

HORSE

Administering Medicine to Horses

By DR. J. FIELDING COTTRILL

Medicine may be administered through different organs and in various ways. It is fortunate for us, and for our patients, that we are able to do this, for sometimes one organ, say the mouth, is so affected, that we cannot use it, and we have to give our medicine by some other channel. The organs or channels we use are:— (a) the mouth, (b) nose and trachea, (c) skin, (d) rectum, (e) urino-genital organs, (f) blood vessels.

MOUTH.—The medicine may be in one of the following forms:— (1) Ball or pill, (2) drench (3) electuaries or pastes.

MAKING AND ADMINISTERING A BALL

The ball or pills for the horse should be cylindrical, about two inches long and having a diameter of about three-quarters of an inch. They should be freshly prepared, because when old they are apt to become dry and hard, and may even be passed whole without being dissolved or having done any good. Usually, the drugs in these balls are bitter and disagreeable to the taste and would be accepted with difficulty in any other form. The body of the old-fashioned balls was linseed meal, which was added to the drugs and mixed together with soap or treacle. They must not be sticky, and for this reason it is usual to wrap them in thin strong paper.

Many modern balls are given in capsules. It is easy to understand, that only those drugs, which occupy a small compass, can be made into balls. In order to give them to the horse, take off the coat and roll up the right sleeve. Now loosen the halter, and turn the horse round in his stall. This is to prevent him flying back. Now take the ball in the right hand, holding it by the tips of the first two fingers and the thumb, and form the whole hand into a long cone like a letter "y". Now take the tongue in the left hand, pull it forward and sideways, so that it lies between the teeth on the right side of the jaw. Insert the right hand, holding the ball, into the open mouth, keeping the back of the hand against the palate, or roof of the mouth, and push it backwards until the hinder part of the tongue is reached and there appears to be a space. (Keep cool, don't be afraid and don't be in a hurry but push well in. The horse cannot hurt you. He is unable to bite while you hold his tongue.)

Withdraw your right hand; leave hold of the tongue; hold up his head and you will see the ball move along the left side as it is swallowed. Some horses hold the ball in their mouths for quite a time. For such, have a bottle near at hand, with a little clean water in. When the tongue is released the water can be poured into the mouth, and the whole sent down together. You can pour in the water before releasing the tongue if you prefer.

The advantage of giving a ball is that you know exactly how much you are giving and it is far easier for both man and beast. Some would prefer to use an instrument, called a speculum, to keep the mouth open, but I never use one. Others, again, use an instrument for throwing the ball into the mouth. It is termed a "balling gun," but it is not really necessary, unless you are treating "bronchos."

It would be well to practise this until you are able to do it without fear.

GIVING A DRENCH

The drugs are given in the liquid form when they are bulky, and each dose is termed a drench. If the drug is insoluble, it may still be mixed with water, but be sure to shake the bottle up well. Use enough water (or raw linseed oil) to prevent the medicine being too strong, because if you burn or injure his mouth, he may resist you the next time you want to drench him. The bottle I use and prefer is a strong one with no shoulder. An aerated water bottle is just the thing. In many places a cow's horn is cut so as to form a kind of sloping spout and is kept for drenching alone. Or a tin bottle can readily be obtained. These latter are used, because of the risk of having the bottle broken by the teeth; in which case you may cause serious injuries.

To hold the horse's head up, take a rope, make a loop at one end, throw the other over a beam, pass the loop over the upper jaw, just past the bridle teeth, then pull up the head and pour the medicine into the open mouth. Perhaps there is

no beam. Then tie a loop in the end of a strap, rope, etc., put this over the upper jaw, knot upwards. Put a stable fork under this and lift up the head by means of the fork. Notice that in both instances the lower jaw is free. He will probably open his mouth himself. If not, pull the corner of his mouth outwards, to form a funnel, and pour the medicine in. DON'T be in a hurry; two or three ounces are enough to give at once. If you press the mouth of the bottle between the bridle teeth and the molars and towards the roof of the mouth, he will at once open his mouth. If he does not swallow, I rub my finger or the bottle (finger generally) along the bars on the roof of the mouth and he very rarely causes any trouble. Then I pour in a little more and so on, until all is taken. Some men take more of the medicine on their clothes than the horse takes inside. Personally, I feel that it is my fault if any is lost.

