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**VETERINARY DEPARTMENT:**

*by Dr McEachran*

**HINTS ON HORSE-DEALING.**

A traffic in horses must have been carried on in very early times, for we read that even Solomon himself dealt largely in horses, having them brought from Egypt and other countries and selling them again at a great profit to the neighbouring sovereigns. It would, indeed be very interesting to us to be informed in what way this traffic was conducted generally in the days of the ancients. Whether the cheating and frauds now in use were resorted to then, and whether the wholesome precaution, "caveat emptor"—let the buyer beware—was as necessary as it is at present. We can trace cheating in horse flesh in English history as far back as the reign of Richard II, for so much was it practised then, that to the English legislators it appeared necessary that rule should be established for the protection of the ignorant against the arts of the designing; and, accordingly, a statute was passed regu-

lating the price of all horses: this related to selling all horses on warranty, and these laws have been in themselves rendered as protective to the purchaser as we believe it possible for words to make them. But the difficulty and uncertainty of appealing to these laws lie in the difficulty and uncertainty of proof, which may thus be accounted for—first, no evidence is so vague and contradictory as that given in horse cases. Secondly, by the almost general ignorance of the economy of the horse either in theory or in practice. Judge and jury often labor under many disadvantages, in their endeavours to get at the truth, again the warrantor of the horse, "and it is upon warranty alone that an action of trover can be brought": warrant him sound.—free from vice &c., &c. Now there is no such doubtful word in the English language as the word "Sound" However, we shall endeavour to show what in law is considered an unsound horse. A warranty of free from vice is of a very ticklish nature. It might be very difficult to prove any real act of vice in a horse, whilst in the possession of the seller, and in the next, a horse, from being ill-treated or alarmed, may become vicious in a week, never having been so before. In all cases of a horse warranted sound, difficulties often arise in the event of his proving unsound, and that is the proof of his having been unsound or lame from the very identical cause of his present unsoundness or lameness, whilst in the possession of the seller. Without this proof, no action of trover can be maintained, and as we are aware that many diseases will remain a long time inactive, in fact will not be brought into action at all until the horse has done some work, the buyer will thus see that warranties are after all but very slender securities. In our opinion, the purchaser, if he have no knowledge of the horse he wishes to become possessed of, has a better chance of protection from loss by submitting the horse to the inspection of a qualified veterinary surgeon, who, from his anatomical knowledge, will be able to detect not only the incipient disease, but to make a fair estimate of the probability of the animals not becoming unsound from mal-conformation of limbs, ill organized eyes, &c., &c. As to the good qualities of the horse they are to be judged of by the buyer, and this is difficult without a trial. In fact, as knowledge of horse flesh can only be the result of experience,