

ART. XXVIII.—*Horses and their diseases.—Lamenesses, Shoulder Sprain, Rheumatism.* By J. B. TURNER, V.S.

Some veterinary writer, I just now forget whom, has called the shoulder sprain the "refuge of the ignorant," by which he meant that whenever a horse, lame in the fore leg or foot, is brought to a veterinary quack, and the quack cannot find the seat of the lameness any where else, he always sets it down to be in the shoulder, and treats it accordingly, in his fashion.

One day last summer I saw a horse at grass in a field near Montreal, who had evidently been under the hands of one of these impostors; observing from a distance that the near shoulder of the poor animal had been most severely blistered, and having a natural curiosity to ascertain wherefore, I got over the fence and made a closer inspection, when I discovered pretty quickly that the animal was laboring under that disease of the foot, named *navicularthrititis*, and that, even had it been shoulder lameness the quack had blistered the wrong one!—the horse being lame in the off and not in the near foot.

Shoulder sprain does, however, occasionally occur and is generally produced by a slip or side fall, and is apparently an unnatural extension of the *adductores* muscles, and chiefly of the *serratus magnus*; the ligaments of the articulations, both scapular and humeral, appear in some cases to be chiefly affected. Mr. Percivall is inclined to think that the injury frequently affects the tendon of the *flexor brachii*, and some French authors think it often exists in the scapulo-humeral articulation. It is, however, of very little consequence practically, to know the exact seat of the injury, as the treatment would be precisely the same.

It is not uncommon on viewing a horse in front, to find that the muscles of one or both shoulders are wasted; and, it is almost impossible to make even intelligent

observers believe that the injury does not lie where its effects are so apparent; but the fact is, that in all painful lamenesses of the fore feet and legs, not only the external, but the internal muscles of the shoulders are frequently found wasted—the fore legs are drawn closer together, the withers appear more prominent, and the whole muscular substance of the anterior part of the body seems lessened; it is therefore very important to be able to distinguish a true shoulder sprain from injuries originating elsewhere.

Whatever, then, be the peculiar tendon, muscle, or ligament injured in shoulder sprain, the symptoms are alike. When the shoulder is really sprained, the horse suffers great pain in moving, and as it will be recollected that the muscles of the shoulder are principally employed in lifting the foot, the tortured animal takes care to lift it as little as possible; and, therefore, invariably *drags the toe along the ground*. In most other lamenesses of the anterior extremities, when the horse stands in the stable, he rests the injured limb in advance of the sound one, *flat* on the ground. In shoulder lameness the foot is rested on the *toe* alone. If the suspected limb be elevated and carried forward by the hand of the surgeon, the animal will show that he is enduring great pain, which he will not do in other lamenesses of the foot or leg. Symptoms which we must *not* look for are much heat, tenderness, or swelling; for, the injured muscles being deeply seated ones, these symptoms cannot be manifested. Neither must we, if in standing in front of a lame horse we see that the point of one shoulder is considerably larger than that of the other, be then in a hurry to conclude that it is sprain of the shoulder. This species of injury is commonly attributable to a blow. Heat and tenderness will be found inside the fore-arm, and the muscles of the chest, rather than those of the shoulder, will be found affected.