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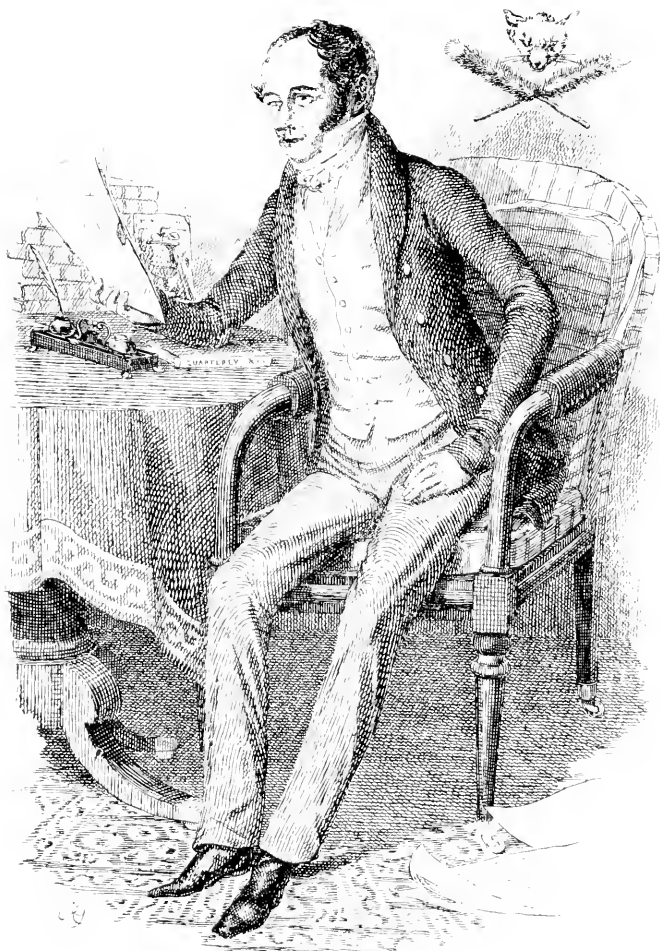


## THE CONDITION OF HUNTERS





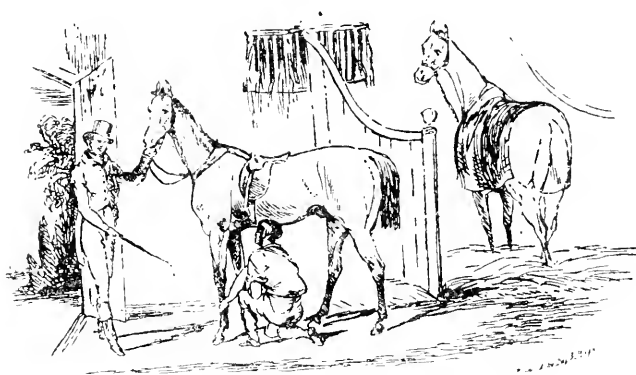




My best love  
Remond

THEIR CHOICE AND  
MANAGEMENT BY NIMROD  
THE VETERINARY PORTIONS  
BROUGHT UP TO DATE BY

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INCLUDING THE ORIGINAL  
TURNER LITHOGRAPHS ❧



NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY MCMVIII

*Turnbull & Spears, Printers, Edinburgh*

## MEMOIR

BORN 1778. DIED 1843.

**C**HARLES JAMES APPERLEY — better known as “Nimrod”—stands out pre-eminently as one of, if not the greatest writer on Fox-hunting and Hunters.

From youth upwards he turned his attention to field sports and country pastimes.

A little later on he proceeded to the famous school at Rugby, at which he received an excellent classical education—the result of which appears, over and over again, in the classical quotations and allusions that adorn his pages. His writings are sufficient testimony to the excellence of the instruction he received there, and the use he himself made of it in after years.

On leaving, he accepted a commission and became a Cornet in Sir Watkin Wynne’s Fencible Cavalry Regiment, in which he served during the terrible Irish Rebellion of 1798. That sad episode in Irish History is too well known to need recapitulation here. He was very popular and rose rapidly in the regiment remaining with it till it was finally disbanded. Later on he married and settled down in Leicestershire.

He threw himself with avidity into all the hunting pastimes and sports for which that country had so great a reputation. He found the Quorn Hunt at its zenith. He made innumerable friends, not only in connection with this famous pack, but with almost every pack of any note throughout the kingdom. His acumen and sound judgment on all matters relating to the chase made the name of "Nimrod" almost a household word where foxhounds were kept, or huntsmen met, either at the breakfast-table or in the disused quarry, prior to the run. His friendship was all embracing. It included the great ducal families alike with the humble trainer and the keeper. All that he looked for was honest merit. He was ever open to learn from the lowest menial, and his richly stored mind was at the disposal of all who sought his advice on sporting matters.—He was the uncompromising enemy of ignorance and cant.

On change of residence, his next home was at Bittern Hall in Warwickshire, which also had formerly been the place where Joseph Addison had lived. Mr Apperley appears to have lost a considerable amount of money in some farming experiments, in consequence of which he turned his great talent to literary work.

After one or two changes of residence, we find him in London. His first articles appeared in the *Sporting Magazine* in 1822, on "Fox-hunting in Leicestershire." The author was then about 44 years old. The name of "Nimrod" very soon became celebrated through-

out all sporting circles. His racy and pleasing style hit the public taste. His knowledge was recognized as eminently sound and practical, as opposed to mere traditional usage or theory in all matters pertaining to the hunter and the chase. His writings were not those that emanate solely from the easy chair. They were based on real experiences and on well-ascertained facts. They were from one who knew what he was writing about. As such they were presented to the public, and as such were appreciated by them. There is a charm of style about all his works, that specially appeals to all lovers of the ancient and royal pastime of fox-hunting. To them he is what Scott is to the lovers of Romance, and Dickens to the wider lovers of Humanity. Like them, too, he has had many imitators, but none who succeeded in reaching his high level of excellence. Many of his conclusions—even with advancing knowledge—are as sound to-day, as when they were given to the public.

Letters on Hunting and kindred articles followed from his pen in rapid succession.

At 50 years of age, Mr Apperley rode for, and won the Gold Cup at Dobberan.

Afterwards he went over to France (1830) and took up his abode at Calais, whence he contributed to *Fraser's Magazine*, *Sportsman*, *Morning Herald*, etc., and became one of the staff of the *Sporting Review*. His article in the "British Encyclopædia" is a testimony to his great critical judgment and powers of mind. In 1843 he returned to his native land, where he died soon afterwards.

His best known works are his "Remarks on Condition of Hunters" (1831), "Hunting Tours" (1835), "Nimrod Abroad," "The Chase, the Turf, the Road," "Northern Tour," "Life of Jack Mytton" (1837), "Life of a Sportsman" (1842), "Hunting Reminiscences" (1843).

FRANK T. BARTON.

UPPER NORWOOD,  
LONDON, 1908.



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*The Publisher has much pleasure in acknowledging his indebtedness to Mr WALTER T. SPENCER, 27 New Oxford Street, W.C., for the use of his brilliant impressions of the first and only edition of "Turner's Illustrations to Nimrod on the Condition of Hunters," from which the reproductions contained in this volume have been made.*

## EDITORIAL NOTE

**T**HE Editor, in the revision of these letters “On the Condition of Hunters,” has been anxious to retain their original form as far as possible, but with our present state of knowledge—more especially the letters bearing upon Veterinary work—it has been necessary to delete a considerable portion of the text, replacing it with facts of an up-to-date character.

In some of the letters this alteration has diminished the pagination, whilst the original index had to be recast in consequence.

The total volume of the work has been “cut down,” but the Editor trusts that this expunging of useless matter will not be thought to have diminished the brilliant character of the letters as originally penned by this famous sportsman, and that the “Condition of Hunters” will meet with the same hearty welcome as the older editions did.

F. T. BARTON.



## INTRODUCTION

“Doubtless God might create a better berry than the strawberry, but doubtless God never did.”—Dr BOTELER (*a Physician of old*).

THE following remarks on the choice of Horses, their management, and condition, are founded on the experience of upwards of twenty years, some part of which was purchased at the price at which that commodity is generally sold; and although I am aware that we have not much to learn from the “old ones” on this subject, yet it may amuse some of my readers to see how far their ideas and our own accord; as also to shew in what esteem and honour the Horse was held by them.

The object of Dr Paley’s Natural Theology is to infer intention and design from the general mechanism and evidences of art apparent in the animal frame; and certainly divine wisdom is in nothing more conspicuous than in the infinite variety of living creatures of different constructions—every part of them being formed with stupendous skill, and fitted with the utmost nicety to the purposes for which they appear to have been intended. The relative adaptation of their parts to their specific purposes is one of the strongest evidences of design in Him who made them; and in no instance is this more clearly and positively demonstrated than in the animal of which I am about

to treat. The description of THE HORSE has been deemed a subject not unworthy of the best and ablest writers of antiquity ; nor indeed has it been considered beneath the notice of inspiration itself : for grand and sublime as have been the allusions to him by ancient and modern authors, they all fall short of, and are lost in, the majestic language applied to him by Job (ch. xxxix.) : “ He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength : the glory of his nostrils is terrible. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage, neither believeth he (for joy) that it is the sound of the trumpet.” The horse has also given birth to many beautiful similes. Juvenal compares a degenerate person of quality to a broken-down race-horse ; and Tibullus elegantly introduces an old worn-out racer to shew the transition of all human glory. The tongue of an emphysemated fellow has been humorously compared to a race-horse, as going faster for the less weight it carries.

As to Homer and Virgil, they put even a poet’s licence to the stretch when they touch on this subject. Each of them makes his horses of heavenly extraction ; and the former takes as much pains to trace the pedigrees of his horse as he does those of his heroes. Twice he compliments Greece on the beauty of her women and her *horses* ; and makes those of Achilles immortal, after having stood still and wept for the death of his friend Patroclus. In his description of the coach-horses of Diomed, he descends even to their clothing in the stable ; which seems to have been ornamented in a manner suitable to the tinsel and tawdry taste of an Asiatic Prince. Neither has Virgil been behind-



hand with him here ; for, with a true Homeric spirit, he tells us that the horses which Cæsar consecrated when he passed the Rubicon wept, and refused their food on the day of their master's death. Of Virgil, however, it may be justly observed, that he gave to the world what in his day must have been considered most useful information respecting this noble animal ; and whenever he has an opportunity of introducing him in his poem, he descends to the minutest particulars as to colour, shape, furniture, etc., and dwells upon him in a manner that plainly shows the particular esteem in which he held him.

It is difficult to determine the nature of animal life, but it is evident that it cannot exist without certain organised parts ; and in proportion as this organisation is complete, is the vigour it possesses. When we compare the different species of animals we find each of them possessed of powers and faculties peculiar to themselves, and well adapted to the peculiar sphere of action allotted to them. Mere strength requires solidity alone ; but when, as in the horse, it is united with that suppleness and activity which we see them possess, what a multitude of combining powers must it not require ! What levers, springs, etc., must be called into play ; and how small a space do they occupy, at the same time allowing full liberty of action ! Look at the fetlocks of a horse, how small they are ! and yet we find them capable of lifting a great weight, in addition to his own, to the height of five, six, or even seven feet<sup>1</sup> from the ground, and

<sup>1</sup> It is wonderful what a bound or spring some horses have the

supporting it again in its descent with vastly increased force.

All bodies, animate or inanimate, derive their beauty, more or less, from their aptitude to the uses for which they were intended ; though among the former some may be said to derive it from circumstances independent of this aptitude. Birds, for instance, appear conscious and proud of their ornamental plumes, and take no small pains to clean and preserve them. What enamel, however, can be much finer than the lustre of some horses' skins ? In the latter—the inanimate world—variety, regularity, and just proportions of their different parts constitute their principal beauty ; for what would become of the wreathed and fluted column under a pile disproportionate to its strength ? If, therefore, symmetry and proportion are necessary to form a perfect figure, where are they more frequently met with than in the horse ? That elegance of form in which there is no unnecessary weight to oppress the muscles is particularly conspicuous in the better sorts of our English horses, when brought into condition for hunting or racing. The regularity and just proportion of their limbs confer a peculiar grace and beauty on the body to which they belong ; and when we consider the good qualities they possess—the fire and spirit of their temperament, yet general docility—the agility of their movements, which we call action—their courage, their accomplishments, passive for-

power of exerting. In 1821 Mr Mytton's horse, "the Hero," cleared *timber* seven feet in height, with a very short run to it, in Mr Jellico's grounds in Shropshire, with Mr M. on his back.

bearance—and, above all, their indispensable utility—we cannot be surprised that in all ages and in all countries they have been objects of admiration and gratitude. If, therefore, the logic of Socrates be admitted, that what is good is beautiful, and that fitness is essential to beauty—the horse must “bear the bell” among the animal creation. Exclusively of his beauty, if he be not the strongest, he is the bravest and fleetest in the forest; and if custom had not dignified the lion with the title of “king of the beasts,” reason would have bestowed it on the horse.

To some animals Providence has imparted strength, to others subtlety; some are made dreadful by their ferocity—perhaps, in the first instance, by way of warning mankind from a state of indifference which too great a security might produce: but in the horse is implanted this happy combination of qualities, which render him so particularly subservient to the purposes and uses of man. Were his nature, with his gigantic strength, different from what it is, it would be impossible to tame him; for education never alters nature. Fortunately, however, it is no less true than extraordinary, that animals which are most timid are hardest to be tamed; whereas those which, like the horse, are of a bold and generous disposition—having less fear because they have less suspicion—rather solicit than avoid the kind offices of man.

Frenchmen, generally speaking, are bad judges of animal life: but let us hear what one of them says on this subject.<sup>1</sup> “Of all animals the horse has the finest

<sup>1</sup> “Spectacle de la Nature.”

turn of shape, is the most noble in his inclinations, the most liberal of his services, and the most frugal of his food. He would sooner die under the weight of his labours than decline them. Is he to bear his master himself, he seems sensible of the honour. He studies how to please him ; and, at the least signal, varies his pace : is always ready to slacken or redouble, or precipitate it, when he is acquainted with his master's will. Neither the length of the journey, nor the uneasiness of the way, nor ditches, nor rivers the most rapid, can discourage him. He springs through every obstacle, and is a bird whose career no impediment can check." Thus far the Frenchman goes on very well, and has described the sort of horse for which a Melton man would have no hesitation in giving five hundred guineas ; but when he comes to a more minute description of his form, he produces one which is only fit to carry a Frenchman. He says, " he should have a small head, be high and thin chested, of a well-turned shape, with a belly somewhat round and tight, and thin legged. This," he adds, " is the most proper for services of a genteel nature, will do honour to his rider in performing feats of chivalry, will excel in the chase or course, and will be serviceable in travelling, or in pursuit of the enemy." He finishes by saying that the most valuable saddle horse is the English gelding, the Spanish genet, or the Arab.

That able zoologist, the late Mr Pennant, very justly observes, that the horse is found in England of many mingled breeds, whilst most other countries produce only one. Our race-horses, he adds, descend

from Arabian stallions, and the genealogy faintly extends to our hunters. The strength and courage of our draught horses are derived from those of Germany, Flanders, and Holstein. The British cavalry was remarkable even in the time of Julius Cæsar, yet we know not what was the primitive breed.

Fabulists have accounted for the original birth of the horse in two ways : first, that Neptune created him by a stroke of the earth with his trident ; and, secondly, that he was begotten of the wind. These are grand and poetical ideas : but what Neptune had to do with horses, unless it were with the *hippocampi*, or sea-horses, I am at a loss to imagine : and although it appears he took one of his names from his skill in breaking them, yet I never hear of the relation between them but I think of the Irishman and the *horse marines*. Fabulists, painters, and poets, however, do not stop here ; and although Noah is said to have refused a passage in the ark to the mule, *they* are not satisfied till they surpass Nature, and attempt to unite in one figure what she has wisely divided between two. By destroying nature, they substitute infirmities ; and, however beautiful their centaur, their Pegasus, their satyr, their dolphin, or their mermaid may appear in a picture or a poem, they would cut a sorry figure were they realised : and I have always been of opinion, that a brawny young fellow, stark naked, with a huge pair of wings on his back, might (*tali auxilio*) just as soon be taken for a devil as an angel. In this manner they have deformed and dishonoured both man and horse, by creating a *centaur* ;

and, strange to say, many grave writers contend for the actual existence of the monster. Plutarch mentions one as having been seen at Corinth; and Pliny, who ought to have known better, says *he himself saw* one embalmed in honey, which had been brought from Egypt to Rome by the Emperor Claudius. This, however, is not the last upon record; for St Jerome mentions, in the life of Paul the Hermit, that a centaur had been seen by St Anthony. Now, as one good father could not, with propriety, doubt the veracity of another good father, it seems he only doubted the eye-sight of the Saint, and suspected the object to have been an illusion of the devil. I think we may fairly conclude that these monsters never existed but in the imagination of a madman, or a poet, or of some outlandish Greek who first saw a man upon a horse's back, which is not altogether an unnatural conclusion. Few stories, however, are more famous in historical fable than the battle of the centaurs with the Lapithæ, when they all got drunk at a wedding.

Authors are divided as to the time when men first mounted horses; but from passages in the Bible, it appears that we are indebted to Egypt for the equestrian art. That it was cultivated in Homer's time is certain; and it seems the Greeks transmitted it to the Romans, who soon excelled their masters. Herodotus, in Thalia, speaks of hunting on horses in the time of Darius: also, in Melpomene, that the Amazons hunted on horseback with their husbands. Xenophon tells us Cyrus did so when he exercised himself and his horses. Ovid speaks of Castor and

Pollux being mounted on horses whiter than snow at the hunting of the Caledonian boar. It does not, however, appear that horses were brought into Greece long before the Trojan war.

Several countries have claimed the honour of being famous for their breed of horses ; but Tartary seems to be the indigenous one. They were great breeders also in Argolis, Cappadocia, and in Macedonia. In the latter country there were kept in the Royal stud three hundred stallions and thirty thousand mares ; but Epirus, formerly a kingdom of Greece, seems to have been the *Yorkshire* of the East. According to all that has been said on the subject, great attention was paid to preserve the breeds pure. In Tartary, a bad race-horse was immediately castrated ; and among the Arabians the certificate of leap and produce was delivered with all the forms and accuracy of a title-deed to an estate. They had three classes of horses in Arabia : first, noble ; next, nearly so ; and the third, common. These answer to our thorough-bred, half-bred, and cart-horse. To obtain possession of the first class has always been very difficult ; and many interesting anecdotes are upon record of those whose necessities have compelled them to part with them.

After what has been said, supposing it to be true, we cannot wonder at the high honours that have in all ages been paid to the horse, and that he has made so conspicuous a figure in the history of every country. Darius was chosen King of Persia by the neighing of his horse ; and it has been gravely asserted that

Alexander would never have pushed his conquests half so far as he did, had not Bucephalus stooped to take him on his back. The history of this horse is elegantly blended with that of his master. It appears that when brought for Philip to purchase, he was extremely restive, but was soon made to submit to the courage and superior horsemanship of his son. This so pleased the father, that, kissing him, he exclaimed, "Oh, my son, seek some kingdom equal to thy worth, for Macedonia is too little for thee." We are farther told that he built a city in honour of the horse, and called it after him. If history is to be credited, one Roman Emperor raised his horse to the Consulate, and another made him a guest at table, where he was fed with gilt oats out of an ivory manger : his stable was of marble, his collar set with pearls, and his clothing, of rich purple, fit for a Bishop. In Morocco, horses were made saints,<sup>1</sup> and when the King went abroad, he caused one of them to be led before him richly accoutred, and his tail held up by a Christian. Oriental Princes always sent a horse as a present to their favourites. When Trajan stayed at Antioch, several petty Princes sent him presents—among which was a horse, that, when brought before him, kneeled and bowed to him. It is told of Cyrus, that, having had one of his famous grey horses drowned in passing a large river in Asia, he was so vexed that he stopped the course of it, and divided it into three hundred and sixty channels. So attached was this great Prince to horses and horsemanship, that among

<sup>1</sup> "The World."



his subjects it was considered a disgrace to be seen publicly on foot. Among the ancient Grecians, horse-men were placed above the commonalty, and next to those of the highest rank and fortune. The same respect was also paid to the Roman *Equites*; and in the present day a sub in a dragoon regiment thinks himself equal to a captain of foot.

No trifling respect, if not honour, is paid to the horses of our own country. They exceed all other animals at least tenfold in their value; and their comfort and convenience are, generally speaking, strictly attended to. William the Conqueror improved the breed of English horses, as did the Earl of Shrewsbury in his (William's) time. In Edward the Sixth's reign an Act was passed to make stealing a horse felony without benefit of clergy, but it did not extend to other cattle; and in that of Harry the Eighth, all persons whose grounds were enclosed were obliged to keep two brood mares of a certain size.

We are now arrived at such perfection in the breeding and *forcing* of horses, if I may be allowed such an expression, that we have nothing to learn from those who have gone before us: but the *principles* laid down by ancient writers on this subject, particularly by Virgil and Pliny, both good judges, are strictly correct. The former says, if you want to win a prize at the Olympic games, *consult the dam of your colt*. This was exactly the opinion of the late Lord Grosvenor, the greatest breeder of race-horses this country ever saw. The present Earl has confirmed it by breeding very extensively from Thunderbolt, but it has been

only out of two or three of his best mares that he could get a winner. This has also been very strongly exemplified at the last Newmarket meetings by the produce of the Duke of Grafton's famous mares winning all before them.<sup>1</sup>

It is much to be lamented that among sportsmen the prejudice against mares is so strong, as, in consequence, the value of many good hunters, and, subsequently, many good brood mares, is never known; for being so generally rejected by those persons who would give them the fairest chance of distinguishing themselves, they fall into the hands of farmers and others, who cannot for obvious reasons give them that opportunity. If we look back to the great performances on the road against time, we shall find that by far the greater number of them were by mares; and *Eleanor*<sup>2</sup> winning *the Derby and the Oaks* (in 1801), and the running of Lord Grosvenor's *Meteora*,<sup>3</sup> were perhaps never excelled if equalled by horses. The

<sup>1</sup> The produce of Coquette, Diana, Piquet, Miltonia, Parasol, Medora, Prudence, and Penelope, won (thirty times), in 1822, prizes amounting to £11,317.

<sup>2</sup> This excellent mare when in training had forty-nine engagements, and was the winner of twenty-eight prizes: she was the successful competitor for both the Derby and Oaks at Epsom; she also won the King's Plates at Newmarket and Lincoln; the Gold Cups at Oxford, Newmarket, and Egham; and £2567, 5s. in specie. Eleanor was dam of *Nell* by Johnny, *Muley* by Orville, *Troilus* by Walton, *Active* by Partisan, *My Aunt Nan* by Pioneer, etc. etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Meteora's* career was truly brilliant. In addition to £1480, she won the Oaks at Epsom, the Royal Plate at Chelmsford, two Classes of the Oatlands, the Audley End Stakes, twice one-third of 25 gs. Subscription, the Jockey Club Plate, two Cups at Stamford, the Somerset Stakes, and the Cup at Brighton. She died in 1821.

Arabians have always preferred mares to horses. They have been found to endure hunger and thirst, and all other privations, better ; and although in our climate horses are seldom put to the test in this respect, yet, when travelling between the tropics in a desert, it must be a most valuable consideration. In a race, it is true, mares are put upon a par with geldings ; but it must be admitted that they are more perfect in their nature, and, with the exception of the period of genial desire, I conceive them to be more than equal to them in any kind of exertion on the road or in the field.

By the Spanish proverb, " He that will have a mule without a fault must keep none." Perfection is seldom found in any living being ; but certain it is that, of all animals in which perfection, or as near to it as their nature will admit, is required, it is in a horse to carry a man or a woman on the road ; and were I requested by a friend to purchase a good hack for him, I should consider him to have given me a commission ten times more difficult than if he had requested me to purchase half a dozen hunters ; and for the following reasons : In the first place, the price offered for a hack is seldom sufficiently great to induce the owner to part with him if he is really a good one ; and to be a good one, he must not only be a *hunter in miniature*, but he must be possessed of many good qualities that may be dispensed with in a hunter. A horse may have twisted fore-legs, fleshy feet, thrushes, or corns ; may be startlish, fretful, and awkward in his slow paces, and yet be a brilliant

hunter over a country.<sup>1</sup> But the qualifications of a good hack are so numerous as to be almost disheartening to look for them : he must have good fore-legs as well as good hinder ones ; he must have perfect feet, a good mouth, not given to start, safe on his legs, gentle in his temper, and quiet to ride *on all occasions*. A fidgety hack, however good in his nature, is very unpleasant, and in hot weather insupportable. He is fit for nothing but to ride to covert at the rate of twenty miles in the hour ; and in that case his being a little eager to get on may be immaterial, as the disease and the remedy travel together. I remember asking a young Oxonian whether his hack was a good one, and his answer was, “ Capital ! he ran away with me every yard of the road (fourteen miles) to covert this morning.” For such quick work, however, it is necessary that a hack should be well-bred. A low-bred one will go very pleasantly at this rate for about ten miles, when he will begin to roll about and become unsafe. In the language of grooms, he will “ cry out for his mamma.” There are very few exceptions to this rule, for Nature seldom goes out of her course to oblige any man.

There is one most essential quality, a *sine qua non* in a good hack which is, that he should go *near the*

<sup>1</sup> What I have now asserted was completely verified by that celebrated horse *The Clipper*. His fore-legs were so twisted that he was generally booted to go to covert, and his temper so awkward that it was necessary that some one should accompany the boy who rode him to open the gates. It is almost unnecessary to add that he was the property of Mr Lindo, and perhaps the most brilliant hunter that ever appeared in Leicestershire.

*ground*, and yet go safe. Perhaps it may not be generally known that a horse may go *very near the ground*, and never make a trip; and that another may lift his knee almost up to his nose, and yet be an arrant tumble-down. Were I to say which was the safest animal in all its paces that ever came under my observation, I should have no hesitation in saying it was a mare that was in my own family for upwards of fifteen years, that touched every stone which she passed her foot over, but never made a mistake in all that time. Lifting up the leg, or what the London people call the “knee-up action,” has nothing to do with a horse going safe on the road. It is not on the *taking up* of the foot, but on the *putting of it down*, that the safety of a horse’s action depends. Although I do not go so far as to say (though it has been said) that the fore-legs are merely pillars under the body of a horse, and have little to do with his action, yet I do maintain that they are entirely obedient to the shoulder; and if the shoulder command that the toe shall touch the ground first, instead of the foot coming down flat, with the heel well down, it is no matter how high the foot is taken up by the bending of the knee. What I have said may appear rather paradoxical; but a little consideration will establish the justness of my observation. When the leg is bent, as in action, in the form of a C, and the foot suspended in the air, turning inwards, with a curve towards the body, were it in that state to come in contact with a stone or any other substance, it would pass it over without resistance—being, as it were, at that time in

a flaccid state ; but when the foot approaches the ground, the limb is extended, and the whole weight of the fore-quarters is about to be thrown upon it. If, then, the base for that weight be not even and firm—if the toe dig into the ground before the bearing is completed, a trip, and a dangerous one, is the consequence. My argument is exemplified thus. Man walks very near to the ground, but seldom strikes it with his toe. Follow him over a path where the snow is deep enough to trace him, and you will immediately perceive that he strikes the snow with his heel, but scarcely ever with his toe. If he did, he would constantly be injuring himself, and would soon become a cripple. The action of a man proceeds from his hips ; whereas that of a horse, as far as his fore-legs are concerned, is from his shoulders ; but the principle is the same with each : each is a piece of curiously-wrought mechanism ; and according to the correctness of that mechanism is their action true.

When I try a horse with the view of purchasing him for a hack, my trial is a very short one. I get on his back, and, loosing his head, let him walk a hundred yards on a foot-path. If Nature has designed him to stick his toe into the ground instead of putting his foot down quite flat, by which alone he can go safe, he will do so two or three times before he goes that distance. There are little undulations in a road of that description which are scarcely perceptible, and for that reason will immediately detect this sort of action. If, on the other hand, he walk smoothly over



ONE OF THE RIGHT SORT





it without touching it, I try his other paces, and if I like them I have no reason to fear his tumbling down. There are other ways in which horses fall down on the road. One is by sudden starting, when their legs "fly from under them," as it is termed; and another by what is called "a false step," that is, by placing the foot on a stone that rolls from under it; or from the giving way of any substance on which they may tread; also from the corns or thrushes, in which case they come down to the ground more suddenly, and with greater violence than when the fall is occasioned by a stumble. Falls, however, of this nature generally proceed from want of energy in their action and a good use of their hinder legs; but as circumstances of this nature will occur on all roads, it shews the necessity of never trusting a hack entirely to himself. With the exception of post-boys and commercial travellers, few persons have ridden the road more than I have done; and I attribute the trifling number of falls I have had to never trusting my horse. I have always made it a rule to feel his mouth lightly, and generally more with the bradoon than with the curb, and for the following reasons: In the first place, to go safe on the road, a horse must carry his head where nature intended he should carry it, and by riding him on the bradoon he will be the more inclined to do so. Secondly, by always feeling his mouth, however lightly, you are enabled to give him assistance *immediately* on his legs failing him, when a very little will be sufficient to restore the equilibrium: but if you ride him on the curb, with a loose rein, he may

be nearly down before you feel him ; and when the centre of gravity is lost it is not so easily restored. Feeling a horse's mouth in this way is a still greater security from falls proceeding from any of the last mentioned causes, as so little previous warning is generally given. A few years since I was riding to covert with a master of fox-hounds who rode heavy, and seeing him going along at the rate of twelve miles in the hour, up and down hill, with his reins on his horse's neck, I observed to him that I should be afraid to trust him. His answer was that " he could not fall." The very next time he rode him, however, he did fall, rolling completely over him ; and, had it not been that the ground was soft, must in all probability have killed or seriously hurt him. However pleasant and wholesome horse-exercise is, it has been remarked that no man who gets on a horse knows how or when he shall get off him ; and certain it is that when, under any circumstances, we trust our safety to another, the insurance becomes doubly hazardous. Common precautions, therefore, are neither to be despised nor neglected. A leg, a thigh, or a skull is soon fractured, and a really good and safe hack is not only, as I before mentioned, the most scarce and difficult horse to be met with, but invaluable to a man who rides much on the road, particularly after a certain time of life has gone by.

Although it is not necessary, or to be expected, that a hack should be a hunter, yet a hunter, to be perfect, should be a good hack, and his value is much increased by his being so. I remember hearing a

person speaking of a hunter, by a covert's side in Leicestershire, which was for sale ; and, among other good qualities, he mentioned that he was a nice horse to carry a woman on the road. " Whose horse is that ? " exclaimed my Lord Maynard, who was within hearing. " I will give two hundred guineas for him ; for a horse that will carry a woman well will always carry a man." The chief paces for a hack to carry a gentleman are the walk and the canter. A very quick trot is a most ungentlemanlike pace, and only fit for a butcher ; besides which it wears out a horse much sooner than a canter, from the weight being all thrown upon one fore-leg at the same time ; whereas in the canter it is equally divided between both. Added to this, a canter is much more easy, as well as safer to the rider, the horse having his haunches more under him than when he trots, thereby more likely to recover himself in case of making a mistake, which the best is sometimes subject to. Fast trotting also distresses a horse more than cantering, because in the one he is going up to the top of his speed, and in the other much below it. Trotting, however, has been more in vogue lately in the sporting world ; and the match between Mr Barnard's mare, of the Arabian breed, and Captain Coltson's horse, for 500 gs., was a wonderful performance. It appears that the mare, who won, did the last mile within six seconds of the rate of twenty miles in the hour without being pushed—the speed of the horse having fallen off. Had the race been continued for one other mile at the pace the mare did the last, *she would have trotted ten miles in the*

*extraordinary short space of half an hour and fifty-two seconds.*<sup>1</sup>

Some cantering horses appear to consult the ease and comfort of their riders by never breaking into a trot until pulled up for that purpose ; and I have met with a *few* in my time that did not *appear* to be going more than eight or nine miles in the hour, and yet were going eleven. This is the perfection of action in a hack ; and I never see one getting over the ground in this delightful and smooth manner, but it brings to my recollection the anecdote of a gentleman who sent for his huntsman into his dining-room to inquire after the sport of the day ; when, after describing the country he had drawn over, and the run he had had, he finished by saying that “ *his hounds went like hell and d—n, and the old mare carried him like oil !* ”

Demosthenes, being asked what was the first point in oratory, replied—action. What the second?—action. What the third?—action. Had the sage Grecian been catechised in this way as to his opinion of a horse, he could not, with all his eloquence, have expressed himself more aptly ; for action is everything: without it the finest form is of no avail ; although in justice we must admit that we do not often find very fine shape and make unaccompanied by it. Sometimes, however, there is a helplessness and want of

<sup>1</sup> This event took place on Tuesday, June 4th, 1822, in the Grove Park, near Gerrard’s Cross, Bucks, over a two-mile circle. It was to trot nine miles against each other, and to start at different ends of the two miles. It was as fine a race as ever was run, and both were neck and neck at the seventh mile, when the horse began to fall a little off his speed.

energy about a well-shaped horse which we cannot account for—arising, perhaps, from some physical cause not apparent to the eye. I have frequently been asked my opinion of a horse when standing in the stable. My answer has invariably been, “Let me get upon his back, and I will tell you.” A judge, however, may form some idea of what a horse is before he mounts him, from the position of those two most essential points—the shoulders and the hinder legs; for if they are not in their proper places, it is in vain to look for true action. You may as well expect an ass to play the fiddle, as a horse to carry his rider pleasantly, unless he have good lengthy shoulders and well-bent hinder legs. A friend of mine, who is become fastidious in his judgment, goes so far as to say that no horse can have a good mouth with straight hinder legs. He is so far correct, inasmuch as no horse with straight hinder legs can pull together; therefore neither his head nor his heels can be where they ought to be, and consequently he can never be fit to carry a gentleman.

