

SWINEY—OR DISEASE OR STRAIN OF THE SHOULDER.

This is an affection not uncommon, but yet little understood. If of recent occurrence it will be seen that the shoulder is *swelled*; if of long standing, that the shoulder is *diminished in size*, the muscles having shrunk away. The shoulder is frequently shrunk when there is no disease in it. This shrinking arises from disuse of the muscles. To retain its full volume a muscle must have constant action. Now, disuse of the muscles of the shoulder may arise from two causes. 1st, lameness of the foot or leg; 2nd, lameness of the shoulder. If it arise from the foot, no treatment is necessary for the shoulder. It may be easily known if it proceeds from the foot. In such case the horse, when he moves, lifts his *foot clear from the ground*; and when he points his foot forward, he places it flat on the ground. If the injury be in the shoulder, when he moves he *drags the toe of the foot along the ground*, seemingly unable to lift it clear; when he points his foot out, his *toe* only rests on the ground, not the sole of the foot. If the injury is in the shoulder the horse reluctantly turns his head towards the opposite shoulder; this strains the muscles: but he will willingly turn his head toward the lame shoulder, as this relaxes the muscles.

The common causes of shrinking or swiney of the shoulder, when it arises from the foot or injury to the leg below the shoulder, are all the diseases of the foot and leg, which continue long enough to occasion such a disease of the muscles of the shoulder as to occasion their shrinking. Such diseases are foot founder, contraction of the foot, strain of the navicular joint, ring-bone, puniced foot, sand crack, quittor, gravel, any separation of the foot, in short, any of the various diseases of the foot which induce the horse to favor it, and thus use as little as possible the whole leg and shoulder.

The shrinking of the shoulder, where it arises from an injury in the shoulder itself, has but one ordinary cause, viz., a strain of the shoulder. When there is strain of the shoulder, it is known at once. Within a few hours after its occurrence the shoulder is *swelled*, perhaps in its whole length, but generally at the lower end. The strain lies almost always in the muscles which attach the shoulder-blade to the body; yet the swelling is on the outside; but this arises from sympathy.

When the horse is observed to be lame, and it cannot at once be determined where the lameness is, let him be walked, and if he *drag his toe*, it is in the shoulder. Let the shoulder be examined in front; if the affection be of long standing, the shoulder will be seen to be less than the other. If on feeling it, it be found to be free of heat, there will be no fever. The disease is then chronic. If, however, the shoulder be enlarged, it will be found, on feeling, to be hot—the injury is then recent and inflammatory. Where the disease is in the shoulder, and is chronic, it has gone through the inflammatory stage, and is of some considerable standing. The chronic state

is rarely cured. It is not unlike rheumatism. For the *chronic state* the best remedy is active *blistering*. This will rouse the vessels to activity. It may be necessary to blister repeatedly, and exercise should accompany the blistering, with good grooming and general care. Let the exercise commence as soon as the blister begins to diminish its discharge. This treatment, continued judiciously and energetically for some time, may cure *chronic* disease of the shoulder. When the strain is recent, and inflammation exists, the horse should be bled from the neck and from the plate vein on the inside of the leg, as near the body as possible. Rest, cooling physic, both purgative and sedentary, should be given—*no blistering* should be allowed. Embrocations of a cooling nature should be applied. No *stimulants* should be applied externally, or given. They but add to the inflammation. When the inflammation is subdued and the shoulder has fallen back to its natural size, the horse needs nothing but rest, with gentle exercise. Let him be turned out, if in the summer, to grass; in the winter, into a small yard in good weather, and a loose box at night in bad weather. It will take him some time to get over the effects and be fit for work again.

When the shoulder is shrunk or swineyed from lameness in the foot or leg, below the shoulder, no attention should be paid to the shoulder. When both feet or legs are diseased, so that the horse seeks to relieve each alternately from pressure, both shoulders will be swineyed; they will be both shrunk, and the breast in front will be diminished and fall in. Treatment in these cases is to be addressed to the place of disease. If in the feet, cure them; if in the legs, cure them. Some diseases in the feet cannot be cured, and, of course, if there be swiney from such cause, it cannot be removed. When the feet and legs are cured, and the horse recovers thereby his wonted action, the muscles of the shoulder will by exercise, recover their former size, and the swiney be gone.

Among the ignorant there is a variety of remedies for the swiney, as pegging (that is thrusting a knife in the shoulder and blowing in stimulating powders), swimming, setons, &c. A recent writer in the Southern Cultivator says, "introduce the small blade of a common pocket knife (the point of which must be sharp), into the thinnest part of the shoulder, which will be near the upper margin of the shoulder-blade, holding the knife as you would a pen when writing, and scratch up the membrane that covers the bone for a space the size of a silver dollar; the knife may be then withdrawn. The knife may then be introduced in one or two places below the first, and used in the same way, and the operation is over." Now, if the disease be in the shoulder, this method can only cure by rousing the vessels to action. Blistering will do this better, and is more humane and less dangerous. Wounded membranes frequently produce fatal inflammation. Blistering is never dangerous in chronic affections, and