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## MORE ABOUT BITS ETC., BY ANOTHER TRAINER.

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**DEAR SIR:** The subject of bits, boots, etc., seems to be a popular one for discussion in your columns, and I think these exchanges of ideas and experiences will result in much benefit to all concerned, and tend to lessen the punishment of horses with all sorts of cruel appliances. I have read these articles with great interest, and concluded to add my mite.

After using in my business nearly all the styles and inventions that have been brought before the public in the shape of bits, I have discarded all but two styles of driving bits and one check bit.

I use, of course, a great many bits, but the variety is made up of different sizes, not of different shapes. One of these bits, and the one I have found to suit more horses than any other, is a large snaffle, the same thickness its entire length, with a slight curve, a bend from the ring to the joint in each division, with the joint exactly in the middle, with what is called a half check piece.

The other style is a bar bit, with a slight curve from end to end, and a half check piece, like the other. I have a great many sizes of each kind, ranging from very small to very large.

I have every bit I use made by Fawcett, of highly-polished steel, and tested by twice my strength before they are ever put into a horse's mouth. I use different lengths, and prefer a shorter bit than the usual length, as in my judgment they are too long. I dislike to see about two inches of the bit come outside of the horse's mouth when you pull on the rein.

For tender-mouthed horses, and those that are apparently afraid of the bit, I have found a large size of the bar bit, described above, the best. When a second, or check out, is desirable, I use a fine bar bit, as a snaffle pinches and irritates the horse, and makes him restless and unsteady with his head. The same objections can be made to the Mace bit, and all others that are very large at the ends, and very small at the joint in the centre, they have a tendency to pinch, and crowd the sides of the mouth in, which is very objectionable to many horses.

I have used every style of flexible bit I ever heard of, and have no use for them, although many good horsemen praise them highly.

To prevent a horse from putting his tongue over the bit, I use much the same device as your correspondent "S. T. B." does, only in the place of the rubber tubing (which confines the bits too closely), I use a strip of very thin sheet rubber, such as is used by physicians for bandaging, and sew the ends together, leaving the bits from two to three inches play. This rubber is so thin, it will stretch easily if more room is required, yet the horse cannot possibly get his tongue over or between them.

Why should there be any necessity for the invention of so many kinds of bits, etc.? Why do horsemen put their tongues over the bit, or out of their mouths?

On this side of the Atlantic we have generally been satisfied to bring the best shots we could muster together, and to permit each man to shoot very much according to his own judgment. It is now evident that the Americans never bring a team to the target in an important match which has not been trained on a very different plan. In fact, it seems as if their teams bore more analogy to artillery detachments than to our squads of riflemen. The rifles in an American team are, if not all of one pattern, at least sighted exactly alike, so that, assuming the shooting men to be steady "holders," the captain or coach can direct the "laying" of each rifle almost as he would that of a 40-pounder Armstrong. Some discretion must, of course, be left to the shooter himself to deal with sudden puffs of wind, or changes of light, but, on the whole, the evidence is overwhelming that "drill" tells in team shooting, and that better aggregate scores are made when it is intelligently applied than when even the most accomplished marksmen are left to their own devices.

## RINGERS IN CANADA.

A correspondent "Young Traveller" in the Spirit of the Times, speaks as follows of "ringers" in the Maritime Provinces:—