## LETTER I

### THE CONDITION OF HUNTERS

**H**AD some sensible and rational groom given to the world the result of his practice in the stable, I should not have taken up my pen on this humble subject, conceiving he would have been better qualified for the task. But as no instructions of this nature are before us, and they appear to be much wanting, I will endeavour to furnish them to the best of my ability.<sup>1</sup> Mr White's is the only one on this subject that I ever was possessed of. It appears to be written by a man who understands his profession, and his practice is rational and safe. He has a long chapter on *condition*; but he writes as a veterinary surgeon, treating scientifically of the anatomy and pathology of the horse, and stating such defects as operate *against* getting a horse into condition—as also recommending some preventives of disease after hunting, etc. But for directions as to work, feeding, and other means by which we are to get a horse fit to appear at a covert-side, we look in vain. Mr White, however, as I before observed, was a veterinary surgeon; and it is not, generally speaking, from veterinary surgeons that we are to expect such direc-

<sup>1</sup> This work has been revised by several veterinarians.

tions. Their attention is turned to more important subjects ; and it is from those alone who have made it either the business or amusement (*labor ipse voluntas*) of their lives to superintend the management of hunters that we are to receive practical and useful directions. Among the latter I may class myself. For twenty years of my life I have had a stud of hunters ; and although I have had two as good grooms as fall to the lot of most men, I never gave them control over my horses in the stable ; but acted on the principle that two heads may be better than one, and that the person who rides the horse is a better judge of his state than the person who cleans him.

I shall endeavour, therefore, to detail the result of my own practical observations on this most essential point—a point on which depends not only the place which every man who rides to hounds is to maintain in the field, but his safety in that place ; and—what is of no small importance, from the high prices at which horses have lately been sold—the safety of his horse afterwards.

In illustration of argument, or in corroboration of facts, it is impossible to avoid sometimes talking of oneself, particularly on such a subject as this ; but I beg the reader to understand that it is my wish to suggest, rather than dictate. I shall, therefore, merely describe that method of treating the hunter, in his preparation for the field, which I have found to be the most safe and advantageous—leaving others to judge of its propriety, and to adhere to their own plans, if they prefer them to mine. The situation of a

hunter, well ridden up to hounds, is one of great peril and danger ; and it may be some recommendation to the plan I have pursued, that in a long series of years I have never had the distemper in my stable, nor more than one dead horse dragged out of it. I may also add that I have had more than my share of success with my horses.

Mr Locke was of opinion that such is the diversity of the tastes and relishes of men, that it would be difficult to write a book which might not please some ; and one of the " old ones " has observed that every man should do *something* to make himself useful and profitable to mankind. If, then, by communicating the result of my experience on this subject, I may amuse some, and be the means of enabling others who pursue the diversion of fox-hunting to do justice to the physical powers of their horses, and thereby diminish their sufferings (for suffer they must) from the work which they are put to perform, I shall not think my time has been misemployed. It is a subject on which theory is worth little. The information required must be the result of practice or close observation alone. Be it remembered, that it was at the suggestion of a cobbler that the Grecian painter altered the shoe of his figure. If I differ from some old-established rules, it will be on the principle that no notions, however handed down to us, which our reason cannot approve, should influence our judgment in matters of this nature, but we should be solely guided by what appears rational and true ; and " he who will not reason is a bigot, and he who cannot is



a fool." Ignorance and prejudice are fading fast, and common sense finds its way into the stable, as well as into other departments of general economy, and knowledge predominates over ignorance and error, as man governs other animals.

The word "condition" is one of the widest latitude. Dr Johnson defines it thus: "a quality by which anything is denominated good or bad." Strictly speaking, therefore, the adjective "good" or "bad" is wanting to give it its proper signification. It has, however, been generally applied in a favourable light. Our old writers were wont to call men of rank and fortune "gentlemen of condition"; and in our own times, if we see a horse, or a piece of land, looking well, we are apt to say "they are in condition." As, however, by the word condition, when applied to the horse, we mean a state quite contrary to a state of Nature, if follows that *art* is necessary to produce it; and as all measures which tend to throw Nature out of her destined course *by violence* are bad, it also follows that time, great caution, and judgment are necessary in the use of them; for which reasons it is not in the power of every man calling himself a groom to get a horse into condition. In the first place, it requires a larger stock of strength of mind than persons of this description are generally possessed of, to induce them to lay aside old prejudices and customs; and, what is a still harder task, to acknowledge that they know nothing. That there are scientific grooms it is true; men capable of getting a stud of horses into perfect condition without the master's eye; but it is not in

the power of every man who keeps his hunters to get them. They are scarce ; and their demands for wages, and other concomitant expenses, are not within the reach of us all.

In the common language of the stable, a horse is said to be " in condition " when he is full of flesh, has a shining coat, and a healthy look ; whereas, with all these outward appearances, being in perfect health, he may be quite incapable of exerting his physical powers with effect : for although, in some measure, the skin may be said to be the complexion of a horse, yet it is more by the *feel* than by his look that his good or bad condition is to be appreciated.

It is well known that animals in a state of domestication exhibit powers unknown in their wild and natural state ; and so does man. With respect to the latter, it has been ascertained by the hynamometer, or measure of strength, of Regnier, that the physical powers of man in a savage state are only as 51 to 69 of that of a Frenchman, and 71 of that of an Englishman. Good food, aided by exercise, invigorates the muscles by consolidating the flesh ; and the texture of the body depends, in great measure, on the food on which all animals live.

Next to the nature and accomplishments of a hunter, his condition is of the first importance. In my own opinion it has always been considered of such *paramount necessity*, that I have thought no pains or expense ill bestowed to obtain it ; having so often proved that a middling horse in condition will beat a good one not fit to go. The system which I have

adopted for upwards of twenty years is now becoming more general ; but when I first commenced it, it was quite contrary to that pursued by my friends and neighbours, and particularly obnoxious to my groom, who told me my horses would be ruined—that every feed of corn they ate in the summer was thrown away upon them—that their legs would be spoiled—their feet contracted ; and that they would be blind, broken-winded, etc. The system I allude to is, *never to give a hunter what is called “ a summer’s run at grass,” and, except under particular and very favourable circumstances, never to turn him out at all.*

When the utility of any generally adopted practice becomes doubtful, it is entitled to a fair discussion ; but before we condemn it we should be certain that it is wrong ; and when a man takes upon himself to contradict received opinions, and prejudices sanctioned by time, he should bring valid proof of what he asserts. He should set aside the authority of others, and use his own reason. He should refer to his own experience, which is the surest test of truth. When, however, a gentleman undertakes to interfere with his groom in the management of his stable, he has no trifling difficulties to contend with. The pride of science is humble when compared with the pride of ignorance ; and ignorance and presumption accompany each other. He must, therefore, be prepared for a contest ; but he has the staff in his own hand, and he is wrong if he yields it to another.

I am now called upon to state why I consider the practice of turning out hunters to what is called

“a summer’s run at grass” to be injurious to them, and why I prefer my own place of never turning them out at all, except, as I before observed, under particular and favourable circumstances.

As I was not in the world fifty years ago, I cannot tell what hunting was in those days ; but I have often conversed with those who have seen and described it ; and I should conceive that the Revolution of the French empire could not have been more complete than has been that of fox-hunting within the period alluded to. The style of the hound, the horse, and the man <sup>1</sup> who rides him, have all undergone a change in the regular march of time ; and fox-hunting has not been excluded from that blaze of new light that has dawned on our present age. Whither this light will extend, or what it will set fire to, is not for me to trouble myself about here. It is enough for me to observe that, whenever improvement finds its way into one part of an establishment, it must be accompanied by improvement in others, or the benefit of it is lost ; and if the fox <sup>2</sup> and the hounds go faster in

<sup>1</sup> A modern fox-hunter, stepping out of his carriage by a covert-side, looks more like as though he were going a-courting than fox-hunting. Those of the Old School thought this was carried too far. The late Mr Forrester, of Willy Hall, in Shropshire, who hunted that country many years, gave his coverts, when far advanced in life, to a pack of fox-hounds set up in his neighbourhood by some farmers. Having ridden out one day to see them, he was asked how he liked them ? “ Very much indeed,” replied the veteran : “ there was not one d—d fellow in a white-topped boot among them.”

<sup>2</sup> A fox found by the drag, as was the custom in former days, as soon as it was light, and before he had digested his chicken, could not be supposed to run so fast as one whipped out of an acre of gorse at one o’clock in the afternoon, as is the fashionable time at present.

1822 than they did in 1772, the horse that follows them must go faster also. When I began to look at fox-hounds, on a pony, in the Christmas holidays, they appeared to me to be a different kind of animal to those which I have seen since. Comparatively speaking, harriers now go the pace of foxhounds in those times, and fox-hounds that of greyhounds. The style of horse, the seat upon him, have all been revolutionised, and fox-hunting in some countries must soon change its name to " *racing after a fox.*" When a celebrated hard rider comes to confess that he was beaten two miles in twenty-two minutes, with a good horse and a good start, which I was witness to with the Duke of Rutland's hounds, what can be the difference between going over Leicestershire on a hunter after a fox, or going over the Beacon at Newmarket on a race-horse? The pace, when going, must be nearly the same; and the only thing that can enable the hunter to continue it, is the relief he gets by being pulled up at his fences. If, therefore, the pace of a hunter—and it is the pace that kills—is anything like the pace of the race-horse, the preparation for that pace should be in some measure similar, or we must admit that he has not fair play.

There is an expression at the beginning of this paper which is entitled to particular consideration. I say that "all measures which tend to throw Nature out of her destined course *by violence* are bad." Now we must be aware that Nature never intended that a horse should eat a peck or six quarters of corn in a day besides beans or peas; be kept in an under

oxygenated atmosphere, instead of the pure air ; be clothed, sweated, and cleaned—to say nothing of the work he is called upon to perform. If, then, his nature is, as it were, to be thus changed, how can we expect that it can be done but by slow degrees ? “ Use,” says the old proverb, “ is second nature ” ; but the word use implies custom, and custom is not established but by length of time. How, then, can we reasonably expect that a horse turned out to grass for the summer, and taken up, full of bad flesh, the first week in August (which is about the time those who are in the habit of turning out their hunters generally take them up), should be in condition and fit to go to hounds by the end of October or the beginning of November ? As I have before observed, we think ourselves lucky if we can bring a race-horse to the post, fit to run, in eight or twelve months ; but a hunter is to be made fit to follow hounds in as many weeks ! Nature, however, let me repeat, will not be put out of her course by violence, and time alone will admit of the change we wish to produce. Training-grooms are well aware of this ; and those who entrust their horses to them have too often occasion to repent of not having sent them sooner to their stables, to prevent their being hurried with their work and condition. If, then, time is so necessary in the hands of a training-groom with a horse which is sure to have been in a certain degree of work and preparation previous to his arriving under his care, what chance can a hunter have to be in condition in November when he is taken out of a rich pasture in August ? Ask a training-

groom to look at a hunter that *is fit to go*, and observe what he says. He will first feel his crest, and then, laying his hands flat on his ribs, he will tell you if he likes him. "This horse is well: his flesh feels as if it had been taken off, and well put on again." Now, as before a horse can be in condition his bad flesh must come off him, as certain as the horn at the top of his foot must find its way to the bottom of it, think what time it must take to accomplish this change, if it is to be accomplished, without injury. In proof of what I assert, look at *all* persons' hunters in the month of March. They are *then in condition*, just as there is no further occasion for it, and with most of them it is all going to be destroyed by four months' run at grass. Observe to a friend at the beginning of the season, whose horse has been at grass in the summer, that he is not looking well, but is sweating, and all in a lather as he trots along, and he will tell you "it is the month of November—a month so bad for horses—but in a short time he will look as well as any man's horse." What an excuse would this be for Mr Prince or Mr Robson, should they bring a race-horse to the post out of condition at the Houghton Meeting in November! A horse, if he is a sound one, is to be got into condition by any given period of the year, if time be allowed to do it as it should be done.

A friend of mine, who has tried the powers of a horse as much as any man could do, has justly observed that "grass is a very good preparation for a bullock for Smithfield market, but a very bad one for a hunter." As for myself, I have long been of opinion that more

hunters are ruined by being turned out to grass than persons are generally aware of ; and when I see one in blooming condition going to be turned out for the summer, I always think that it is almost even betting that he never is in condition again. When I first set out in life, hunters were turned out under circumstances still more unfavourable than they are at present. They were not even physicked ; but, as soon as hunting was over, their clothes were stripped off, and after being turned out for an hour or two for a few times in the middle of the day, to prepare them for the change, they were sent to take their chance—perhaps on some strong feeding land—to meet the young grass, as it was called, and there to remain until about the 12th of the succeeding August. This was done under the false impression that spring grass purges horses ; whereas it has been clearly proved that if a horse goes out to grass foul, he comes up from it still more foul. The load of bad flesh he acquires in this state may be termed a sort of “oleaginous dropsy,” the effect of a general atony of the absorbents, created by the immense quantity of succulent food he devours, and by the sudden stop put to the evacuations by sweating and other means resorted to when in regular work. In later times horses have had the advantage of being cleansed by physic before they are turned out ; but even this cannot prevent the evils attending the practice of giving a hunter what is called “a summer’s run at grass.” To say nothing of the accidents they are subject to when turned out at large—as most diseases of horses arise from plethora—their being





THE FAMOUS HUNTER GELDING 'ANJOM'

The property of J. H. Stokes, Esq., and a winner of numerous Prizes, including the 30 Guinea Cup at the Royal Lan-ashire Show and 1st at the International, 1907



at liberty to gorge themselves uncontrolled is frequently productive of diseases of various kinds. Nor, indeed, can we wonder at it. Habit, or rather custom, cannot so far overcome Nature as to admit of an animal being kept eight months in the year in a warm stable, and in an equal temperature, and the other four to be exposed to the noon-tide heat and midnight cold with impunity. These extremes cannot fail to produce an increased action of the arterial system. Inflammation often attacks (perhaps unperceived) those organs which are most readily influenced by local irritation; hence blindness, and what is vulgarly and stupidly called "a grass cough"—ending in broken wind, or roaring—are produced.

I have hitherto appeared to have been speaking of the evil of turning out hunters to grass, as far only as regards the state of their bodies, without a reference to that of their legs and feet, which have generally been the chief consideration with those who have pursued that plan. I have, however, no hesitation in saying that the idea of a summer's run at grass being beneficial to the legs of a hunter is a most erroneous one, and that with respect to the feet, they may, by proper management in the stable or loose house, derive all those advantages which they would receive from grass. As what I am going to say on this subject may be contrary to the generally received opinion of many, I shall be careful to assert nothing but what I have confirmed by actual experience. I have had in my stable, as all men who have kept them must have had, two hunters with their legs *equally*

round, full, and “knocked about,” as we are apt to say, by a season’s hard work—full of bangs, blows, and contusions of all descriptions. I have turned one of them out to grass, after being properly physicked, and I have kept the other in a loose house, also well cleansed by physic. At the end of two months I have found the legs of the horse in the loose house perfectly fine, and reduced to their natural size ; and I have found those of the other, which was at grass, as round, or nearly so, as when he first went out. Let us give ourselves time to inquire into this matter, and we shall no longer wonder at the result of the experiment. If we injure one of our own limbs by a strain, a blow, or any other cause, do we continue to use it, or do we give it rest ? Does a horse in training injure one of his legs by a blow or a strain—which from the nature of his work he is so liable to—does he go on with his work, even if not lame, or is he “indulged,” as they call it in the stables, with two or three days’ walking exercise, which they term *rest* ? All this applies to the hunter. To say nothing of his galloping over the hard ground—perhaps leaping—I think I may venture to assert that, at the most moderate calculation, he travels on an average at the rate of half a mile in the hour, or twelve miles in the course of the day and night. At this pace, if he is at grass for three months, he travels one thousand miles. Some horses, I have no doubt, exceed this distance ; but the thousand miles, or say five hundred if you like, must be a bad recipe for limbs which have been injured by hard work and strains, and whose sinews

and fibres have lost much of their proper tone and vigour.

Before I proceed any further on this subject, I do not wish the reader to suppose that I am averse to hunters being turned out, as I before observed, "under favourable circumstances," the nature of which I shall explain hereafter. All that I condemn is the practice of throwing a horse out of his condition by a long run at grass. I am aware that the dews of the evening may be favourable to the feet of horses; but I also contend that they can, by proper management, receive all those advantages in a loose house during the summer months. As I have set out by promising to assert nothing but what I have experienced the truth of, I shall state the case of a horse of my own which was in my stable for fifteen years, with the exception of one winter's run. He was a thoroughbred horse, and had run several times at Newmarket and other places. He had a chronic cough on him when I first became possessed of him, which affected him after his water, and when he got foul in his body. His feet, as is too often the case with thoroughbred ones, were disposed to contract. He was also a hard-feeding, gorging horse, and took ten drachms of aloes, generally aided by calomel, to stir his bowels. Now, as it was not tried, I cannot presume to say what would have been the result of the experiment; but I have every reason to believe that had that horse been turned out to grass for half those fifteen summers he would have been broken-winded. When I shot him, at twenty-one years old, he was in beautiful condition;

and his feet remained perfectly sound until within three months of his death, when disease attacked one of them, and I thought it too late in life to attempt to remove it.

In the case of masters of hounds, I am aware that the plan of keeping hunters up in the summer cannot be so easily accomplished, from the number of their stud; therefore servants' horses must take their chance. They are, however, generally taken up soon, and get into work by degrees, in cub-hunting, which gives them an advantage; and wear-and-tear of horses of this description is to be calculated upon as a matter of course by those who keep fox-hounds. When Lord Sefton hunted Leicestershire, his own horses, that cost him six or eight hundred guineas each, were ridden about in the summer quietly with the hounds, although they were turned out at night under favourable circumstances. It was impossible to exceed the condition these horses were in to carry high weight.

## LETTER II

### OBJECTIONS AGAINST TURNING HUNTERS OUT TO A SUMMER'S RUN AT GRASS—PHYSIC

**M**Y principal objections against turning hunters out to a summer's run at grass, as far as relates to their legs, consist of three. The first is the great risk we run of injuring their legs by the work we are obliged to give them, *when heavy*, to get rid of the load of flesh which they have accumulated at grass. My eyes were opened on this subject by witnessing the progress of a stable of hunters belonging to a friend of mine, with whom I was on intimate terms. He was a heavy man, and generally had a stud of five or six hunters, which he was in the habit of turning out for a summer's run in strong feeding land. The consequence was, they came up overladen with flesh about the last week in July, or the first in August. When in the stable no man's horses were better looked after, for he was a good judge of such matters; but towards the end of September, or the beginning of October, I always found that out of these five or six horses he had two or three lame ones. On questioning him as to the cause of their lameness, I was generally told they had thrown out a bit of a splint, got a blow on their legs, or some trifling reason

was assigned. It, however, too often happened that they were either obliged to go through the process of blistering, perhaps the operation of firing, and then not fit to ride till after Christmas. I, however, soon found out that it was *the work these hunters were doing, before they were fit to work—the galloping under this load of flesh*—that destroyed their legs; and the example before my eyes led me, twenty years ago, to the determination that turning out a hunter to a summer's run at grass to help himself to as much food as he pleased to eat, and accumulate this load of flesh, which was to be got rid of *only at the expense of his legs*, was a most pernicious system, and was the cause of the number of lame horses which I met with in the stables of my friends. From that period to the present I have never given a hunter a summer's run at grass, nor would I recommend any one to do it who wishes to be well carried to hounds, and to preserve his horse to a good old age. Rest from his labours, I admit, is essential to a hunter as well as to a race-horse. It will not do to have him always going; or, like the race-horse, he will get stale. Green meat is also necessary; at least, cooling and wholesome; but that is to be had in a loose house; and a small piece of land—a few square yards—if his owner has no paddocks, is sufficient for him to exercise himself in and keep himself in health. If it were not so, what would become of stallions that live this kind of life for twenty years together and do well? The influence of habit on animal economy is very strong, and soon overcomes Nature.



With respect to the feet of hunters, all the advantages obtained at grass are within our reach in the stable. I have heard and read a great deal about horn contracting in oil and expanding in water : but we want neither oil nor water. It is moisture that we require, and not wet. The latter is so far from being serviceable to the feet of horses that it is really injurious. Let those who doubt what I say keep a horse for six months in sponge boots, and see what a state his feet will be in. We read in history that the horses in Hannibal's army were rendered useless by travelling three days successively in water. Their hoofs (for shoes they had none), we are told, came off. They would have travelled for thirty days over a sandy desert with less inconvenience. By watering a hunter three times a day in the summer at a pond, or in a running stream, and keeping his feet stopped, three times a week, with cow-dung mixed with clay, or damp (not wet) tow stuffed into them, we have all the advantages that can be obtained in this respect by turning him out to grass. As to what we hear, or read, of the bad effects of standing on hot litter, as disposing horses' feet to contract, I do not listen to it, as my answer is—what business has a hunter to be standing on hot litter ? There always is clean straw to be had, and a boy to set his bed straight, whether in a stall or in a loose house.

My second objection to turning hunters out to grass is one which escapes the observation of many ; and that is, the great stress which is laid upon the sinews of the fore-legs of most hunters *when in the act of*

*grazing*. It is well known that the legs of horses are seldom, if ever, much longer, at any period of their lives, than they are when they are foaled, or at least at the expiration of the first year ; and that the body, when at maturity, rises to the height prescribed, as it were, by the length of the legs. This, however, chiefly applies to horses which have been reared in a natural state, and not forced by corn, which most colts now are that promise to make valuable or first-rate hunters. In this case, more than usual, or, we may venture to say, *intended* growth of the body takes place, which, whilst it adds much to their value, and produces what we so much prize—the short-legged horse of power and size—yet it makes it very difficult for such a horse to reach the ground with his mouth, his head being so far from it when erect. Indeed he cannot do it without either half kneeling down, or greatly straining his fore-legs. I lately witnessed a striking proof of what I here assert. I saw a remarkably fine hunter in the act of filling himself with grass ; and the only way in which he could get at it was by placing one fore-foot close to his hind ones, and the other close to his mouth when it was on the ground, and even then there was a tremor in his legs which too plainly shewed the stress laid upon them to enable him to reach his food. We have all experienced this, more or less, as we have let our horses stoop to drink in shallow water.

My third and most essential objection to turning hunters out to grass is, not so much on account of their legs and feet—for without good legs and feet

horses may go very well over a country—but it is the destruction of their condition which is so detrimental to them, for it is impossible that it can be restored by the time they are required to go into the field again.<sup>1</sup>

With respect to the effect of *condition* on the horse, it is in the stable of a post-master that I take my stand. When I see a pair of under-sized, apparently worn-out, horses put to what, in the language of the road, is called “a bounder,” that is, a gentleman’s carriage with three in and two out—with “everything belonging to the family,” as the post-boys say, “but the kitchen grate”; when I see these animals draw this load a fifteen-mile stage in the morning without difficulty, return home, and take another such a load in the evening; when I see them, with skins as fine as race-horses, stand out exposed to all weathers, washed all over when they are hot, and all this with impunity; I ask myself what enables these animals to do this? Is it their natural physical strength? Is it the goodness of their nature? My reasoning faculty tells me it is neither. They would

<sup>1</sup> It so happened that whilst (July 26, 1822) in the act of writing this, the groom (as he is called) of a neighbouring gentleman called on me with a message from his master, and the following conversation passed between us: “Has your master taken up his hunters?”—“No, Sir, he never takes them up till the first of August; but this year he has only one to take up.”—“How so?”—“He has sold one, and the other died last week.”—“Of what did he die?”—“Of the blood.”—“What do you mean by the blood?”—“He was so terribly fat, his blood stagnated: the mare is terribly fat too.”—“How shall you get it off her?”—“Oh, we sweats it off.”—“How are her legs?”—“Very middling.”—Here the conversation ended.

both fail. No! it is solely to be attributed to the six, eight, ten, twelve, perhaps fourteen years' *hard meat* which they have got in them—to that consolidation of flesh, that invigoration of muscle, that stimulus to their nature, which this high keep has imparted to them—which give them, as it were, a sort of preternatural power; inasmuch as but for that stimulus they would never be able to perform more than half of what we see them do. It is true that during the progress of this preternatural state, or what on the road is called the *seasoning*, many of them lose their eyes, get big legs, etc.; but this is chiefly owing to no preventive means being taken by their owners, who find it more to their account to let them take their chance of losing an eye, or perhaps both, than to lose their work, from physicking, etc., which cannot be done without rest from their labours. I have, however, no hesitation in saying that a horse, provided he is of a sound, good constitution, may be kept on hard meat, and highly fed, for twenty years, if he live so long, without suffering in his wind, limbs, or eyesight, if he be well groomed, and what the veterinary surgeons call prophylactic or preventive remedies are properly administered. We all know that, from the great length of the arterial system, horses are subject to inflammatory complaints; but these complaints are acknowledged either to proceed from atmospheric causes, or to accompany sudden changes of food, temperature, etc., and more commonly attack horses that may be said to be only "half in condition," horses that are ridden about the country, and exposed

to such disposing causes. What these preventives are I shall take occasion to mention as I proceed. To the three objections which I have now stated to turning out hunters to a summer's run at grass, I might add a fourth ; and that is, the bad effects which arise from the constant stamping of their feet to get rid of the flies, which materially injures them, and is often productive, not only of splints, but of *ringbones*, than which nothing is more difficult to cure.

Having recapitulated the disadvantages of the too common method of turning hunters to grass for the summer, I shall now state in what way they should be treated during those months when hunting ceases. My first object, it plainly appears, *is to obtain condition*, and to obtain it in a manner least injurious to the animal we have to deal with ; and as it is useless taking up time in exposing past errors, I will proceed to detail the plan I would pursue were I a servant employed to get a stud of hunters into condition. It has been the fashion of late to be intricate on the plainest subjects ; but saying much does not prove much. "*Non est quod multa loquamur.*" My argument will be the vulgar one of experience ; and I will endeavour to make myself understood, so that, should any gentleman choose to let his groom read what I have written, he may not mistake my meaning. In my humble opinion writing on such subjects as these should be nothing more than a sort of literary conversation between the writer and the reader ; and, after all, as Aristotle observes, perspicuity without meanness is the perfection of style ; and common expressions

must be best, for, had they not been proper, they would not have been common.

I have before made some comparisons between the race-horse and the hunter, conceiving the treatment of the one to be in many respects applicable to the other. I need not repeat my conviction that *condition* is *equally* essential to both. The chief points of difference between them appear to be in the sort of work they are called upon to perform. The one is not more than a few minutes in completing his task ; whereas the other is often ten or twelve hours about his. The preparation, therefore, must be different ; and much as I admire the economy of the racing stable, particularly their feeding and regularity, I would not fix upon a training groom as exactly qualified to get a stud of hunters into condition, any more than I would choose a thistle-whipping huntsman to hunt a pack of fox-hounds. In the first place, the training groom would be apt to draw his horses too fine for the continued fatigue they have to go through ; and in the next, although I admit that there is no strength without wind, yet he would be inclined to give them more of *quick work* than is necessary to prepare a hunter for the field. Good flesh, as I before observed, is strength ; and in the preparation of a hunter, particularly if he be to carry a heavy man, to get him *high in flesh and strong in work* is the perfection of the art of grooming. In one respect, however, the race-horse and the hunter are nearly on equal terms. Each must have work, and each must have rest. The only difference between them here is, that

the former rests in winter, and the latter rests in summer. Neither of them can be always on his legs, or they will be equally stale in their way. But when the race-horse rests, his condition is going on. He may have some green meat given to him, if there is any to be had at the time ; but at *all* seasons of the year he is never to be deprived of his corn.

Lest it should be supposed that I am averse to turning hunters out at all in the summer months, it will be better, perhaps, not to proceed farther without explaining myself on that head. So far from being averse to it, I would strongly recommend it, under favourable circumstances. In case of having recourse to blistering, it is most serviceable ; and, after firing, almost necessary—but then they should be turned out only *at night*, and into a place where there is but little grass, and have two if not three feeds of corn a day, but nothing else to eat till they go out, unless it be a few vetches, for four or five days at a time, when they are young and tender, in the months of May or June ; but this should not be repeated more than three or four times, as they tend to make horses very foul, and when in pod are most injurious to them. It is not every one who keeps hunters that has paddocks to turn them into ; nor, indeed, do they fall to the lot of many ; but when they are to be had the advantage is great, as a horse is safer in them, and the smaller they are, within reason, the better ; for it is not the grass that we want, but the exercise and the moisture of the ground for their feet, and the bracing effects of the pure air. If only one or two hunters are turned

into a large paddock, and the grass grows upon them, some sheep should be put in with them to keep it down. Their bite also sweetens the herbage, and makes it more nutritious ; but paddocks should never be mown. Paddocks, however, are always to be made, and at a trifling expense. A small piece of ground—say thirty square yards—is sufficient. Let it be hurdled around, and then lined with faggots reared up from seven to eight feet high. A stallion may be kept in these places with the greatest safety as to his breaking out of them, for he will never attempt it so long as he cannot see through or over the fence. The faggots, so far from being worse, are better for the use they are put to ; and they are within the reach of every one who resides in the country at five shillings a score, if he do not grow them himself. The hurdle that lets the horse in and out should often be changed, and then he will be still less inclined to attempt to break out.

However beneficial this turning out a horse in the summer may be, it is comparatively trifling with the advantages that are reaped by a winter's run. I have seen horses, as it were, *renovated* in their constitution by being turned out for a winter ; and, as far as relates to their legs and feet, it is, I think, the only *time* when anything effectual can be done for them, when the injury has been considerable.