Patience and gentleness are all that are required. Do not on any account, pinch, thump or rub the throat and there is no necessity to pull his tongue. Simply tickle the roof of his mouth with the finger and he will swallow. Should he cough, drop his head at once—at once, mind. Or some of the medicine may go down to the lungs and cause mechanical pneumonia. This tells you not to tie the head up. Leave it so that it can be dropped at once. It is for this reason that you are strongly advised never to drench through the nose. Do not even put water in.

I have known some people to drench cows through the nose. This is nonsense. Simply hold the nose with the left hand and pour the medicine down the throat as fast as you can. A cow will swallow a quart quicker than a horse will take two ounces. We often give a gallon of medicine at a time to a cow, and very rarely give a pint to a horse. I might have said that sometimes a syringe is used for drenching the horse, but unless the quantity given is small, it is too troublesome. Do not for the sake of keeping the medicine to suit the syringe, give it too strong. Far better to dilute it and use the bottle or horn.

ELECTUARIES OR PASTES

These are generally used in cases of sore throat. The medicine is mixed up with syrup or honey and licorice powder to a soft paste. Then, with a long iron spoon or a piece of smooth flat wood shaped like an oar, the paste is put into the mouth and rubbed upon the back of the tongue, gums or back teeth. The mixture, being rather pleasant to the taste, is licked or sucked in without any trouble. This is a rather nice way of giving medicine.

NOSE

In "Lung Diseases," medicines can be applied directly to the air passages from the nose to the lungs. A pail of hot water can be taken and a table-spoonful of the medicine, oil of turpentine, oil of

tar, spirits of camphor, oil of eucalyptus, carbolic, creolin, tincture of myrrh, etc., etc., be added to it. Then the pail should be so placed that the horse would be compelled to breathe in, or inhale, the steam and with it the medicine. For this reason it is termed *Inhalation*. I also advise that more steam could be made to rise by stirring the water with a whisp of hay. Of course, he can be made to inhale it without using the steam, e. g. Sometimes chloride of lime is sprinkled over the bottom of the manger, so that he is compelled to breathe the chlorine gas rising from it. Sometimes a hot brick is placed in the manger, and the oil of tar, creolin, carbolic, etc., poured upon it. Other times a nosebag is used and the bottom covered with hay wet with hot water, upon which is added the volatile medicines. But do not do it that way. I mention this merely to warn you. You may easily scald him; besides he wants to breathe air, not steam with very little air.

Some add the drug to a hot bran mash, in cases where a nasal discharge is to be encouraged, as in strangles or distemper. I wonder if these people ever thought what a vile disgusting thing they were doing. They compel the horse to eat the discharge with the bran. I prefer to spend a few minutes bathing the face and forehead, while I keep his head over the steaming pail. Of course, everyone knows the surgeon gives ether and chloroform by means of the nose, and they are inhaled.

DOUCHES

Sometimes the nose has to be washed out, or medicine applied locally. Each wash is termed a douche. They are very rarely required, and are generally resisted by the animal.

INSUFFLATION

This consists in blowing a fine powder into the nose for local treatment. It is done occasionally.

TRACHEA

Medicine is injected directly into the trachea or windpipe, when it is desirous of treating the breathing tubes or lungs locally. In such cases, whatever medicine is used must occupy but a small compass and it must neither be oily nor insoluble. It is not often done even by veterinarians. Turpentine is sometimes used thus.

