

How to Buy a Horse.

DEFECTS TO BE DETECTED IN AGE, EYES AND WIND.

In a recent number we pointed out a few short rules for the selection of horses by purchasers not pretending to be perfect judges of the animal; dwelling on the points of excellence in the form of the horse which should be principally sought for in making a choice. We proceed to indicate briefly some of the most ordinary defects, diseases and unsoundness to which horses are liable and for indications of which every buyer ought to look before completing his purchase. The more deeply seated ailments and intricate complaints are not to be detected at a glance, sometimes not even after a thorough examination even by a judge; to allude to them, therefore, for the benefit of a novice, would be worse than absurd.

In speaking of the age of horses we observed before, that the number of years which the animal has lived is indicated, up to his seventh year, by marks in the teeth of both jaws, but principally of the lower jaw, which vary every year until the eighth, when they become obliterated. We added that they are difficult to learn, and impossible to explain without the aid of diagrams. We should perhaps have said also that there is a system of jockey rascality by which false marks are forged on the teeth of aged horses, making them appear to be six or seven years old, which may deceive, and often do deceive novices, but are thrown away on judges and old hands. This system is called *Bishoping*, and is executed by the use of a file and the usual cautery. There are, however, some signs of extreme age in the horse which can easily be recognized by any one, some of which are infallible. One of these

is the fact that in a young horse the crown of the tooth is oblong or rather obovate in form, *lengthwise*, or in the line of the jaw-bone; but that in very old horses the crowns change their shape and become oblong or obovate *across* the jaw-bone. When, therefore, the tooth has assumed this form, or has even become much modified from the longitudinal shape, it is certain that the horse is too old to be a desirable acquisition. A second sign is the length of the teeth from the root to the crown, and their angular protrusion like those of the hare or rabbit; in both which particulars the increase is regular with the increase of age. Indeed, the degree of this protrusion is said to be so certain and infallible that a machine has been invented by the french veterinarians for measuring the angle of protrusion, by which it is alleged that the exact age can be ascertained up to any known period of equine life. Without undertaking to answer for this, we should advise a buyer always to look to the points mentioned; as it is extreme age which one seeks to avoid, with reason, not maturity, or even the commencement of decline. Except to a racing man, it matters little whether the horse he buys be four, six, eight or nine years old, provided that he be sound, suitable in other respects, and free from the effects and marks of hard labor and wear and tear; remembering always that if the buyer requires a horse for immediate hard use, he should not purchase one under six; and, if the animal be perfectly sound, and fresh and clean in his legs, he will be wiser to buy at eight or nine than younger.

We now come to the eyes, which of all the parts of the horse are, except the legs, of the most vital importance, and in which it is often the most difficult to detect imperfection. There are some species of blindness, which to a common observer give no