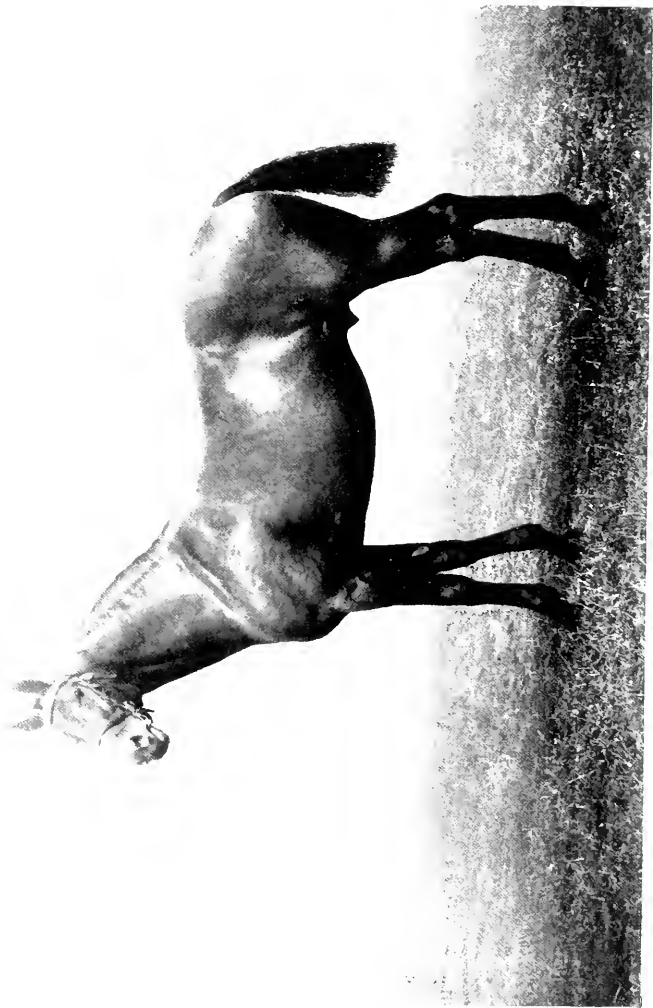
I think I need say no more to convince the reader of my full conviction of the injurious method of turning hunters out to a summer's run at grass, and shall conclude that part of my subject with an anecdote



which a friend of mine furnished me with the other day, so much to the point that I hope I shall be pardoned for introducing it here. I only lament that I have not the pleasure of knowing the lady in question, that I might have an opportunity of conversing further with her on a subject on which her ideas were so congenial with my own. My friend was walking in the streets of London, when his eye was attracted by a remarkably fine pair of long-tailed coach-horses, which, by the arms on the panel of the carriage, appeared to be the property of a rich old maid. On complimenting the coachman on their comely appearance, he remarked that "they were very well for their age—one of them being twenty-six, and the other twenty-three years old." "I suppose," said my friend, "they have been much indulged." "Not they indeed, Sir," said *Coachee*; "they work as hard as anybody's horses on these London stones, and my mistress goes all over England with them to the watering-places in the summer; and as for grass, they have never tasted it since we have had them, for she says *she is sure it would give them the belly-ache.*" The old lady, it seems, acted on the good old principle of *letting well alone!*

Before I enter upon the system which I have pursued and which I so strongly recommend, I will make a few remarks on what is called the Old Plan—that is, giving a hunter three months' run at grass, and taking him up the end of July or beginning of August—accompanied with some observations on what I conceive to be the best and safest method of treating

them under such disadvantageous circumstances. The common method of treating the hunter that has been at grass has been to bleed him the third or fourth day after he comes to the stable, and about the seventh or eighth to give him his first of a series of three doses of physic. The only remark that I have to offer here is, that the bleeding is not only useless, but improper ; and the waiting seven or eight days for (in the language of grooms) “ a little hard meat in him,” before he has his first dose, is also equally absurd. As I shall have a good deal to say about physic, and its effects, in another place, I shall only observe that, as physic is to be given at any time, and under any circumstances, with perfect safety, the sooner the hunter has his first dose after he comes into the stable, the better he is enabled to withstand the sudden change from the natural to the artificial state to which we are about to subject him ; and the sooner will his habit of body be prepared for that excitement which his subsequent exercise and change of diet are certain, more or less, to produce. I have seen some of my acquaintance give their hunters physic when at grass, with the hope of preventing their getting too fat ; but their expectations have failed, inasmuch as the aptitude to get flesh always increases after a horse has been well cleansed by physic, as training grooms can more particularly vouch for. If, however, a person does turn his hunters to grass, I see no objection to their giving them physic. It may be the means of forwarding their condition, by getting sooner into work, when taken up for the season.



HUNTER SIRE 'RIVERSTOWN'

Owned by E. W. Robinson, Esq., Brookleigh, Essex. A winner of Prizes and Sire of Winners



As the system of getting hunters in condition which have been at grass is, in most respects, so well known, it would be presuming in me to attempt to give directions respecting it; I will therefore merely detail the plan I would pursue had I a horse to deal with under such circumstances. My directions to my groom should be as follows.

The hunter should be taken up certainly not later than the 20th of July. Soon after this period the nights begin to get chilly, and his coat would receive a check if exposed to them. It would lose that soft, silky feel which it generally has if the horse is in perfect health previously to that time. When first taken to house he should be kept as cool as possible, and, if it can be avoided, there should not be *more than one horse in every other stall*, be the stable ever so large. We will suppose a man has six hunters, perhaps all kept in one stable in the winter. When his horses are first taken up, he should not put more than two or three at farthest into it, and the rest into a hack-stable or loose house, with the doors or windows open, so as to keep the temperature as low as he can. As time is precious, and, as before observed, physic is nothing more than the means of cleansing by evacuation the stomach and intestines, as sweating gets rid of the superfluous flesh and fat, the sooner he has his first dose the better. As his bowels will be relaxed by the grass he has been eating, his physic should be milder than usual; but that must depend upon previous knowledge of the constitution of the horse. Generally speaking, five drachms and a half would be

sufficient, if well prepared by bran mashes beforehand. It is ridiculous to see a horse in physic in July, just taken out of the open air, where he has been for three months, clothed up and hooded. He wants nothing of the sort : he may be ridden out naked ; and if he refuse warm water, which most probably he will, he may drink at the first pond or running stream he meets with in his exercise. No one holds the danger from the operation of physic more cheap than I do. I could fill a volume with all the nonsense I have heard grooms, and sometimes their masters, talk on this subject. I conceive that, with common caution, a horse is in no more danger from a dose of physic than his master is from a dose of salts. I do not approve of strong physic ; because it is useless to give it, when a mild dose, with proper preparation, will do what is required.

To return to the hunter. By the time he is ready for his second dose, he will be, in some measure, reconciled to the change of temperature—from the open air to that of a confined stable—and a little more caution is necessary during the operation of it. Unless the weather happens to be very warm, he should have a hood on him if he goes out early in the morning, and, at all events, one warm body cloth, or his coat may receive a check which it will not recover for some time. If he has had his first dose a day or two after he was taken up—say the 20th of July—allowing seven clear days between the *setting* of each dose, he will be through it all by about the 17th of August, up to which time, and for a week afterwards, he should

have nothing but gentle walking and trotting exercise, of about an hour and a half at a time, before the heat of the day ; and by no means should a brush be laid upon him, as it opens the pores of his skin and renders him more susceptible of cold. Indeed, all the grooming he requires at this time is to have his legs well rubbed—particularly with the hand—three times a day, and oftener if the circulation be languid, and his body well wisped with a good solid *hay* wisp, a little damped. Should a horse have had some physic at grass in the summer, or *late* in the spring, before he was turned out, and not appear foul, it may be better to stop a fortnight or three weeks between his second and third dose ; and, if a bit of soft ground can be found, to give him a little work in the time. If his two other doses did not work him hard, it will be advisable to add half a drachm of aloes to the third dose, as it will take more to move his bowels now than it did before he got the hard meat into him, and had a little work.

Having said that there is nothing to fear from the operation of physic, I beg to be understood to mean provided the horse has been properly prepared to receive it, and the drugs are good of their kind. By giving him two large loose mashes for two days in succession, the bowels become so relaxed as to prevent the possibility of danger ; and by an alteration lately made by the veterinary surgeons, of having the horse exercised *on the day he takes the ball*, a milder one does the business, and the operation is much quickened. It generally begins to work on the evening of the day

he takes it, and by stable time the next evening it is beginning to set, and the horse is comfortable and well, instead of enduring perhaps thirty-six hours of continued sickness. I strongly recommend my readers to procure their physic balls from a veterinary surgeon in their neighbourhood, as professional men prepare them in a safer and more convenient form, and cold water may be given with it, with safety, if a horse refuses warm. Grooms do not like this alteration of exercising the horse on the day he takes the ball, and will tell us it ought to lie in them for a day or it does not operate so well. One moment's reflection will convince us that as there can be no virtue in the aloe but that of clearing the intestines, the sooner it does its office the better. They might as well say that an emetic should lie a whole day in a man's stomach before it is suffered to operate.



## LETTER III

### THE EFFECTS OF CONDITION—THE STABLE, AND STABLE MANAGEMENT

**I**N all matters of domestic economy, maxims pass from mouth to mouth, and are established by tradition, without even making the experiment, as that might at once give them the lie. We seldom inquire into the causes of things continually before our eyes. Habitual acquaintance renders them familiar to our observation, and checks that curiosity which is the strongest incentive to knowledge. We see such things, but never inquire how they came to be so. The phenomena of disease—the phenomena of life itself—are not more unsearchable, or more difficult to account for, than are those changes and alterations which take place in the condition of horses. I once heard a veterinary surgeon of great repute declare, that he would give five hundred guineas if he could find out why a blind horse should have a smooth coat in winter and a rough one in summer, which happens to nine out of ten.

We are too apt to look upon a horse as a piece of mechanism which we can use at our pleasure, without ever considering that the machine must be in order before we can avail ourselves of its power. A horse

out of condition, and a horse in condition, certainly bears more resemblance to himself than a horse-chestnut does to a chestnut horse, but he is assuredly a very different-looking animal in one state to what he is in the other. *In persona*, if I may be allowed the expression, he is the same—*in re*, quite another being: in the one state, he is comparatively weak and powerless—in the other, equal to greater exertion of power and speed combined than any other animal which the hand of nature has formed. It has lately been the fashion to put the powers of man in competition with those of a horse, *on a journey*. Clad in a flannel jacket and trousers, he may travel over as much or more ground in a week than a horse; but put a *proportionate weight* upon his back, and see where he would be! Surely the well-attested fact of Mr Highwayman Nicks' ride to York must set this matter at rest!<sup>1</sup>

The period is now arrived when the condition of hunters is put to the test. Previous to the month of November no man who has anything else to amuse himself with, or who has a regard for his neck, or his horse, should be seen by a covert-side unless it be on a hack cub-hunting, which after all is but a

<sup>1</sup> In 1696, Nicks, a noted highwayman, robbed a gentleman at Gad's Hill, in Kent, about four in the morning; but, apprehending that he was known to the person he had robbed, made for Gravesend, where he lost an hour in waiting for the ferry-boat, yet, by crossing the country to Huntingdon, and then keeping to the northern road, he reached York, and appeared on the bowling-green in the evening as he proved upon his trial for this robbery. The Jury acquitted him, thinking it impossible he could be at two places so greatly distant between sun and sun.

melancholy recreation. The ditches are not only so full of grass, or so "blind," as we say, that the best hunter on earth may be deceived into a fall; but the country in other respects is not fit to ride over. However soft it may be at the surface from the autumnal rains, the substratum is hard; and where cattle have trodden in the preceding winter, holes remain, which are not at this time visible, but which serve as a sort of trap for horses' feet, and are particularly dangerous and injurious to old horses. It is not necessary that a hunter should be a perfectly sound horse—that is to say, provided he be not ridden over a country till it is in a state to receive the pressure of his weight, without jarring him at his fences or in his gallop. By the first or second week in November, this is generally the case; and if a horse has been in the hands of anything like a groom, he ought by this time to be pretty well prepared for the field. By long-continued slow work—but increasing in pace as his condition increases—assisted by proper stable management, he ought now to appear by the covert-side with credit and advantage. What this work should be, and in what this stable management should consist, shall be the subject of the following pages.

The condition of a horse must proceed by slow degrees: it is the work of time; and it is in vain to expect it on any other terms than as the result of a long course of preparations, *followed by severe work*. In a clear fortnight after he has had his last dose of physic he should begin to do some work; for without it no progress can be made. This, however, should

be gradual ; and for the first month should consist of long protracted exercise, rather than what is called “ good work.” He should be kept out of his stable for three or four hours in the course of the day ; and if ridden gently across a country, and now and then with a pack of harriers (weather permitting), it will greatly promote his condition, by hardening his flesh, increasing his strength, and improving his wind. At this time the use of *alteratives* is indispensable. By their mild and gradual impression a healthy action of the bowels is obtained, and thereby what, in stable language, is called “ fog ” (but which might more properly be termed debility, or depression of strength), is got rid of, and the general appearance and condition of the animal much improved. Indeed, without the use of alterative medicines<sup>1</sup>—exclusively of physic—no hunter can be got into blooming condition ; that is to say, to look well in his skin, to dry immediately after a sweat, and to be in full vigour of body. Of these medicines there are several sorts in use ; but the diuretic and diaphoretic are in my opinion the best. It is almost needless to observe that the latter act upon the skin : but as sensible perspiration in the horse is not to be obtained by medicine without difficulty, and having recourse to larger doses than may be safe or convenient for him to take when at work, and it is *insensible* perspiration that we wish to obtain, these alteratives should be combined ; for it is from their gradual and almost imperceptible

<sup>1</sup> The use of alterative and diuretic drugs requires discrimination, and the Editor does not recommend their use in general.

operation that we are to look for the effect we wish to produce. Nitre has been much used by grooms as a cooling diuretic, and a preventive of disease from such causes; but it must be borne in mind that nitre is a strong repellent, and of a debilitating nature.

All this, however, without a good stable, and good stable management, is of no avail. It is a maxim as old as Hippocrates himself that food should be proportioned to labour. Diet, therefore, is a most essential point to be attended to in promoting and preserving the condition of a horse; for, as evacuation is the cure, repletion is the cause of disease. Horses in a state of nature are subject to few disorders. As has been elegantly observed, "they contract no disease from unseasonable indulgence or inordinate revellings: the pure stream their drink, the simple herb their repast; neither care disturbs their sleep, nor passion inflames their rest." The state, however, in which we keep them for the different purposes to which we apply them, is strangely at variance with this temperate and natural state; and it is only by constant recourse to physic and exercise that we can preserve their health under such trying circumstances.

We are told that in former times, before wheat was found out, oats fed the vassal and his lord, as they now do many a Welch Squire and Scottish Laird. Formerly wheat was given to race horses, as more nourishing than oats; but now the latter form the chief food for all descriptions of horses. Beans, however, have for some years been allowed to hunters,

and when given with discretion are most beneficial. I remember hearing Mr Warde exclaim, as his hounds were settling to their fox, and he expected a good run, "Now we shall see what gentlemen's horses eat old oats, and what eat new." I am inclined to think that this distinction may be applied to those horses which eat beans, and those which eat none; for they help to bring them home at the end of a long day, and support their strength in a run. They are said to dispose the constitution to inflammatory complaints, which I believe to be the case when given in large quantities to horses of plethoric habits, and whose work is moderate; but, when given in proper quantities, are most nutritious and wholesome. Two single handfuls in each feed of corn is the allowance for a hunter who is fed (as he ought to be) five times a day.

In the quantity of hay given to a hunter there is also a great alteration within my recollection, not more than half the quantity being now put before him. About eight pounds a day, or one truss a week, is considered sufficient for a hunter that will eat five feeds of corn per day. A larger quantity is found to increase the size, consequently the weight of the carcase, to injure the wind, and destroy the digestive powers. Among the brute creation we find extraordinary instances of long abstinence, but the horse is not of that tribe. He is a voracious animal, and requires a daily supply of food: nevertheless it is advisable that his appetite should never be cloyed, but that he should always appear eager for his food on his groom coming to him after being shut up his

regular time ; and if one handful of good hay be found in his rack, he should have no more till next stable time, when his appetite will be sharp. If given to eat his straw, the setting-muzzle, in this case, must be made use of.

In consequence of the lateness of the hour of meeting with hounds—now seldom before eleven o'clock—hunters do not require so much food as they formerly did, when they were out a much greater number of hours from their stables ; and there is no doubt, but at the pace hounds now go, an empty stomach is necessary, or why put the muzzle on the race-horse ? In Leicestershire this short allowance of hay has been carried to a great extreme ; but a full belly will not do for that country ; and amongst the Meltonians horses are not required to come out often, owing to their generally having such large studs.

Hunters are not always to be fed alike ; allowance should be made for the distance to covert ; for when a horse has to go twelve or fourteen miles in a morning to meet hounds, he may be allowed a little more hay overnight than if he had but four or five, as he will empty his stomach on the road, and there is reason to expect a long day. As to whether a hunter should have any water on the morning of hunting, that is a point not so much considered as it ought to be, for we should be guided by his constitution. If he is apt to scour, and throw off his meat on the road, I should recommend his having none ; but if, on the other hand, he holds his meat well in him, has some distance to go, and is not called on till ten or eleven o'clock in

the day, he should have six or eight swallows, or go-downs, as the grooms call them, between five and six in the morning. This quantity of water, or more, is always given to the race-horse on the day he runs his race, as it makes him enjoy his food, and digest it afterwards, and it is all absorbed by the time he is called upon to run. Nothing is so apt to make horses scour as change of food and water ; for which reason it is advisable that a hunter should go from his own stable to meet hounds, if the distance does not exceed fifteen or sixteen miles, rather than sleep out, and be subject to the effects alluded to. If, however, he does sleep out, and is affected by the change, he should be watered before he leaves home, and have very little where he sleeps, which will in some measure counteract the evil. One would suppose that this apparent derangement of the bowels would be most injurious to a horse which has to follow hounds ; but I remember being in the company of a very heavy and desperate rider, when this subject was discussed, and he assured us, that were he called upon to say on what day he considered himself to have been carried across a country in the best style, and with the least distress, he should say that it was by a horse that scoured most violently on his road to covert, and looked like a shotten-herring when he got on his back. All, therefore, that can be said on this subject, is that there are exceptions to all rules, and that the case in point is in favour of an empty stomach and a short allowance of hay. One thing is certain, that it is scarcely possible to tire a sound man, when in strong exercise, with an empty



belly ; but give him a good dinner and a bottle of wine, and he is soon defeated.

When on this subject, perhaps I may be excused for introducing an anecdote of a naval officer, who resided some years back not a hundred miles from Gloucester. The captain had a very good mare, on which he appeared one day by the covert-side as usual, when, on some one remarking that she scoured very much, he observed that she had got a dose of physic in her. It appeared that his groom, thinking that a little rest would be of service to *himself* and the mare, had given her a dose of physic without his master's knowledge ; but the captain was not to be shoved off in that way, and after d——g his eyes about half a dozen times, sent her to covert, and rode the run, which she performed as if nothing more than common had occurred. This, we must also admit, is in favour of an empty belly.

I now come to the corner-stone of all conditions in horses—the stable, and stable management—the latter of which has undergone considerable alteration since I first began to keep hunters.

Were I to recount the numerous instances of the benefits arising from good, and the evils, disasters, and dangers which I have witnessed from bad condition in my own and other persons' hunters, I could fill a volume. I shall, however, content myself with one or two instances of the *beneficial* consequences of *good* condition.

A very intimate friend of mine, well known in the sporting world, and an excellent judge, gave one

hundred and fifty guineas for a horse called " Hermit " ; but soon after he purchased him he was obliged to go into Leicestershire—not to hunt, but for the purpose of having the advice and assistance of the famous Doctor Chesher, for an injury of his spine, occasioned, it was supposed, by riding a hard-pulling horse. Being obliged to remain under his care for the space of two years, he took a house, and amused himself in the winter with his greyhounds, of which he had some of the best in England, as they proved themselves by their running at Newmarket and other places. During this time Hermit was kept in lavender. He had an excellent loose box, and his condition went on the same as if he had been constantly hunted. In the summer he was physicked, soiled, fed with carrots, and ridden quietly about, with every now and then a gentle sweat. In the winter he was regularly sweated, ridden with the greyhounds, and had some good brushing gallops ; by which means, and being in the hands of an excellent groom, his condition was as perfect as it was possible to make it. He looked big, and rather full of flesh ; but it was that sort of flesh which increased rather than diminished his strength.

It is true that Hermit was a particularly fine fencer, and, if I may be allowed to apply such an epithet to a horse, he was an *elegant* goer in all his paces ; but when *well clapped to* over a country, he had not the reputation of being a stout horse. It might be said of him, as was said of another horse by a celebrated sporting character who wanted to account for his not turning out to be quite so brilliant a hunter as

he had represented him to be to a person who had purchased him—that he was a very good horse when he went *his own* pace, but when he wanted him to go *his* pace it did not suit him. This I take to have been in some measure the case with Hermit. When the pace was not tremendously quick, he was a delightful horse to ride over a country, with a perfect snaffle-bridle mouth, and he could hop over all the gates in the country with the elegance of a *Vestris*. In Leicestershire, however, he was unknown as a hunter, any farther than now and then appearing by a covert's side, with his owner on his back, but who was forbidden the pleasure of riding him to hounds. Notwithstanding this—notwithstanding that he had never been seen to do anything in that country but canter up and down by the side of a covert, and hop over a gate or two, which was as easy to him as going through it—yet, strange to say, he was purchased by the late Capt. St Paul, at the enormous price of six hundred and fifty guineas !

Now, reader, we will suppose that this Hermit, who only four years before was purchased at the vulgar price of thirty-five pounds, had been turned out for the two preceding summers in one of those fat meadows in Gloucestershire by the Severn's side, where his owner lived, and had been taken up in the months of July or August, where, under such circumstances as I have mentioned, would have been found the six hundred and fifty guinea customer ? No ; it was to his blooming condition—the work of two years—and to that alone, that his owner was indebted for the im-

mense price he got for him. His frame was brought to a pitch of perfection, by a continuation of high keep and good grooming, that made him quite a different animal to what nature had intended him to be.

A curious and rather unfortunate circumstance attended Hermit's *debut* in Leicestershire with his new master on his back. In a most severe burst, he stood still in the middle of a field, and went into strong convulsions. His rider bled him in the mouth for instant relief, which being observed by Mr Loraine Smith, a caricature soon made its appearance, representing the scene described, under which were written the following words: "An Apostle administering relief to a distressed Hermit." It is but justice to observe that the horse was not well when he went out in the morning; and all who have witnessed Captain St Paul's manner of "putting them along," can easily conceive the possibility of his riding a better horse than Hermit into convulsions. In the course of a short time, however, Hermit came to the post again, and was a great favourite of his master for many years after he quitted Leicestershire.



HUNTER GELDING 'THE ROBBER'  
Owned by R. Neilliam, Esq., Bexton Lodge, Knutsford, Cheshire. A winner of many Prizes. The classical features of  
this horse are at once obvious.



## LETTER IV

### STABLE MANAGEMENT—CASE OF FERRYMAN

**H**ORSES are to be purchased in all places and at all times, but condition is not to be purchased with them ; for which reason, he who wants to increase his stud should always buy his horses in the spring of the year, having then the summer before him, in the course of which, if the animal is a sound one, his condition can be accomplished. Upon this principle I looked into Tattersall's some years since in the month of May, when I perceived a strong, cross-boned looking horse, with some good hunting shape about him, "going" at 50*l.*, and before I could get around him to ken him over, he was "gone." Finding he was purchased by a dealer, I gave him five pounds for his bargain, and took him away with me. Soon after my arrival at home I met with a person who knew him, and who informed me that he was got by Joe Andrews, and was a capital fencer, but that he could not be kept in condition in the stable ; that his legs always filled after work ; and, in short, to use his own emphatical words, he looked like a hunted devil in the winter.

Here then, was a field for experiment. On looking at this horse, I accounted for his not being *kept* in condition by being satisfied that he *never was in condition*. He looked all head and shoulders, and his belly was gone. I was immediately convinced that there was a debility and a want of tone about him that could alone be got rid of by an entire change of his constitution, and which change could only be effected by the stimulus of high keep, assisted by alterative medicines and good grooming. Suspecting that his organic powers were weakened, and to prepare him for the change, I gave him three doses of *very mild* physic, only five drachms of aloes at intervals of twelve days, which I found quite sufficient to work him after two days preparation by mashes. In the course of the summer I put him through three courses of mercurial alteratives, and gave him three feeds of good old oats per day. He was never out of his loose box, except to drink at a pond twice a-day, and ate no green meat, with the exception of a few vetches twice, for six days in succession. He had three more doses of physic, equally mild, in the month of September, and I hunted him the following season. I found him exactly what my friend had described him to be— an uncommonly fine fencer and a good winded horse, but in other respects no better than the common run of hunters. When they were sick, he was far from well, and no liberties could be taken with him. His legs filled after work, his flesh melted away like butter in the sun, and he would not come again, after a hard day, under a week or eight days.



The next summer I treated this horse precisely in the same manner as in the preceding one, with the exception of giving him two bushels of oats a week, if he would eat them ; and at the commencement of the second season I witnessed the change that had taken place in his constitution. His legs were perfectly fine before and after work, and he fed well ; his body spread, and his carcass dropped ; and he did not sink, as before, from the effect of a good day's work. Hounds, on some days, could neither go too fast nor too long for him ; and in consequence of his clearing a high timber fence at the end of an hour *best pace*, I sold him to a Noble Lord for two hundred guineas, who, from his being so capital a brook-jumper, changed his name to *Ferryman*, and one day saw out all the second horses on him with Sir Thomas Mostyn's hounds, in a most severe run from Shuckburgh, bringing his rider a long distance home at night, when several horses were left in all parts of the country.

Notwithstanding what I have said this was not naturally a good horse. When I first had him I could beat him to a standstill in a quarter of an hour, and to the last he had his good and bad days. In some respects he was favoured by nature. From his great length of frame he had a particularly smooth way of going over ridge and furrow, without which no horse can live long over a country at anything near the top of his speed ; leaping was, comparatively, little exertion to him, and his pipes were remarkably clear. With all these advantages, however, it depended upon whether he were fit to go that he could carry a

man to hounds ; he required but little work, for if not above himself he was soon beaten. To sum up all, when his condition was good he was good. If not fit to go, he would not—he could not go ; for he was by nature a very middling horse.

I think I have in this instance clearly shown the good effect of condition, or the power of art over nature. With respect to the horse in question it is certain that in a natural state he was a bad horse. In an artificial state—that is, in good condition, from a long succession of hard meat and strong work—his natural defects were removed, and he became a good horse ; for at times he was a brilliant hunter, and certainly one of the most gentlemanlike horses that was ever ridden over a country. I shall mention one other circumstance respecting him, and then dismiss the subject.

On going one day into my stable I observed my groom in the act of giving him a dose of physic, and was proceeding to turn his head around again to the manger, but not seeing the ball go down his gullet, I desired him to let him remain where he was. In about five minutes he brought the ball back again *through his left nostril* into my hand. This being something new to me I was alarmed, and sent for a neighbouring veterinary surgeon

I think I need add no more to prove the value I set upon the condition of a hunter—being no less in many instances than that of the horse himself. For example, how many horses have I seen that I should have been glad to have purchased at much more than

the price asked for them, if I could have purchased condition at the same time? But to see a promising horse in the middle of the season, when he is immediately wanted, with his coat curling in all directions and his flesh as soft as beef upon him, what expectation is there of any thing but disgrace and danger from the possession of him?

As no workman can make good work without good tools; so no groom, however good, can get a horse into condition without a good stable. In the first place it must be dry—in the next it must be warm. I am aware that what I have to say on this subject will be objected to by some of the old and slow ones, who preach against the dangers of hot stables; but for my own part, experience has led me to declare, that so far from ever having witnessed the ill effects of a hot stable, I never saw a hunter in good condition out of a cold one. Nay, I will go further, and assert, that a horse, which no exertions of his groom can get to look and to be well in a cold stable in the winter, shall, on his being removed into a warm one,<sup>1</sup> be in good condition in a month. Not being a philosopher I cannot explain the why and the wherefore of this apparent phenomenon. All that I can say is, *that it is so*; and were I to hear Sir Humphry Davy himself expatiating upon the impropriety of horses being shut up in a hot stable, breathing an under-oxygenated air; were I to hear him say that atmos-

<sup>1</sup> A moderately warm stable is favourable towards the attainment of good condition. A "hot" stable absolutely pernicious.—THE EDITOR.

pheric air was the very pabulum of animal existence ; that it is contrary to nature and nature's laws to breathe any other—I should listen to it all, unable to answer him ; yet I should say to my groom, don't mind what the philosopher says ; stop up every crevice in the stable, taking care only that there be a pipe or two to take out the foul air. Never mind the fresh air, enough of that will find its way through the key-hole, but let there be a vent for that which is fetid. It is not in compliance with the prevailing fashion of the times that I speak this language. Were my object to keep a horse merely in a state of convalescence, I should keep him in a cool stable ; but if I want to prepare him to follow a pack of fox-hounds, with a man upon his back *determined to ride by the side of them*, I must keep him in a warm one. Why this is so I cannot exactly prove ; but that does not alter the case : my argument is the vulgar one of experience ; “ seeing is believing ; ” and we might as well reject the truth of geometry, because we may be unable to comprehend the higher branches of it, as deprive ourselves of the effect because we are ignorant of the cause.

“ Felix qui potuit verum cognoscere casuam.”

We are all, however, wise after experience ; and a man should be committed for contumacy who will not believe what he sees.

I have always thought that there is a striking analogy between a horse and a man, as far as their condition is concerned. Each enters on his training with physic, and concludes it with severe work ; each is at his best

when least reduced by sweats : each is capable of doubling his natural and ordinary powers. The skin of the horse is also his complexion ; and it is not until the prize-fighter strips in the ring that his good or bad condition is ascertained. Nothing can exceed the beauty and lustre of some horses' skins when in what is called " blooming condition ;" on the other hand, nothing can be more unsightly, or even appalling, than the death-like appearance of the staring coat of a half-starved doy-horse awaiting his fate in the kennel orchard on a cold winter's day. Let us therefore bestow a little time in endeavouring to discover why a warm, or what by many would be called a hot, stable is essential to the good condition of the horse.

It is with all improvements upon old systems as with every infant science, we believe before we consider, and condemn before we investigate ; by which the simplest truths are too often disputed. In the first place, we must recollect that the horse is originally a native of a warm country ; and we need go no farther than the Scotch Highlands or Welsh mountains to prove that he degenerates in a cold one. We, therefore, may conclude that warmth is congenial to his existence. In the second place, as we find the body is as regularly renewed and replenished as is the sweat of the brow, whatever promotes that renovation—which warmth, by increasing the circulation, must do—is in this case beneficial. In the third place, they who attend to such matters will find that the constitution and habit of a horse undergo a change when kept for some time in a warm stable, favourable, no doubt, to

the work he has to perform as a hunter in the stable of a hard-riding man. He is not that gross animal which he might otherwise be if a hard feeder, and kept in a state more nearly approaching to a state of nature. This we may attribute to the increase of insensible perspiration, occasioned by increased circulation, whereby the grosser particles of the body fly off and are got rid of. In this state he would bear some comparison with a well-fed English farmer, when put to perform feats of activity with a man of more refined habits of life, where nineteen times out of twenty he would be defeated. From the *athletæ* of Ancient Greece and Rome to the present day, the first process of training has consisted in purifying the body, and *preparing* the way for increase of vigour and activity. This was not only done by physic, but by sweating, which more effectually removes the superfluities of flesh and fat ; and, when added to exercise, promotes absorption and secretion, and invigorates all parts of the body. I do not mean to say that I would keep a horse in a state of perspiration ; but I would keep him in a state of warmth sufficient to increase his circulation and keep his coat down close to his skin, which is a certain criterion of his being warm and comfortable.

As there is an analogy between a man and a horse in work, let us carry it a little further and ask whether after a hard day's exercise in the winter, a man would recover sooner if he passed his evening in a warm room, or if he passed it in a bivouac, or in a room that was cold and damp ? This I think would decide the question between a warm and cold stable for a hunter

after the fatigues of the day. I shall, therefore, conclude my remarks on this part of my subject with observing, that if it be possible to get a horse to live well in a *cold* stable, which would be a novelty to me, all the grooming on earth would never get him to look well in a *damp one*. A horse is all but a barometer, being most sensibly affected by change of weather. As to hot stables being prejudicial to a horse's eyes or lungs, I will not admit it to be the case, provided there be a vent for the foul air to escape, and no accumulation of foul litter be suffered to remain. It is that which does the mischief ; and all grooms who suffer a horse's bed to become foul, or a heap of damp or wet litter to remain in the stable because they are too idle to take it out side the door, ought to be kicked out of it.

