

## CONTRACTION OF THE HOOF.

A Correspondent informs us that he has a valuable mare, the subject of *contracted feet*, and desires to know if faulty shoeing is not the cause of the same.

Altered structure, corns, and various other affections of horse's feet, are often attributed to the above cause, and no doubt a rational, and improved method of preparing the foot, and adjusting a suitable shoe for the same, may lessen the liability to some such diseases, yet we contend there are other causes than the above, over which the blacksmith has little if any control. We allude to that universal law, termed the hereditary predisposition; which provides that "like shall produce like." We know that the "Black Hawk," "Messenger," and many other permanent varieties of breeds, transmit to their offspring a peculiarity of form, temperament, quality and color, by which the lineage of the latter can with certainty be determined. And should the parent labor under any *permanent* disease, defect or vice, the same is very apt to be, directly, or indirectly, transmitted. The very color of the hair, accompanied by particular and distinctive marking, often extend and re-appear through several generations. Hence, a colt begotten by a sire defective in so important a part of the animal economy as the feet, ("no foot no horse,") must necessarily, in accordance with *nature's* immutable law, inherit the same *idiosyncrasy*. Therefore, the very best system of shoeing practised on *nature's* criminals, would fail, when attempting to reverse *her* decrees.

A horse, inheriting the least predisposition to faulty feet, is at all times liable, when used for draught, or speed, or pavid thoroughfares, to disease of the same, which may end in *contraction*, it being, in nine cases out of ten, the result of primary disease of the foot.

A defect in the conformation of a horse's foot, may be so slight as to escape *ordinary* observation, yet the defect is there, liable to augmentation, and sooner or later the evil is discovered.

That a tendency to contraction of horse's feet does lurk in some breeds, we have abundant authoritative proof to offer, if necessary; consequently, faulty shoeing cannot be classed as the direct cause of contraction.

A point-blank argument in favor of the blacksmith in this view, is founded on the fact that contraction of the hind feet, which undergo the same system of shoeing, seldom, if ever, become the seat of this deformity. Among our truck horses, may be found many of the Pennsylvania, New York and Vermont breeds, that have to endure all the evils of shoeing, as well as of domestication; yet a great proportion of them enjoy immunity from *contracted feet*. Therefore, the latter are not predisposed; they have *good open heels*, the foot is well proportioned in all its parts, and bears a symmetrical relationship in size, form and action, to the limb and body, which it aids to support and move.

Hence contraction, as well as many other forms of disease which are observed in the feet of the horse, have their origin in hereditary predisposition; therefore, it is a matter of impossibility for a smith to make a good foot out of one that was originally defective.

## CLEANLINESS.

There is a proverb in the Levant, that "no prince ever died of the plague," which means that the many resources which opulence affords are preventives against contagion. Accordingly we find that in those Mahometan countries, where the plague rages with the greatest violence, but few of those who enjoy the first of the State are ever attacked with the distemper, although according to the precepts of Mahomet, they are obliged to appear in public at all times, and must comply with general custom in giving their hands to be kissed indiscriminately by every Moor who comes to beg justice, or throw himself under their protection.

At a time when the plague at Algiers destroyed many thousands of the populace, who easily caught the infection from their negligence respecting their persons, but *two* out of *three hundred* officers, belonging to the Dey's household, were attacked with this mortal sickness.

Nor is cleanliness beneficial only in contagious disorders. Filth engenders corruption, taints the atmosphere, and predisposes the system to disease. And when an epidemic prevails, those persons who are particularly cleanly in their habits, are less likely to become victims to indisposition, than those who pursue an opposite course.

The importance of well ventilated rooms, cannot be too strongly urged upon the attendance of the sick. A free circulation of air is not only beneficial to persons labouring