

Veterinary.

Impaction of the Stomach.

SIR,—Will you kindly advise me as to the following case:—

I have a horse which I found sick on my visit to the stable in the morning; he was loose in his stall; the barn-door communicating with the stable was also open, and in it was a barrel containing seed wheat, bran, &c. The horse is in pain at intervals, looks continually at his side, and strains as if trying to pass manure or water. I have given the remedies prescribed in the Doctor's Books for cholic, but without effect. There is slight fever, and the ears are first warm and then cold. He is rising three years old.

S. J. F.

This is a case, undoubtedly, of "Impaction of the Lower and Posterior part of the Stomach," and most probably of the "small intestines," caused by the horse having overloaded that organ with food, which, from its nature, requires a sufficiency of liquid to ensure of its being in such a pulpy condition as to be passed by the aid of the gastric juice (juice of the stomach) through the pyloric orifice (posterior opening of the stomach) into the first intestine.

The food being devoured voraciously by the animal is received by the stomach until the distension of that organ is such that it can receive no more.

Passage of food into the stomach naturally causes a flow of the gastric juice, of which the partial duty is to liquify the food received into the stomach, but in this case the amount of juice thrown out, combined with the saliva, and the heat of the stomach, was only sufficient to form the food into a paste or dough, and thereby to cause a total or partial bar to its passage into the intestines. Some people hold the erroneous opinion that the impaction exists only in the intestinal canal and cannot exist in the stomach, but post-mortem examinations prove the contrary. For I have seen the food taken from the stomach after death of such a consistency that it could hardly be cut with a knife.

The symptoms in these cases are, as a rule, very similar to those of spasmodic cholic; the paroxysms are, however, less frequent and also less violent, the animal rather straining in its endeavor to pass the accumulated mass of fecal matter, than struggling under the intense griping pains of spasmodic cholic; the pulse, however, and the Schneiderian membrane (lining of the nostril) show more signs of fever than in cholic, owing to the derangement of the circulation by the overloading of the stomach, and, as a collateral consequence, the liver becomes more or less affected, and the biliary secretions are consequently impaired.

This disorder requires to be treated both promptly and effectually, otherwise gastritis, or inflammation of the stomach, either by itself or in conjunction with enteritis, or inflammation of the bowels, will quickly supervene, and the result will, in all probability, be fatal.

Give the horse immediately three pints of raw linseed oil, warmed, together with three drops of croton oil and two drams of tincture of capsicum; follow this up with injections of hot Castile soap-suds, to be repeated in the proportion of a pailful each hour for three hours, or until a passage is insured, for although the liquid thrown up by the injection pipe cannot reach anywhere near the stomach, still by its exciting action on the rectum and large intestines a sympathetic action will be produced in the small intestines, and through them, though in a less degree, on the stomach itself. If the above dose does not operate in eight hours, repeat it. The animal should be

gently walked about for ten minutes at a time every now and then, to assist the action of the medicine, and in the intervals, cloths, wrung out of very hot water, should be applied to the abdomen.

The horse must be warmly clothed and allowed as much warm linseed tea as he will drink.

This treatment will prove effectual, providing that inflammatory action has not set in to any serious extent, in which case, of course the disease assumes an entirely different character, and requires a correspondingly different treatment, and that of a more energetic kind. When the medicine has operated, a bran-mash diet should be given for three or four days, the chill also being taken off the drinking water, and it would be advisable, considering the weak state in which the animal's stomach will be left, to give him such powders as may restore a proper and healthy tone to that important organ. For that purpose I should recommend a continuation of such tonics as carbonate of iron, gentian, ginger, capsicum, &c., &c. The horse should be kept in the stable and carefully looked after for a short time, as this disorder is liable to predispose the stomach, and incidentally the liver, to many other diseases which may cause the owner much trouble and expense.

This disorder occurs, not infrequently, amongst cattle; the impaction, however, in these cases takes place in the "rumen," or second stomach; the danger, nevertheless, is not so great as in horses, for it is possible in extreme cases where medicine seems to be ineffectual to make an incision into the "rumen," and thereby remove the impacted mass; the animal, moreover, seems to be little or nothing worse if proper care is taken in the operation, and if, also, the animal is judiciously dieted, warmly housed, and well looked after until convalescence ensues.

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Choking.

Prof. James Law, in his "Farmers' Veterinary Adviser," thus treats this subject:—

This is especially common in cattle feeding on roots, potatoes, apples, pears and the like, because of the habit of jerking up the head to get the object back between the grinders. Pieces of leather, bone, etc., chewed wantonly by the cattle, often slip back in the same way.