## LETTER V

HOT AND COLD STABLES—TREATMENT AFTER A SEVERE  
DAY—CLOTHING—HAY AND WATER—CLEANLINESS  
—OVER-REACHING

**I** NEVER had a hunter go blind in my possession, although I have always used very warm stables, not lower than  $63^{\circ}$  of the thermometer in the winter time. As to coughs being produced by hot stables, I should much sooner suspect them to be the produce of cold or damp ones. In a large mass of blood, as in the horse, humours will circulate; and there is in some horses a strong disposition to get flesh and become plethoric, which accounts for their becoming foul in their work so much sooner than others, and requiring so much more work to prepare them for the field or the starting post. When Goosander, the dam of Sailor, winner of the Derby in 1820, was in training, they were obliged to stop and sweat her the fourth day on a journey—such was her aptitude to get flesh.

Although with all descriptions of horses this is the better extreme of the two, it is very injurious to legs. I once had a horse of this description, which it was with difficulty I could keep in any place without knocking his legs to pieces with work. I sold him to a



friend for a large sum, and entreated him not to turn him out with his other horses in the summer, as, knowing his constitution, I feared the consequence—exclusively of the loss of two years' condition which he then had in him. He, however, was turned out, and came up extremely fat, with what is called a grass cough upon him. In a fortnight after he had been in the stable, he was attacked with inflamed lungs, and in a month he was broken-winded.

It is quite a mistaken notion that a horse with a long coat on his back is less liable to catch cold than one that has a short one. Were I in a situation in life that required my riding about the country, putting my horse into all sorts of stables, and trusting him to all sorts of grooms, I would use every means to put a good coat on him ; and for the following reason : in the first place, it lies closer to him, and is warmer ; and in the next, it is much sooner dry. When a horse has a long hollow coat upon him, the wind blows it up and exposes his skin ; but, what is worse than all, it is many hours before it is dry after a sweat, or rain, during which time it must contain all the chilling properties of wet clothes. A horse with a short fine coat is not subject to that sudden and premature shedding of it which Mr Richard Lawrence, in his excellent paper on diseases of the lungs mentions as one of the causes of inflammatory attacks. Although the skin may be said to be generally the complexion of a horse, there are some horses which no exertions of a groom can get to wear a good coat, and are exceptions to the rule of looking well and being well, of

which the famous Parasol was one, even when quite fit to run.

Another argument against hot stables is, that horses kept in them are liable to catch cold in bad weather by a covert-side. My answer to this is—that if his rider will not let his horse stand still too long, and *will keep on his back*, there is no danger of his catching cold. There is considerable warmth in the pressure of a saddle to a horse's back with weight upon it; and there is that kind of animation in horses with hounds which keeps their blood in circulation.

Now I think I have said enough on the subject of getting hunters into condition; and the next thing is to keep them in it; to make them perform their work to our satisfaction, and to get as much out of them as we can for our money without injuring them; for in "bringing a hunter round again," as we say, after a severe run, good stable management is put to the test; and in which some grooms will much excel others, as all gentlemen who have known the pleasure of having a good one and the misery of a bad one can testify. I have no hesitation in saying that one man shall bring a horse out again in four clear days in better form than another shall in six.

A man may be a good farmer or a good gardener without having read Cato de Re Rustica, or Mago the Carthaginian; so it is possible that a man who cannot write his name may be a good groom, provided he have been brought up under a good one, and only acts upon what he has seen to be experimentally efficacious, and does not venture out of the beaten

track. As, however, no man can make good work without good tools, so no servant can do his duty by a stud of hunters without proper materials to go to work with. He must have a good stable, some loose boxes, and a good saddle-room with fire-place: he must have lots of horse-clothes of all descriptions, bandages, hot water, gruel, and the very best old hay and corn, good exercising ground, and, above all, plenty of strength in his stable; for there are two ways of dressing a horse—one to warm him, and the other to starve him. Dressing a horse vigorously removes obstructions in the smaller vessels, promotes the circulation of the blood, and in bad weather, is a substitute for exercise.

As skill and judgment are necessary in recovering a hunter after a severe day, which I shall treat of presently, so are they wanting to prepare him for it; and if not prepared he cannot go, for, as old Frampton, Master of the Horse to William the Third, observes, “the best *undieted* cock is unable to encounter the *worst* that has been carefully dieted; and so it is with a hunter; for a middling horse fit to go will beat a very good one that is not so.

With regard to a horse coming round after a hard day, even supposing him to be in the hands of the best of grooms, that must in some measure depend on the stuff he is made of; but, generally speaking, he should come out about the sixth day after the severest run. If his legs have received no injury, he should come out three times in a fortnight, at least during the open weather; and he will be the better

for being out twice a week if there have been no tiring days. Some horses require much more work than others ; but none of them can go *the pace*, and continue it over a country, unless they are in strong work. Were I asked when I was best carried for an hour without a check, I should say it was by a horse on whose back I had been nine hours with hounds on the preceding day. This, of course, was the effect of accident. A boy mistook a pot of blistering ointment for one of liniment for the heels, and rubbed it well into all my horses. The horse I allude to, having been the property of an old lady, and looked after by her coachman, had had his legs trimmed, which made the hair strong and bristly, so that he suffered less than the rest ; and by the help of a couple of urine balls and fomentation he soon recovered. The consequence was, I rode him these two days in succession, and I shall never forget the way in which he carried me on the second. Milton, the dealer, gave 250 guineas to a master of fox-hounds for this horse when fourteen years old, and sold him to a Metropolitan sportsman, who broke his leg the first day he rode him.

I never had the curiosity to ascertain the number of day's hunting I have had in any one season, much less the number of times any one particular horse had carried me ; but I recollect the celebrated Captain Barclay telling me, on the last day of Sir Thomas Mostyn's hunting for the season, that he had been carried eighty-two times that winter by four horses—being twenty times and a half to each horse—which

struck me as being a great performance, considering the Captain's weight, and the strength of the country (the Bicester) in which he hunted.

General rules cannot be individually applied ; but there is one respecting a hunter which I have held inviolable ; and that is, that under all circumstances, whether the intervals between his hunting have been long or short, he should have a sweat, and go for a mile nearly at the top of his speed on the day before hunting. I have generally adopted the following plan :—

Let some heavy clothes be put on him, and, with a light weight on his back, let him go, at a gentle rate six or eight times around a large field that rides a little deep, till he sweats kindly. Let him be followed to the place by a man with some dry clothes and a scraper, and, taking him into some building, or under a warm hedge, let him be well scraped, and have on his dry clothes. Then, if short of work, let him have a good gallop for a mile, and walk home. This treatment, with proper care, is unattended with any danger of catching cold, and, if, followed by a *proper allowance of hay and water*, will give him a wonderful advantage over those horses which have not been doing what he has done, provided he drop into a quick thing with hounds the next day. I have seen hunters led to be sweated by a boy riding a hack ; but however great an advocate I may be for preserving horses' legs by keeping weight off them as much as possible, yet a horse cannot, in my opinion, be worthy the name of a hunter if he cannot carry a boy in his exercise.

Having laid some stress upon the words, proper allowance of hay and water on the day before hunting, I will proceed to state what I consider that allowance to be. In the first place, if a horse will eat his corn in the morning without water, he should have none till he comes in from exercise, and is done up, which should be by ten o'clock at farthest. He should then have half a pail of water,<sup>1</sup> and a proportion of his hay, which should not exceed, for a moderately-sized horse, ten pounds a-day. He should then be shut up till four, when, before he is dressed over, he should have another half pail of water, and no more until he returns from hunting the next day, unless it be a few swallows on the morning he hunts, when his groom first comes to him. If this quantity of hay is not sufficient to satisfy his appetite, and there is an appearance in the morning of straw in his manger, as if he had been eating it, the setting-muzzle should be put on him at ten o'clock, and he should remain on it for the night, but his groom should be with him by five in the morning, to relieve him. He should then have his two feeds, at an interval of an hour, and proceed to the covert at a gentle pace. When there—provided he have been treated in the way I have prescribed and he cannot carry his rider as he ought to do, we must conclude nature forbids it, as he will have had every assistance from art.

Long days with hounds—by which I mean severe

<sup>1</sup> On days not preceding hunting this quantity of water is not sufficient. He may have three-parts of a pail in the morning, or a few swallows at night.



‘ SILVER CLOUD ’

A light weight Hunter and Big Winner. Owned by James Young, Esq., Keele, Staffs.  
This picture represents a beautiful head, neck and forequarters of a typical  
Hunter with the correct expression





running, with perhaps a brace of foxes, and upwards of twenty miles home afterwards—are most injurious to hunters, and call forth all the skill and judgment of their grooms to recover them from their effects. If mere fatigue be the consequence, rest, that *vis medicatrix naturæ*, will do all that is necessary: but if a horse is what is called *over-marked*, his groom must be on the alert. There are two or three directing symptoms which cannot easily be mistaken. In the first place, his appetite fails him, and he is very greedy for his water. His respiration is not so smooth as it should be, and there is a considerable relaxation in the muscles in the interstices of the hips. Sometimes inflammation comes on very rapidly after a hard day, bidding defiance to all precautions, and, too often, if it does not destroy him, renders the horse unfit for a hunter, as it generally terminates in his feet. If he does not cast his hoofs entirely, they become what is termed “pumice,” and take a long time to recover. Horses that have had fever in their feet generally go on their heels afterwards, and the inside of their feet becomes convex, instead of being concave.

I had a remarkable instance in my own stable of the rapidity with which inflammation of this sort attacks horses that have been over-marked. I had seen one very quick thing of fifteen minutes, and another of an hour, over the finest part of Leicestershire; and although my horse was at one time a good deal beat, he came home very cheerfully, and I had no reason to expect mischief. Before nine o'clock that night, however, he was quite blind, and nothing but

the assistance of a veterinary surgeon, who was at hand, and who took nine quarts of blood from him that night, and three more the next morning, besides physic, clysters, etc. saved his life. On the third day his eyesight returned, but the fever settled in his feet, and he was only fit for harness at the expiration of twelve months. This happened in the month of November; and previously to my purchasing him he had been turned out on very good land for the summer months, to which I attributed the loss I sustained by him: for had he been in my possession six months sooner, I feel confident it would not have happened, as there was nothing in that day's sport to have injured a horse whose condition had been the work of time.

When I first began to keep hunters, we knew nothing of those great restoratives in the stable—*flannel bandages, hot water for legs, and gruel*. Except in case of illness they were never thought of—the benefit of which is, in my opinion, incalculable. By their use circulation is kept up in those parts where it is apt to be most languid; and the practice of washing legs in very warm water, and swathing them in large folds of flannel, takes off soreness and inflammation from blows and other injuries, which all hunters are liable to in a run over a strong country. Another advantage attending them is, that they admit of a horse being shut up half the time it formerly required to clean him, which enables him to lie down, or roll, which he will always do if in a loose house, before he gets stiff from his work.

When a horse has had a very hard day, I have found the following treatment safe and effectual in bringing him round again quickly.

There is a cleanliness in not letting a hunter be taken into his stable until the *rough dirt* which hangs about him is removed ; for which purpose he should be taken under a shed or into another stable ; and the quickest method of removing it is by the means of a birch broom. Three minutes will accomplish this. He should then be taken into his own stable, have two or three quarts of tepid gruel, and his feet and *legs above his knees and hocks* should be well washed in water nearly hot.<sup>1</sup> When sponged well with strained sponges, one set of bandages should be swathed around them. His head and body should be well dried, which, if he is full of hard meat, will not occupy more than an hour, when he should be shut up in a loose house, well littered down, and a small feed of corn allowed him. In about two hours his groom should come to him again ; his bandages should be taken off, his legs well wisped and hand-rubbed, his head and body lightly brushed over, and a dry set of bandages put on. A luke-warm mash, with a feed of oats in it, and three parts of a pail of tepid water, with a very small quantity of hay, will make him comfortable for the night ; and on the following morning he should go to exercise as soon as it is light, and be walked for an hour with an extra cloth and a hood. He should have tepid water all that day, and

<sup>1</sup> If the legs are washed it is necessary to dry them thoroughly, otherwise this practice is liable to bring on cracked heels.—EDITOR.

a liberal allowance of it, with his usual oats if he will eat them, but no beans. If his appetite fails him, and does not return before shutting-up time that evening, he should have half a cordial and half a diuretic<sup>1</sup> ball mixed together ; which, with a liberal allowance of tepid water, and an hour and a half walking exercise on the third day, will so far recover him as to enable him to return to his former high feed on the fourth ; on the fifth or sixth have a sweat ; and on the seventh be fit for business again (as far, at least, as his constitution is concerned) after *the hardest day*, and will carry his rider with more ease to himself than if he had not gone through it.

When a horse is in all other respects right, and in prime condition, it is one of the most provoking circumstances attending a stable of hunters to find him with a *bad over-reach*, which will prevent his hunting for a fortnight, or perhaps more. This injury has been generally supposed to have been inflicted by the toe of the shoe ; to obviate which blacksmiths most commonly square it, when they shoe a hunter, leaving a small portion of the hoof projecting over it. Ten years ago (from 1823), a good judge of these matters informed me that over-reaching was not done by the toe, *but by the inner edge of the inside of the shoe* ; and taking me into a blacksmith's shop, he convinced me of it by passing my finger along this edge of a new shoe, which I found was almost as sharp as a knife. It is in the act, it appears, of drawing back the hind leg,

<sup>1</sup> Cordial and diuretic balls should always be obtained from a veterinary surgeon, and not from non-professional sources.

after having, by an over-exertion of the hind quarters, over-stepped the fore leg, that this incision is made (often half way up the sinews,) which I always considered was done by the toe. When made acquainted with this, my surprise ceased at seeing horses' heels and sinews nearly cut off by what I supposed to be the blunt or almost round edge of the *outside* of the shoe. I have ever since had the inside edge of the hind shoes what the blacksmith's call "bevelled," or rounded off, and have never had an over-reach. All horses are more or less subject to over-reach, particularly in countries where there is much brook-jumping.

## LETTER VI

STRONG WORK NECESSARY—ILL EFFECTS OF TOO MUCH  
REST—NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS OF THE GROOM

**A**NIMALS—particularly horses which we take under our protection—are no longer strangers to pain and sickness ; but, like ourselves, struggle through a “ frail and feverish being ” in continual danger of their lives from illness ; besides a thousand accidents to which they are exposed from the uses to which we apply them, and the various functions and operations which man, not nature, calls upon them to perform. It is a subject, therefore, beneath no one’s consideration as to whence these evils arise, and how they may be remedied : to which may be added, that in few articles which contribute to the amusement of the upper ranks in life is there a larger capital embarked than in good hunters—several studs of which, within my knowledge, have cost their owners no less than five thousand pounds, and upwards. Now, as the late Mr Richard Lawrence observes in his *Essay on Diseases of the Lungs*, to which I alluded in my last, horses kept in a forced and preternatural state are “ always on the verge of some inflammatory disease,” the man who may point out one single hint for their preservation,

or suggest any expedient by which their powers may be applied to advantage, and with safety, by those who have purchased them so dearly, is as much entitled to be heard, and does as much good in his way, as the skilful and scientific artificer who invents the most powerful and complicated machine. The one by the help of his mental faculties produces mechanical power far exceeding natural force ; so the other by his humble means increases animal power in a ratio comparatively great.

A celebrated professor of physic in a neighbouring nation, in the luxuriancy of his imagination, considered man as a machine, and attempted to explain the phenomena of animal economy by mechanical and physical principles. The pride of man, however, which will scarcely stoop to take a lesson from the instinct of brutes, however home it may apply to him, felt insulted by this comparison of intellect with force, and the Doctor got scouted for his pains. Were I, in the indulgence of my fancy, to compare a horse to anything so much beneath him as that which could be formed by man, I should say he resembled *an organ*, on which, if the pipes and tubes are in order, and the bellows good and strong, a merry tune may be played with the help of a delicate finger. How then this instrument (to our pleasures) is to be kept in tune shall be the subject of my farther observations.

Next to the article of food in the condition of a race-horse or a hunter, is to be considered the work he has to do ; for without the one it is no matter how well he

may be supplied with the other : and we may just as reasonably expect crops to arise out of the ground without awaiting the ordeals of nature, as to see a horse in condition without a long continuance of good food and strong work. In administering work to the race-horse consists the chief art of training ; and it is a matter of no less importance with a hunter in the stable of a man who wishes to distinguish himself in the field, and *not to run the risk of killing his horse every time he goes out.*

As far as regards the last mentioned circumstance, the chief consideration with me has always been—not how long or how severe the day's sport may have been, *but how my horse has been prepared for it ;* and it is a consolation to hard riders to observe, that, in my experience in the field, out of the great number of horses which I have seen tired, or what is called “ dead beat,” with hounds, I have never once known death to be the consequence, unless it were to those who were short of work, and not sufficiently prepared. Were I to enumerate all the instances with which I am acquainted of horses being lost from this cause, it would be tiresome and unprofitable to the reader ; but this much I will venture to assert—that it is not in the power of the best run a fox can show to cause the death of a good hunter, in good condition, and fairly ridden, provided he have been out with hounds and seen a run within the five or six preceding days, and had a good sweat with a good brushing gallop after it on the day before, with proper attention as to food, etc. in the stable. A horse may be so tired as



to lie down in the field, yet it is generally the fault of his owner if worse consequences ensue.

I have before observed that I never had but one dead hunter (p. 25) drawn out of my stable, though I have had many tired ones come into it ; and I in great part attribute my good fortune in this particular to the invariable rule I have made, let the weather be ever so bad, to give my horse some good strong work, and to cause him to sweat freely on the day before hunting. I have always been aware that when the wheels of nature are clogged, the machine cannot only not go on as it should do, but is in constant danger of being broken or destroyed.

It may be here observed that the race-horse does not sweat on the day before he runs. This I admit is true ; but the race-horse in training, when well, is always going. He does not, like the hunter, lie still—with the exception of an hour's walking exercise—for two or three days after his last day's work.

Having had a good deal to do with private training, I may be allowed to say that the very best effects are to be found from *gentle sweats, often repeated*. They keep a horse light and free in his body, without that injury to his legs by what are called "brushing gallops," in which every sinew about him is put to the hazard. Long-continued exercise, we are all aware, is of the greatest use in unloading the bowels, giving firmness and elasticity to the muscles, and promoting the general secretions ; but a horse cannot be fit for such severe and trying exertions as he is put to in the field unless his vessels are kept clear and open,

and his blood in a proper state of fluidity—frequently cleansed of its excrementitious matter, which so powerfully contributes to disease, after work. This can only be done by repeated perspiration ; and I have heard veterinary surgeons say that the perspirable matter which flies off through the pores of the skin is of more consequence, as far as clear wind and condition are concerned, than all the other secretions.

What I have now said chiefly applies to the state of the blood. The state of the bowels is equally important. Rest not only generates a redundancy of blood and humours, but the bowels become overloaded, and distend beyond their proper size, in which state violent exertion must always be attended with danger. In perusing an old article on farriery, I recollect being gravely told that a horse should not be ridden with fox-hounds under three weeks after a dose of physic, or with stag-hounds under a month. All this is laughable ; but, if true, what would become of the race-horse, who sweats six days after his physic sets ? For my own part, were I to know to a certainty that I were to see a severe day's sport with hounds, I should prefer riding a horse which had gone through a dose of physic ten days before : I should prefer this, not only as a preventive of danger after it, but with the confidence that I should be better carried than if he had not had it.

The ill effects of rest, and the good effects of work, on the powers and energies of a horse are astonishing. In long-continued rest his flesh becomes soft and flabby, and the muscles lose their elasticity, and even their

substance. This is particularly exemplified in the human subject ; for, let a man forego the use of one of his legs for twelve months, the muscles of that leg will fall away, though they will in some measure recover on his resuming the action of the limb. With horses lame in the feet this is also plainly shown. The muscles of the chest fall away, because they are not called into their *proper* action, which a cripple has not the power of doing, although he may work every day. This gave rise to the vulgar, but now nearly exploded idea of chest-founded horses, whereas such a complaint does not exist. The evil lies in the feet ; and the wasting of the muscles of the chest is the effect, and not the cause. In strong work, when a horse is sound every muscle and fibre of his body are braced, as it were, until they become as tough as whipcord.

Not only the muscles of the body, but the lungs also, are powerfully strengthened by good work. The quickness of respiration by repeated galloping produces an elasticity in these organs far above their ordinary powers ; and as, particularly with hunters, *wind is strength*, it is a consideration of the highest importance to a man who rides over a country, as far as himself, as well as his horse, is concerned, that his hunter be in *good wind*, for without it the best fencer is powerless and dangerous.

As far as relates to the proper attenuation of the blood, the advantage of *frequent* sweating is too obvious to require much notice here. Let a horse, highly fed, have nothing but walking exercise for some time, and the first day he is made to perspire his sweat will

lather like soap suds. The second day that lather will be much thinner, and the third the perspiration will run off him as clear as water. That perspiration is the grand duct by which the impurities of nature are carried off, requires no argument of mine to show ; and so far from a horse being got into condition without frequent recourse to it, even a cock cannot be brought into the pit until he has gone through the operation of sweating. All those gentlemen jockeys who know what it is to waste to ride, have found the full effect of this grand relief of nature in the light and volatile feel which they experience after having lost three or four pounds' weight in a walk in clothes, and a good smoking between the blankets afterwards. When they get up and are fresh dressed, they feel as if they could fly ; and for my own part I have often envied the feel of a race-horse walking back to his stable after having had a sweat.

Exclusively of the extreme debility and laxity of fibre produced by it, many serious evils frequently arise among hunters from a long respite from work in the winter, unless proper preventive measures are had recourse to. I am no friend to quacking, in either horses or men, when they are well. I remember the speech of the dying man :—" I was well, I wished to be better, and here I am," said one who attempted to mend a good constitution. Nevertheless, being exactly of Mr Richard Lawrence's opinion, that inflammatory attacks are to be apprehended with horses in a state in which the constitution is preternaturally excited, preventive measures must be used

to guard against them. In the summer, green food, moderate allowance of corn, and turning out at night, are cooling remedies always at hand ; but not so in the winter : and I have always been apprehensive of mischief in my stable after a long-continued frost. The organs of respiration are the most likely to be affected, and many horses have become roarers during such a period. This is not confined to horses, for in the human species pulmonary complaints are always more frequent after a severe winter.

A few days after the breaking up of the frost at the latter end of 1822, a gentleman with whom I had a slight acquaintance was galloping by the side of me in some deep ground ; and on hearing his mare more musical than she should be, and having been in the habit of seeing her go to hounds before the frost set in, I asked him how long she had been a roarer. He seemed surprised, as well as alarmed, at the question ; but the next time I met him he admitted that the mischief was done.

This circumstance, although in corroboration of what I have advanced as to the evils attending long rest, without measures being taken to counteract them, was trifling in its consequences to another which I witnessed some years ago in Leicestershire. One of the most distinguished members of the Old Melton Club went to town at the commencement of a long frost, leaving in his stable sound and well perhaps the best hunter of that day in England. On his return, when the country was open, he ordered this horse to the covert's side, with another for him-

self, giving directions to his groom to ride him quietly after the hounds to prepare him for the next day. On coming to a check, after some slow hunting, this celebrated sportsman observed to a friend, in a jocular manner, "Here he comes, roaring away: who can he be?" Who was it but his own horse, which had become a roarer in the stable during the long-continued frost, and from no other apparent cause! Thus was a horse, worth at that time one thousand guineas, spoiled by doing nothing.

The instances which I have now mentioned are only two among many which I have met with of a similar kind; and I have always guarded against them in my own stable by precautionary measures—by lessening my horses' corn at least one feed per day, taking their beans from them, and invariably giving them a dose of physic, followed by a mild urine ball, if time will permit, or, what may be better, a few carrots chopped into their morning and evening feeds. Carrots have a particularly cooling property, and act as an alterative by the kidneys. Bran mashes, cold, are also useful, but they must not be too frequently given, as they are of a very lowering nature.

Although I object to the frequent use of bran mashes with horses that are to follow hounds, yet I have always made it a rule to give each horse one large lukewarm mash in the course of the week, taking care that he do not have it within two days of his turn to hunt. Bran mashes, made thin, expel the contents of the bowels without increasing the secretions, and are great preservatives of general health.

The following are what I take to be the chief points on which the judgment of a groom is to be exercised :—To know when a horse becomes foul in his body ; when he is up to his mark, and when he is below it ; how to check incipient disease ; how to treat horses that are not quite sound, so as to keep them on in their work ; how to preserve their feet, and how to feed them. He should also know how to treat thorns, strains, common wounds and blows, which are perpetually happening to hunters' legs ; but when any mischief of a more serious nature may occur, he ought, if he has his master's interest at heart, immediately to send off for the best veterinary surgeon in his neighbourhood ; for when disease lies beyond the reach of manual detection, a groom (however clever he may be as a groom), if he attempts a cure, is travelling in a wilderness of error ; and the expedients he may resort to may be worse than the original evil. I will here offer a few remarks on each of the above heads.

With respect to feeding—one of the first considerations—I believe I have said all that I conceived to be necessary on this subject at p. 18, to which I have nothing to add, but to remind my brother sportsmen of what I have before so strongly enforced, viz., *that food should be proportioned to work*, or plethora, the root of all evils, will be produced. “Plethora,” says Boerhaave, “is created by everything that maketh a great quantity of good chyle and blood, and at the same time hindereth their attenuation, corruption, and perspiration, through the pores of the skin.”

This authority is sufficient to enforce attention to the golden rule to which I have just alluded.

A stint in the allowance of hay must be strictly enforced if we wish to preserve our horses to a good old age. We have heard of the *scelera aquarum* as applied to the human species, although *sportsmen* are not apt to be afflicted by such evils; but the mischief arising from an improper use of hay, I take to be *incalculable*. In the stables of the fast coaches this has been proved almost to demonstration. These horses are only allowed half a truss each for the seven days, and a broken-winded horse is now scarcely heard of among them. I have taken some pains to ascertain this fact by my own personal inquiries. One proprietor, who had nearly fifty horses at work—many of which were in as fast coaches as any that travelled the road—assured me, lately, that he had not one broken-winded horse in his yard; whereas, before he stinted them in their hay, he generally had one in five in that state. A further proof of the good effect of this sumptuary law in the stable is, that the horse which lives chiefly upon corn requires less water than one whose belly is distended with hay; and it must make no small difference to a horse whether he be taken from an empty or a full rack, when put to a coach that *starts off*, and continues to run, at the quick rate of eleven or twelve miles in the hour.

Having, as before observed, had a good deal to do with private training, I may be allowed to say that I consider the present system of feeding the race-horse to be very nearly applicable to that of feeding





HUNTER SIRE 'DE BIGNE'

The property of Dr. A. Hazelwood of Fuxton. Winner of the King's Premium.



the hunter of the present day ; and the trifling shade of difference between them exists only in reference to the work each has to perform. Here, however, the difference is much less than it was formerly, and may now be said rather to apply to the sort of horse we have to deal with than to the business he is put to. Strong and severe work is as necessary to the one as to the other ; and to get a horse of a naturally hard constitution quite fit to go to hounds, in some countries, requires that he should be nearly as much in training as if he were going to run a four-mile heat at King's Plate weights. The whole system of hunting is so revolutionised that the preparation which a horse now requires is very different to what it was in former times. The hour of meeting is seldom before eleven ; the find generally quick and certain ; and horses are often not more than five or six hours from their stables after the best day's sport ; and the ground they go over is frequently not so much as a plating race-horse performs in contending three or four-mile heats. Having said this, I see no reason to doubt the propriety of feeding, sweating, and muzzling the hunter much in the same manner as the race-horse, only making due and proper allowance for the relative nature of their work, particularly as to not stripping the hunter too much of his flesh, or losing sight of the natural difference between the thorough-bred horse and the cock-tail.

It is my firm conviction that no less than nine hunters out of ten that appear by the covert side—taking into account the present speed of hounds—

are short of *quick work*, for the pace they are made to go ; and let me impress one circumstance on the mind of the reader—*that, barring epidemic complaints and accidents, no horses enjoy such uninterrupted good health as those in training.*

## LETTER VII

### TREATMENT OF HUNTERS IN THE SUMMER

**A**S the mariner at the expiration of one voyage repairs his bark for the next, so should the sportsman at the conclusion of one season set about getting his horses into good tune for the one which is to come. I shall, therefore, now proceed to state how I should recommend a hunter to be treated when the season is at an end—supposing him to finish it “sound, and well up to his mark.”

The first step I should take would be to put him into a loose box, if convenient, and by degrees diminish his corn, giving him an hour’s walking exercise every morning as usual. I should then give him two doses of physic, which would not only cool his habit of body so as to prevent the danger of inflammatory attacks, but would have that effect on his legs as to enable me to see what injury had been done to them in his work ;—whether there were any ligamentary enlargements—any injury to the joints or sinews—any callous substances produced by blows—or, in short, *anything going wrong*. The clear state of his legs which this treatment will produce would prevent the possibility of working in the dark, as they will become *finer*, to use

the language of grooms, in three weeks than they would at the expiration of a three months' run at grass in the summer.

I cannot but be aware that I may in some degree be encroaching on the practice of the veterinary profession ; but such is the esteem in which I hold that highly useful body of men—every *real* member of which is a treasure in the neighbourhood in which he resides—that so far from it being my wish to take a guinea out of their pockets, I should prefer putting one into them, or giving them any encouragement to which they are so justly entitled ; and I have no hesitation in saying that it would answer to any sportsman who keeps hunters to call in the assistance of one of them to look over his stud at the end of every season, and to submit them to his treatment and superintendence during the summer months, which would repay him well in the end : for whatever may be the experience of a gentleman or his groom in such matters, the veterinary surgeon, from his anatomical knowledge of the animal, is enabled to see defects which are not observable by others, and to meet the danger before it becomes insurmountable. By way of illustration take the following example in my own stable.

A few years ago I had a remarkably clever grey horse, for which I gave 220 guineas. At the end of the season, when only six years old, he lost his action, and went like an old post-horse, being to all appearance groggy. With the most perfect feet and legs, and without a visible sign of anything wrong, I became alarmed, and could only account for it by supposing

that I had given him a shake at a leap with a considerable drop into a road which was hard, on the last day of hunting him. I determined, however, not to rely on my own judgment, and sent for the nearest veterinary surgeon of eminence in his profession (Mr Samuel Palfrey), who was at first as much puzzled as I was ; but, on a minute examination of his legs, he discovered two *incipient* splints, as they are termed, very little larger than peas, growing out just under the joints of the knees. These being removed by the operation of two mild blisters, the horse recovered his action, and my alarm was at an end.

Now it is very probable that had this horse been in the hands of a groom he might have been put to all kind of torture in the stable, or, what is more likely if in the possession of many persons, he would have been turned out to grass with the hopes of that being the *catholicon* for all such cases, and with the assurance that he would come up sound at the expiration of his three months' run.

What, however, would have been the consequence ? Why, the splints would have grown, though perhaps the lameness might have disappeared ; and when the horse came into work again at the commencement of the next season, inflammation would have returned, and it would have been more than propable that half the season might have passed away before he could have appeared by a covert-side again. Here then is the old adage verified—" a stitch in time saves nine."

Indiscriminate blistering of hunters' legs has been

generally resorted to previous to their being turned out, or thrown out of condition for the summer, under what I may venture to call the old system of management, now pretty nearly exploded. In my noviciate I followed this practice myself, and have since been an observer of it in the stables of others, but have long since pronounced it to be a waste of drugs, as unnecessary torture to the animal, and not once in twenty times of the smallest benefit. On the contrary, I have frequently seen it highly injurious, distending the vessels so much beyond their natural state as never to recover their proper tone again; and, indeed, this is almost certain to be the case if applied when any active inflammation is going on in the limb. My experience, indeed, has led me to place but little faith in blisters to horses' legs, unless the injury to which they are applied has been of very short duration. As to their reducing callous substances and obstinate splints and curbs, to which they are too often ignorantly applied, a sponge with cold water is equally effective, and divested of the torture. As preparatory to firing, in some particular cases, and in all those of incipient excrescences of bone—such as splints, curbs, and *bone spavins, just budding*—the timely application of a blister will nine times out of ten effect a cure; and when to these you add their use in diverting certain inflammatory attacks, when applied externally to the body, you close the catalogue of their virtues—by no means a scanty one.

