

## HOW TO USE A HORSE.

It is not, after all, every one who owns a horse that knows how to use him; whether for his own pleasure or the horse's, which is, in other words, the owner's best advantage. Nor is it very easy to lay down rules how a horse should be used, considering the many different purposes for which horses are kept, the different natures and constitutions of the animals, and the different circumstances of their owners.

Horses may, in general, be divided into two classes—those kept for work, and those kept for pleasure. In the former class may be included farm-horses, stage, coach, and omnibus horses, team-horses, employed in the transportation of goods, and moving heavy and bulky masses, carmen's horses,—and lastly, the road horses of all professional men, who, like lawyers, doctors of medicine, and the like, are compelled to drive or ride many hours *per diem*, regularly, in the performance of their business.

In the latter class may be included race-horses, match-trotters, private gentleman's saddle-horses, carriage-horses, or roadsters, and many other animals belonging to business men, which being employed during half the time or more in actual service, are used during spare hours on the road, for purposes of amusement.

With regard to the first class of these horses, the exigencies of the business to which they are applied are, for the most part, such as to supersede and override all rules. In some cases the natural hours of the day and night have to be reversed, and the animals are called upon to do their work by night, and to rest and feed by day. Under these circumstances, it may be laid down as an immutable law, that at whatever hour the horses are to be worked, they must have full time, beforehand, to digest their food and water; they must be carefully cleaned, and made comfortable; they must have sufficient intervals for halting and baiting on the road, must be cleaned and well fed during the intervals of work, and must have ample time for undisturbed repose. The distance which horses in perfect condition can go upon the road, varies greatly with the powers of the animal, the degree of pains bestowed upon him, the skill of his driver, and the amount of his load, as well as the state of the roads. But it may be taken as a rule, that strong, able horses, of moderate speed, can travel forty miles a day, with a moderate load, without distress, for many days in succession. It may be observed, that it is the better way to start at an easy pace when on a journey, to increase it slightly in the middle of the day, and again to relax it before coming in at night, in order to allow the animals to enter their stables cool, in good order, and ready, after a short rest and cleaning, to feed with an appetite.

It may also be observed, in this point of view, that it is a mistake to fancy that horses are benefitted by being driven or ridden very slowly when they have a long distance to perform. If a horse has to get over forty miles in a day, the roads being good, the temperature of the day pleasant, and the load not excessive, he will do it with more ease and less inconvenience to himself, going at the rate of seven or eight miles the hour, and doing the whole distance in five or six hours, with a single stoppage in the middle of the day, to feed and rest, than if he be kept pottering along at the rate of four or five miles, and be kept out of his stable, hungry and thirsty, and leg-weary to boot, for a longer time.

Farm-horses, whose work is necessarily slow and continuous, lasting ordinarily from sunrise to sunset, with the exception of a mid-day halt for baiting, are under different circumstances. Their work being always slow, and rarely, if ever, severe, at the moment, or toilsome, except from its long duration, they need not be subject to the same condition as fast-working horses, of being fed long before they are put to work, and allowed to evacuate their bowels thoroughly before being harnessed. They may, therefore, be fed and watered at the last moment, and put to slow work immediately, and will rarely take harm from travelling on full stomachs. In the same manner, when they are loosed at noon-day, being rarely overheated, after a slight rest and a slight rubbing down—which, by the way, they rarely receive—they may take their mid-day feed without delay, and without fear of evil consequences. In the like manner may be treated carmen's horses, and team horses, the labor of which is heavy and continuous rather than rapid. All horses, however, whatever the work to which they are applied, should have ample time to rest at night, and should be thoroughly rubbed down, dried, clothed, and made comfortable, before feeding them and closing the stables for the night,—and the more so, the more trying the day's work.