

REMARKS ON SHOEING.

From the American Veterinary Journal.

DR. DADD,—Dear Sir: I cannot coincide to the full extent in your strictures on the usual method of applying the shoe hot, to the foot, in fitting for shoeing. At present I have not time to go into the whole subject, or to deal with the merits of the arguments you advance, but will only state my own experience in regard to it.

In the forge connected with my own practice here, the shoe is always applied hot in fitting—we meet with many cases where a good fit cannot be made otherwise—and I have never known the slightest harm to result from the practice. In the forge of Professor Dick, of the Veterinary College, Edinburgh, where shoeing is allowed to be practiced on as sound principles as anywhere else in Europe, and in all the other forges in Scotland or England I ever had a chance of seeing, and the number is pretty large, the same method was practiced, and with the same freedom from any bad consequences. And with the French system of shoeing it is hardly possible to make a good fit by any other means.

In thus defending the use of the shoe, red-hot, in fitting, from my own experience, and not from any “book knowledge concocted by a compiler,” it must be borne in mind that those who thus practice it with impunity do not do so in the belief that a horse’s hoof cannot be injuriously burned with a hot shoe. The reverse of this is the case. They know the evil, and by knowing avoid it. No rational blacksmith in any civilized community, now-a-days, would ever apply a hot shoe for “a minute,” or even “half a minute,” to a living foot, as the French experimenter did to the dead one. From three to five seconds is the usual duration of the contact, and from the slowly conducting quality of hoof, the heat of the shoe cannot penetrate more than a sixteenth to a twentieth part of an inch in this time. Then again, in practice, the portion of crust so charred and heated is not allowed to remain *in situ* to communicate its caloric to the subjacent parts, but is immediately on the withdrawal of the shoe, removed. In fact the chief benefit, as you justly say, of applying the shoe hot being to mark unmistakably those points where the bearing is too hard; the cutting away of whatever the shoe has browned is a necessary and immediate consequence of the previous part of the operation. The sole, which your French authority says is a greater conductor of heat than the crust, should never be touched by the shoe, either hot or cold. Lastly, those who practice their craft knowingly never apply the shoe in fitting, as your experimentalist did, either at a “black” or “cherry heat.” To do so would necessitate a far too protracted application before the desired degree of singeing was produced. The shoe should be fitted red-hot, adapted lightly to the foot for a second or two, just to brown the points of contact between the two, and then withdraw to allow of their speedy removal. By attending to this, which every good blacksmith does, no harm will occur from the use of the hot shoe in fitting.

I grant what you say about the possibility of making the ground surface of the foot even with the knife and rasp, but in practice there are many feet which it is not advisable to make even, and where the shoe must be adapted to the irregularities of the foot. And, as I said before, in the French system of shoeing, where the toe is turned up in imitation of the natural tread and wear of the foot, the ground surface before the shoe is applied, is never even. All which, shows, that the use of the hot shoe in fitting, if it can be practised harmlessly, as I think it can, is not to be proscribed without due and weighty reasons.

Of course in making these remarks, at the result of my own observation, I am not by any means dissuading those who think they can do better by fitting cold than hot, from adopting the plan. There can at least be nothing said against its safety, and no harm can come from it in the way of “contracting the calibre of the porosities,” as you say. But at the same time I think those who adopt it should not be encouraged to rail too harshly against those who do the other way, unless they can show that the practice is hurtful essentially as well as accidentally.

Yours, &c.,

M. CUMMING, V. S.

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WASHING DAY.—The time when a woman can throw a broom at a thievish dog, or say, “I won’t,” without being thought cross.