For injuries to horses' legs when they are serious or of long standing, firing, with time, is my favourite



remedy. I must here make one observation; and that is, that I have ever been sparing of punishment to horses when it could be avoided, not only on the score of humanity, but for a natural regard which I have always had for so noble an animal. I must take heed, therefore, how I speak of firing a horse being a "favourite remedy" with me, or I may have some canting moralist on my back, and be set down for the greater brute of the two.

Perhaps there are few sportsmen who arrive at a good old age without having themselves experienced the *potential* cautery. When applied to a horse's leg it is called the *actual* cautery, being administered in the form of a red-hot iron. In both cases the operation is severe; but the impression on my mind is, that horses suffer more by severe blistering than they do by firing.<sup>1</sup>

In April 1822 I had a hunter of mine fired in both his fore-legs. Previously to the operation he was blistered as I wished—besides strengthening his legs, which appeared about to give way—to reduce a callous substance that had formed on one of his tendons. Being of an irritable temper in the stable, he suffered much by the blistering, and was so uneasy that I was obliged to have a man to stand at his head with a small switch in his hand, for six hours, to prevent his rubbing one leg against the other, by which he would have blemished himself. When ready for the opera-

<sup>1</sup> The application of vesicants, the actual cautery, or a combination of them, is necessarily attended with a considerable degree of pain, but the benefits are undeniable.—Editor.

tion I sent him to be fired, with orders to my servant to lead him gently home afterwards. Being a resolute horse he struggled much on being thrown, but when down and secured he did not appear to feel anything. When he got up, and his head turned towards home, he was so full of play that the servant was obliged to ride him, or he would have broken away from him on the road. The same operator fired another hunter for me the following week for a young ringbone. He merely put a twitch on his nose, and *he never stirred a foot from the ground*. The consequences of these operations were, that the ringbone on one horse was stopped in its progress to lameness ; and the enlargement on the tendon of the other, although of more than twelve months' standing, quite disappeared, and his legs all in place again. Now all the blistering ointment that ever was made would not have effected one of those cures, if it had the other : and with respect to the relative suffering caused by the operations of blistering and firing, I have only to observe that the effect of firing is merely local, whereas the anguish of a severe blister deranges the whole system, and often produces strangury and other spasmodic affections. I shall conclude this part of my subject by observing that I have never fired a horse when I thought other means would answer the end ; but I would do it on the principle that I would go to a dentist and have a tooth drawn, rather than suffer protracted pain and illness from temporary or palliative measures. The operation in both cases is severe, but soon over ; and I shall never think we are debarred of inflicting a

certain degree of pain on animals given to us for their services, if those services cannot be available on other terms.

Having given the hunter his physic, and the liberty of a loose box, his legs will be reduced as nearly to a state of nature as can be expected after what they have gone through, or after the injuries they may have received. If no ligamentary enlargements, or callous substances on the sinews or on the tendons, should appear, a man may congratulate himself that his horse has been so fortunate as to escape them, and his legs may go on for another year; but they should be minutely inspected, and by one who knows the evils when he sees them (no mean accomplishment), and, having found them, circumstances alone must direct us to which of the two remedies must be applied. If blistering will reach the cause, it has certainly the reputation of being the milder operation of the two; but if the injury is considerable, the parts where it exists material, and of more than one or two months' standing, nothing but the actual cautery can be depended on. With those horses which carry high weights firing is too often a *sine qua non*; for when once nature gives way under such circumstances, nothing short of so violent a remedy will restore the injured parts. Curbs, splints, and, above all, blows on the legs, are frequently very obstinate to deal with, often requiring repeated blisters, followed by firing, to get rid of them.

With respect to horses' feet in the summer, there are two opinions amongst good judges as to whether

the fore-shoes should be on or not—the hoofs, in the latter case, being often rasped around the toe to prevent them chipping or splitting. For my own part I prefer the tip, or half-shoe, leaving the frog to press on the ground. A few nails around the front of the hoof cannot be injurious provided the heel be left free from them. If a horse's foot is inclined to become convex, or pumice, then he should go without his shoes, on the same principle as the inside of the blacksmith's hand becomes hard by the constant use of his hammer. I had a fine hunter with this sort of feet, which I restored to their proper form by making him stand on flags all day for three months in succession. The internal part of the foot, which had, as it were, dropped from its proper place, was forced back to it again, and the disease, if I may call it such, did not return.

## LETTER VIII

### HARD MEAT *versus* GRASS—PHYSIC

**F**ROM the experience of graziers and butchers, as well as by the reports of the meat markets, we find that some summers are particularly unfavourable to the beasts of the field, consequently to those hunters which have been managed under the old, and perhaps too common, system of three months' run at grass ; and, as there is nothing like *proof*, I satisfied myself of the truth of what I have asserted in the following manner : Knowing that a neighbour of mine had his hunters out, as usual, I rode to his house to see them ; and wishing to put matters to the test, I took a horse of my own with me that had been summered, if I may use such a word, nearly, though not exactly, according to the method I have recommended, and I will state the result in detail. My horse had had two doses of physic since the last season, was not turned out till the first week in June, and then only at night, on a third year's lea which had been closely fed down in the spring. During the bad weather he lay in at night, and was turned out at four in the morning, taken up at ten A.M., and out again at five in the evening till nine, when he was housed for the night.

When only out at night he had a small portion of hay in the middle of the day, and two feeds of oats, to which were added, as the weather was cold, during the rest of the time he was out, a double handful of beans, not split, in each feed. When in the stable, by day, he was exposed to great circulation of air, as the casements were taken out of the windows and the door open. My neighbour's horses, seven in number, had been turned out as soon as hunting was over into a field of eight acres of tolerably good land, always used for the purpose, with plenty of shade and water, and had had no physic since the commencement of the last season. Himself and his groom entered the field with me, and I was much struck with the sad appearance of the horses. The "*qui color albus erat nunc est contrarius albo*" might have been aptly applied here. There were two grey horses in the field, but there was very little white about them; The black horse was anything but black, the chestnut a kind of dun, and the bay horses presented a kind of sickly compound of red and yellow, which it is not in my power to define. There was no reflection of the solar rays on their skins, and they had altogether a miserable appearance. Three out of the seven had coughs, their crests were low, their bellies large, and their action feeble.

On my remarking to the owner of these horses how ill they looked, he observed, that they did very well in that field last year, and that they had come up in what he called "very good condition."—"That is very possible," said I, "because last summer was

one of an hundred. The grass was roasted till it resembled hay, but now your horses are starved."—"How can that be," replied my friend, "when there is so much grass?"—"That there is grass," replied I, "I admit; that is to say, in places under the shade of trees and in wet spots, which they will eat, as you or I would eat a dog or a cat when starving: but they would as soon eat the fungus that grows amongst it as touch it now; and where the feed is sweet, you perceive they have gnawed it until there is no bite left to support so large an animal as a horse, and particularly one whose appetite was a short time since satiated with high keep." I now remarked to him the difference between my horse and any one of his seven. The coat of my horse was of its original colour, and lay close to his back: he was full of vigour and strength, rather fatter than I wished to see him; but dirty as he was—having been only taken up the day before (the 10th of July)—we could see a gloss down his quarters and shoulders, and his flesh was as firm as if he had been in work. He had no cough, but appeared in *perfect* health; and, by way of experiment, I rode him rather fast for about a mile and a half on my own road home, to see whether he would perspire quickly, which he did not, though full of glee, and eager to get home, and, as it happened on that day, under a hot mid-day sun.

Now let us contrast, if they can be contrasted, the advantages and disadvantages of these two plans, and balance the account between them. It is true that my neighbour's horses will have cost nothing but

the value of about an acre of ground to each horse from the period of their being turned out until they are taken into the stable again ; and mine, supposing him to have consumed his acre of grass, and to have had his two feeds of corn a day, since the time the others were deprived of it, will have cost, in addition, 144 quarterns, or nine bushels of oats, and about one and a half of beans, the expense of which does not amount to more than two pounds. Now we will suppose, for the sake of argument, that necessity required that either one of my friend's horses, or my own, were to have been exposed for sale in a week from the time the comparison was made—what, may I ask, would have been the result ? Why, I will venture to assert without fear of contradiction, that as two gentle sweats and some good wisping would have made my horse look nearly as well as when in work, he would have produced an addition of twenty-five per cent. on his value beyond that of my neighbour's ; and therefore, supposing them to be each worth 100*l.* when in condition, he would have paid 25*l.* for having eaten a twelfth part of that value in corn.

We may look at it in another light. If the condition of my horse, by the superior firmness of his flesh, and his increased vigour, be so much better in the month of July or August, how much better still must it be in the month of November, when he will be called upon to follow hounds—particularly so, when in the interval he has to go through that wonderful process of nature, the change of his natural covering, or coat,





THE CELEBRATED HUNTER 'WHISKEY'

The property of J. H. Stokes, Esq. Winner of 1st and Championship at Richmond, 1906, 1907, 1st and Championship at the Royal Lancashire, 1905 & 1906



which so visibly affects him ! Were a man told that he must write a book, or build a house, in three months, would he do either so well as if he had a longer period allowed him to arrange and consider the subject for the one, or to select and season the materials for the other ? This applies still more powerfully to the horse, inasmuch as all operations of nature require a stated time.

As I was returning home from inspecting my neighbour's hunters, I was amused as well as instructed by the following conversation, which took place between one of his tenants (a farmer) and myself :— “ Mr ——'s horses,” said I, “ look badly.” “ Why, yes,” said the farmer ; “ I told the 'Squire so some time back ; but I don't hold with the way in which some of you gentlemen keep your hunters. You keep them in a warm stable, full of good corn, for eight months in the year, and then turn them out to shift for themselves the other four. Now,” added he, “ this is not the way I like to keep my cart horses. I like to keep them pretty well all the year around ; for if they are kept *up and down* (verbatim), there is sure to be something the matter with them—grease, or some humours.” These were precisely his words, and I registered them carefully in my recollection ; for nothing can be more true than that the greatest evils arise to horses from subjecting them to extremes of food, as also of heat and cold. Philosophers tell us that if this globe were to experience, in the space of one year, the heat of the torrid and the cold of the frigid zones— which it undoubtedly would do were the elliptic to

make an angle of twenty degrees more than it does with the equinoctial line—three parts of it would be uninhabitable, as *neither plant nor animal could sustain the two extremes!* With reference, then, to the unnatural condition of horses, and the unnatural purposes to which we apply them, the more consideration I give to the subject, and the more my experience teaches me, the more I am convinced that, with few exceptions, the stable is the place for hunters; and that subjecting them to sudden changes of diet, and to the vicissitudes of this uncertain climate, is productive, or at least the predisposing cause, of nine-tenths of the diseases and evils (to say nothing of accidents) which happen to them: and were I to be told that I were to receive a good annuity subject to the life of a horse, I would keep him in the stable all the year, as the most likely means, with proper exercise and grooming, of preserving him to a good old age. I have been more confirmed in this opinion by conversation I have had at different times with officers of dragoon regiments, on the numerous diseases—glanders in particular—to which troop horses are liable; and I have generally found them to proceed from the following causes—namely, bad grooming, want of physic, to their only being what may be termed “half in condition,” and, under all these unfavourable circumstances, to their being exposed to the vicissitudes of weather, and sudden transitions from heat to cold, and from cold to heat.

Now although, fortunately for those who turn out their hunters, they are generally taken up again before

the most trying period to the constitution arrives—namely, August or September, when hot days are succeeded by chilling fogs at night—yet I think we may venture to assume that those horses must be foaled for the purpose, and made of more than common materials, which could submit with impunity to having their saddles and bridles taken off *as soon as they come home*, and turned out into a field to roll themselves in the dirt, and fill their empty and debilitated stomachs with cold spring water.

Although “among a multitude of proofs one does the business,” and one would satisfy me as well as a hundred, yet, having others to convince, I thought I would submit the propriety of turning hunters out to grass for the summer to one more test ; so, the morning after I had seen my neighbour’s horses, I got upon my hack, and rode to a park some miles distant, where I knew some hunters were turned out, and where they were charged five shillings a week for their keep, from the superior character of the pasture. Had I entertained any doubts, however trifling, on the disadvantages of a summer’s run, my visit to this park would have dissipated them all : but I had here a particularly favourable opportunity of selecting one subject out of several that I met with, either of which would have been sufficient with which to illustrate the solidity of my argument ; and this was a chestnut mare, the property of a gentleman who had sent her twenty miles to run in this park. Now it so happened, that, as I was riding along the turnpike road, the second week in May, I met this mare on her road to this park.

Having ridden in the same race with her for some Hunter's Stakes about three weeks before, I had observed that she was looking remarkably blooming and well, and when I met her in the road she was but little altered in her condition. Her crest was up, her muscles hard, her legs quite in place, her eye was lively, and her skin was beautiful. When I saw the same mare in the park, *only nine weeks after I had seen her on her road thither*, I knew her, undoubtedly because I expected to find her, but had I met her anywhere else I certainly should not have taken her for the same animal. Her crest was gone, her carcass was swollen, her eye was dull, her action was languid, and her colour, from having been an excellent chesnut, was become (for I can compare it to nothing else) like that of half-baked gingerbread, without the smallest gloss on her coat, which lay hollow on her back; and, to sum up all, she looked as if she were rotten.

Now it is by no means my intention to imply that this mare was rotten, but I only wish to enforce the striking contrast between her former and present appearance; but of this, however, I will not only pledge my existence, but, what would be worse than the loss of life, I will consent to be condemned to live upon horse-flesh the rest of my days, if this mare, by any skill of her groom, by any art, save that of magic, *can be reinstated in the condition in which she was when I met her in the road, until hunting is over the ensuing season*. I should here observe that the rest of the horses in this park looked equally bad as the mare I have been speaking of.

In my rides about the country in the month of May 1823, I met two other hunters on their road to grass for the summer. I asked the servant who was leading them whither he was taking them? He answered, to a tenant of his master's, who always summered them for him in his meadows. "Is it not a pity," said I, "to turn them out now they are in such a fine condition, and their legs appear so good?"—"Oh, no," said the man, "it will do them a deal of good."—"Are *you* quite well in health?" said I. Not knowing the drift of my question, John smiled, but made no reply. "Have you any bodily complaint?"—"None, Sir," was his reply. "Would you wish to be better than you are?" He said he should not, "Then," replied I, "you should have persuaded your master to have kept his horses at home, which would have saved you and him a great deal of trouble between this and Christmas."

In corroboration of the hard-meat system, I was particularly struck with an observation of the Earl of Darlington, respecting the horses of some officers of a light dragoon regiment who hunted with his hounds in the Raby country. "I know not how it is," said his Lordship, "but no expense or trouble is spared with my hunters, and my stables are excellent; but none of them look like these officers' horses." Now, as far as my experience has led me, I have never had reason to think that officers' horses in general were well groomed. On the contrary, their being called upon at all hours, and the almost constant access to barrack stables, must be much against them; but

these minor evils are light in the scale against a long continuance of good hard meat and pretty regular exercise.

If we convince a man against his will, we are told that we do nothing, for he immediately relapses to his former opinions. This reminds me of a passage in Cicero, when writing on the immortality of the soul : —“ I know not how it is,” says he, “ but when I read I assent ; but when I put away the book, and begin to think on the subject, all that assent vanishes.” So much for the effect of prejudice in a mind so highly cultivated as his ! How, then, can we wonder at its taking still stronger hold on many of us less favoured mortals ? Cicero, however, could not satisfy himself by experiment ; but we can : and let me conclude this part of my subject with the exhortation to every sportsman who rides hard, and wishes to be carried well over a country, never to let his horses get out of what is called “ good hard meat ”—the only groundwork of condition. It may be asked, would I work them in summer ? Certainly not ; but of the two extremes I have no hesitation in saying that gentle work, with corn, is better for a hunter than no work without corn, for reasons which I have before shown.

Having mentioned in a former Letter (p. 49) that I should have something more to say on physic, I conceive the present to be the most proper time for communicating it. It is true that in strengthening and augmenting the capacities of the body beyond their ordinary powers, whether in a man or a horse, the evacuating process is always had recourse to ; but,



before we apply our theory, we should be acquainted with the constitution of the subject to be operated upon ; neither must we lose sight of local circumstances and exceptions.

I was once flogged at school for making a rule absolute when it was not so, and I have never forgotten the lesson. Notwithstanding this, I am one of those who for some years of my life submitted to the practice of my groom to give my horses three doses of physic in succession at the commencement of their being what is called "got into condition for work"; and I am almost ashamed to add, that, without taking the trouble to give it a moment's consideration, I was led to join with him in his creed that less would not do, *for the two first stirred up the humours, and the last carried them off!* My better judgment at length convinced me that this practice was an erroneous one, often productive of serious mischief, and by no means to be made general. Common sense might at first dictate to us, in these words—"If your horse be well why physic him at all?" Experience, however, has proved to us, that, to guard against the preternatural excitement produced by high keep and strong work, a sort of periodical evacuation of the system by the bowels is necessary to preserve the health, if not the life of a horse, as repletion would be almost invariably the consequence ; but why these three doses are to be hurried indiscriminately through *every* horse that is to be prepared for hunting, in the month of July or August, I have yet to learn : and what led me to a serious and rational consideration of this subject, so

as to doubt the propriety of the practice, was, first, the reason my groom generally gave me for it ; and, secondly, its effects on my horses.

As for my groom's reasons for these three doses in a fortnight, the only effect they had upon me, when I took the trouble to consider them, was to make me smile at their absurdity, and to banish them from my mind with the contempt they merited. The *effect*, however, of these three doses of strong physic afforded a salutary hint, which I did not so soon lose sight of. At the expiration of the third dose I always found a urine ball, or, perhaps two, were to be given to get rid of a fulness of the legs, which was said to be always produced by physic. " Indeed, then," said I, " are the means to which we resort to strengthen the nervous system, and to prepare it for severe exertion, productive of a contrary effect ? Are we bringing on debility, of which swelling of the legs is the most infallible proof, by means intended to produce the opposite effect ? Something must be wrong here, and we must endeavour to alter it."

When we look back into old writers on farriery, we are as much astonished that more horses were not killed by some of their cathartic drenches, as that any of them were cured by some of their absurd nostrums. There is an admirable hit at these ignoramuses in Bucklaw's recipe for a strain, in the *Tales of my Landlord*. " Take," says he, " a fat sucking mastiff, flay and bowel him, stuff him full of black and grey snails, roast a reasonable time, and baste with oil of spikenard, saffron, cinnamon, and honey, anoint with the dripping,

working it in." After all there is no great exaggeration in this. A relation of mine—a clergyman, educated at Eton and Oxford—stood by and saw a country farrier give three pounds of shot, and two ounces of gunpowder in a pint of milk, to a mare of his labouring under violent inflammation of the lungs, with great difficulty of breathing. About five minutes after she had taken it she staggered a few paces, and fell dead on the spot. My friend being a prudent man, I remonstrated with him on the impropriety of wasting so much powder and shot, as the twentieth part of the dose, in a more compressed form, would have produced more speedy relief.

At the period to which I allude, when I first directed my attention to the operation and effect of physic, I had a horse, to which I have before alluded, and which, as never having been what could be called a perfectly sound horse, but having stood fifteen years in my stable, with the exception of one winter's run, a model of condition, has been a sort of landmark to me in directing the operations of my stable. The horse was in the habit of taking ten drachms of Barbadoes aloes and one drachm of calomel, in his three doses, in succession, and which appeared barely sufficient to produce the desired effect. Now I have good reason to believe that this horse had been in the habit of taking his ten drachms of aloes and his one drachm of calomel from the time he came out of training at five years old, and therefore less would not do ; but for some years before he died he received all the benefit that could be derived from physic, by what I conceive to be not

more than half the dose—namely, seven drachms of Barbadoes aloes, and no calomel. This alteration was effected by a better method of administering it. His bowels were relaxed the two preceding days by at least half a dozen *loose* bran mashes : he was kept *very short* of hay during this time, and set upon the muzzle at night ; and he had a considerable portion of exercise on the day on which he took the ball, with as much tepid water as he would drink, before he felt nausea from the ball. Thus was the same effect produced from a much less powerful, and—as must be the case where drastic medicines are concerned—also from a much less dangerous cause, and the constitution relieved from the powerful impression of mercury. The practice of physicking horses in this mild and rational manner is now so well understood that it is nearly disarmed of all apprehension of danger, which formerly attended it.

When necessary, I am a great advocate for mercurial physic. Though I have administered it very frequently, I never found any bad consequences to ensue, with proper care and attention ; but I have known several instances of horses being lost from its effects through careless and unskilful management. It is the property of mercury to stimulate the whole secreting system more equably than any other medicine that we know of ; and it is the only remedy to be depended upon to thoroughly cleanse and change a foul habit of body to a healthy one, by exciting action in the glands, and giving increased energy to the absorbents ; but, if given in too large quantities, it



YEARLING HUNTER GELDING 'ENSIGN'

The property of J. L. Nicklison, Esq., Hinton Manor, Swinton, Wilts. Winner of 1st Prize at the Royal Agricultural and many other Shows in 1900.



weakens and exhausts by its too powerful impression. I confess I was once rather surprised to see some thorough-bred colts belonging to a friend of mine exposed to heavy rain with a dose of mercurial physic then in operation ; but it was under the direction of a very eminent veterinary surgeon, who ordered it, and who said he would bear the responsibility. The only way of guarding against cold is to be superior to its influence, which I conclude was the case with these colts running in a state of nature.

One of the advantages of the hard-meat system in the summer is the forward state in which we find a horse on the first day of August ; and I name that day, because on or about that time hunters which have been altogether out for the summer are generally taken up. Instead of being that dropsical-looking animal, out of all form and shape, that a horse from grass is, he wants nothing but a sweat or two to put him, to all appearance, in place. His flesh, in which I include his muscles, is firm and elastic, and he has not that superfluous load of it, with a redundancy of blood, that good pastures create, and is therefore not so liable to those inflammatory complaints which so frequently attend a sudden change of diet. To a horse in this state I would never give more than two doses of physic *before* hunting commences, and those as mild as his constitution will admit. Circumstances must direct us when to administer another, which I shall allude to hereafter when writing on the duties and qualifications of a groom. Generally speaking, a hunter thus prepared will go on in his work until the

first interruption from frost, when a third dose may be most beneficially administered.

One of the principal auxiliaries to the condition of hunters is long-continued exercise, or what grooms call "keeping them out." A helper—the lighter the better—should ride one horse and lead two, one on each side of him. I have never been fond of too much walking; for in this pace, as may be seen by the track of his footsteps, there is a great exertion of the hind leg of a horse, by which curbs and spavins are often occasioned. In the "jog trot," as it is termed, the hind leg falls short, and is comparatively in a state of ease. I have, therefore, always directed my groom, when travelling horses on the road, to trot them gently the greater part of the journey; and I recommend that pace to hunters at exercise, where the ground is not too hard or uneven. In the months of September and October they should go out early in the morning, on account of the bracing effects of the air, but always in clothes and hooded, and be kept out for three hours at a time. During these months the brush should be very sparingly used, it being the moulting season with them; and a damp hay-wisp is better, for obvious reasons. A few years since I saw a stud of hunters at Christmas, whose owner had not suffered a brush to be used to them up to that period, and their skins were particularly glossy and fine. It is difficult, however, to restrain grooms from the use of them, unless they are under lock and key, which was the case in this instance. When speaking of exercise, I should have observed that high ground should be chosen for



this purpose, if within easy reach, as wonderful benefit is derived from gentle work against a hill, and a great relief to legs. Add to this, the breathing a purer air is of no small advantage when the lungs are excited by action.

## LETTER IX

### ON THE FOOT

**E**XPERIMENTAL philosophy has been hard put to it in its researches into the foot of the horse. Indeed Nature herself seems to have exerted her very nicest art before she could form anything in the shape of animate substance capable of being hammered with the force of a sledge-hammer, and all this with impunity, for twenty years in succession. To accomplish this she has had recourse to all the art and power of mechanism—to springs and cushions, pulleys and levers, and to every contrivance to prevent concussion in the *internal* parts of it; whilst the *outward* part is composed of a substance of all others the most suited to its purpose, being firm enough to bear the weight of the horse and his burdens, and admirably adapted to the adhesion of nails, by which shoes are affixed to it for its protection. Notwithstanding, however, the unrivalled excellence of the workmanship, it is too often unequal to the purposes to which we apply it; and the diseases and injuries of the feet of horses form a bane for which no antidote has hitherto been discovered, and which so frequently blast the hopes and expectations of the sportsman, who goes

to bed at night in the belief that he has a horse in his stable worth five hundred guineas, and when he gets up in the morning finds him not worth as many shillings.

What I have to say on this subject is the result of experience, never having seen a proper dissection and injection of the foot of a horse ; and perhaps it is well for me that I have not—for I remember hearing my Lord Maynard declare that he had never had a happy moment since he had witnessed that operation ; “ for now,” said his Lordship, “ I expect my horses to be ruined every time they step over the sill of their stable door.” From the numerous horses, however, that I have seen cut up in the boiling house, added to the great attention I have paid to the subject, I have, I think, a pretty correct idea of the form and construction of the horse’s foot, and the causes of the diseases that attack it—I wish I could add that I were able to point out the cure.

It is, perhaps, presumptuous to say what may have been the intentions of the Creator. Might we be allowed to question whether it were intended that the foot of a horse should be shod with iron, and that the horse should be driven or ridden on hard roads. From the adaptation of the parts my humble faculty supposes both ; and yet we must express our surprise why so many ages should have passed over before such ends should have been effected. From what I have heard and read on the subject, there is no proof of shoeing horses, as we shoe them, being practised until the ninth century of the Christian era ; and we must admit that he was a bold man who first

ventured to drive nails into the foot of a living horse. I may be told that we have only negative proof of this, inasmuch as there is no mention of horses being shod with iron by any of the ancient writers on husbandry, horsemanship, or the veterinary art. Neither is there any representation of horse-shoes in any of the remains of ancient sculpture, although the artists of antiquity were so minute in their designs as even not to omit a nail in the wheel of a carriage. No mention is made by their historians of shoeing-smiths, or horse-shoes forming part of the *materiel* of an army; but we have numerous instances of their cavalry being obliged to halt on their march on account of their horses' hoofs being worn down and spoiled. On this account it was that they so much esteemed horses with hard feet. The Bible speaks of these, whose hoofs were "counted like flint"; and Homer and others, of "iron and brazen-footed horses, with loud sounding feet"—all which, with the *equi sonipides* of the Roman Poet, we may consider as poetical ornaments. That the ancients had a contrivance to protect their horses' feet, by a kind of sock fastened on them, is certain; and to this day, in some eastern countries, these socks are used and sold to travellers by persons stationed for that purpose on their roads. We all remember—as a political event of some interest was attached to it—Vespasian's coachman stopping on the road to put shoes on his mules, which no doubt were shoes of this description. Indeed socks are now sold similar to what we may conclude these to have been, to be used when a hunter

loses a shoe in the field. They are made to fasten under the flap of the saddle till wanted. They buckle around the fetlock joint, and the bottom of them is shod with iron.<sup>1</sup>

Shoeing horses is not now universally practised, as in many of the eastern countries they are still ridden bare-footed. It is most probable that the practice of shoeing became more general as gravel was used for roads; for, although paved roads were in use in very early times, they were not so injurious to feet as sharp flinty gravel. I have read that William the Conqueror introduced horse-shoes into England, and that Henry de Ferrers, who came over with him, got that surname because he was entrusted with the inspection of the farriers, and that his descendants still bear six horse-shoes in their arms. It is further added, that that Sovereign gave the town of Northampton to some person as a fief, in consideration of his paying a stated sum yearly for the shoeing of horses.

Nature is seldom defective in her work; but, without proper consideration, we might be induced to think that she had been so with respect to the hoofs of horses and the teeth of human beings. Before,

<sup>1</sup> Of the "horse-sandal or removable horse-shoe," invented by Mr Percivall in 1830, that gentleman says, "I am not merely a reviver or restorer, but 'an original inventor,' since this is the first thing of its kind which has appeared before the public with any chance of success." The sandal consists of two parts: the *shoe*—the iron part, or that which defends the bottom of the foot and sustains the wear; and the *straps*, composed of web, whereby the shoe is fastened to the foot. It is not only light (*its weight not exceeding half a pound*) and conveniently portable, but strong and protective.

however, we can substantiate this charge, we must prove that it was *intended* that horses should carry heavy weight on their backs, or be driven at the rate we drive them on hard roads, or that human beings should eat and drink boiling-hot food ; for I believe that the teeth of savages, in a state of nature, are said to last to the latest period of their lives. With regard to Europeans, it is certain that their teeth, generally speaking, do not endure half their natural existence ; and were it customary to ascertain the age of a man, as we do that of a horse, by looking into his mouth, we should generally find at the age of forty as great a lack of grinders as Sancho did in the jaws of his master after one of his renowned battles.

It cannot be denied that the treatment and diseases of horses' feet embrace a subject of the highest importance, not only to a sportsman, but to all who possess valuable studs for the common purposes of life. It is a subject on which I could write a volume—the result of observation and practice. Indeed, it may be said that enough has been written upon it already ; and we must also admit that no small quantum of quackery and bookmaking has been the result. We have had shoes of all descriptions, some of which must excite a smile ; and the short reign they had proved their inutility and folly. My experience, however, has led me to the following bold conclusions—first, that the original form of a horse's foot has nothing to do with his soundness ; secondly, that contraction of the hoof is the effect, and not the cause of disease ; thirdly, that unless nature has done her

part *effectually*, by forming the foot of good materials, all the art of Mr Coleman and the whole body of veterinary science is of no avail; and, lastly, when disease has once thoroughly taken possession of this delicately formed organ, the boiler is the only remedy.

With respect to my first assertion, it would be as preposterous to say, that because a man may have a neat leg and foot, or an elegantly turned hand, he were never to be attacked with gout or rheumatism in either of them, as to suppose, that because a horse may have a perfectly formed foot he is never to be subject to disease. Much as I am an advocate for good shoeing, it would be equally preposterous to assert, that unless a horse be shod agreeably to one or two particular systems he is to become a cripple. When we consider how many various methods of shoeing are practised in different countries, we must be well aware that they cannot all be agreeable to nature; therefore we must conclude that shoeing is *not the chief consideration*, as, in spite of its very worst application, some horses continue sound in their feet for a great number of years, whilst others, shod by the first practitioners of the art, are irrecoverably lame before they have worn out a dozen sets of their orthodox shoes. When, however, we consider the delicacy and intricacy of the structure, with all its various articulations, we cannot wonder at its not being perfectly comprehended at first sight. As under the roof of our parents we imbibe our first notion of things, it may be allowable to go back to such data. In my father's stable, although—from his

principle of treating them, working them with a bellyful of grass in the summer, and of hay, good or bad, in the winter, with "abhorrence of physic"—every other horse in it was broken-winded, yet (and I was a close observer) I only remember *one* at all tender in his feet, though they were shod by a blacksmith who never heard of the principles of nature in his life—who never knew there were such things as bars in the foot of a horse, but who took his butteris and pared hoof and frog till he was tired, and then made a red-hot shoe<sup>1</sup> do the rest of the business! Let not the reader imagine that this was a system I approved, for I think the good old gentleman had much luck on his side, and only mention it to show that some horses attain their twentieth year—which several of his did—perfectly sound in their feet, though shod by a smith who violated all the principles of nature, save one—that is, he suffered the shoe to rest on the wall, which is the chief natural bearing of the horse.

However lightly I may have now spoken on this subject, no man holds good shoeing to be more essential than myself; and, to prove what I assert, I some years

<sup>1</sup> When the late celebrated Colonel Thornton kept fox-hounds in Yorkshire, he was extremely particular about the shoeing of his horses. Taking up one of their feet one day, he observed that a hot shoe had been applied to it. "Tell that rascal of a blacksmith," said he to his groom, "if he ever dares to apply a hot shoe to a horse's foot of mine again, I will apply one to his ——." (The reader must guess the rest.) A short time afterwards, as the Colonel was returning from hunting he caught poor Vulcan in the fatal act, when, galloping up to him, with the assistance of two of his whippers-in, he made good his promise, and stamped him *à posteriori* with the insignia of his profession. It is unnecessary to add that the actual cauterisation was in this case a sovereign remedy.





