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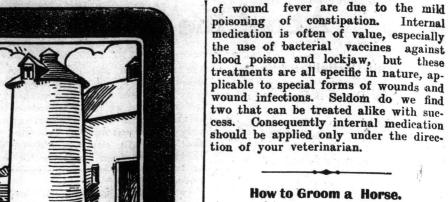
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By John S. Underwood.

It is often said that a good grooming is worth a feed of oats. Although a horse cannot live on a currycomb and brush, there is no doubt that in many stables less feeding and more grooming would be better for his health. Proper grooming is hard and tedious work and becomes extremely monotonous; but it must be done. Its use is twofold: to clean the horse and to put on muscle or harden muscle that is already there.

A horse must be kept clean if he is to

be kept in good health. There are various ideas among farmers and other horse owners as to what constitutes cleanliness of a horse. If the mud has been scraped from the legs and there is no straw and filth clinging to the quarters many men consider that a horse has been cleaned, and all the currying he gets is by having the harness dragged off each evening.
Some people ask, "Why should a horse

need so much grooming in a stable if he is healthy without it when out at grass or running wild?" The reason is not far to seek. The horse is usually kept in a stable for hard work, or at any rate work hard enough to make the skin act. Now, when the skin acts it secretes perspiration and scurf which must be removed. Moreover, horses when at work are given stronger foods, the waste products of which are partly excreted by the skin. If not removed they are injurious. In the pasture a horse seldom moves faster than a walk and eats the plainest of food-grass. Hence the skin does not require so much action. It acts throughout the night, and in the morning there is always a certain amount of scurf and dirt in the coat which should be removed by grooming immediately after the horse is watered and fed. The animal should be groomed again immediately after work, and lastly just before the evening meal. A wisp should first of all be used to rub off the dirt on the outside of the coat and to dry the coat if wet; but this does not really clean it. The brush is the only thing with which to clean a horse's skin and coat, for nothing else will penetrate the latter. But if the coat be wet it must be dried with loose wisps first.

To use the brush properly the groom should stand well away from the horse, so that he has to lean his weight on the brush to support himself. He should brush with a straight arm in the direc-, tion of the coat, but if it is at all caked or very dirty a somewhat circular sweep should be employed. A currycomb should always be carried in one hand, and after every few strokes the body should be scraped against this to take off the scurf. No one who could see the amount that comes out would ever wonder why grooming is no neces-

When the coat is considered clean the wisping should begin. A wisp is made by taking a small rope of hay, tying it in a knot, dampening it and then flat-tening it by treading. It does not clean a horse much, but is good for his skin and has a wonderful effect in increasing or hardening muscle. One should lay it on hard and smack the horse with it. The muscles should contract at every blow. It thus acts as a sort of massage and in bad weather is an excellent substitute for exercise. There is no doubt that good wisping puts on muscle. Many horsemen contend that grooming should take about an hour and a half, but my experience is that a horse well and briskly groomed in half an hour is better off than one groomed slowly for an hour and a half.



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