Your issue of Dec. 8 contains a letter from Toronto, Ont., signed "Old Traveller," speaking of the "ringers" at Boston, etc. I think he will find he was wrong in assuming that the horses who "figured so conspicuously" at our recent circuit at Frederickton, St. John, Truro, Kent, and Amherst, were from Boston, as I believe it will prove they were from the State of Maine, just across the New Brunswick line, and that two of them had trotted at the New England Fair, at Portland, Me., in September last. These two, called here Morgan Knox and Saco Boy, have since proved to be Royal Knox, record 2:55, and Little Fred, with same record. They were in charge of John Haines, who drove them, and who has lately advertised himself as a reformed man, and has been lecturing on temperance in the States. He entered and trotted these horses through our circuit in 3:00 2:50, and 2:38 classes, and won about all these races. While at Frederickton he was arrested for beating a man at "three card monte," and finally gave up the money. He was afterwards arrested at Amherst for beating an old man \$300 or \$400 at bluff. They played five hundred, and the old man had four knives, which exactly corresponded with the party who played with him. I hear that Royal Knox and Little Fred belonged to Albert Nye, of Fairfield, Me., who sent his own man along with the horses to get his share of the spoils. Another ringer in this circuit was called Lady Dinmore, and was entered by John Wheelton, of Bangor. She too had a fast record, and was entered in 3:00 and 2:50 classes. Still another was Fanny Raymond, who has been expelled by the St. Johns Association, of which Mr. George Barker (firm of T. B. Barker & Sons) is President. This mare had a record, it is said, of 2:50. These Yankees all struck here together.

## Aquatic.

### HIGGINS BEATS BOYD.

The boat race for £400, the championship of England, and challenge cup, valued at £100, took place at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Jan. 14, on the Tyne, between Robert Watson Boyd, of Gateshead, and John Higgins, of Shadwell, the present champion, and was won by Higgins on a foul.

Boyd got away first, but Higgins was gaining when Boyd began to bother him and crowd him out of the course. Finally, when Higgins was about to take the lead, Boyd laid his scull over the fore-quarter of Higgins' boat. The boats went some distance locked, when Higgins' boat filled. Another boat was provided, but meantime Boyd took a long lead and went in nearly a mile ahead, but the race was awarded to Higgins.

## SPLASHES.

Tom Col., the English oarsman, is dead. He was contemporaneous with Bob Coombs.

The Auburn papers call attention to the fact that Courtney is a descendant of the old row-men.

**COURTNEY VS TRICKET.**—There is nothing new in connection with this proposed encounter, nor is there likely to be, until Courtney or his agent hears something definite from the Antipodesan. Hanlan is in the field, too, claiming that he should have first show with Trickett. We shall await with impatience some reliable information on this matter. Our London namesake is inclined to doubt the probability of the Australian coming to America to uphold his name, and thinks that some one will have to go to Australia to row him first. That is rather foolish, because he would only be likely to get one match on, but if he comes here he can have a number of them.—*N. Y. Sportsman.*

The Auburnian has the following: Courtney is in active training with his machine, which gives a stroke exactly like that of a shell while resting in the water, for the coming match between himself and Trickett, the Australian oarsman, for the championship of the world. He says if his health does not fail him, he will be in a better condition than ever before for pulling the race. He is confident of his ability to defeat the foreigner; and is of the opinion that Trickett will accept the Ensencore course on Owasco Lake, his choice for the contest. The Cayuga sculler will be backed to any amount by his financial Auburn friends.

gaudy colors when descending upon its merits, but as a finishing touch he never fails to bring to bear the capstone of the argument, that it is the quickest mile ever run over the course.

This feeling has prompted the clubs and associations of the country to prepare their tracks with a view to fast time. They know the wild fancy of owners and the public for "watch breaking," and understand that if a course is fast, it is an inducement to turfmen to run their horses over it. Hence, by having such a track they are sure, if other appointments are attractive, to have a liberal patronage. Besides, the public is generally without sufficient information and judgment to form correct opinions of the merits of a performance, and are, therefore, too ready to declare a race of a mile run in 1:48, or mile heat in 1:48—1:49, as poor racing, without regard to the course over which it transpires, or its condition. This grows out of the fact that the public have been educated in the school of the period, and that everybody relies upon time as an infallible test of the comparative merits of different events.

Nothing can be more fallacious, and it is scarcely a matter of doubt whether anything is more injurious to the turf. A course prepared for fast time must be made hard. The weight of a horse coming in contact with it at the top of his speed must put his muscles, tendons, bones, and body to a severe test to be equal to the task of withstanding the shock. The course, too, must be in this condition while preparing the horse, and the long-continued exercise incident to a thorough training upon such a track must inevitably affect the powers of the horse. He cannot stand the same amount of exercise over a hard course, such as the fastest time is made upon, that he can over a softer and slower one. This is the experience of every intelligent trainer in the land.

