

THE CARE OF YOUNG FOALS.

It is well known among breeders that it is very difficult to catch a mare in the act of parturition, and that if the foetus is in proper position, and everything else favorable, birth occurs very quickly and easily. Should you, however, happen to be on hand when your mare foals, and the youngster is coming right, but not progressing as fast as he might, it will do no harm to rupture the membranes and help a little, pulling only when the mare presses, and always in a downward direction or towards the hind feet of the dam. It would appear on first impression that breath is a necessary and indispensable adjunct to life; but in the unborn foal such is, of course, not the case—the first inspiration is taken upon the advent to the open air of the little animal, and it is of importance that nothing shall interfere with the supply of oxygen to the lungs as they begin to assume their vital functions. Many foals are lost through the nasal passages being occluded by the foetal membranes or otherwise, the first feeble attempts at respiration proving of no avail, the blood fails to become oxygenated, the next effort is weaker still, the heart's action, at the best uncertain owing to the sudden change in the course of the circulation, soon ceases entirely, and independent existence ends before fairly begun.

As soon as the foal has emerged, free the head from the envelopes, see that the air passages are clear of mucous or other fluid, and lay the little animal on his right side. If the umbilical cord or navel string is not ruptured at birth, it may be tied with a stout cord a couple of inches from the navel and cut off below the ligature, and to prevent blood poisoning, or the absorption of septic germs, it may be dressed with a strong solution of carbolic acid, care being taken not to injure the surrounding tissues, or it may be temporarily smeared with carbolic oil. Should animation appear to be suspended while the heart still beats, an attempt may be made to resuscitate the little creature by pouring cold water in small quantities on the head, slapping the body with a cold wet cloth, holding ammonia to the nostrils or even by what is generally more convenient, puffing a little tobacco smoke into them. Should these measures fail, a little blood may be taken from the navel, but when syncope is present there is no great hope of bringing about recovery.

I would like here to interpolate a little advice regarding foals "coming wrong". If there is any malposition of the foetus not of a serious nature, you may, if you are at hand, be able to rectify it, using judgment and common sense, bearing in mind that a mare will not stand much rough handling, and, above all, keeping cool and endeavoring to avoid excitement, which at such times is very natural and very dangerous. Should you find yourself unable to remedy the evil, lose no time, but send at once for professional assistance if such can be procured, and, meanwhile, allow no interference save by some intelligent and thoroughly experienced stockman who understands the vital importance of absolute cleanliness and who will know, after making an examination, whether he can do any good or not, and will guide himself accordingly. Great harm may result from well meant but mischievous interference with these cases, and the veterinary surgeon often finds on his arrival a well nigh hopeless subject which, if let alone, he might have handled with one tithe of the trouble and with far greater certainty of saving life.