HUNTER GELDING 'EXPERT'

Owned by F. B. Wilkins Esq., Edwinstone. A winner at Olympia, 1887, Royal Lancashire, Great Yorks, Royal Notts, at all of which he won 1st Prizes.



since made myself acquainted with the operative part of preparing a horse's foot for his shoe with the drawing knife, under the tuition of a first-rate performer from the College. Having done so, I was ever afterwards enabled to direct those who shod my horses, and found the best effects from my instructions. In one instance, in particular, I found them of infinite advantage. I went to spend the summer months, a few years since, with a friend who resided in the interior of the principality of Wales ; and conceiving that gentle exercise at that period would be serviceable to two valuable hunters I then possessed, I took them with me. Dreading the uncontrolled operation of the butteris in the hands of a Welsh blacksmith, I took my drawing knife with me, and the first time my horses wanted shoeing I prepared their feet myself. Contrary to my expectation the Welshman approved of and profited by the example I set him ; and, in a very few lessons, became a shoer on the principles of nature, which was also of no small importance to my friend, who had eight coach horses (seven greys and a piebald) in his stable at the time, which Messrs Tattersall afterwards sold for him for as many hundred pounds.

Were I to purchase a horse at a large price I should certainly like to see him with a *fine circular foot*, *sound*, *elastic frogs*, and *strongly-defined bars*. I should like to see the hoof *full in the front*, *free from ribs or seams*, and of a *blue shining colour*. But when I have seen all this, am I to imagine that I have got a horse whose feet are secure from disease ? Am I to imagine

that so long as I contrive to preserve this circular foot, these sound and elastic frogs, and these well-defined bars, I am to have a sound horse? Let me not take such "flattering unction" to my soul! No: this horse is liable to disease in his feet as well as another whose hoofs are narrow—whose heels are high—whose frogs never touch the ground—*provided nature formed them in such a mould*, and also provided she formed them of good materials. If this were not the case, what would become of the mule, the donkey, and the Arabian? I could bring a hundred proofs of the truth of what I am now advancing, but will only state one or two at present.

In 1818 I heard of a very clever, well-bred young horse, the property of a clergyman in Bedfordshire, that had gone well one day for half an hour with the Oakley hounds, when the country was very deep, and was to be sold for one hundred and thirty guineas. I went to see him for the purpose of purchasing him. But I must here enter a little into detail, for the sake of establishing one point.

On my arrival at this gentleman's residence he was on a visit to a friend, so that I only saw his horse in the stable; but, as he was expected at home early the next morning, I gave him the meeting at an appointed hour. On examining this horse's feet, previously to taking him out of his stall, I found them perfect. I had him trotted at the end of the bridle down hill, upon pavement, when he went perfectly at his ease; and after riding him a short time I purchased him at the price stated, and had him led by a

careful servant of my own into Leicestershire, at three easy days' journey of twenty miles each. The fifth day after he arrived I got on his back to ride him to covert, and found he was lame. Immediately mounting another horse I ordered my groom to get his shoe off, and to put his foot into warm water, supposing his lameness to proceed from some trifling cause. My horse, however, was never sound again; and *because I could not prove that he was lame before I became possessed of him*, I never saw a shilling of my money again.

Now I must here observe, that when I saw this horse on the morning previous to my purchasing him I thought he did not stand quite square on his fore-legs, but that he seemed to have one of them—the faulty one—a little more forward than the other. I observed it again when I saw him the next day, and mentioned it to his owner, who assured me that it was only caused by his looking over the side of his stall at another horse—adding, that as he had bred him he could answer for his never having been lame in his life. All this was very true. The horse never had been lame; but, at the time I am speaking of, incipient disease existed in his foot, and the travelling into Leicestershire produced inflammation and lameness. The veterinary surgeon who attended him declared that if he wanted to make a drawing of the foot of the horse he should have been glad to have taken his for a model, so perfectly was it formed in all its parts and features. On dissection, two years afterwards, all this fine form was obliterated, and a

total derangement of the necessary organs of action presented itself.

The next is an instance *à contra*. Three years ago I heard of a horse, the property of a farmer near Gloucester, that had been going particularly well with Colonel Berkeley's and Mr Hornyold's hounds, and was for sale; but though he was what we call "all over a hunter," no one would purchase him, because he had "small contracted feet," as they were denominated, and was "certain to be lame." His price was 150 guineas. Being at this time on a visit to Mr Hornyold, I got on my hack the next morning, and rode to see him. I found him just as he had been described to me, with small feet, high heels, and frogs not within an inch of the ground; but, convinced of his soundness, I bought him for £150, and sent him part of the road that evening into Warwickshire, with orders to my groom to give him a dose of physic previously to my riding him with the hounds. He, however, very soon attracted the eye of a celebrated sporting character in that country, who rides heavy, and who gave me the price of another good horse for him, in addition to what he cost me, and does me the honour to call him "Nimrod." He has never been at all lame, or even tender in his feet, nor would his owner take 500 guineas at this moment, if such a price were offered for him. I may here add that Hermit (p. 64), who was sold for so large a price in Leicestershire, had very narrow heels with very small frogs, but was never lame from such causes in his life, and was most particularly good on the road. On

talking over these matters lately with a friend of mine who has been a great breeder of race-horses, and has had much experience in others, he observed, " You remember my Currycomb colt ! I never took such pains with any horse's feet in my life as I did with his, to make them perfect, but he was never sound after four years old. My Zodiac horse, that I rode so many seasons, had very narrow feet, with scarcely any frogs at all, and never was lame in his life."

## LETTER X

### ON THE FOOT—*In continuation*

“ It is absurd to suppose there are no final causes, because we do not see the efficient cause. The equality of three angles of a triangle with two right angles, cannot be made to be, though there may be some other thing prior to it, without which it cannot be. My horse, which is lame, cannot be made lame, though there may be a cause for his being so :—there may be a nail in his foot.”

PETWIN'S “ *Letters on the Mind.* ”

**W**E attempt in vain to account for some of the dispensations of Providence, but to *suffer* seems the natural attribute of mortality. The natural diseases, however, of horses are but few ; and, in justice to humanity, it must be admitted that they, as well as others which owe their existence to man, have occupied their share of attention ; and we cannot, without impeaching the mercy of the Creator, for a moment imagine that there are many diseases without their remedies. It is, however, a maxim in physic that to find out the disease *and its cause* is half the cure ; though it often happens that the former is the more difficult point to accomplish.

I conclude my last letter with some observations on the foot of the horse, with a promise of continuing them in this. “ When the ploughman took the helm,”



says the fable, " the gods left him to himself ; " and I must be cautious how I enter into this field of art, or I may be compared to the man who set about learning animal economy by dissecting a statue. Nevertheless, as all knowledge is progressive, few practical sciences arrive at perfection until they become the objects of *general* inquiry ; and therefore I may be allowed to contribute my mite to the fund. Experience often points out guides more certain than any theory, and one triumphant certainty is worth a thousand doubts. At all events *evidence* cannot cheat us, but, on the contrary, has that sovereign dominion over our minds, against which argument has no chance to contend.

Although it is well that every man should have some idea of the operations of nature, few have much knowledge of anatomy, unless intended for the medical or veterinary profession ; but without its demonstrative evidence, all is doubt and uncertainty, and we go on, accounting for one thing by supposing another, until we exhaust every species of error. Find out the cause and remove it, and the effect ceases ! Remove the film, and the sight is clear !

In searching for truth it is useless to expose former mistakes and errors ; we should only look to well-established facts, and to the unexpected discoveries which present themselves. In my last letter on this subject I venture to oppose the long-received opinion—an opinion emanating from the highest authority—that contraction of the foot was *a cause* of lameness, and, that unless the frog received pressure, disease,

and consequently lameness, were the certain effects. Now, the natural consequence of this opinion has been the stumbling block I alluded to in shoeing, giving birth to the expansion shoe, the thin-heeled shoe, and the artificial frog, which have, in their turns, ruined many thousand horses. The reader may exclaim, "Surely this is bold language!" It may, I allow, appear presumptuous in a humble individual like myself to state my opinion in opposition to that of such a man as Mr Coleman, to whom we are, after all, indebted for laying down the first real principles of veterinary science in this country; by whose means they have been conveyed to all parts of the kingdom; and to whom may be traced that light which has recently and generally been thrown on the art which he professes. We are all, however, wise after experience; and my experience has fully demonstrated that thick toes and thin heels will lame the soundest horse that was ever foaled, *when put to severe work*, and that pressure on the frog is by no means essential to, or a wide circular hoof by no means a proof of, the soundness of the foot.

With respect to the first of these positions, I have often experienced a converse effect. I have more than once had a horse in training, whose sinews showed some symptoms of giving way; when, on lowering the toe and raising the heel, those sinews have been relaxed, and the horse has gone on well in his work.

With regard to the frog, I am fully aware that Nature never furnished an animal with such an organ

without appropriating to it some useful function ; but, on a nicer examination of the foot of a horse than that which a living subject presents us with, it is very evident that the heels, and not the frog, form the first natural bearing for his weight ; and, in a state of nature, the latter will not touch the ground on a level and hard surface until the crust of the former is worn down, as I have a hundred times witnessed in colts which have travelled a long distance bare-footed. Add to this, that however well adapted the frog may be to act by *second* causes, and also to prevent injury to the parts beneath it, yet (speaking plainly), from the stuff it is made of, so highly elastic—when considered as a preventive of contraction—its powers of opposing horn and iron must be very feeble indeed.

As I shall, hereafter, offer some remarks on preparing the foot for the shoe, in which attention to the frog and its properties will not be overlooked, I shall now proceed to the important discovery to which I alluded in my last, relating to the nature and seat of the disease called “founder, or groggy lameness” —a discovery which has hitherto never been noticed by veterinary writers, with the exception of one or two have who *lately* touched upon it. The reader will observe that it is a disease strictly confined to the forefeet ; so that the last-mentioned organ, the frog, can have no *peculiar* relation to it, as that organ exercises its functions equally in all the feet.

Now the following is the manner in which I stumbled upon this (to me) new light in the veterinary horizon, in which I am much inclined to think there is still

some twilight remaining, which the bright sunshine of knowledge and experience has yet to dispel. Happening to go to London the latter end of September 1823, I was requested by a friend in the country to purchase a hunter for him, for which purpose I went to the Bazaar. There I got into conversation with Mr Turner, the head veterinary surgeon to this splendid establishment, and who also so well performed his part in the rostrum on the auction days. On my looking at the feet of some horses, and making some observations on them which were in unison with his ideas and practice, he entered freely into the subject, and at last spoke of "*the navicular disease.*" Now it so happened (and here I must expose my ignorance), that though I knew there was such a joint in the foot as this, yet I was ignorant of its technical appellation<sup>1</sup>; and therefore was obliged to ask for an explanation, which, in the most obliging and scientific manner, he instantly furnished me with; at the same time informing me that the discovery of this disease, *as the seat of navicular lameness*, was due to a brother of his, who practised the veterinary art at Croydon in Surrey.

Being all for demonstration, when I can get it, and convinced that there are but two ways of obtaining knowledge—one from our own experience, and the other from the experience of others—I obtained from his brother an introduction to Mr Turner, and waited on him at his residence at Croydon, where I found he was the son of an eminent practitioner of his art.

<sup>1</sup> I knew this bone by the name of the nut, or shuttle bone, and was also aware of the joint it formed with the flexor.



**THE FAMOUS SHOW JUMPER 'OMEGA'**

Formerly owned by Mrs. W. Brodley, Moor Hall, Madley. A winner of Hundreds of Prizes at most of the leading shows. The conformation of this horse at once arrests attention. The high withers being particularly striking.



On my arrival at Croydon Mr Turner was prepared with one dissection of the leg of a horse just killed, to show me the original structure of the interior of the foot ; and with another denuded of hair and flesh so as to enable him to point out to me the situation and office of the navicular bone and joint, wherein, he contends, the seat of the disease called “founder, or groggy lameness,” is *invariably* to be seen ; and by the very clear and able manner—suited to my capacity on such subjects—in which he unfolded the evidence necessary to establish the fact, I shall be able to detail it, I trust, in such language as may be intelligible to the reader, being similar to that in which it was conveyed to me.

The navicular bone has its derivation from the Latin word “*navis*,” being supposed to resemble a boat ; but, in my opinion, the old appellation of “shuttle bone” need not have been disturbed, as the resemblance here is the stronger of the two. By that wonderful organ—the *great flexor tendon of the leg*—passing immediately under this bone, and articulated with it, the joint called the “navicular joint” is formed. Immediately under this joint is the fatty or elastic frog, also one of the greatest curiosities in nature ; and under that is the horny or elastic frog. It is also worthy of remark, that the navicular bone passes across the foot from one side to the other, just above the centre of the frog, forming, as it were, a double joint with the pastern bone and the flexor tendon ; thereby acting as an auxiliary supporter to the coffin bone, in receiving the weight from above. On this

weight being received from the pastern, the navicular bone descends with the pressure, inclining backwards, conveying the weight to the fatty frog, and thereby acting as a powerful spring to all that portion of the foot which is *posterior* to the coffin bone. On inspection of this joint, in its healthy state, the navicular bone (which forms the joint with the flexor tendon, by a corresponding convexity in the centre of the bone) presents an exquisitely polished surface, resembling a shell, though at the same time it is highly vascular, and has the power of secreting that phenomenon in animal economy, *synovia*, or joint oil,<sup>1</sup> by which the joints are lubricated when in action.

Now it appears most clearly that there are two distinct causes for the disease of the navicular joint—one, from any effectual opposition it may meet with in its descent, as above described (and which descent, as it receives the weight *perpendicularly*, and not obliquely, as with the coffin bone, is essential to prevent concussion); and the other, by inflammation, which attacks the synovial membrane which lines the joint and which may proceed from various causes; though I should imagine concussion, or jar to the foot, to be the principal one; notwithstanding, *to oppose concussion to a certain extent*, seems to be the principal intention of the parts in question.

From the information Mr Turner was so kind as to afford me, and from the specimens he presented me with, I am enabled to form the following notions of

<sup>1</sup> The tendons expand at the point to form a sheath—the navicular bursa.



the disease of the navicular joint :—First, inflammation attacks the membrane lining the joint, succeeded by a diminution of the synovia, and a general stoppage to the healthy secretion of the parts. The consequence of this is increased friction, succeeded by abrasion of the delicate and highly sensible membranes of which they are composed. Secondly, absorption from the centre of the bone takes place, causing a hole in it very similar to that which we see in a carious tooth ; and, lastly, a strong adhesion of the tendon to this hole, forming a disease the most prevalent, and at the same time the most formidable to which the horse is liable. In slight cases I found there had only been an absorption of the cartilage which covers the bone, without any loss of, or hole in, the bone itself, and then there was little or no adhesion of the tendon to the bone.

Now to all those who have experienced the painful and distressing effect of a small bone spavin in a horse, it must at once be obvious that to create action in a joint in the state above described must be the cause of excessive suffering to the animal ; yet such is the case with all groggy horses.

Of the extreme sensibility of joints we need no further proof than to be told that the most trifling exposure of their cavities very often terminates fatally, by excessive irritation. Even bones cannot rest or move upon each other with impunity, but are protected by ligaments which surround their joints, and by a fine vascular membrane which lines their different cavities.

Whatever may be the credit due to Mr Turner

for his able and satisfactory researches into this dreadful disease, it is but just to observe that it has not *altogether* escaped the notice of others. Mr Coleman, in all his publications, has never reverted to this disease; though I understand that since his attention has been directed to it by Mr Turner, he has admitted it. Mr Goodwin did mention one instance of it in a late publication, in the case of a gentleman's hunter whose foot he dissected; but to Mr Turner alone is the merit of establishing the incontrovertible fact. These gentlemen, however, speak of it as an individual instance; and it must be highly gratifying to Mr Turner to find that eminent practitioner Mr Goodwin (veterinary surgeon to his Majesty,<sup>1</sup> and whose book I have perused with the greatest pleasure) stating, that "although this disease might have been previously known to exist in particular cases," (only one of which appears in his practice), "it was not understood to be the general cause before Mr Turner investigated the subject."

For my own part I hate a hovering faith, and would at any time travel a hundred miles rather than remain in doubt on a subject of this interesting nature. On my viewing Mr Turner's specimens all scepticism vanished, but some curious reflections came across my mind. "Why," said I to myself, "do we take so many opinions upon trust, when we have ears to hear, and eyes to see, for ourselves? If this fact be established, what must after-ages think of those volumes of error that have gone forth to the world

<sup>1</sup> George III.

on a subject surely of no such impenetrable difficulty ? or that one humble individual should have it in his power to say, that, after all the exertions of the veterinary body, not only has no cure been yet discovered, but no *real* cause demonstrated, for *by far the most common disease* incident to the theme and subject of their inquiries and labours ? As for contracted hoofs, I have already stated my opinion of them in terms which cannot be mistaken. They have no more to do with the *cause* of lameness than the pen I now hold in my hand. Among Mr Turner's specimens is the most contracted foot I ever saw, for the heels fairly overlap each other, with no appearance of frog. It, however, carried an old horse quite sound to his dying day ; but the navicular bone and joint are as sound as adamant. Had it been in the power of mere outward compression to have lamed a horse, this horse must have been lame ; but this I do not believe to be the case, and I will state my reasons why.

Every part of the internal cavity of the foot which could be affected by pressure, being of an elastic nature, and no joint being within its immediate influence, contraction, from whatever cause it may proceed, cannot come on so rapidly but that the parts would adapt themselves to the change. How frequently are hind feet contracted—but when have we heard of lameness as the consequence ? Should contraction arise from the mechanical effect of shoeing, which *must be progressive*, there is a still slighter chance, from the reason just stated, of disease being produced by it.

Were anything wanting to convince me that the seat of foot lameness is in the navicular joint, I should take my stand in the hinder hoof. This, it appears, is never affected with navicular disease. But why, may I ask, does it not? The answer is—it does not receive concussion sufficient to injure the navicular joint: it comes *obliquely*, and not perpendicularly, to the ground, as does the fore-foot; neither does it support anything like the same quantity of weight.

Now, for the sake of argument, it may be asserted, that as, from the form of the animal, it was necessary that the fore legs should carry a greater proportion of the animal (say nothing of the rider) than the hinder ones, Nature has been deficient in not providing accordingly. To this I answer, that for all natural purposes she has provided; but not against going at the rate of twenty miles in the hour, with additional weight, and opposed to two of the hardest substances we have—iron and stone. It is “the pace that kills” here, as well as in other cases; and to the moderate pace at which horses in foreign countries are ridden (a fact universally allowed) is to be attributed the more general absence of foot lameness, and not to their clumsy method of shoeing, which I shall allude to hereafter.

From having been so much on “the road” my eye is quite familiar with horses having this (navicular) disease; and I know them when I see them standing in the stable. They stand in a position peculiar to themselves, leaning obliquely backwards, as it were, to ease the fore feet, and trying to rest their weight

more on the toe than on the heel. This would not be the case were the lameness produced by pressure on the cartilages, as then the impression would be general.

When some of my acquaintance, who may be said to have been great *footmen* as well as great horsemen all their lives, come to read what I have now written, they will, I think, be convinced that they have had a good deal of their trouble for nothing—not but what I highly appreciate the value of an open and wide foot in a hunter, in keeping him above ground over a deep country, as I would draw out manure on tender land in a broad and not a narrow-wheel cart ; but I allude to those whose anxiety has been so great to preserve open feet as a preventive of disease. To one friend of mine this particularly applies. He had a very valuable gig horse, which he never drove in the winter, *because* he said he had such narrow feet that he would certainly be a cripple, unless he passed the winter months in screw shoes, by means of which, I admit, his feet did appear to be somewhat wider at the heels when he came up in the spring, though they soon resumed their old shape. These narrow feet, however, never failed him, for the navicular bone was sound.

Now I have no doubt but this was the disease which “the ancients” termed “coffin lameness.” As most of them are, fortunately (for horses), now in their own coffins, it is no harm to say that they could not have given a much stronger proof of their ignorance ; for, from the oblique direction of that bone,

added to its being surrounded by, and embedded in, springs, its injury must be of rare occurrence.<sup>1</sup>

When I say that injury to the navicular joint proceeds from concussion, are we not surprised that mischief is not done every time a man leaps his horse into a hard stony road? General rules, however, never apply to individual cases: and in no part of animal economy is there more variety than in the foot of the horse, not only as to its shape, but as to what it is made of. I have had horses whose feet have been very perfectly formed that could not go at all without their fore shoes; and I had one, which I sold to Mr Lechmere Charlton for a large price, that carried me from the further end of Witchwood Forest in Oxfordshire, to Bourton on the Hill in Gloucestershire, a distance of at least eighteen miles, in two hours, without a fore shoe, and without the smallest injury to his foot, which was a narrow one—by the bye not a soft country to go over, and the shoe was off at the finish of a capital run, so that I know not what distance the horse might have gone barefooted.

I must now bring this letter to a conclusion, but shall resume the subject, it being, in my opinion, one of *the most interesting* that ever occupied the attention of a sportsman, as far as the stable is concerned. In the meantime it may not be amiss to observe, that as concussion appears likely to produce foot lameness, by peculiarly affecting the part I have been treating of, it should be avoided as much as is

<sup>1</sup> Fracture of the coffin or pedal bones, also the navicular bone, though uncommon, does occasionally occur.—EDITOR.

consistent with absolute necessity for it, and valuable hunters should be kept off hard roads as much as it is possible to do so.<sup>1</sup> This applies merely to concussion.

Inflammation of the synovial membrane which lines the joint may arise from other causes, which it may be more difficult to describe. It may be well to observe, that suffering horses to go a long time without being shod, or removed, and thereby suffering the sole to become morbidly thick, may be one cause of inflammation, as offering too much resistance to the descent of the navicular joint. Standing long in the stable, and then suddenly called into action, is also very likely to derange these highly-sensible parts, as indeed it is the cause of various bodily complaints.

<sup>1</sup> On returning home from hunting with a friend of mine who was riding a horse he had purchased from me, and was trotting him at the rate of nine miles an hour on the high road, whilst I was riding by the side of it—"Why," said I, "do you knock your horse's feet about in that way when you can avoid it?" His answer was—"If they will not stand what he is now doing, he is not worth what I gave you for him." This was bad logic.

## LETTER XI

### CONDITION RESUMED

**A**S the latter end of July is the period when all hunters should be in the stable, I resume my remarks on "*Condition*," and shall continue them until I have concluded what I have to say on the subject. I make no apology for the minuteness of the detail, as I am well convinced the subject is one which will command the attention of my readers ; and I am happy to be able to communicate the pleasing fact, that numbers of my brother sportsmen have adopted my system of summering the hunter, with the anticipation of the best results. I have also had an opportunity during a late excursion through some of the best hunting countries, of hearing of, or seeing, numerous studs of hunters summered in this manner, belonging to sportsmen of the very first order, who adopted it long before I put pen to paper on the subject. Among others I called on Mr Weedon, the Earl of Plymouth's groom, whose opinion, as one of the best hunting grooms in England, I was anxious to obtain. I found that he carried the object of condition still further than I do, as he informed me that all those horses of his Lordship which were flesh on their legs were walked out for an hour



or two every morning during the summer. Mr Weedon has lived fourteen years (reckoning from 1824) with Lord Plymouth ; and to any one who has witnessed his Lordship's style of riding across a country, it must be evident, that, unless Mr Weedon knew his business well, he would not have remained fourteen years at the head of perhaps one of the most valuable studs of hunters in England. Mr W. is also a man of manners and education superior to the generality of persons filling situations similar to his own, which induced me to go several miles out of my road to see him.

There is always a delicacy between sportsmen, which forbids them prying into the stables of each other, at any period of the year ; therefore I did not even express a wish to see Lord Plymouth's hunters (about seventeen in number), but called on Mr Weedon at his residence, which is about a mile and a half from the Earl's seat in Worcestershire. It appeared he had never heard of NIMROD or his letters ; but when we came to compare notes on the subject of condition of hunters, I could almost have persuaded myself that he had been the author of them, instead of myself—so exactly did our sentiments tally. With respect, however, to giving hunters walking exercise throughout the summer, he there goes a step beyond me ; but on mature reflection I am convinced he is right. On talking the matter over, each of us referred to Mr Potter, the Earl of Sefton's celebrated groom, who always adopted that plan, and to whose very superior condition I have before alluded. " When horses are

fresh and well on their legs," said Mr Weedon, "the advantage of always keeping them going in this gentle way, is incalculable at the commencement of the season. It invigorates their whole frame, strengthens the muscles, preserves their bowels free, and keeps them from getting out of shape and form."

On conversing with Lord Molyneux, at Chester races, on Potter's stable management, his Lordship told me that he was now steward to his father, and of course had nothing to do with the horses; but we both agreed on the very superior form the Earl's hunters were in when he hunted Leicestershire: and, as I before observed, they were always walked out with the hounds in the summer. On my asking Lord Molyneux after the horse he called *Oxford*, he told me he was quite well, but had had an operation performed upon him. I saw this very first-rate horse a short time afterwards in London, looking remarkably well; but I shall have occasion to speak of him again, when describing the celebrated Ditchley day with Lord Middleton's hounds when he hunted Warwickshire, and when Lord Molyneux rode this horse, and was *one of three* who saw it.

During my excursion I spent a day with Mr Lockley, who has ever been celebrated for the condition of his horses; and knowing that he had a very favourite hunter, for which he had refused a large sum of money, I had some curiosity to see how he was treated. I found him in his stall, out of which, with the exception of travelling into Leicestershire, and other hunting countries, he had not been for three years—not even



'SURPRISE'

A typical Hunter. The property of Sir Merrick Barralls. A winner at the Royal Hunter Show and at many others.



into a loose box. He had been soiled for a fortnight on clover, which had let his carcase down a little ; but in every other respect he was fit to go to hounds at a week's notice, and his groom had ridden him ten miles that morning on the road.

On my journey homewards I saw the Earl of Jersey's groom, and found his horses treated exactly in the same manner as Lord Plymouth's, with the exception of their not being ridden out. They were, night and day, in large loose places, with chains across the doors, which were open ; and they were full of corn. I asked his groom, whom I have known many years—and a most excellent servant he is, and high in his master's confidence—whether he kept their shoes on or off ? when he told me they wore half shoes, or tips, merely because they kept the stopping in their feet, by which means they were kept moist.

When on the subject of feet, I cannot pass over a passage I have met with in Mr Goodwin's work,<sup>1</sup> which I here transcribe.

“ I have invariably observed,” says Mr Goodwin, “ where horses are turned out to grass during the dry and hot summer months, that, on bringing them up to be put into stable condition, their feet are in a much worse state than they were when they went out, dried up, and so hard and brittle, that, on the application of a tool to bring them into a form fit to receive a shoe, the horn breaks like a piece of glass, and all the naturally tough and elastic property is lost, so that it requires some months to remove the bad effects.

<sup>1</sup> This is an old work on “ The Diseases of the Feet.”

If it is necessary that a horse should be put out of work during the hot and dry weather, I prefer a large box or shed, and soiling with green food ; by which means two objects are gained—viz. all the *injurious* effects of a drying wind or a meridian sun on the hoofs are avoided, which creates such an excessive evaporation of the natural moisture absorbed into the horn from within, that it not only becomes dry, hard, and brittle, but the whole horny box tightens on the sensible parts, and frequently produces great mischief. But in a loose place moisture may be applied in any desirable way. The other advantage of a shed or box is, that horses are sheltered from the terrifying effects of flies and heat. Horses at grass are much inclined to thrushes ; and whether they have shoes or tips, or are without either, it is necessary frequently to inspect their feet, and to remove all superfluous horn, otherwise the foot will grow out of all form.”

I think I have now said enough of the evils attending summering hunters in the field ; and I think the foregoing observations of Mr Goodwin will be an answer to all those who say “ it is absolutely necessary for their feet.” That they can exist sound and well for fifteen years without it, my own experience has assured me ; but the following well-authenticated account out-herods Herod. The circumstance is thus related in the 8th vol. of the *Sporting Magazine*, p. 160 : —“ Lately died, at Barnstaple, in Devonshire, a chesnut horse, in his 39th year. He was well known in many hunts thirty years ago. The gentleman in whose possession he died, bought him at two years

old, at which time he took him to house, and rode him, summer and winter, for between twenty and thirty years, *without ever turning him out*, and he died of an accident at last."

Philosophers will tell us, that there is a condition which is natural, and a condition which is not natural, to all bodies animate or inanimate, liquid or solid. So much for the operation of external causes! Now most men will admit that the natural condition of the *ass* is for the most part a sorry one, having more than his share of that *vis inertiae* which keeps things in their places. *Internal* causes, however, operate with him most forcibly; and it is wonderful how this *vis inertiae* is changed into a *vis vivida* by a plentiful allowance of good oats and beans. I beg pardon for introducing so mean an animal as this to the notice of the reader, when speaking of what relates to the horse, but time has been when this patient and better deserving slave was held in higher estimation.<sup>1</sup> In the former state, however, he suits my purpose best, though the question might be asked—what has an ass to do with the condition of the horse? My answer is, that the ass, when in condition, is so far *pro tempore* exalted in the scale of beings, as nearly to approach the horse; as the following anecdote will prove.

On my return from Epsom races on the Derby day (1824), my attention was attracted to what is vulgarly 'yclept a "donkey chaise," in which were a man and

<sup>1</sup> It is somewhat singular that in the Decalogue we are commanded not to covet our neighbour's ass, but not a word is said about the horse.

a woman of no small dimensions, going at a very rapid pace, and drawn by a small ass. Curiosity led me to follow them, when, as far as I could judge by the pace of my own horse, I found they were going at the rate of nine miles an hour on a very indifferent road. On being observed by a friend, he rode up to me and told me he had seen this humble vehicle on its way to the course in the morning give what is called the *go-by* to several carriages-and-four, and that he was equally struck with the extraordinary appearance and action of the animal. On my asking the owner of him a few questions about him, he informed me that he had done three miles in fifteen minutes with him on the road for a wager, and that he would back him to do it in less ; at the same time giving me his address, when I found he was a blacksmith, residing at Mitcham in Surrey. "Do you keep your ass on Mitcham Common?" said I, anticipating his answer. "Oh, no!" replied the son of Vulcan, "he has never been out of my stable for three years, and he eats as good oats and beans as your horse does."—"It is accounted for," said I to my friend: so we pulled up our horses, and gave Neddy the road.

Before I finally take leave of the evils of summering horses at grass, I must be allowed one word more. The reader will recollect my illustrating some of my arguments against it, by describing the state in which I saw seven hunters, the property of one gentleman, at the conclusion of the last summer; and also one mare which I went to look at on purpose. I have now to add, that one of the eight



horses died in the course of the winter, and six of the other seven were never in condition at all, and the mare died after the first good run she dropped into. From a pecuniary point of view, including accidents and all other casualties, I have no hesitation in asserting, that in the course of twenty years the bullock-feeding system of summering hunters shall be fifty per cent. against those who adopt it ! As to accidents, they are as numerous as *unlooked for* ; and I know not when I should have done enumerating them were I once to begin. At Chester races, a gentleman by the name of Purshouse, well known in Staffordshire as a good sportsman and a still better rider, came up to me, and said, " You remember my pigeon-eyed horse ? " — " To be sure I do," replied I : " he was a *hunter*, and could carry weight well ; and I have been often delighted to see you ride him across a country." — " I shall never do it again," added he ; " for he is gone broken-winded. I turned him out to grass in the summer, when he used to amuse himself by galloping round his pasture till he was heated, and then lying down in a pond to cool himself. He did it too often, and inflammation of the lungs was the consequence."