It is admitted that horses break down earlier now than they did several decades since. Fewer of them reach the post in proportion to the numbers bred and trained. We now have more bad legs, sprung or slipped tendons, bruised frogs, osseolates, ringbones, and other accidents or diseases of the limbs and shoulders. The question is, What has produced this difference? We should have improved the form, limbs, and general powers of the horse as we have advanced in breeding and training, as well as his speed. Have we done so? It is the opinion of the more experienced that we have not. On the contrary, that the improvement of the thoroughbred has been mainly confined to the one single point—speed! It is not even a settled fact that there has been that improvement in this respect that we generally credit ourselves with.

It is difficult to say that Ten Brock's mile in 1:39, in 1877, is a better performance than Tomoleau's mile in 1:41, in 1816, or that his two miles in 3:27, of 1877, is superior to Peace-maker's 3:43, of 1803, or that his three miles in 5:29, of 1866, is more meritorious than Ariel's 5:46 in 1877, or that his four miles in 7:15 is equal to Henry's 7:37 in 1823, or Fashion's 7:32 in 1842. Many years lie between these events, and many changes have taken place. The heavy and gaudy harness of the present day has supplanted the simple and light harness of the past.

Reference was also made to the success of Vera Cruz, Aristides, Baden Baden and others as illustrating the fact that animals trained here could go East in the Spring in better condition than those wintered in the North. Mr. Lorrillard was assured that his bets would be taken to the extent of either \$19,000 or \$20,000, and that everything would be done to facilitate matters and to add to the comfort of his stable. To this liberal offer Mr. Lorrillard replied in the negative, and will not run his stable in the West or South. It seems strange that our own people do not form and keep a Southern circuit, rendering it unnecessary to go East with the pick of the country. Make Mahomet come to the mountain, for the essence of racing is still in Old Kentucky, where soon 'Derby Day' will be as famous as the same noted event in England.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE HAMILTON LACROSSE CLUB.

The annual meeting of the Hamilton Lacrosse Club was held at Bauer's Restaurant last week. In the absence of the President, Mr. H. L. Johnson was called to the chair. The minutes of the last meeting were read and adopted, after which the Chairman called on the Secretary to read the financial statement of the year.

The statement proved to be a very flattering one to the management of the club, and gratifying to the members generally. The receipts during the past year, as reported by the Treasurer, were \$300. This, with the balance carried over from the season of 1876-7, is something, remarkable being over \$300. This shows conclusively that the club is getting rapidly in the hands of our citizens, and we trust that the next financial statement will show a corresponding increase. The Club has, during the past season, spared no expense in bringing first-class talent to the club in order that the people of Hamilton might have an opportunity of witnessing a first-class game of lacrosse, and we must say they have succeeded in gaining the confidence of a large number who have seen them play.

The membership roll of the Club has been largely swelled as compared with last year. The matches played have been nearly trebled, and of those sixty per cent have been won. The entire display by the directors of the Club is evidence from the fact that it was the only Club from Western Canada (with the exception of Toronto Club), represented at the National Lacrosse Convention held at Montreal in August last.

## THE NEW HORSE SHOE.

The English agricultural and other press are in raptures over the Yates horse shoe, which is made of cow hide. It is composed of three to four pieces of cow hide compressed into a single mould, and then subjected to a chemical preparation. It is claimed for a test of its strength and weight only one-fourth as much as the iron shoe, that it will never wear out, nor have the feet injured by it, nor will it require to be replaced. It requires to be made of asphaltum, horse hair, and other materials. The shoe is made of cow hide compressed into a single mould, and then subjected to a chemical preparation. It is claimed for a test of its strength and weight only one-fourth as much as the iron shoe, that it will never wear out, nor have the feet injured by it, nor will it require to be replaced. It requires to be made of asphaltum, horse hair, and other materials.