

## GOSSIP

## HORSE VICES AND HABITS.

An Old Country horseman, speaking of vices and habits in horses, says:

"A habit is a peculiar action, which is repeated frequently or periodically or under certain conditions. A vice is a bad habit, i. e., one which renders a horse dangerous, or diminishes his natural usefulness, or is injurious to his health. A horse may contract habits which are not vices. A playful horse may, for instance, learn how to open his loose-box door or slip his head collar. A horse that has been given sugar, bread, apples, etc., will follow a hand held out to him, and thus, even when in harness, may move towards an outstretched hand and get on the pavement or turn a trap over. Many other little habits and mannerisms are contracted by horses, but we cannot class them as vices or trace them to disease. Some bad habits are, perhaps, the direct result of disease. I have known scores of horses with defective eyes that never shied, and I have known hundreds of horses that shied, but exhibited no visual defect. If short-sightedness would cause shying, how is it that the habit only occurs occasionally? We should expect the horse to shy at everything and anything, whereas all shyers have some special objects to which their aversion is shown. My opinion is that shying is a vice when it reaches a degree that entails danger, but it is a vice due to mental conditions, and not to visual imperfection.

"Crib-biting and wind-sucking often co-exist, but I distinguish between the two. Either may exist without the other, but one (crib-biting) may lead to and end in the establishment of the other. Crib-biting is a habit contracted by idle horses who start by playing with the manger—licking or biting it. It may be copied from the habit of another horse, and, therefore, a crib-biter in a stable is undesirable, because it may teach other horses the habit. Just how and when it arises is a difficult question to answer. I remember one case in which the habit was contracted in only a few days. A horse may "crib" and not wind-suck, in which state I hold the horse has a vice. When he wind-sucks, is he vicious or unsound? Mere cribbing does not diminish his usefulness. Wind-sucking may not interfere with the working capacity of a horse doing regular, constant work, but should anything occur to prevent his working—as, for instance, a lame leg or a sore back—he will soon diminish his capacity for work. Most horses require some resting place for their teeth or jaws before they wind-suck, but a few are able to do so with no fixed point to rest against. The evil of wind-sucking, I assume, is the distension of the stomach by swallowed air. This leads to gastric defect. I do not believe that the habit has, as a predisposing cause, a gastric affection, nor do I recognize any evidence that indigestion leads to wind-sucking. I consider it merely a bad habit—a vice leading to unsoundness.

"The habit of refusing to pull a vehicle is due to many different causes. Some horses decline to work in single harness, some in double. Some horses, who are willing and staunch in harness, will not carry a man in the saddle, and vice versa. Pain will cause good horses to jib, and overloading makes many jibbers. Recently I had a curious experience. A stud was affected with glanders. Among the horses were three or four who jibbed at work frequently. During the six or eight months that elapsed before the outbreak ceased, every one of the horses that jibbed succumbed to the disease. None of these horses was a jibber when purchased, and the owner drew my attention to the circumstances, feeling convinced that the disease had some casual effect in inducing the vice. As sore shoulders will cause a horse to jib, so it is just possible that a disease of the thorax, or its contents, may have a like effect. Jibbing I take to be a habit induced by the horse resenting some circumstance or accident which befell him in his early breaking, or which had arisen later. As a rule, it is due not to stubbornness or stupidity on the part of the horse, but to stupidity or cruelty on the part of his drivers or riders. A jibber is usually a little too intelligent.

"Kicking is a bad habit, a vice; but there are degrees, and although probably the law would call kicking a vice always, we know many good useful horses which kick. Even a kicker in harness may be useful in the hands of some men. Rigs