During the season for physicking hunters, let me strongly recommend all my brother sportsmen to caution their grooms against giving too strong doses to their horses, and to prepare them well by bran mashes.<sup>1</sup> Misfortunes, they say, seldom come alone ;

<sup>1</sup>This celebrated sportsman's remarks *re* the administration of physic, are admirable and correct. To obtain and regulate the

and when at Chester races I was also informed of a sad mistake on this important subject, which had that week occurred in the stable of an old schoolfellow of mine, and a brilliant performer over a country, in the Cheshire Hunt, whose groom had given a horse of his *ten drachms of aloes*, without a sufficient preparation, and he was buried on the day I heard the story, having lately been purchased in Leicestershire for either three or four hundred guineas.—Another death by physic, occasioned by bad management, came to my ears a few weeks since. This was the case of a horse which I sold at two years old, and was now five. He was very promising for a hunter, and Mr F. Holyoak was in treaty for him, when death put an end to everything.

I have before observed that I never lost, or had a horse in any danger, from physic ; but with such horses as are at all apt to be griped it is desirable to give the dose overnight, as in that case the symptoms would shew themselves in the day time, when relief would be more readily administered. I shall, however, have much to say on this subject at another time.

proper action of Barbadoes aloes it is always expedient to give the horse two or three bran mashes before administering the bolus.—  
REVISING EDITOR.

## LETTER XII

### PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN IN THE MOULTING SEASON —SWEATING

**N**ATURE so delights in freshness that she will not suffer her creatures to wear their old clothes ; and to the horse—no doubt her favourite—she has given two suits in the year—one in the spring and the other in the autumn. The periods alluded to—but particularly the autumnal one—are the most trying of any to those kept in an artificial state—the constitution being by the law of nature more than commonly susceptible to morbid impressions. Thus it is, that, comparatively speaking, so few gentlemen's hunters *commence* the season in blooming condition ; at least, it is one of the principal obstacles to that desirable end. People, in the warmth of their imagination, seldom advert to causes and effects ; but the animal economy is affected in so many various and unlooked-for ways, that a groom, to be sure of his object, must ever be on the alert. He will soon find out there is no catholicon for getting horses into condition. He must investigate ; he must reflect ; he must exercise his reason, and make all the use of his common sense, if he has any.

August and September are the usual months when horses which have lived well begin to cast off their summer coats ; and it is, or at least it ought to be, the period when those used for the purpose of hunting have gone through their course of physic. It is, however, too often the season in which injury is done to the coat of a hunter, which he does not get the better of till Christmas is past. I have before observed that no horse, or at any rate not more than one in a hundred, will be in blooming condition until he has (besides his physic) gone through a course of alteratives to sweeten and correct the acrimony of his blood. Now the difficulty is to give them this medicine, and to give him his work also, without injuring, or what in the stable is called "setting," his coat. Many persons, on this account, postpone sweating their hunters until the moulting season has gone by ; but with proper treatment this precaution is not necessary, and the delay is fatal to the condition of their horses. The secret here merely consists in keeping them warm, particularly on the days they sweat, and thus avoiding a sudden constriction of the pores—more than usually susceptible by the diaphoretic properties of the medicine they are taking. Indeed I must go one step further, and assert, that if, at this trying season, a horse is exposed to a stream of cold air, after having had his blood vessels extended by exercise, and his skin relaxed by medicine, the bloom will be taken off him as effectually as if he had been turned out into a straw-yard for a week. The blush on the human face is scarcely more tran-

sient than the bloom on a horse's skin—so intimately connected are its extreme and minute vessels with the vascular system at large. It may, indeed, so truly be called his complexion, that a man of observation, in the habit of daily inspecting his stable, can see with a glance of his eye if his horse is doing well or not. In the degrees of discernment, then, consists the merit or demerit of a groom ; and even then, unless he knows the causes of effects—the why and the wherefore—all is still darkness.

As a fine genius is said to be a man at his highest perfection, and as, next to man and woman, the horse is the paragon of animals, so may we call him, when in the highest possible condition, the next fairest sample of a happy combination of nature and art. The bow, however, must not always be bent. It was observed by Hippocrates that the health of man was most precarious when arrived at the highest pitch ; and I am sure this may be applied to the horse. In this respect training grooms are, generally speaking, the best physiologists, and more awake to the sudden alterations which take place in those under their care ; or, in the more humble language of the stable, *when a horse becomes foul*. Inasmuch, then, as prevention is preferable to remedies, is this a most important part of a groom's services to his master, as he may be the means of checking incipient disease.

There are progressive stages in all diseases ; but those of an inflammatory nature, and to which horses in condition are most exposed, are often so active and

decisive, that if we wait for directing symptoms we are lost. The progress of them is frequently, and indeed generally, so rapid, that unless speedily arrested in their course, mortification, and consequently death, ensues. In many instances, however, Nature gives us timely notice, as in the case of the race horse in his work. The practice of his trainer is—after he has gone through his first preparation—to feed and to work him as long as his constitution supports him; and when Nature says “enough”—by his appetite failing him, and other symptoms which will be hereafter explained—he has physic, green meat, and rest, and then starts fresh again; or, in their more technical and not inexpressive language, “becomes free”; for they are well aware that, so long as the wheels of nature are clogged, the machine cannot proceed as it should do, and the whole system becomes deranged. Judging, therefore, by the rule of optics, is a most essential qualification in a groom.

The common appellation, then, given to this change in the animal economy of the horse is, that he has become foul; or, in other words, that his blood is vitiated and his system over-excited; nor can it be much better expressed. That he should become so, from the unnatural state of excitement in which he is kept, unless preternatural means be taken to correct it, is by no means to be wondered at; but as habit lessens the noxious influence of all changes in animal economy, and finally gets the better of Nature herself, we have nothing to fear if we are awake to impending circumstances. That such is the fact, has been pretty

well ascertained by other animals as well as horses. The celebrated Mr Abernethy procured a rabbit, six weeks old, and fed it with cabbage which had been grown upon flannel, *sprinkled with distilled water* : the animal preserved its health as perfectly as if it had been running in a warren. The no less celebrated Dr Fordyce enclosed in glasses, filled with common water, some gold and silver fish. He changed the water every three days, and without any other food the fish lived and thrived for fifteen months. He then exchanged this water for *distilled* water, and, to prevent the probability of insects getting access within the vessel, he closed it up carefully ; but the fish grew and performed all their natural functions as perfectly as if they had been swimming in a pool. Either the Brahmin who lives entirely upon vegetables and water, or the Englishman who is carnivorous and drinks brandy, must violate his nature ; but we find each of them living to a good old age.

Now as relating to horses, there is little doubt, but that, as the blood is the mainspring of life, it is to the viscid and unhealthy state of it that this foulness of habit is to be attributed ; but let not the reader imagine that high keep and warm stables are alone to bear the blame. No !—the derangement of this vital fluid is more often occasioned by poor, bad living, than by good ; but the treatment in the one case is very different to the other, and in the latter much more difficult to succeed in. In the progress of human existence, indeed, I will venture to assert that for one case of disease arising *solely* from generous living,

fifty may be traced to the want of it. Intemperance is nowhere to be commended; but "air, exercise, and *good nourishment*," said Sir Astley Cooper, in his lecture on scrofula at St Thomas's Hospital, "are the three great points to be attended to in the preservation of health. There is no other specific," adds he, "for the cure of this disorder, and he who says there is, attempts to gull mankind by the assertion of what is not true." For my own part, I have known many water drinkers,<sup>1</sup> but I never could find out that they lived longer than wine drinkers, provided the latter kept within the bounds of moderation, and followed the sports of the field. "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake," said Paul the Apostle, in his tender regard for his dear friend Timothy.<sup>2</sup> As we are now, however, speaking of horses in condition, I must confine myself to the effects of high and not of low keep.

To preserve health the blood must be kept as nearly as possible in a state agreeably to the standard of health. The great object of condition in horses being

<sup>1</sup> An excellent anecdote is on record of the great Chief Justice Mansfield. Probably with a view to prolong his own days, he was always anxious, when old witnesses were in Court, to know their customary habits of life. It so happened that two very old men by the name of *Elm* were one day the objects of his inquiry. "You are a very old man," said his Lordship to the elder brother; "I suppose you have lived a very temperate life."—"Never drank anything but water, my Lord," said Mr Elm. "Nor you neither, I suppose," said the Judge, addressing himself to the younger brother. "When I could get nothing else, my Lord," was the reply. "I always took my glass with my friend."—"Well, then," replied his Lordship, "all that we can say is, *an elm will flourish, wet or dry.*"

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. v. 23.



to increase the living power, in how far this is to be effected without risking the health and life of the animal consists the whole art of grooming. It remains, then, now to point out how and when a groom is to be aware that he is pushing this system beyond what Nature, with all the precautions of art, will bear.

The distinguishing symptoms of foulness in a hunter are these: He appears unwell without any specific disease. His mouth is hot, his eyes look dull, and sometimes yellow. His coat loses some of its usual gloss, and stales between the hip bones, and sometimes on the poll of the neck. His appetite frequently remains good; but he is more than usually anxious for his water. His heels are scurvy, and sometimes crack. He stales often, but a little at a time. His urine is highly coloured, and his excrements hard, and often covered with a slimy fluid. He is dull when at exercise, and frequently coughs without any appearance of having taken cold. He loses flesh, and looks dry in his skin. His legs and ears are often cold, the latter being frequently found wet after exercise, and sometimes deprived of part of their covering. His crest falls; the whole tone of his system appears relaxed; and, without his groom exactly knowing why, he is not the horse he was a week ago.

Bleeding (or what the grooms call "changing the blood") used to be the favourite system pursued in this case; but I have long since abolished bleeding in my stable, except in cases of inflammatory attacks or when horses have been over marked with hounds—in the former of which it cannot be done too

speedily, or too copiously, so as not to reduce too much.<sup>1</sup>

Before we apply our theory we must consult the constitution of our horse, and also attend to circumstances. In all cases we may rest assured of one thing—viz. that from whatever cause any ill-effect may proceed, that effect will never cease to show itself until the cause which produces it be removed. In all common operations the operator is apt to look at the ultimate end of his work, without considering the intermediate steps which are to lead him to it ; but this will not do in the stable. The operation of getting a horse into condition is so opposite to that which is purely mechanical, that circumstances are to be anticipated, as well as provided for, beyond what we first bargain for.

As there can be no condition without work, I am supposing that the symptoms before alluded to occur when horses are in full exercise. In the racing stable the most common plan pursued is, a dose of physic, some green meat, and a remission of work for a few days ; and this generally restores them to their former strength and vigour. With hunters, however, one of these recipes—the green meat—is never to be exhibited when they are in work, neither is it always convenient to give up the use of a horse for a period sufficient to enable him to go through a dose of physic with advantage. Alteratives alone must then be depended upon.

<sup>1</sup> Bleeding is still very useful in acute engorgement of the lungs, if the animal is fairly full in flesh.—EDITOR.

Although the word *surfeit* may be considered an indefinite term, yet there is a species of foulness in the habit of our horses which comes under that denomination, and is produced by a sudden constriction of the pores of the skin, when exposed to a stream of cold air, after having been expanded by severe exercise. Here the blood is most materially affected, as the matter which should have been thrown off by perspiration is thrown back upon the circulation, and the whole mass of it is at once contaminated. The symptoms here cannot be mistaken, as they almost immediately shew themselves in the staring and unkind appearance of the coat—by a cough, swelling of the legs, or, in some instances, by a violent inflammation of the lungs, which comes on about the third or fourth day. In the mildest of these cases a change of the blood, or, more properly speaking, an alteration in the quality of it, is absolutely necessary ; but this must be the work of time.

On the first appearance of this change for the worse in the condition of a hunter, I have endeavoured to stop its progress by giving him half a drachm of calomel with a drachm of emetic tartar over-night, and a dose of physic in the morning, and have several times succeeded in doing so. When time and circumstances would not permit of the calomel and physic, from a drachm to two drachms of tartar emetic, in half an ounce of cordial ball, may be given every other day for a week—taking especial care that more than common attention be paid to the horse whilst under the effect of the medicine, by keeping him warm,

in and out of the stable ; with plenty of leg-rubbing, a bountiful supply of straw, and tepid water. Gentle exercise also at this time—but not to create perspiration—is most material.

As almost all diseases of horses are of an inflammatory nature, the good or ill condition depends upon the pure or impure state of his blood ; and which, as far as Nature is concerned, can only be regulated to a certain standard by food and exercise. Allowing each of these to be administered to the best possible advantage, yet there is that disposition to change—generally leaning to plethora—in the habit of all animals under preternatural excitement, that occasional evacuations by the bowels, or else a course of alteratives, are necessary every six weeks, or two months at farthest, to preserve them in uniform health. The evacuation I allude to is a light dose of physic, not exceeding six or six and a half drachms of Barbadoes aloes, with the bowels well prepared by from four to six bran mashes beforehand ; and when I speak of alteratives, I mean those which induce a healthy action of the *bowels and skin* by their gradual and mild impression, and not those which act *strongly on the kidneys*, and are termed diuretics ; to most of which, with hunters, I have the greatest possible objection, for reasons which I shall state hereafter. Alteratives, however, I must observe, are only expected to *preserve a horse in his condition* ; for without physic not one in a hundred will ever arrive at his best ; or, at least, remain so for the period for which his services are required.

In a former letter I have stated that I never had but one dead hunter dragged out of my stable, and that event was occasioned by a sudden collapsion of the pores, from standing still by a covert-side in rain whilst a fox was dug out, after a short burst of only twelve minutes, but just enough to do the mischief; neither do I recollect but two instances of dangerous inflammatory attacks, in both which cases the horses recovered and did well. In addition to this, I now declare that I never had a horse that went blind in my possession; I never had one that went broken-winded; I never had a horse suffer from worms; neither did I ever experience lameness from thrushes, cracked heels, etc. All this good fortune I attribute to three simple causes: first, to never turning horses out, except in cases of accident; secondly, to giving them plenty of exercise, generally bordering upon work; and thirdly, to never suffering them to go more than six weeks or two months, *when in work*, without giving them either a dose of physic or alteratives, which, discharging by the skin, the bowels, or the kidneys, act sufficiently for my purpose.

I have before described what I consider the best method of physicking horses, in the progress of which I have never had an accident. I have always borne in my mind what I have learnt in conversation with veterinary surgeons, that, though the stomach of a horse be proverbially strong, yet the intestines through which the drugs have to pass are extremely delicate, and highly sensible to anything of an acrimonious nature. The alterative I have chiefly made use of

has been the common antimony of the shops, giving an ounce per day for eight days in succession—with the occasional addition of a little yellow resin. When strong symptoms of foulness appear, and it is inconvenient to physic, I then prefer the emetic tartar as an alterative. With the latter, however, a great deal of good grooming and care is necessary, or mischief may ensue from its stimulating property; as it may indeed from the antimony, if the system be overcharged with it. When foulness of habit proceeds still further than this, and amounts to a cutaneous disease, I stop short in my practice, as mercurial or other preparations are necessary, which I am afraid to encounter. I only profess what is termed the prophylactic, or preventive, art. When disease appears I fly to the first veterinary surgeon I can meet with.

I must now return to the former part of this letter. As there can be no condition without work, the hunter to be in good form by November must now begin, and in the course of the months of August and September he should have some gentle sweats—at least one in each week. Having clothed him pretty heavily for this purpose, put a light boy upon him to ride him, or have him led in a soft meadow; or, if you have not that at your command, in a fallow field which has been rolled and dragged in the course of a preparation for a wheat crop. The common exertion to get over such ground, at the same time that it will benefit his general action as a hunter, will soon cause him to sweat, though he do not exceed a trot of about

seven or eight miles an hour. If the weather be never so warm, take him into a well-sheltered place to scrape him, so as not to expose him to a stream of air: for this being his moulting season, his skin will be very susceptible of cold—more particularly so if he is at the same time taking the emetic tartar, or any other alterative. When nearly dry—which, if he has been treated as I recommend in the summer, he will soon be—put a dry hood and other dry clothes upon him; let him walk<sup>1</sup> quietly for twenty minutes or half an hour, when he will be in good order for dressing. The curry-comb, with blunt bars to it, and the hay wisp are the only implements to be used in dressing him, as he will part with his dust sufficiently for present condition in his sweats. Let him have his water tepid, and be shut up for six hours without being disturbed.

The plan I have laid down will greatly tend to promote the condition of a horse by unloading the vessels, purifying the blood, increasing his muscle, and setting him quite free in his body—the proof of which will very shortly shew itself in the shining and healthful appearance of his skin, and the increased liveliness of his spirits. It will also secure him from the risk of inflammatory complaints, by diminishing the disposition to plethora, which must naturally arise from eating the quantity of corn (unassisted by such evacuation) which hunters should now be allowed

<sup>1</sup> The pace, *after* sweating a hunter at this time of the year, must be regulated by the temperature of the air. Walking will generally do, but the circulation must be kept alive till he is in his stable.

—viz. five good feeds in the twenty-four hours. Grooms should always recollect that fever will accompany repletion: it is, indeed, against the manifest law of Nature to calculate otherwise.

I must here observe that the system just laid down cannot be pursued in the month of August (if, indeed, in the month of September) with a hunter which has had his summer's run at grass, but only with one which has been properly summered; and it does not require a conjuror to inform us which of the twain will be most fit to go to hounds in November!

When speaking of the coat or hair of horses, it must be remarked that the coat itself is not always an index of their general health, as there are some who, at certain periods of the year, never have a good one; but *the skin* is always a criterion to judge by. If that feels dry, with hard lumps upon it, and is of a dusty hue, with a scurf arising on the surface of it, we may depend upon it our horse is not in kind condition—even should there be no affection of his lungs, which, under such circumstances, is always to be apprehended. We may be sure his skin is preternaturally distended, and wants relaxing by such medicines as will act gently on its fibres, and also improve the general health. It is by the state of the skin that naturalists decide whether the climate is, or is not, too severe for animals which are not indigenous to it. If what is called “the yolk” rise on the surface of it, the animal will exist and do well, but not otherwise. Those inveterate disorders, grease and eczema, are cutaneous maladies of common occurrence.



Returning once more to the present season of the year—a season in which so much good or evil hereafter depends—I have only to urge the absolute necessity of administering alterative medicines to hunters first beginning to work ; and the only precaution necessary to preserve the bloom on their coats, or to secure them from any inconvenience from their effects, is to keep them warm, both in and out of the stable ; to give them plenty of hand-rubbing to their legs, with a liberal allowance of good old corn. There are many grooms who delay giving their horses severe exercise till the month of October ; but—I speak from experience—horses so managed are not in condition on this side Christmas. That there can be no condition without long-continued work, is as true as that there would be no day if there were no night.

As there is nothing like a little practical information, I give the following detail : This day (August 15, 1824) I had a hunter sweated. She had on her a thick blanket-rug, under a quarter-sheet and breast-plate, with a single hood. She was once walked around a fallow field (fresh rolled and dragged) of sixteen acres, just to enable her to throw off some of her meat. She trotted three times around it, and cantered twice. She then walked home, about a quarter of a mile, to her stable, where (as it rained) she was scraped. I stood by with my watch in my hand, and in twelve minutes her neck was dry. At the expiration of nineteen minutes she was dry all over, having been well wisped ; and, after walking

out for a quarter of an hour, she was brought in and dressed. In an hour she was shut up, having had half a pail of tepid water, and her corn.

It must be observed that the mare in question is very forward in her condition, otherwise she would not have dried so soon. It was only her second sweat, but it ran off her like rain water. She was soiled, at different times, in the summer, but never lay out, and has had a course of alteratives since her physic.



'JACK JAR'  
A Steeplechase Winner, owned by A. Knowles, Esq., Abington Hall, Nantwich



## LETTER XIII

### TREATMENT AFTER A HARD AND LONG RUN—CLIPPING

**T**HE cock was sacred to Æsculapius, by reason of his extreme vigilance. In a former letter I have observed that one of the chief points on which a groom has to exercise his judgment is, in being apt to discover whether a horse be *over-marked after a severe day's work with hounds*. I have already detailed the directing symptoms of this too frequent occurrence; but although I have stated what I have found, by my own experience, to be the best way of treating him after what I have termed "a very hard day," yet I have not mentioned what I consider to be the most effectual measures to be adopted when his life appears in danger. A bad horse will seldom lose it in this honourable way; but a good one, not properly prepared, will too often go till he dies.

When a horse is very much exhausted after a long run with hounds, a noise will sometimes be heard to proceed from his inside, which is often erroneously supposed to be the beating of his heart, whereas it proceeds from the excessive motion of the abdominal muscles.<sup>1</sup> All horses, however, who die from exertions

<sup>1</sup> This sound is due to spasm of the diaphragm or midriff, as it is more popularly called.—EDITOR.

beyond the limits of vital power die from suffocation ;<sup>1</sup> and on this account, as soon as we perceive a horse to be much over-marked, he should have from three to four quarts of blood drawn from his neck immediately on his getting home, to relieve the pressure on his lungs ; and one ounce of carbonate of ammonia (salt of hartshorn, a powerful stimulant) should be given him every four hours during that night, and part of the next day, in a ball. Although he should be put into the coolest stable that can be found—nay, indeed, into an open shed, well littered down, if the symptoms are alarming—yet a strong determination of the blood to the surface should be kept up by friction of the legs, belly, and head, and by very warm clothing on the body. A good cordial ball, or a pint of mulled port wine well spiced, should also be given him, and his bowels should be relieved by a clyster of warm gruel. If the impeded action of the heart and arteries do not soon abate, he should be well blistered behind his elbows, and lose some more blood ; and I think I may venture to say that if this treatment does not save his life, there is too much reason to fear he is beyond the reach of man.

Many persons are apt to imagine that when horses are over-marked, cordials are improper, and that the reducing or repellent system is alone to be pursued. This, however, is quite a mistaken notion ; for although bleeding is resorted to in order to relieve the

<sup>1</sup> When hunters are brought into the field without being conditioned or winded, they are very liable to suffer from pulmonary apoplexy or acute engorgement of the lungs.—EDITOR.

pressure on the lungs, from the greatly increased action of the heart and arteries, yet a stimulus is afterwards wanting to assist almost expiring nature.

Permit me to lay great stress on the propriety of putting a horse, which may be thus unfortunately situated, in a place where he has free access to air, for a hot stable is destructive to him. When one of Lord Derby's huntsmen's horses came home last season in a very exhausted state, after a very tiring run with a second deer, this error was committed : he was put into his usual stall, and the usual warmth of the stable was increased by the presence of almost every servant in the house, who came from motives of humanity to inquire after the fate of a favourite old horse. Had he been well littered down under an open shed, he would have had some chance for his life ; whereas, in the situation in which he was placed, he had but little, and he died the next day.

I remember witnessing a very strongly marked instance of the dangerous effects of placing horses in warm stables before the circulation of the blood is restored to its proper standard. We had killed a fox with Lord Middleton's hounds in Warwickshire, close to the house of a gentleman who was out, and who asked several of us to take some refreshment. Cantering forward to order it, he thoughtlessly put the mare he had been riding into her stall among four other horses, and proceeded to the house. We had scarcely sat down to our luncheon, when he called me out of the room to inform me his mare was ill.

On going to the stable I found her on her knees. "She is fainting," said I: "bring her into the air, and she will recover;" which she almost immediately did, and, after walking gently about for twenty minutes, she returned to her stable comfortable and well.

Although it has been the fashion in the Old School to condemn the use of cordials, yet I have no hesitation in saying, that in the hunting stable such medicines are invaluable; and were a pint of port wine<sup>1</sup> made warm with spices given to a hunter after a *very hard* day's work, I have no doubt but it would be as serviceable to him as it would be to his master. After all, what is fatigue? It is a sudden exhaustion of strength, producing languor and faintness—the consequence of too great a hurry of the animal functions! Whatever, then, speedily removes these distressing symptoms, and gives strength and cheerfulness to the body, cannot fail in being beneficial.

In all those distempers which dissipate the nervous fluid or animal spirits, I am certain cordials are good; and in all obstructions whereby the perspirable matter is thrown back on the circulation, producing a sudden diminution of strength, with increased languor and weight, they cannot fail to be of service. In the commencement of colds they are very effectual, by increasing insensible perspiration; and to horses which are what is termed "washy," and which throw off their meat, or to those which are much below their mark, they are extremely beneficial, as they not

<sup>1</sup> Unquestionably an excellent restorative.—EDITOR.



only invigorate the blood, but increase the elasticity of the muscles and strengthen the whole nervous system.

Let me not be understood to recommend the use of cordial balls on every trifling occasion, such as a horse refusing to eat a feed of corn. In my experience with hunters I have never been much troubled with bad feeders—it being nineteen times out of twenty the fault of the system pursued with them, if a horse will not eat sufficient for the purpose he is applied to. Only let him be well cleansed with physic, and kept on good hard meat, and I will answer for his eating enough. Nothing is so prejudicial to a shy feeder as being part of the year in, and part out of, his stable. By being always kept in, and *fed regularly*, his appetite returns, as it were mechanically, at stated periods; and if kept quiet, he will eat his allowance in the twenty four hours. Keeping horses quiet has more to do with feeding than people are aware of; and I have had a few horses in my time, which, though they would not pick up their corn quite clean in the daytime, would eat half a bushel in the course of the night, if given to them.

Fretting and nervous horses are very apt to refuse their feed in strange places. A friend of mine came to see me last hunting season, and in consequence of my stables being within hearing of the cry of hounds in the kennel, one of his horses would not touch his corn for two whole days. Not having a cordial ball at hand, I gave him a teaspoonful of Cayenne pepper on the third day, which so stimulated his stomach that

he set to and ate voraciously. This was a receipt of the late Lord Stawell's for horses that were delicate feeders.

The use of tonics is not sufficiently applied in the progress of a hunter's condition. At certain periods, particularly in the month of October, horses are subject to considerable debility, which tonic medicines alone will remove. There are mineral tonics which are well known to every one; but for valuable horses there is nothing like the best Peruvian bark, from which I have experienced the best possible effects. Mr Manning, Lord Jersey's head groom, recommended it to a very delicate, but a very brilliant, horse of mine some years since, and his general health was wonderfully improved by it. He had a weeping at his eyes from the lachrymal glands, a laxity of body, an indisposition to carry flesh, and general debility about him, which a steady perseverance in the bark entirely removed.

It has been a standing apophthegm with the doctors of old times that nature never purges herself unless she wants purging. Of the human subject I do not treat; but with cattle this certainly is the case. If a cow or an ox at grass purge, or "shoot," as it is called, a dose of physic, about the same as you would give to a horse, will invariably cure it. Some horses, however, have always relaxed bowels, but still keep themselves in condition. Mr Warde has a chestnut mare—one of the finest animals of her sort that I ever saw—who is always in that state, but nevertheless she is always equal to her work. The best treatment

for such horses is constant hard food, with the occasional use of cordials and tonics.

To preserve health, a balance must be preserved between the *ingesta* and the *egesta*; consequently another requisite in a groom is, observing a proper medium between repletion and evacuation. I have before observed that the greater part of diseases of horses arise from plethora, and plethora from high keep. Nevertheless without high keep horses cannot do their work with hounds as it ought to be done; and, generally speaking, hunters do not eat a sufficient quantity of corn, particularly if they are to carry high weights. Road coach-horses, in some stables, set us a good example for feeding; and I have no hesitation in saying, that in the hands of a good groom, or in the stable of a gentleman who knows what a hunter should be, a horse in open weather, when he can do work, should have what corn he can eat.

I always accustomed myself to get upon my horses now and then in the progress of their condition (and I strongly recommend the practice to my brother sportsmen), just to enable me to feel them under me; and I am almost inclined to assert that I can perceive the difference of an extra feed of corn per day in the increased vigorous action of the animal. Reflection, however, must not sleep, and we must proportion work to the diet, so as to keep the circulation alive, and prevent the blood from becoming viscid; for there is a standard here to be observed which will not admit of variation: and if we overload the system with more than the efforts of nature—assisted even with such

exercise as at this season of the year can be given them—can get rid of, something will soon grow wrong. Here, then, it is that those useful auxiliaries, alterative medicines, are so essential.

Horses that have been well kept in the summer will sometimes have their bodies covered with lumps, or “bumps,” as they are called, having somewhat the resemblance of the effect of a sting from a wasp or a bee; but nothing alarming is to be apprehended from them. On the contrary, they indicate increasing vigour: and a mild course of diaphoretic and diuretic alteratives, assisted by not less than three or four hours’ gentle exercise every day, will, in good time, remove them.

How provident soever nature may have been in the formation of the animal in question, the goodness of his wind, after going a certain distance at a rapid rate, will chiefly depend on the work he has been doing. Thus it is with a human being. The divers after pearls in the Gulf of Persia, who remain under water for such a length of time, are obliged to keep themselves in the almost constant practice of diving, or they would be unable to perform their task. There are numerous organs, appendices to the lungs, employed in the act of breathing; and all of them being either muscular or elastic, require to be kept in tone to preserve their power and elasticity.

I have said before, that the muscles and fibres of all animals relax with rest. Wishing to avoid asserting anything on subjects of this nature but what I have proved by the safest of all tests—experience—I must

here, once more, have recourse to my own stable ; and I hope the example I am about to produce will not be lost on my brother fox-hunters. Some years since I went to spend the week at that long-established and truly sporting carnival, Shrewsbury Hunt ; and on the Wednesday Sir Richard Puleston's hounds met at Atcham, the seat of Lord Berwick, about four miles from the town. I had out on that day a very good mare, called Barmaid ; and as I had also at that time a very good groom, Barmaid was very fit to go. I likewise had in the field a bay horse, which I had purchased a few days before from Mr Underhill, at that time a great Shropshire horse-dealer, and which, as might be expected, was not at all fit to go. I rode the mare myself, and my groom rode the horse, with directions to put him along as far as he could without distressing him, and then to pull him up. It so happened that we had a remarkably fine run over the severest part of Shropshire—the base of the Wrekin—when our fox, being headed, retraced his steps, and was killed in the plantation where we found him. There was a large field out, and of course a great deal of distress ; but the mare carried me close to the hounds the whole way, took her fences clear to the last, and enabled me to see what I do not recollect to have ever seen since—namely, a young hound snatch at the fox as he met him in a ride in the covert, when dying before the pack ; but on his shewing him his teeth, with a sort of convulsive grin peculiar to this gallant animal in the last struggle for his life, the puppy dropped his stern and suffered the fox to pass

him. Now comes the sequel of the story. In consequence of this run Sir Richard purchased Barmaid to carry his huntsman, which she did in capital style for several seasons, and was killed (mind, reader!)—not by what I can exactly call a blank day, but by trotting up and down Mr Whitmore's coverts, at Apley in the Shiffnal country, with a fox which never broke away at all! The fact was, this mare was a very hard feeder, and required a great deal of work; but a long frost having suddenly broken up, she was called upon before she was fit to go, and her vessels being overladen by rest, death, from acute engorgement of the lungs was the result.

Now then for the horse. Being by nature a game one, he went farther without shewing his distress than a bad horse would have done; and my groom—a better judge in the stable than out—not having sufficient discrimination, did not pull him up in time; and although he did not go half the distance the mare went, he was obliged to be left that night within four miles of Shrewsbury, where I saw him, on my road home, in such a state that I offered him in the evening for ten pounds to any one who would have him, though I had given nearly a hundred for him a few days before. He, however, recovered; and having made Underhill an allowance to take him again, he sold him to a gentleman in that country, who rode him a season or two, when he was also purchased by Sir Richard Puleston, to carry this same huntsman, which he did for several seasons. He was not a fast horse, but when fit to go he would not easily tire, and he lived to be an old horse.

The above is, I think, a pretty strong proof of the *absolute necessity of preparing a horse well before he goes to hounds, and the danger of riding him when unprepared*. Numerous, however, as these instances are, they do not appear to make that impression upon sportsmen which they ought to do ; and I repeat my assertion, bold as it may appear, that, taking England throughout, not one hunter in ten is fit to go to a covert's side. I will also venture to add, that provided a horse—*not* what I call “ well prepared ”—can go half an hour at a clipping pace with hounds, taking his fences well to the last, it is in the power of his groom to make him go for forty minutes equally well—an advantage of no small importance at the time, to say nothing of the diminution of risk from the effect of the exertion he is put to. *There is a market*, also, in which these additional ten minutes would put an additional hundred guineas, if not more, on his value.

