

Veterinary Department.

Firing and Blistering Horses.

(Veterinary Editor CANADA FARMER.)

SIR:—I lately observed a notice in the *Turf Field and Farm* of a communication received from a gentleman in Montreal describing the condition of his horses, and also stating that one of them has been fired and blistered, and he says not from necessity but as a means of prevention. We should like to know your opinion of the necessity of firing in such cases.

CONSTANT READER.

[NOTE BY VET. ED.—The firing iron is frequently used as a counter-irritant in the treatment of injury and disease of the limbs of the horse, and whilst admitting its efficacy in some diseases of the joints as Ringbone, Spavin &c., it is our decided opinion that many horses are subjected to the severe process of firing when there is no necessity whatever for the operation, therefore we cannot too strongly condemn the practice of firing in many instances. In the case Constant Reader refers to, if a severe counter-irritant was not requisite, it appears to us as a piece of cruelty to subject a fine animal to a severe and unnecessary operation; and as to its being useful as a preventive of future lameness, in our own opinion the idea is most absurd.]

Tympanites or Hoven in Cattle.

During the winter months, a tympanic condition of the paunch and bowels is by no means uncommon amongst cattle in this country, and is generally caused by the eating of partially frozen turneps, carrots or potatoes.

In the healthy discharge of the functions of the rumen or paunch, the food appears simply to undergo a process of softening, or maceration; but when the functions of the organ is interfered with, either by prolonged retention of its contents, or the injurious nature of the food taken in, the process of fermentation takes place, and gases are extricated, causing unnatural distension of the parts.

Amongst cows kept in cities, we find a very common cause of tympanites in the refuse of the kitchen, such as potato parings, apples, &c., which, in many cases, are mixed up with cold bran, and given to cows in large quantities, which prove very difficult to digest, and when retained in the stomach, it soon begins to ferment. The symptoms of hoven necessarily vary somewhat according to the amount of gases generated. Amongst the first noticeable symptoms are dullness, and more or less swelling of the left side of the belly. The animal stands with the head extended, and frequently moaning. The breathing is also labored and severe, produced by the rumen pressing upon the diaphragm and interfering with the action of the lungs. In acute and severe cases the swelling of the flank increases, until it stands prominent above the spine; if it is struck, a drum-like sound is emitted, showing plainly that the distension is due to the evolution of gas. As the disease increases, the breathing becomes still more oppressed; the animal froths at the mouth, and the eyes are unnaturally prominent, the circulation of the blood is weakened, the sufferer appears to experience very great agony, and if no relief is afforded, death soon ensues, either from rupture of the rumen, or diaphragm, or from asphyxia, produced from the enormous distension.

In order to save the life of the animal, some means must be immediately resorted to, to liberate the gas, or otherwise get rid of it, and for this purpose many different medicines are recommended. A very good drench for tympanites is two ounces of turpentine with a pint of linseed oil, or sulphuric ether two ounces, cold water one pint. The chloride of lime is

also a very good remedy, and tends to neutralize the gas, and some of the preparations of ammonia have also the same effect. In very severe cases, relief must be afforded mechanically, either by introducing the hollow probang down the oesophagus into the paunch, or puncturing with the trochar and canular. In performing the operation of puncturing the paunch, the place selected for operating is a spot equidistant between the last rib, point of the haunch, and about eight inches below the transverse process of the lumbar vertebrae. A small incision should first be made through the skin, and then the point of the trochar is placed in the wound and pushed into the paunch, then withdraw the trochar, and the gas freely escapes through the canular.

After operating it is generally found advisable to administer a purgative, as a pint or two of linseed oil, or half a pound of epsom salts dissolved in two quarts of water.

Different Systems of Horse-Breaking.

The London *New Quarterly Magazine* has an interesting article on the English and other systems of breaking horses, from which we make an extract:

In foreign countries when the colt is first broken, a bit of severity greater than that in common use is put into his mouth. The rough rider gets upon his back, and something like the following scene occurs. The young horse, feeling a strange weight upon him, probably begins by leaping up with all feet from the ground, at the same time curving his back,—a proceeding known as "buck-jumping," finding that this does not dislodge his rider, he lowers his head and kicks violently, hoping to send the rider over his head. The latter instantly draws the bridle tight and throws the horse's head so high that kicking is impossible to him—for to be able to kick, a horse has to hold his head low. Baffled again, he rears, and the man instantly loosens the reins and applies the spurs sharply. The horse drops to his forefeet and, as a last resource to escape from his tormentor, runs away. He is pulled up by the action of the powerful bit, which holds his jaw like a vice so long as he tries to resist it; but he does not try for long, for such a bit as is used is in truth, irresistible. Then completely at his wit's end, the poor beast stands trembling, quite cowed, and breaking out in a profuse perspiration. Thereupon, the rider coaxes him and pats him and (to use an expressive word I once heard from the late Mr. Rarey, of horse-taming celebrity) "gentles" him.

