

HOW TO TELL A HORSE'S AGE

BY PROF. J. A. GOING, M.D. V.S.

During our late Western trip, we were struck very forcibly by a remark made by a prominent horseman. The remark alluded to was, when speaking about the trotter generally, he said "No tooth no horse" was as true as fate, but in his opinion it was equally true, "No tooth no horse," and suggested that it would be quite a boon to the readers of the Sport were we to write an essay on dentition, viewing it in its different aspects and from different standpoints. Thus we have concluded to do, as it affords us great pleasure to accede to the requests of our readers, whenever we have an opportunity. There is no doubt that many gentlemen, who are in other respects conversant with horse matters generally, are not by any means so well informed respecting the subject about which we have been writing. In this way gentlemen are frequently victimized when making purchases, especially those who are in the business of training horses, with dealers who resort to that disputable practice of "bushing." By possessing information on not only the effect age should have on the individuality, or black spots on the teeth, but also on the general appearance which an average horse of a given age should present.

To commence, we would advise our readers not to be satisfied with merely committing the principal points of the following to memory, and relying on it when occasion requires that they should, put their knowledge to a practical test. We strongly recommend them to commence and examine animals of the different ages which will be here mentioned, compare what they see before them with what they expected to find, taking our remarks as a guide. In this way they will indelibly write the matter on the tablets of their memory. Our remarks will be altogether confined to the permanent teeth; we will, therefore, not allude to the temporary unless to mention that, as their names suggest, they are cast at various ages, and this will be unavoidably mentioned as the various ages are considered. It would not be an inappropriate commencement to state what teeth are: They are hard, comparatively small bodies, fixed in the alveoli (sockets) of each jaw, and are used to grind and masticate substances intended for the nutrition of the body, and, of course, the more perfect they are, the better that office will be performed. True teeth are only in the mammalia, reptiles, and fish.

Teeth are, as a rule, of an irregular, conical shape, the base being toward the interior of the mouth, that is, they are set in a slanting direction, the superior portions being placed exterior to the inferior, instead of perpendicularly, as they would appear to a casual observer. The gum is the dividing line, that portion immediately in contact with the upper portion of the gum, and immediately below and above it is called the crown, or neck, the fangs, or roots, being imbedded in the alveoli, or sockets, of the superior and inferior maxillaries, respectively. The incisors are situated in the front of the mouth, and as they are the ones we will have most to say about, we will give a description of them, and afterwards direct especial attention to the changes that take place in them as the animal advances in age.

Teeth are considered to be active agents in mastication. Their mode of development is the same in all our domesticated animals. Those placed together in front, at the middle of the dental arch, are called the incisors, or incisive teeth; those situated behind these (two in the superior, and two in the inferior maxillary) are denominated canine teeth, or tusks, those which occupy the more concealed portions of the mouth are called molars or grinders. A horse has forty teeth, composed of twenty incisors, four tusks, and twenty-four molars, the mare has corresponding teeth, except the tusks, which are, in the female, almost invariably absent, hence she has only thirty-six. All teeth are composed essentially of enamel, dentine, and crusta petrosa. A curious but remarkable fact presents itself respecting the growth of horses' teeth, which is not common to other animals, namely, that the teeth are growing continually from their development to the animal's death. They are forced upward from their sockets to supply the material required by attrition. Tusks are only found in the

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ly perpendicular, are now slanting; and this process continues with advancing age. As a horse becomes old the enamel loses its original beautiful whiteness, and assumes a cloudy or smoky yellow instead, and become striated with brown and black marks, and the tusks not infrequently drop.

The operation called "bushing" consists of burning holes in the teeth to stimulate the original but worn cut infundibulum. A practiced eye will not be so deceived, as it looks at the mouth and teeth generally, but if only the marks are taken as guides the inexperienced are very apt to be victimized by purchasing horses which are old, and when the owner expects he is in his prime, he finds he is unable to masticate, and from old age and consequent general breaking down of the system, becomes useless; and therefore we would caution our readers to be very careful about making their examination in this connection, as some people make a dishonorable but lucrative living by "bushing." There are such, even in this model city, that will make you a five or an eight year mouth without additional charge, and without reference to the animal's actual age.

Miscellaneous.

FREAK OF NATURE.—In Guelph there is at present a calf, a few weeks old, whose head and countenance resembles that of a calf, and it is said to testify delight, by clapping its hands, when brought in the neighborhood of cows. It is a most singular freak of nature. The names of the parents are suppressed for obvious reasons.

OFFICERS ELECTED.—The following gentlemen have been elected officers of the Canadian Columbarian Society.—President, W. H. D. Chester; 1st Vice-President, J. B. Johnson; 2nd Vice-President, Jas. Goldin; Guelph; Secretary, W. Lakens; Treasurer, Jas. McGrath; Executive Committee, T. Adams, C. Goodland, W. War, J. McDon-



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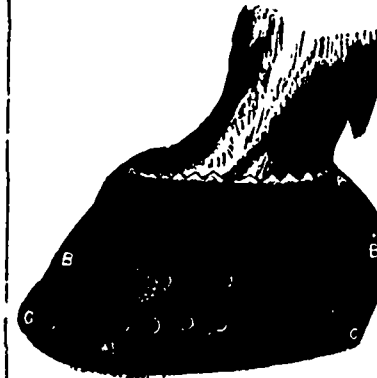
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