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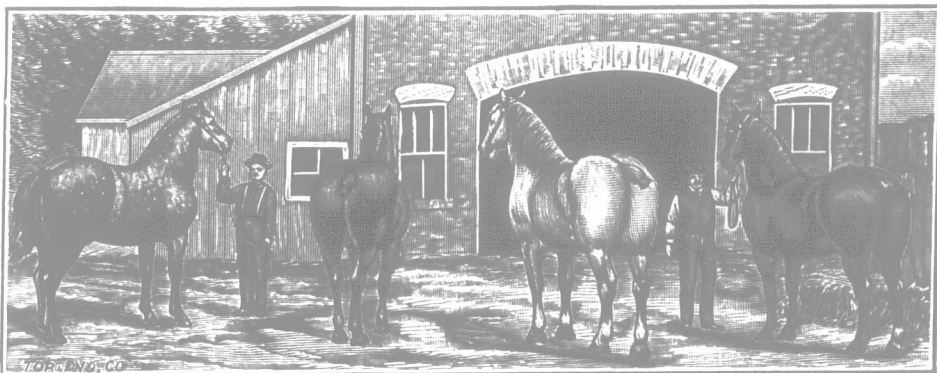
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and some mares have this vice cured by castration, which would suggest that in these cases the vice was a symptom of unsoundness. But the operations are not always successful, for no matter what the original cause of a habit may be, it becomes confirmed and then persists when the cause is removed. A young horse may kick in play, but the action does not become a habit except by repetition. When a habit, it is a vice. Kicking in the stable may result in injury to the horse as well as injury to the surroundings, so that it becomes a vice when it is a habit. As a rule, a strapround the fetlock, with ten inches of chain attached, will stop the kicking, but when the strap is left off the habit is soon in evidence. Kicking is often started by attendants playing with or teasing horses.

Timothy Woodruff, the New York politician, says that an old chap in business in a town not far from Buffalo, recently discovering one morning that his safe was out of order, telegraphed to the maker in Buffalo to send down an expert.

When the man arrived he discovered that the vault, which was an old-fashioned affair and locked with a key, could not be opened. After a hasty examination the expert took a piece of wire, and began to dig out a mass of dust and lint from the key. He then opened the safe as quickly as one could desire. With a sickly smile the old merchant meekly asked:

"What's the charge?"

"Twenty-five dollars," was the reply.

"Does any one know you're in town?"

"None save yourself."

"Then here's fifty. You will do me a favor if you'll get out of town by the first train. If any one knew that I had paid a man twenty-five dollars to dig the dirt out of a key for me I'd never do another dollar's worth of business in this part of the State."

Messrs. H. J. Whitteker & Sons, breeders of Ayrshire cattle, Oxford Down sheep, Berkshire pigs, and Buff Orpington fowl, North Williamsburg, Ont., writes: It pays to advertise in the "Farmer's Advocate," as we have had a successful season at Spring Burn Stock Farm, having sold 23 head of Ayrshires since Jan. 1st, 1904, and have 41 head still on the farm. They are in fine condition to go into winter quarters, and the young bulls that we are advertising are a fine lot. Our Oxford Down sheep have done well this season, and we have had grand success with them at the fairs this fall, and have sold nearly all our surplus stock, having only three ram lambs left. We have a fine lot of Buff Orpington cockerels and pullets, that we offer for sale at reasonable prices.

Colwill Bros., Newcastle, Ont., breeders of Tamworth swine, who have been so very successful in prizewinning at the leading exhibitions in Canada, and whose advertisement runs in this paper, write: We have the finest lot of young boars and sows for sale we ever had to offer, including our first and second prize boars at Toronto, besides some 10 to 15 other boars, from four to seven months old. We are also offering our yearling stock boar, winner of fourth prize at Toronto, and a twelve-months boar, winner of third at Toronto. We have recently sold to Mr. Marshall, of Rossmount, one of the four sows photographed at Toronto. She will make a beautiful brood sow. We still have several beauties left for sale, at quite reasonable prices.

Senator Blackburn says that once when a joint committee of the Louisiana Legislature visited the State penal farms at Angola and Hope, for the purpose of reporting on the work done by the board of control, they spent considerable time in conversing with the negro convicts in order to elicit certain information.

One of the negroes chanced to recognize in a member of the committee a rising young member of the bar of New Orleans.

"It appears you know Mr. C—," remarked one of the committee.

"Yes, sah," replied the negro, grinning to show his white teeth. "I knows him mighty well, sah; he wuz the genulman dat sent me heah."

"Is that so?" said the member who had addressed the darkey. "I never knew that he had been a prosecuting attorney. How was it that he sent you here?"

"He wuz my lawyer, sah!" explained the convict.