The horse may be supposed to argue that there is no contending against a power and an intelligence, which he has learned to perceive is superior to his own. He has discovered that further contention is useless; whatever attempt at resistance or aggression he has made has been checked and mastered, and he submits. The horse is broken. Now, this is the whole principle and science of horse-breaking; a very obvious principle and a very easy science. It consists only in letting the horse feel that he is completely mastered. To do this without fuss, and without unnecessarily frightening, hurting or exasperating the horse, is scientific horse-breaking.

Let us now examine the process of horse-breaking as performed in England, and see how these various conditions are fulfilled. The rough rider, armed with a stout ash sapling and a heavy pair of spurs, mounts the unbroken colt, who is bitted with the ordinary English double bridle. The colt kicks, and his bit is jerked violently and he is spurred and violently struck with the stick. He plunges and is again corrected. He rears; and here comes into action the well-known artifice of the English horse-breaker,—a feat which it takes a marvellously quick hand and perfect nerve to accomplish without danger. When the horse is standing high in the air, he is pulled over by the rider and falls backward, the rider slipping to one side to avoid being crushed. The risk to the horse is great, the risk to the driver immense; and it may be doubted whether, after all, the habit of rearing is ever cured by this heroic method.

Should the colt run away—and almost every previously untrained horse attempts to do so—the shortcomings of the English system are conspicuous. Unless the horse's mouth is unusually tender, the English bit is incapable of holding him; the man puts out his strength, the horse exerts his and often gets the best of the struggle and gallops long and far. Whether he is eventually mastered or not, the horse has perceived

that the rider's superiority is not incontestable, and he acquires in future a habit of resisting whenever he is frightened or irritated, and often merely from high spirit he gets into a habit of bolting. His mouth in the meantime has become callous; in other words, he comes to be hard-mouthed; for the final victory of the English breaker is rarely obtained without an immense amount of jugging and jerking and pulling of the bit. The horse is essentially a creature of habit; he associates being ridden with fighting against the bit in his mouth. If he could have been persuaded at first and at once that resistance was useless, he would have given in and acquired a habit of submission.

Modes of Killing Animals.

Dr. Slade, Prof. of Veterinary Science at Bussey Institute, Harvard College, recently read a paper before the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, upon the subject, from which we extract what follows:—

Dr. Slade spoke on the subject of killing domestic animals, both for food and to relieve them of the burden of life, in case of disease or old age. Animals for food are killed in several different ways:—by striking a blow on the head that stuns the animal, followed by immediate bleeding; by driving a sharp needle or thin knife through the neck, severing the spinal cord, called pithing; by cutting the throat, as practiced by the Jews. Many experiments have been made to determine the most humane method of taking life, and to learn what is death, and when it occurs.

Severing the head from the body with a knife, as by the guillotine, does not cause instant death.—The body has two motions, those which are voluntary, and those which are involuntary. Bodily motions are not sure indications of pain. There may be pain without motion, and motion without pain. To constitute pain, the brain must be in connection with the body injured. Piercing the nervous center in the neck, just back of the head, is supposed to cause instant death, but the spot to be aimed at is small and liable to be missed, except by experts. Probably the best method of killing is to strike a stunning blow on the head, and then bleed immediately, by cutting the arteries and veins connecting the heart with the head. The brain in animals is smaller than most people suppose, and is situated higher up. It is a common mistake to strike too low down on the face, causing severe pain without killing. It is best to blindfold animals before attempting to strike. To find the spot on the head of a horse, draw a line across the head through the pits above the eyes. A blow, or better, a pistol ball, in the centre of this line will kill instantly. It is advisable to dig the grave for a horse with one end on an inclined plane, that he may be led in. Then, when shot, he will fall to the bottom, thus saving much labor in moving and placing in position.

The doctor did not recommend the general use of chloroform for killing large, strong animals. He believed the sensation of suffocation is often more cruel than killing by a blow. Cattle should also be blindfolded, and the blow should fall about one and a half inches below the horns, in the centre of the head. The tendency is to strike too low on the ox as well as the horse. The same may be said of the hog. This animal should be struck three or four inches above the eyes. The line on sheep and calves is about one and a half inches above the eyes. It is generally believed that swine should not be stunned before bleeding. The lecturer said he thought this a mistaken idea, as they would bleed equally as well as if bled without first stunning. One of the most sickening sounds ever heard on the farm is that from the hog, during its last struggles, and there is no good reason why the present custom should be continued.

There is perhaps no better method of disposing of kittens than by drowning. Dogs may be instantly killed by shooting above the ears, at the side of the head.

When dressing poultry, do not cut off their heads and throw them down to kick and flutter on the ground. It does not have a good moral influence on the young people of the household. Better strike a hard blow on the head, and bleed, the same as other animals. Fishes for food should be killed, and not left to die. The food is much more wholesome, and keeps longer, besides being harder and sweeter.—There is no reason why fishes should be excepted from the general rule that animal food should be bled. It is also very inhuman to let a fish die by slow degrees, out of its natural elements.—*Rural New-Yorker*.