consequences of senseless, unsanitary and detrimental methods of management, and everywhere, to a greater or less degree, they have injured the reputation of the pure-bred, pedigreed stallion and retarded progress which might have been made by the persistent use of stallions of such breeding but of healthy constitution, pure blood and toughened muscle, the result of management similar to that given these horses by all intelligent attendants, and invariably by all horse owners of foreign countries that wax fat by selling us the thousands of stallions we need and could as well breed ourselves did we but go at the business in the right way.

The grade and scrub draft stallion everywhere will continue to prove popular and profitable so long as the imported or home-bred pedigreed stallions are pampered, overfed, undercleaned, underexercised, and detrimentally drugged. The progeny of the properly-cared-for pure-bred stallion is, on the other hand, vastly superior to that of the average grade or scrub horse, and as strong in constitution and virility, seeing that Europe has no difficulty in sending us the multitudes of pedigreed stallions we require, but have not the enterprise to raise.

The properly-cared-for, pure-bred stallion, as fast as possible, should take the place of the scrub and grade stallion, and in doing so will speedily improve the quality and utility of our horse stock, but this happy consummation will never come about so long as buyers of pure-bred stallions abuse the animals they purchase and entertain the false idea that blubber, fat, weight, and hog appetite for more feed, should characterize the pedigreed draft horse, rather than hard muscle, clean bone, sound wind, pure, freely-circulating blood, sprightly action, staying powers, ability for hard labor, if necessary, good spirits, kindly temperament, and the sureness for breeding purposes which is but the natural possession of the stallion so endowed.

What About the Farmers' Mares.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I have watched the discussion on the subject of stallion license with a great deal of interest, and would say, with the rest of the writers, I don't see why there should be a license act to protect the horse owners. If they are licensed, the persons that patronize them will have to pay for it. If farmers would cull out the scrub mares, they would better the quality of their horses quicker than any other way. Farmers are wide-awake enough now to choose a horse that will raise the best stamp of horse to bring the highest price in the market—the heavy, thick horse, with good flat bone, good feet and action. And we cannot expect to raise that type of horse and breed to small, worn-out or blemished mares.

Our taxes are high enough now, without paying for a horse inspector. If things keep on like this, the farmer will not have a say in anything after a while. The Legislature thinks the farmers are not capable of running their schools nowadays. Let us show what we want, and they will be better able to look after our interests.

Lambton Co., Ont.

WM. H. WILKINSON.

A Peculiarity of the Horse-breeding Business.

One question which has been raised several times in the discussion anent the advisability of a stallion-license law, is what justification there is for such legislation relating to the horse industry more than in the case of cattle, sheep, swine or poultry? There is this much to be said in reply: Owners of bulls, rams, boars and cocks keep them at home, for the most part, and do little or no soliciting of patronage. Owners of stallions travel them about the country in charge of the most persuasive grooms they can hire. Competition is keen, and as the groom is not free from the weaknesses of human nature, he usually yields to the temptation to breed every mare he can get, whether suitable for his horse or not. Thus the trotting stallion is bred to some mares of draft type, while the Clydesdale or Shire is used on other mares which should have been bred to a Thoroughbred, Standard-bred or Hackney. There are mistakes enough, in all conscience, in the breeding of every class of live stock, but the tendency to err is aggravated in the case of horses by the solicitation of the stallioner. The horse business is peculiar in that respect.

LIVE STOCK.

The Problem of the Cattle-breeder in Ontario.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Present tendencies in cattle-breeding appear in Ontario a matter of conjecture, and the channel along which the farmer's effort may be most profitably directed in the near future is a question of open debate. There has been some dissatisfaction in dairy circles in the fact that it is really difficult to produce cattle of uniformly high merit as milk producers, even in the best-bred herds. On the other hand, there has been a decided reactionary feeling against the cow of such extreme beef producing tendencies that through the atrophy of her maternal instincts she has proven an unprofitable breeder. The prevailing low price paid for choice export cattle, and the active demand for and high value of dairy products, has turned the attention of the farming community generally to a discussion of the advantages of the dairy industry, and has been the inspiration of many articles touching upon the individuality and breeding of the cow of the future. Before the breeder can wisely make any radical change in his breeding policy, he must make the proposed change the object of thoughtful study, and the import of this article will be the presentation of the writer's views relative to the cattle-breeder's problem.

Reviewing the history of cattle-breeding, we note that the early breeders started with the common cattle of their district, and with these as foundation stock, they sought by careful selection and generous management to improve the type and quality of the cattle they produced. They sought to improve—to what end?