

COLIC AND BOTS.

(Lecture Delivered before the Legislators of the State of Maine, by the Editor of the American Veterinary Journal.)

GENTLEMEN,—Those of you who honored me with your presence last evening, will remember I contended that veterinary science was to “brutes” just what human surgery is to our race, and that when practised with the same amount of skill and intelligence, as in the latter case, tended alike to the same desirable results; and, therefore, was worthy the consideration and support of a Great Nation of husbandmen.

I proved, I believe, beyond a reasonable doubt, that at the present time there exists a lack of informations regarding the fundamental principles of our science: its objects and tendencies; and I introduced evidence demonstrative of the barbarous follies that are continually practised under the guise of “Horse Doctoring,” to the great injury of some of the noblest specimens of creative power; that man has ever been permitted to hold in subjection, and to the disgrace of men, whom, in these enlightened times, are guilty of such glaring absurdities.

I advocated the cause of those whom, “bereft of speech,” are incapable of pleading for themselves, and in view of ameliorating their condition, and thus rescuing them from the curse of irrational medication, I recommended the endowment of veterinary schools, similar to those now in operation in Europe.

The subjects which I propose, this evening, to call your attention to, are:—

COLIC AND BOTS.

The term *colic* is used to designate a disease of very frequent occurrence, both among horses and their masters; those of my audience who have ever been the subjects of an attack of this character, and have experienced the excruciating torment attending it, can readily sympathise with a poor horse when in a similar condition. There is no disease with which I am acquainted that is so sudden in its attack, nor for the time being so distressingly painful, as colic. It is sometimes accompanied with delirium, so that the unfortunate creature will, in falling, or while on the floor, mutilate his body with reckless ferocity as if striving to find relief in his own destruction; and occasionally he does succeed in hastening death, either by rupture of the diaphragm or intestines, or inflammation of the latter.

Nature of the Disease.—There are two forms of colic to which horses are subject, one is termed *spasmodic*, and the other *flatulent*. The first form is recognized by horsemen as *spasms*, *gripes*, *cramp*, and *stoppage*. The term *stoppage* has been applied, from the fact, that in some cases the patient passes neither feces, flatus, nor urine, and thus the stablemen infer, and the inference in some cases is probably correct; that the bowels, as well as other parts, are spasmodically contracted, or else *intussusception* (a folding of one part of the bowel into another,) has taken place; although the latter feature is often associated with flatulency.

It is only necessary to know something of the anatomical structure of the intestines, to perceive how, and by what means the spasmodic action takes place. The intestinal tube of the horse, which is about ninety feet in length, is composed of external, internal, and central coats. The central coat, or rather, layer, is composed of muscular fibres of two orders: one set are circular, the other longitudinal; should contraction occur in the longitudinal fibres, the bowel is proportionately shortened; when it occurs in the circular fibres, the calibre of the intestine is decreased, and sometimes in tonic spasm, complete stricture of the part takes place, so that it is almost impossible to pass even a small probe through the intestinal stricture. On examining horses that die in this state, the small intestines have a knotted appearance, from which feature some persons have compounded the term “gut-tie.”

Flatulent Colic, which is by far the most common affection, differs so essentially from the preceding that the one can easily be distinguished from the other; in the latter affection flatus, or “wind,” is always present, and if at the early stage, no perceptible abdominal distension occurs, it very soon shows itself. One way of satisfying ourselves of the presence of flatus is, to apply the ear to the abdominal region; within, a sort of active rumbling is heard often, accompanied by a tinkling or metallic sound. But while examining the case, we may, perhaps, perceive that the horse passes flatus by the anus, or eructates it from the mouth; in either case our doubts, if we have any, are immediately