

Continued from the November No.

## EVERY MAN HIS OWN CATTLE DOCTOR

## CHAPTER XII.

## Diarrhœa, or Purging.

Purging is produced by various causes; by change of food, from dry to green meat, or from short to luxuriant pasture; by poisonous plants, bad water, or unknown atmospheric agency.

It is not always to be regarded as a disease, nor should the farmer be always anxious to stop it. It may be an effort of nature to discharge something that is injurious; it may exist while the beast enjoys most perfect health, and is even thriving.

The farmer will not regard an occasional fit of purging; he will only attack it if it is violent, or if it continues too long. In the first case it indicates some disordered state of the bowels, or the presence of some offending matter in them, and he will endeavor to remedy this; not, as is too often done, by attempting to rest the discharge as speedily as he can—not by the exhibition of astringent medicine—but by giving a mild dose of physic, in order to assist nature in her effort to get rid of some evil. Nothing so much distinguishes the man of good sense from the mere blunderer as the treatment of purging.

From half to three-quarters of a pound of Epsom salts should be given with the usual quantity of ginger. The next day he may probably administer a little astringent medicine. The following will be effectual, and not too powerful.—

## Recipe, No 17.

*Astringent Drink.*—Take prepared chalk, two ounces; oak bark, powdered, one ounce, catechu powdered, half an ounce; opium, powdered, two scruples; ginger, powdered, two drachms. Mix, and give in a quart of warm gruel.

In the second case also, when purging has long continued, and the animal is beginning to become thin and weak, the practitioner must begin with physic. There is probably some lurking cause of intestinal irritation. He should give the quantity of Epsom salts just recommended—or perhaps he will more prudently give from half a pint to a pint of castor oil. It will usually be a good practice to give a rather smaller dose on the following day; and, after that, he may safely have recourse to the astringents; the animal should be brought into a cow-house or enclosed yard, where it can be sheltered from the weather, and kept partly or altogether on dry meat.

It is of great consequence that diarrhœa or simple purging should be distinguished from another disease with which it is too often confounded.—They are both characterised by purging. That which has been just considered is the discharge of dung in two great quantities, and in too fluid a form; but that which will form the subject of the next chapter, dysentery, is the evacuation of the dung, mingled with mucus, or mucus and blood. In diarrhœa the dung is voided in large quantities, and in full stream, it has sometimes an offensive smell, and is occasionally bloody; but dysentery is often accompanied by a peculiar straining; the dung is not so great in quantity, and it is more offensive, and more highly charged with blood.

The one is an accidental thing—not always to be considered as a disease—and often ceasing of itself when the purpose for which nature set it up.—the expulsion of some acid or injurious matter from the alimentary canal—has been accomplished; the other is an indication of an inflammatory affection of the larger intestines, difficult to be controlled, often bidding defiance to all means, and speedily destroying the animal. Diarrhœa occurs at all times of the year, and particularly after a sudden and great change of pasture, dysentery is a disease almost peculiar to the spring and autumn alone. It must be confessed, however, that diarrhœa is sometimes the precursor of dysentery in its worst form.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## Dysentery, Slimy Flux, or Scouring Rot.

It has been just observed that this disease is most prevalent in spring and autumn, particularly in low, wet, and swampy situations. It is one of the most fatal diseases to which oxen, and dairy cows in particular, are subject, and destroys more than any other malady.

It begins with frequent and painful efforts to expel the dung, which is thin, slimy, stinking and olive-colored. The animal, as appears from his restless state, suffers much pain, frequently lying down and soon rising again. There is also a frequent rumbling noise in the intestines. If the disease is neglected, or improperly treated, the beast gradually gets thin, although for a while he retains his appetite, and continues to ruminate; at length he evidently begins to get weak, rumination is imperfectly performed, and the food passes from him half digested. As this disease is often the consequence of a previous affection of the liver, considerable tenderness will be discovered on the spine, a little beyond the shoulders.—This is one of the methods, and a very good one, by which the farmer endeavors to ascertain whether a beast which he is thinking of purchasing, has the scouring rot. As the disease proceeds, the dewlap hangs down and has a flabby appearance; the dung runs off with a putrid and offensive smell, and, as it falls upon the ground, rises up in bubbles, and a membranous or skin-like substance is often seen upon it; this is occasioned by the natural mucus, which was given to defend the bowels, being discharged. In proportion to the quantity of mucus that mingles with the faeces, the whole is rendered more adhesive, and the bubbles are larger and remain longer on the dung. When this is the case the disease is always obstinate, and generally fatal. The hair all over the body soon appears pen-feathered or staring. Feverish symptoms also accompany the complaint; the eyes become dull and inflamed, there is much working of the flanks, and the pulse is quick.