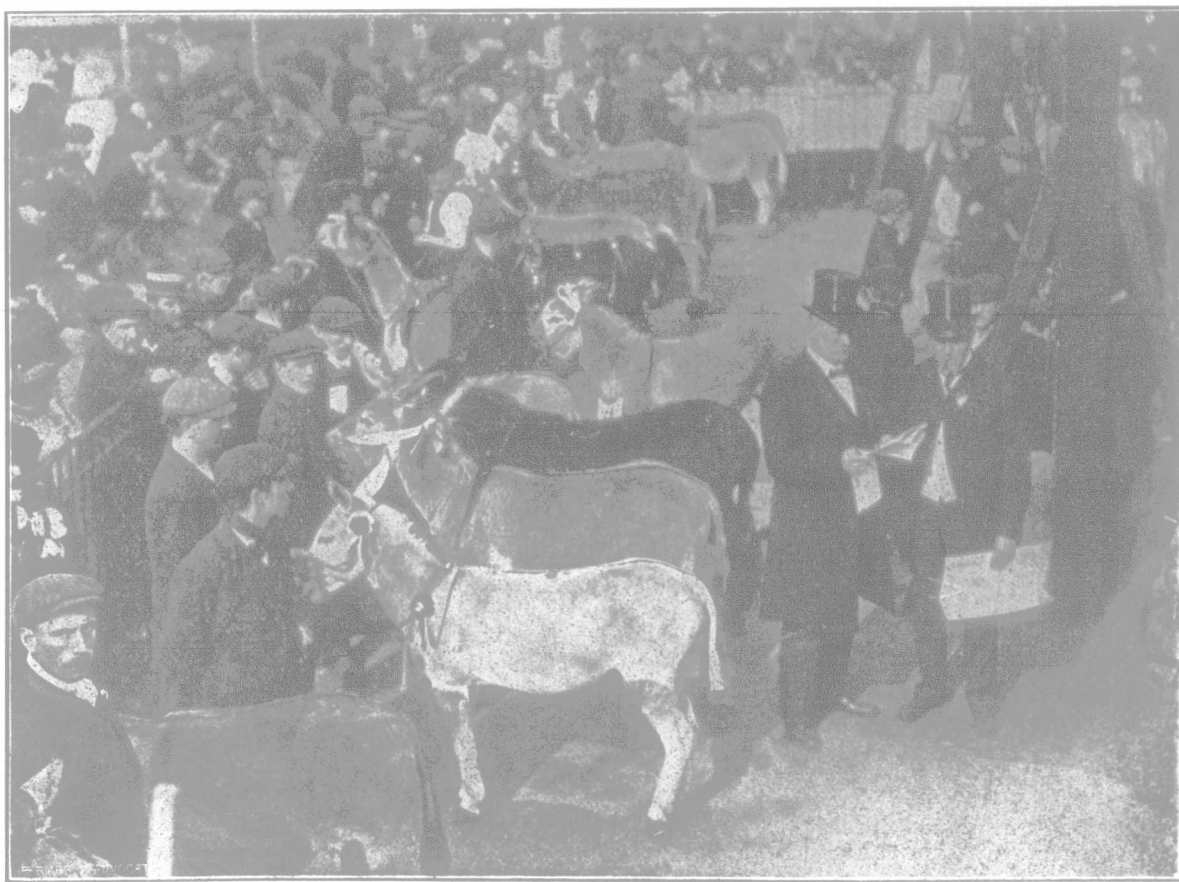
ADMINISTERING BY SKIN

On the outside of the skin drugs are very rarely or never, placed to produce their constitutional effect but that they will do this is evident from the following cases:—

(a) I have seen a dog poisoned by carbolic acid through being bathed in water containing carbolic acid.

(b) I have seen inflammation of the kidneys produced in a horse when too much cantharides was used in the form of blisters.

In both cases, the drug was absorbed by the external skin and produced its effects upon the internal organs. There is, however, the useful hypodermic method of giving medicines. By



JUDGING DONKEYS AT AN ENGLISH SHOW.