

**ON THE FEEDING OF FARM-HORSES,
FOR THE PREVENTION OF COLIC AND INFLAMMA-
TORY AFFECTIONS OF THE ORGANS OF DIGES-
TION.**

Anatomy shews; that—"Of all creatures, the horse has the smallest stomach, relative to its physical size. Had he possessed the quadruple ruminating stomach of the ox, he would not have been, at all times, ready for exertion; the traveller could not have baited his steed, and resumed his journey. The stomach of the horse is not so capacious, even when distended, as to impede his wind and speed; and the food passes onward with a greater degree of regularity than in any other animal. A proof of this is, that the horse has no gall-bladder.

"Another peculiarity with the horse is the supply of fluid. When the camel drinks, the water is deposited in cells, connected with the stomach; but if the horse drinks a pail of water, in eight minutes none of that water is in the stomach; it is so rapidly passed off into the large intestines." Let it also be borne in mind, that the whole intestinal structures of the horse are of an equally peculiar form, and very sensitive in every part; that the stomach, moreover, rests upon the large intestines; its forepart is close to the liver, and its left side is in contact with the diaphragm, or midriff—one of the most important muscles of the frame, and the principal agent in breathing, besides performing many other important functions by means of its connexion with the other intestines. And thus, in whatever organ, or from whatever cause, internal inflammation may originate, the immediate connexion or sympathy of parts soon conveys the disease throughout the whole intestines.

Such, then, are the peculiar intestinal structures of the horse; and so rapid is the progress of a pail of water from the stomach through all the convolutions of the small intestines, sixty feet in length, at a moment when these sensitive teguments, and all around, are probably at a temperature more than double that of the liquid they then contain. What but spasms, inflammation, and death can await the poor horse, unless very prompt and efficient remedies are applied? Wet green food, given in quantity, under similar circumstances, will produce the same effects upon horses, heated and exhausted by previous hunger and fatigue. This almost every post-master and groom well knows, and studiously endeavours to avoid; and surely the farmer ought also to be equally aware of, and guard against it. Yet he complains of the loss of one and another of his best horses, by some hidden sickness, which he cannot account for; nor, until too late, discovers that the horse, having returned from his last day's work covered with perspiration, or shivering under rain, was led to the water-pond, plunged in, and drank his fill, then put in the stable, and served with such provisions as came to hand, fresh or

fusty, and left for the night, without a single hair being touched with whip or comb. The servant may be also young and inexperienced;—but why is he intrusted with horses, or not properly instructed in the first principles of his duty towards them?

There are other causes of an opposite character, where, from the propensities of the servant, in mistaken kindness to the horse, or even with the consent of the inconsiderate master, horses are served with corn unseasonably, or in excessive quantity, or of unsound quality. "*Stomach staggers*" soon ensue, and instances might be related of horses dropping down dead in the yoke in this state—the stomach having become ruptured by the over-distention or swelling thus occasioned, either from too full a feed of any kind, or partaking of food of an improper nature, or even drinking an excessive quantity of cold water, and then put to severe exertion.

In addition, however, to such casualties as these, there are other latent sources of disease, arising from the mode of keeping the natural, and preparing the artificial, food, of many farm-horses, as well as the manner of supplying it. The small farmer, in particular, generally throws the straw into large mows, or heaps, on low damp floors, where it becomes musty; or stows it in the confined loft of a crowded stable, where, fumigated with the exhalations from beneath, the poisoned mass is dealt out to the devoted animals, who thus becomes the innocent victims of various diseases, if not of subsequent destruction. Or, if a portion of the food is boiled or steamed, it often wants the most essential ingredient of the whole, a proper quantity of salt; so that the mess is probably sour before it is administered, or immediately becomes so in the animal's stomach.

Then there is the half rotted, frosty-cut clover, or after-math, at the close of Autumn, so pfeignant with danger to the farm-horse, all of which dangers the harness-horse escapes, by a more uniform course of keeping. The latter is chiefly fed on corn and hay, and is regularly supplied at intervals of three or four hours at most, according to his work or stages;—while the farm-horse has his consecutive yokings extending to ten or twelve hours a-day, often more, with but little intermission for baiting or rest; has less corn, and in general subsists nearly two-thirds of the year on coarse fodder (oat or bean straw), which fills the stomach without affording much real nourishment.

Let it not, however, be said that the fresh straw of the common crops of the farm, together with the customary feeds and mashes duly served, are insufficient to maintain the horses in proper condition, under ordinary circumstances, without the aid of much, or any hay. Nothing is more easy and obvious than to prepare the food of horses in a proper manner, although it certainly requires some care, activity, and arrangement, on the part of both master and servant. If, for example, in