The causes of this dreadful malady are—taking cold at the time of calving, long journeys, exposure to sudden vicissitudes of the weather, and, after being over-heated in traveling, being turned into damp pastures, &c. Poor keep is a very frequent cause, and especially when connected with exhaustion from constant milking, and it is more especially the consequence of the cows being badly fed in the winter. Some cold wet lands are particularly liable to give the rot; yet where the land and treatment are similar, it prevails more in some dairies than others, depending much on the breed of the cattle. Old cows that are fed on sanded pastures are very subject to this complaint.

In all cases the animals should be taken from grass, and put into a large cow-house or an open yard, where they can be sheltered from the weather, and kept on dry food, such as good hay, ground oats, barley, and beans. An equal proportion of each of the three last articles, and of linseed cake, will make an excellent food for cattle laboring under dysentery. A quantity proportionate to the size and appetite of the patients should be given two or three times a day, or if they are reduced, and their appetite is quite gone, a thick gruel should be made of these ingredients and administered three or four times a day.

This disease consists in inflammation of the lining membrane of the large intestines. It will then be evident that bleeding, proportioned to the suddenness and violence of the attack, and the apparent degree of fever, should be first resorted to.

If the eyes are inflamed, with heaving of the flanks, and painful twitchings of the belly, accompanied by severe straining and apparent grippings in the expulsion of the excrement, the abstraction of blood is indispensable.

The purgative drink (No. 2, p. 47) should precede the use of every other medicine, in whatever state the bowels may be. It will prepare for the

after use of astringents. In almost every case there will be something in the bowels, which, if it did not cause the disease, contributes to keep it up. The proprietor of cattle, and he who professes to treat their diseases, should know that there can be nothing more dangerous than to attempt suddenly to stop a violent purging, especially one that assumes the character of dysentery. Let that which offers in the bowels be first got rid of, and the disease will sometimes cease of itself, or, if it does not, astringents may then be administered with safety.

The safest and the most effectual astringent mixture for the scouring rot is that which was recommended in page 61. It may be given once or twice in the day, according to the violence of the complaint.

Alc should never be given in these cases. The astringents may be commenced twenty-four hours after the purgative has been administered.

If the disease does not speedily yield to this treatment, it will not be prudent to continue the use of such large quantities of astringent medicines for any considerable time. The following drink may then be given, and continued morning and night for five or six days:—

## Recipe No. 18.

*Astringent Drink with Mutton Suet.*—Take mutton suet, one pound, new milk, two quarts, boil them together until the suet is dissolved, then add opium, powdered, half a drachm, and ginger one drachm, having previously well mixed them with a spoonful or two of fluid.

When the dysentery is stopped, the beast should very slowly and cautiously be permitted to return to his former green food. Either during the night or the day, according to the season of the year, he should be confined in the cow-house, and turned out twelve hours only out of the twenty-four. Water should be placed within reach of the animal, in the cow-house, and, if possible, in the field; for there are few things more likely to bring on this disease, or more certain to aggravate it, than the drinking of an inordinate quantity of water after long-continued thirst.

These precautionary measures should be continued for a considerable time; for there is something very treacherous in this malady, and it will often suddenly return several weeks after it has been apparently subdued.

In those cases, and they are much too numerous, which totally resist the influence of the medicines already recommended, other means should be tried. The alum whey has sometimes succeeded, and is thus prepared:—

## Recipe No. 19.

*Alum Whey.*—Take alum, half an ounce; milk, two quarts. Boil them together for ten minutes, and strain.

This may be administered twice every day.

The disease may not yield even to this. It will then be evident that it is the consequence of some other disease, and, probably of the liver, vitiated bile secreted by which is keeping up the purging. It is almost a forlorn hope to attack such a case; but the beast may be valuable, and, at all events, we cannot be worse off. The only medicine that can have power here is mercury, for it seems to exert its chief influence on the liver, and the discharge of bile. The mildest, and at the same time the most effectual form in which it can be administered, is that of the blue pill, half a scruple of which may be given morning and night, rubbed down with a little thick gruel. There is very little danger of salivation; yet it may be prudent to give half a pound of Epsom salts every fifth or sixth day; and most certainly to give them every second day, and discontinue the blue pill, if the mouth should become sore, or the breath stinking, or there should be a more than usual discharge of saliva from the mouth.

In many cases there is found a scirrhus state of the third and fourth stomachs in cattle that have died of, or been destroyed for, this disease.