Horses suffer mainly from the badly-shaped balls or sharp-pointed bodies, dogs from bones. Ravenous feeders will choke on dry chaff, cut hay, etc., being imperfectly mixed with saliva, and the same will happen in cases of diseased teeth, or salivary fistula or calculus.

Symptoms of pharyngeal and cervical choking.—When the object is arrested in the throat or neck there is great distress, staring eyes, slavering, violent coughing, with expulsion of dung or urine, continuous efforts at swallowing, and in cattle tympany of the first stomach, which may suffocate the animal in fifteen or twenty minutes. I have seen an animal die in five minutes when the object was lodged directly over the opening in the windpipe. In horses there is in addition an occasional shriek, and water returns by the nose when drinking is attempted. In omnivora and carnivora retching and vomiting are prominent symptoms. A careful examination along the furrow on the left side of the neck will usually detect the offending object.

Symptoms of thoracic choking.—If the object is lodged in that part of the gullet which lies within the chest, cough, slavering and gulping may be absent, but there are efforts at regurgitation and the discharge of liquids by the mouth—in horses the nose. This, with the inability to swallow solid food, is usually slight, and there may be tremors at intervals.

Symptoms of choking with finely-divided dry food.—These are the same as for solid masses, ac-

ording to the situation, but in addition there is in the groove on the left side of the neck a diffuse, soft-yielding swelling, provided the obstruction is situated above the chest.

Treatment.—Sharp-pointed bodies lodged in the throat must be carefully sought for and extracted. Solid objects in this region can usually be withdrawn with the hand. Have the animal held with the head elevated into a line with the neck, and the mouth held open with a balling iron; then the tongue being drawn out with the left hand, the right hand is passed through the mouth into the throat, and the middle finger hooked over the offending body so as to withdraw it. If lodged still lower it may often be worked up into the throat by pressure beneath—it with one hand in each furrow along the lower border of the neck. A vigorous jerk at the last, seconded by the action of the pharynx, will often lodge it in the mouth, but if not, it is easily extracted as above advised.

Should this fail, and tympany prove threatening, lose no time in gagging the animal. A smooth roller of wood two inches in diameter is tied into the mouth by cords carried from its ends around the top of the head—behind the horns in cattle. Swelling never increases dangerously with this applied, and in a few hours the obstruction usually passes on.

More prompt relief may be obtained by using a probang of leather or other material with a spiral spring wire internally, the whole two-thirds of an inch in diameter, six feet long and with one end enlarged to one and a half inches in diameter and cup-shaped. This is oiled, and the head having been brought into a line with the neck, the balling iron introduced and the tongue drawn out, the cup-shaped end is introduced and pushed on until the obstruction is reached. Steady pressure must be kept up on this for a few seconds, when it will yield and should be passed into the stomach by introducing the probang to its whole length. If it resists, leave the animal gagged for an hour or two, and try again.

In the horse the probang cannot be safely passed without casting, and it should never be passed on until by examination in the furrow on the side of the neck the operator has ascertained that it has entered the gullet, and is clear of and above the windpipe.

For the small animals the probang must be made correspondingly small.

The use of whips and such-like objects is very reprehensible as being liable to tear the gullet. An effective probang may be constructed out of a piece of stiff, new rope, a few bundles at the end of which have been opened out and tied back so as to form a cup-shaped extremity. After being used this may be hung up straight on several nails driven into the wall, and will be ready for the next occasion.

In choking with finely-divided food the probang only packs it firmer, and gagging and time will rarely dislodge it. Pour water or well-boiled gruel down, and seek by manipulation to break up the mass and allow it to pass on little by little. Instruments have also been devised for extracting the obstructing mass. Failing otherwise, the gullet must be laid open, the offending matter extracted, the wounds sewed up and the animal fed for a time on liquids only.

Horses are sometimes choked by eggs given by foolish grooms. These may be punctured with a needle and then crushed between two solid bodies on different sides of the neck.

Prevention.—Besides the more obvious resort of withholding dangerous articles, the mere tying down of the head will prevent choking in cattle feeding on turnips, apples, etc. A loop of rope fixed to the ground is to be hung over the horn when such food is supplied. Solid food should be to a large extent withheld for a week after the relief of choking, until the slight irritation or inflammation has subsided.

The following has been recommended as a cure for galls in the shoulders of draught animals: Dissolve six ounces of iodine in half a pint of alcohol, and apply it on the sore with a feather as soon as the collar is removed, and when at rest, twice a day morning and evening. The article should be in the stable of every farmer, as it is an excellent application on horses where the skin is broken, and is a sure cure for splints if used in a proper manner.