There is another stumbling block too often in the way of my brother sportsmen in their stables ; and that is, they do not sufficiently regard the constitutional peculiarities of their horses, but are too apt to prepare them all nearly alike ; whereas a wide difference exists in the treatment of them. To prove this we must go to the racing stable. Lord Foley's Osprey, by Eagle out of Miss Furcy (sister to Chippenham) by Trumpeter, would neither take a dose of physic, nor stand training in any way ; yet, when taken out of his paddock, he could beat half the horses at Newmarket for half a mile. Lord Oxford's Victoria was obliged to be physicked after every race she ran, and in one

instance (well known to all country trainers) worked it off on the road from one country race to another, but winning at both places. The dam of Sailor, as I before mentioned, was obliged to stop a day on her journey to sweat, such was her disposition to feed ; whilst Mr Mytton's Euphrates never wore a setting muzzle. When Major Pigot had York and Manti-damun, he himself told me that the one horse had three doses of physic in the same space of time that the other had seventeen !

In a correspondence I have had with Mr Weedon, my Lord Plymouth's groom, on the subject of sweating hunters in the month of September, he very properly observes, that in such matters " no given rule can be laid down which is not liable to some exceptions " ; but in general, he tells me, he sweats his horses twice a week. " This I do," said he " in soft ground, with as little clothing as I can help, except when a horse happens to be very stout, and then I think more clothes necessary. These points," added he, " must be regulated by the groom, who ought to study the different constitutions of the animals, and give them exercise suited to their strength." These are Mr Weedon's own words on this essential point ; and the reader will find they are much in unison with what I have hitherto said on the subject, which from so good a judge I cannot but consider as a compliment.

On the *method* of sweating hunters, Mr Weedon makes the following observation :—" As to the method of sweating hunters, some think it immaterial ; but I consider it the most safe to ride them singly. But



should I have a horse, the legs of which have become stale, I clothe him well, and have him led by a lad on a hack, and sweated in that way." With valuable horses, such as Mr Weedon had to deal with, this precaution is good.

There is one sentence in the letter which exactly accords with my doctrine in the stable. "The time," says Mr W., "I begin to condition my hunters (*though, as I observed to you before, they are partly in condition all the year*) is about the middle of August. I trot at a moderate rate, but sufficient to warm them, and thus until the middle of September, when I begin to sweat."

There is but one point on which Mr Weedon and myself are at issue. He tells me he gives his horses from four to five hours' *walking* exercise at this period of the year. In one of my letters on this subject I have stated my objections to long-continued walking, and those objections are founded on my own experience, and the experience of others, carrying more weight than my own. The only cases of diseased hocks in horses previously sound, which have occurred in my stable, have been produced by travelling at a foot pace on the road; and I gave a very good reason why such should be the case. Bullocks walking up to London market, laden with flesh, frequently throw out spavins on the road.<sup>1</sup>

In a former letter I have, I think, said nearly enough on the subject of stinting hunters with hay, but I have not been sufficiently explicit as to *water*—in the

<sup>1</sup> This sentence appears to be worthy of attention, being new to the Editor.—F. B.

administering which considerable judgment is necessary, in a stable of hunters of all ages, sizes, and constitutions. Every man at all acquainted with anatomy will tell us, that when the stomach and intestines are filled with water, the viscera press against the diaphragm, by which means the lungs are impeded in their functions, and temporary suffocation takes place when the animal is put to quick work. Indeed it was the old and generally well-received opinion, that, by galloping horses up hills in this state, the air vessels of their lungs were ruptured, and broken wind was the consequence.

As water is the only diluent a horse takes, a certain quantity is of course essential to his existence ; but to such as are not clear in their wind—from whatever cause it may arise—no more than what is sufficient to promote digestion should be given on the day before hunting, and none after three in the afternoon. A *very small portion of hay* should also be given them, and the setting muzzle put on at night.

They who are so unfortunate as to possess finely-formed horses, with all the accomplishments of a hunter, excepting clear wind (and how often do we meet with such horses !), will find the greatest advantage in attending minutely to these particulars. Such horses should likewise be always kept internally clean by physic, as their desire for water will be thereby diminished, and they should never be more than six weeks or two months without some evacuating medicine ; neither should they in the hunting season be ever five days without a sweat. The cure here.

we must remember, can never be radical, but it may be palliative ; and therefore we should try all means in our power to promote it.

It is, I know, generally supposed that the horse is, by nature, a voracious animal, and will not endure long abstinence ; but I think experience teaches to the contrary, and we have it on authorities not to be disputed. Travellers inform us that the inhabitants of Eastern countries ride their horses for two or three days together at a slow pace—only giving them a handful of herbage every eight hours, and they only drink once in twenty-four. We know the power of education in creating the disposition and temperament of animals, and therefore I see no reason to doubt the fact.

The size of a horse's stomach when compared with animals of his bulk is small ; and could hunters live entirely on corn, I have no hesitation in saying they could do their work better without eating any hay ; but this they cannot do. I have, however, in more than one case, debarred a horse from eating any *long hay*—only giving him a sieve full of cut hay (saint-foin, if it could be procured) in each feed of oats, and have found the best effects from it, when the pipes have not been so clear as I could wish.

When on the subject of hay it may not be amiss to state what I found to be the best sort for horses that follow hounds. It should be grown on sound land, be full of flowers, of colour approaching to green ; not dusty, or showing signs of being what is called "mow-burnt," and it should feel hard in the hand.

It should be fresh from the rick, or it imbibes moisture from the air ; and when of this description, a little of it is sufficient, as it will supply in quality what it wants in quantity. Oats should be short and sweet, and should rattle as they are put into the bin, and if of the last years' growth but one they are to be preferred.

I have a little more to say on the subject of water. All alterations of diet affect the animal economy ; but with horses in high condition nothing does it so quickly and visibly as a change of water. The number of pumps and ponds between Newmarket and Doncaster will, nineteen times out of twenty, secure the St Leger Stakes to the north-country horses, and *vice versâ* with our great Stakes in the south. I had not been at Brighton three days last winter before I experienced the effect of the water in the altered appearance of my horses.

I do not approve of the practice of constantly giving hunters warm water in the house. It should stand in the stable for at least one night before it is used, and then it is perfectly safe, when horses have not been sweated, or been with hounds. As, however, a draught of cold water has always a slight effect on the circulation, a hood or extra cloth should be thrown over a horse's loins after he has partaken of it.

A handful of bran stirred up in a bucket of cold water has a two-fold effect. It softens the quality of the water, and from the colour it imparts to it encourages horses to drink gruel when they come home after hunting. The danger of giving cold water after a

severe run, or after profuse sweating, I need not expatiate upon. The stomach—that great centre of sympathy—partakes too much of the general exhaustion of the system not to be highly sensible to such an extreme. When its blood-vessels are distended, which no doubt they are after severe exertions, cold water will sometimes produce a total stagnation of the blood, and immediate death will ensue. A friend of mine lost a valuable gig horse in this way. He was driving him one very hot day, and by way, as he thought, of refreshing him, gave him a few swallows of water out of a deep well, and he was dead in half an hour. At all seasons of the year water that is exposed to sun and air is to be preferred, but that which runs over gravel is always cold.

Although cold water, after great exertion, is dangerous, yet it is wonderfully refreshing to horses that are exhausted. I remember once tiring a horse in the wildest part of Northamptonshire, and no village at hand. I left him in the field with my groom, scarcely able to walk ; but he brought him home (sixteen miles) that night, recovering his strength and spirits, as he told me, after every sip of water he gave him on the road. The present system of giving gruel to horses on their road home, and when they get into their stable, is a most excellent one, and greatly promotes their recovery from fatigue.

Horses that are troubled—as many a good hunter is—with chronic cough should have great attention paid to them in their water. They invariably cough after drinking it, which too plainly shews the effect

it has upon them. They should be kept very short for *two days before hunting*. Their bowels should be kept free by physic, and an occasional loose cold bran mash will lessen their desire for, and obviate the necessity of, much water. I always have found horses which are subject to chronic cough naturally hard feeders. Frequent gentle sweats, producing a determination to the surface of the skin, and thereby relieving the lungs, should never be omitted.

What a man has always to do should be done well ; therefore it may not be amiss to state what is considered by grooms to be the best method of treating a horse when in the stable. Whoever has noticed an experienced nurse handling a young infant must observe a peculiar method of touching it which nothing but practice can give her. Thus it is with a groom. There is a method of handling a horse peculiar to one who knows his business, which a bystander, who is a judge of such matters, cannot mistake. Even in the act of stripping him—before he puts his hand upon him to dress him—there is a method to be observed. Having secured his head and muzzled him, he first unbuckles his roller and the near side of his breast-plate ; when passing his left hand down the spine of the horse, he draws the clothes off, over his tail, and throws them into one side of the manger. By this method every hair in his skin will lie smoothly. When his clothes are replaced, having been well shaken, they should be put some inches forwarder than they are intended to remain ; when the groom, going just behind the tail of his horse, should draw



THE OLD BERKELEY (WEST) FOXHOUNDS, AND MASTER E. LEADBETTER, ESQ.





them gently down to their proper place, for the reason before mentioned. The roller and breast-plate being buckled, a hood, or a linen rubber, should be thrown over the quarters. Nothing looks so awkward as to see a groom pulling a horse's clothes in an opposite direction to his coat, which must be the case if he puts them on lower down, or nearer to the tail, than he intends them to remain. In general the head and neck are dressed before the body is stripped, for which purpose the horse should be turned round in his stall ; and when his legs are rubbed, first with straw and then with the hand, the toilette is completed.

When a groom who knows his business has stripped a horse, he should feel him, to judge how he is getting on in his condition, and whether he be getting his flesh on the right points. Having satisfied himself on this head—having stripped himself (that is to say if he be a working groom)—he sets to work to dress him—an operation in which some greatly excel others. There is, however, no harder work than dressing a horse as he should be dressed—taking into account the atmosphere in which the workman breathes.

A good dressing to a horse is, I have reason to believe, a far greater benefit than we are apt to give credit for. It produces an afflux of blood to the surface, promotes a general circulation of the system, gives elasticity to the lungs, and greatly assists wind and digestion. The brush, when vigorously applied, has a medicinal effect on the spiracula of the skin—a great relief after sweating. It must resemble the benefit derived from the use of the flesh-brush to the

human frame, so much esteemed in the warmer countries previous to the wearing of linen. The ancients had an instrument which they called a "strigil," which they employed for this purpose; and to which Persius alludes when speaking of the Roman baths—

" I puer, et strigiles Crispini ad balnea defer."

The dust in horses' skins, though it may be called an extraneous matter, secreted by the vessels of the skin, has, no doubt, its use in keeping the animal warm, and affording nourishment to the roots of the coat. Sweating, with the vigorous application of the brush, will alone remove it; and for this reason the use of the brush should be very limited during the moulting season. Among the many advantages of keeping hunters in the house in the summer, may be reckoned that of their changing their coats sooner, and, consequently, being better prepared to meet the cold weather when it comes.

The late punishing times have enforced economy upon most people; and all good judges have given up the use of body-clothes and breast-plates *in the stable*, and only use them at exercise, where they are necessary, in the winter, to prevent their clothes blowing back when meeting the wind. A sort of blanket is now used, which is manufactured in the North of England, and is very warm and comfortable and comparatively of trifling cost. If I had all the money now before me which I have expended in body-clothes, it would purchase me a good hunter—for they are soon demolished if horses sleep in them.

Very few saddlers know how to make them properly—scarcely ever cutting them deep enough or long enough for full-sized horses. I am, however, a great advocate for warm clothing in the stable. It promotes the insensible perspiration that is always going on through the pores of the skin, and tends to keep horses in health.

It may be expected that I say something on the practice of clipping hunters. The grand object of a groom is to make his horses look as if they were well groomed, which they cannot do unless they have a fine short coat; therefore, of course, he conceives a fine short coat to be conducive to health and condition, and no doubt it is. I should certainly prefer seeing a horse of mine with a fine short coat without the aid of clipping; but if that were not to be accomplished, I would certainly have him clipped. The advantages of a short, and the disadvantages of a long coat, I have already treated of.

As it always has been, and ever will be, with most innovations on old-established systems, objections have been made to clipping horses, and some silly reasons given for them. That they may be susceptible to cold, if exposed to it soon after the operation, is rational to conclude; but in all my inquiries from the owners of such horses I did not find this had been the case. One gentleman gave it a pretty good trial. His horse was finished clipping on the Thursday, and he swam or forded a canal three times with him on the Friday with Lord Berkeley's stag-hounds, and he was not the least the worse for it. Fat sheep,

we know, are shorn in the months of February and March, and are exposed to the air with impunity, which has often excited my surprise. Some days, however, should always elapse between clipping and work.

The value of any acquisition is only to be estimated by its usefulness. Never having tried clipping, I cannot speak from my own experience ; but I have been informed that horses so treated will do their work better, and come round sooner, than they did before ; and I think it is easily accounted for. I was told that a master of fox-hounds had tried it in his stable with the best effect ; and having had the honour of being introduced to him in the spring of 1824 at Messrs Tattersall's, he confirmed what I had heard. It is a very nice operation, and requires much practice and no little skill to do it well ; but as Nature is not easily imposed upon, it is always to be detected.

## LETTER XIV

### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

**I**T is a principle in unison with all well-known facts that our will has no power over our belief ; and to doubt nothing and to understand nothing are much the same. In the common walks of life the moment a man steps a little from the beaten track, that moment is he opposed in his march ; and were he to yield to every obstacle he meets with, his progress would be but slow. He would resemble the man who went to a fox-chase resolving not to leap ; whereas, to the fearless and experienced horseman, half the pleasure of that noble diversion consists in getting clear over, or in breaking down, the barriers which oppose him.

In the progress of my letters on the condition of hunters I have certainly gone a little out of the beaten track ; or, in other words, I have travelled in a road not much frequented. In the progress of these letters also, I have ventured to condemn a system practised by, I fear, more than two-thirds of my brother sportsmen ; and I have attempted to prove that that system is wrong. Had I written these letters more than twenty years ago, when the method I have recommended was first used by myself, and but very partially

adopted by others, I should have been naturally prepared for opposition ; but in these communicative times I am only surprised that the advantages of it have not circulated throughout all sporting countries—even to the county of Forfar.

My first opponent was the BIT OF A JOCKEY ; but I have done with him—not conceiving that (though, perhaps, a useful writer on other matters) a person whose sporting days, by his own account, were ended before ours began, and who never saw Buckle ride,<sup>1</sup> can be an authority for any practical system now adopted in the sporting world. As well might a man sit down and write a topographical description of London and Westminster, and in the concluding chapter inform us that he had never seen Charing-cross !

My next opponent was THE OLD SPORTSMAN, who talked of “mashed potatoes and Swedish turnips”<sup>2</sup> as the best food for hunters, and wished us to believe that horses and dairy-maids did their work better when rough in their coats. His hounds, however, were all for the pot, and, by his own account, found more hares than foxes. The first blow is said to be half the battle ; but I had the last with him, and I do not think he will resume the contest.

Next comes a correspondent under the signature of “X. B.,” who commences his letter by *saying*, “Does not your valuable correspondent NIMROD think too much of his horse having five years’ old oats and beans in him ? If this were absolutely

<sup>1</sup> See *Sporting Magazine*, vol. xiv. N.S. p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sporting Magazine*, vol. xi. N.S. p. 268.

necessary," continues he, "what would become of our two and three-year-old horses in the race? We find they can run full as well as those at a more advanced age. In 1823 and 1824 the Craven Stakes were won by two-year-olds." <sup>1</sup> My answer to this is—first, that in *my* country two year or three year-old colts cannot have five years' hay and corn in them; secondly, *I did not say it was necessary for a hunter.* He concludes the sentence by telling us, "*I believe* the two-year old colts are taken *from grass* in September to run in April."

Now on all subjects but one I hate the words "I believe." One man believes one thing, and another man believes another—neither of them within two distances of the mark, nor could an argument of a thousand years bring them one whit the nearer. What would a Cambridge Professor say to a man who approached his chair and talked of *believing*? "Bring me demonstration, Sir," he would say, "and I will listen to you!" Now had X. B. taken the trouble to inform himself on this subject before he put pen to paper, he would have found that no two-year-old colt taken from grass (which in the sense he applies it, in opposition to corn, of course means grass only) in September ever did, or—we may safely add—ever will, win the Craven. He would have found that such colts have as much corn as they can eat from the time they leave the dam, and even before they are weaned;

<sup>1</sup> In 1823, by the Duke of Rutland's b. c. Scarborough by Catton, dam by Haphazard; in 1824, by Lord Verulam's ro. c. Vargas, by Orville out of Vittoria by Sorcerer.

and that in these days a well-bred colt, with engagements over his head, may be said to be in training from *the very day he is foaled!* As to grass, there certainly may be some in the paddock he is reared in, but it forms a small portion of his food even in the course of the first year. That a two-year-old colt should win the Craven is anything but extraordinary—indeed the race is made for him. The course is but a little more than a mile,<sup>1</sup> and when the weights were fixed the chances must have been considered equal. Were the race, however, over the B. C. instead of where it is, where would be the two-year-old. His only chance then of winning it would be to put *five years' old corn* into him, and the recipe would be worth something.

The circumstance X. B. brings forward of Trajan, taken from grass, being beaten by Match'em, is rather a singular way of recommending the grazing system; and his (Trajan) having distanced two others (he does not say what) in the race, does not mend the matter at all; as, for aught we know, they may have been at grass also—may have bolted, or tumbled, or God knows what—as it is sixty-two years since (1755) the event he alludes to took place.

When X. B. speaks of four months' training being sufficient for the race-horse, he talks equally out of book; and I had nearly forgotten my good manners, and said he talked *something else*, when he told us he should be delighted to see a valuable hunter of his gallop about a hard field in the summer till he was hot.

<sup>1</sup> Across the Flat, one mile, two furlongs, twenty-four yards.



Were it possible that, during such frolics, a horse could be divested of his skin, and we could have a peep at the internal machinery of his frame, we should see such twists and contortions of his joints that, if they did not make us tremble for the safety of them, would at least satisfy us that they must be a bad recipe for any injuries those joints may have received in their work in the winter. As to exercising horses in the summer, let those who think it *amuses* them practise it, on the score of humanity ; but, for my own part, I never yet saw a horse out at exercise that did not wish to return to his stable.

In your last number <sup>1</sup> a gentleman from Forfarshire (a sportsman, I am certain) comes forward, and, after enumerating “ pot bellies, running thrushes, pleasant roaring ” (awkward music for those who pay to hear it), etc. etc., as the concomitants of the grazing system, energetically says, “ *Now take my plan!* The hunter,” says he, “ must be turned out when days and nights are warm.” Here, unfortunately, he is opposed by one of our first writers on the veterinary art, who says, “ I have always found that when the greatest heat prevailed in the course of the day, the nights were cool, the fogs more copious and heavy, and that diseases amongst horses were then most prevalent.” Nothing can be more true than this. In proportion as the action of the heart and arteries has been excited by the warmth of the day, the greater must be the effect of the damp and vapours of the night.

<sup>1</sup> See *Sporting Magazine*, vol. xv. N.S. p. 194, etc.

“The effect,” says the NORTH BRITON, “on the sinews and joints of the hunter, by a run at grass, is past doubt in my experience.” May I request him to state whether he have proved the result by a close application of his system with the one I recommend. His recommending turning horses out to grass as a preventive of botts cannot but create a smile, and is one of the thousand instances we meet with of a man sitting down to write on subjects *before*, instead of *after*, he has given himself time to think. If we are to believe writers on natural history, horses kept in the house *cannot have botts*: they are the larvæ of a fly that only molests him in the sunshine, but to whose existence and propagation they are as essential as the air we breathe is to our own lives. Hear what a very highly-esteemed writer<sup>1</sup> on the diseases of horses says on this subject: “The flies from which these botts are produced inhabit the country, and do not come near houses, at least not near those of great towns; and therefore horses are never liable to have botts in their bodies if they have been kept in the house, especially in town, during the summer and autumn.”

Your Northern correspondent concludes his letter by lamenting that so many promising young race-horses are nipped in the bud by early training; but as all the great stakes are for young ones, the owners of them will make their hay when the sun shines.

In the same number X. B. again comes forward. He begins by telling us that a horse shut up in a well-

<sup>1</sup> Osmer.

littered stable in the summer *must be in a fever*, or in a state of perspiration. Away with all such trash. If this were the case, what would become of all the race-horses, post-horses, coach-horses, covering stallions, wagon-horses, saddle-horses, and all others used in the hot months? Take a horse from grass and put him into a warm stable, and no doubt he will sweat; but not so if kept on hard meat, or with occasional soiling.

X. B. talks of lessening the quantity of a hunter's food, instead of physic, to prevent plethora; and of changing the nature of it for that which is "less solid and more easy of digestion." Surely here is the OLD SPORTSMAN come again with his Swedish turnips and mashed potatoes! All this tender food may do very well for a lady's pad, or for the lady herself; but such language, when applied to the hunter, is absurd. His remarks on physic are equally unfortunate, and the "*I believe*" again stares us in the face.

I have just found out that X. B. must be an Irishman. He tells us that "when the late Colonel Mellish had a stable of hunters *all in high condition*, he could seldom have the horse he wished, as they were frequently amiss and obliged to have physic." As this gentleman paid me a handsome compliment in the concluding sentence of his letter, I ought not to be too hard upon him; but in future I shall not notice the observations of one who appears so little qualified to offer them.

I am sorry to observe that many of my brother sportsmen are convinced of the evils of turning hunters

to grass, and yet subject them to these evils. I lately had a remarkable instance of this. A friend of mine, riding very heavy and very hard, came to see me, and by way of punishing him for biting one of his other horse's eyes out in the morning, he rode one of his hunters, a horse I have known for many years, and few people have a better when fit to go. On my observing that he looked like anything but what he should be, I asked him what he had been doing with him in the summer? "What I ought not to have done with him," was his reply: "I turned him out to grass. He has lost all his muscle, and he is not half the horse he was when he went out. Besides this," added he, "he has got a bad kick on his hock, and is in the hands of the veterinary surgeon at —, who *thinks* the enlargement will be reduced by continued fomentations."

The next morning my friend and myself rode out together. His horse was wet with sweat, whilst the one I rode (summered in his stall, with only ten days' soiling) was as dry on every part of his body as when he came out of the stable.

Your sceptical readers shall have a little more demonstration. A mare which I rode last winter (1823-4) met with an accident; and being got by Walton out of Highland Lass, I thought she might breed me a racer, so I put her to the horse, and turned her out. She soon got very fat and sound; but, not proving with foal, I took her up after being out nearly three months, and she has had every justice done by her since she has been in the stable. She stands in a



‘ALICE’

A brood Hunter Mare. Owned by Captain Heywood Lonsdale of Shavington, Market Drayton. A noted Prize-winner. The picture depicts a beautiful neck and withers



stall between two that have been summered in the house, and chalk is not more unlike cheese than is her condition unlike that of her neighbours. One of these is the mare that was sweated in August till "the sweat ran off her like water," which X. B. seems to think so cruel and so weakening. Perhaps he is not aware that some of our first-rate stallions are sweated once a week during the covering season.

After what I have now said I have done with producing proofs of the good effects of summering the hunter in the house, and shall conclude the subject with mentioning an occurrence which happened—rather *à propos*—with the mare I have just been speaking of. I rode her to call on my next-door neighbour, who keeps a pack of fox-hounds; and when he saw her, he exclaimed, "Ah! you have had your mare clipped, have you?" "No," said I, "she is not clipped, but she is *in clipping condition*," which is a much better thing. She now dries after a sweat in three minutes, which my neighbours can testify. Where is the horse which has been summered in the fields that will do this? Another circumstance took place with the Brighton harriers last winter. I was riding another mare which had three years' hard meat in her, when we were caught in a very shower of rain. In about ten minutes after it was over, Mr Carr, the gentleman who manages the Lewes harriers, rode up to me and said, "Your mare puts me in mind of a dirty boot by the side of a clean one." "Why so?" said I. "Because she is dry, and every other horse (seventy in number) in the field is wet," was his

answer. This must denote increased vigour of body.

I seldom hunt in October, for more reasons than one. First, the flies have not done stinging the horses; secondly, the country is not fit to ride over; and thirdly, I have always been of opinion that the month of October should be solely devoted to the master of the hounds and his servants. Mr Chute's hounds, however, being within easy reach of me, on the 22nd October 1824 I went out with them; and on the road to covert I overtook the pack. "How all the horses sweat this morning!" said the huntsman: "see how it runs off them!" "My horse does not sweat," said I, "I am certain." On my servant coming up with him he was as dry as when he went out of the stable. What is this a proof of? I have now, however, done with proofs.

In my twelfth letter on this subject I spoke of tonic medicines being essential to the condition of some horses at this season of the year; and have been called upon to state what I consider the best *mineral* tonic used for this purpose. The following ball, given two or three times a week till effect be produced, will be found to answer the desired end:—

Sulphate of iron,  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce.

Ginger . . . . . 1 drachm.

To be made into a ball in the usual way.



## LETTER XV

### ADVICE TO FARMERS—BREEDING—TREATMENT OF BROOD MARES AND COLTS—CLIPPING

**T**HE mind sleeps and is refreshed. It is now two months since I have put pen to paper on my favourite subject—the condition of hunters ; so return to it with increased pleasure. Although I have been silent, my eyes and ears have not been shut.

In my last I observed that I had something to say on this subject to farmers. My object is to induce them to breed horses, being convinced that no other stock on their farms can pay them so well. When, however, I recommend them to breed horses, I mean that they should set about it as it ought to be done, or they had better leave it alone ; for I speak without fear of contradiction when I assert that, generally speaking, no branch of rural economy has been more abused and neglected than this. It is useless, however, to expose errors that have passed : let us endeavour to avoid them.

Under proper management a good three-parts-bred mare may be a little fortune to a farmer. I know one in the neighbourhood of Ludlow which did not begin

to breed until she had carried that ornament to fox-hunting, the late Sir John Hill of Hawkeston, for eleven seasons, when she produced, if I may so express myself, a thousand pounds' worth of horse-flesh in the space of seven or eight years. I myself gave two hundred and sixty guineas for two of her colts when rising four years old, and they both proved good hunters. From what other stock, may I ask, could such a return be made? I may safely assert that the produce of this mare more than realised the fee simple of the land that reared them.

I have not time to be prolix, therefore must come to the point. When a prudent man lets loose his capital, his first consideration is whether it will return to him again. In this instance he may make sure of it if he will follow these simple directions. Let him purchase a well-bred mare, not so much regarding her size as her points and action—particularly requiring that she have a sound constitution and good legs. Let him send her to a horse also of good form, *with freedom of action* and a sound constitution; also being particular as to the state of his legs and feet. Never let him breed from a naturally infirm horse, whose legs have shown more than ordinary weakness;<sup>1</sup> and, above all, let him fix upon one which has what the veterinary profession call a short canon—that is, the bone extending from the knee to the fetlock, com-

<sup>1</sup> Though of course we should prefer legs that have never given way, yet a stallion that has raced much is not to be rejected because he has broke down at last; but we should carefully avoid those which have thrown out curbs, spavins, ring-bones, etc.

monly called the shank bone. Let him begin to breed from his mare before she is much injured by work ; as in that case, if she does not breed to please him with her first and second foal, he can dispose of her and purchase another.

A very celebrated fox-hunter has observed that "the goodness of horses generally goes in at the mouth." Let the breeder, then, bear this in mind, and take care that the foal be dropped early, and the dam well fed for the first two months with bran mashes, carrots, etc., till the spring grass arrives. If the mare should prove a good nurse, the colt will not require corn till he is weaned, which on no account should be delayed beyond the first or second week in September. Here the grand mistake has arisen, to which we are indebted for such numbers of misshapen horses as this country abounds in. Farmers, in general, never think of weaning their colts till after Michaelmas, long before which period there is little or no virtue in grass, but, on the contrary, it is sour and unwholesome.

From weaning time to the following May, the colt should be well kept on a full allowance of sweet hay, with at least two good feeds of oat per day, and *he should be kept warm*. He should have a head collar on, with a small strap hanging down to his knees, which will admit of his being handled every day ; and every two months his toes should be rasped, and his heels opened a little with the drawing-knife. In March or April he should have two mild doses of physic, which will cause him to grow ; and when the weather

is warm he should be turned out into a good upland pasture for the summer with plenty of shade and water, but taken up every month to have his legs examined and his toes rasped. The second week in September he should be housed again for the winter, when his belly should be the measure for his corn. When docked, his tail should be left eight inches in length, which will preclude the disagreeable necessity of having the operation repeated.

Early in the following spring, when turned two years old, he should be broken, but not backed; and physicked as before directed. In the first or second week in June he should be cut;<sup>1</sup> and when recovered he should be turned out for the summer. When taken up again for the winter, he should have two mild doses of physic, and be very well kept, giving him a few carrots, or a large bran mash once a week. Very early in the spring he should have a little more very mild physic; and in a fortnight afterwards he should be backed, and taught his paces by a person who understands the business. Idleness, from this time forth, will be an enemy to him; and as soon as he is perfect in his paces he should do what in the training stables is called "a little work." Exercise will strengthen his legs, enlarge his muscles, improve his form, and make him grow. From this time forth

<sup>1</sup> Though I have spoken of two years of age being the best time for cutting colts, yet this must depend on circumstances. If the owner of him has not a convenient place to keep him in, he must cut him the first year. Also, if he is likely to be too large for his legs, or what is termed "top heavy," the first year is to be preferred. It is customary to castrate at one year.—EDITOR.

he should be treated as a horse in every respect but in his work, which should be moderate till the fifth year; but previously to that time a customer will always be ready for him, and if his owner is disposed to part with him, his average price will be from one to two hundred sovereigns.

The action of the colt, especially that of the shoulders, will be greatly benefited by riding him up and down hills and trotting him gently on deep ground. He should be taught to leap at three years.

When I say that a colt should be treated as a horse after the third year, I mean, of course, that he should be treated after the system I have laid down for hunters, and not allowed his summer's run at grass. Hard meat will make him powerful and handsome: grass will render him, comparatively speaking, heavy, pot-bellied, and shapeless.

What I am now going to advance may appear like straining the point; but I am convinced of the truth of it, and therefore boldly assert it. It is my confirmed opinion, that unless a colt be what is called "deformed," it is in the power of good keep, exercise, and physic, to make him what is termed "a fine horse," and one that will sell for a large price, either for harness or the saddle. No one but those who have witnessed it are aware of the improvement in shoulders, thighs, gaskins, etc., from good oats (old) and beans, accompanied by regular work and proper riding. Being a great man for *proof*, I will mention one instance, which is as good as a hundred.

Five years ago, *i.e.* in 1820, I was riding to meet

hounds in Oxfordshire, on a five-year-old horse, which I had just purchased, and which was much out of condition. I was joined by a brother sportsman, whose experience in horses was considerable, and who was going on the same errand. "What have you got there?" said he, with some expression of surprise. "A brute," said I, "that I purchased the other day out of a Welsh drove." "I thought he was not your sort," continued he. Having summered this horse after the system I adopt, I happened to come across my brother sportsman with the same pack of hounds the following season, just as I was mounting "the brute out of the Welsh drove," with the intention of riding him for the day. "*You have a very neat horse there,*" said he; "where did you get him?" "Oh," said I, "you know him." "No," replied he, "I never saw him before." "What!" said I, "do you not recollect the brute out of the Welsh drove?" I sold this horse the following season to Mr Vincent Corbet for two hundred guineas—having previously refused that sum from him for another person.

When stating matters of fact on subjects so interesting to sportsmen, no one who belongs to that honourable class would object to his name being mentioned, by way of producing proof, without which argument goes for nothing. The gentleman I allude to is Mr Martin, of Ham Court in Worcestershire, a very hard rider to hounds, and whose father succeeded to the estates of the late Major Bland, who hunted that country when I first rode over it.

As another instance of the captivating properties

of condition I might mention that when at Hungerford, in January 1825, I sold one of my horses, which I considered under my weight, to Mr Starkey, of Spy Park in Wiltshire, who told a friend of mine afterwards that he bought him more for his *condition* than anything else.

One word more to farmers. If those who follow hounds, or who breed good horses without doing this, would pay more attention to the condition of their horses, by keeping them up in the summer, putting good instead of bad flesh upon them, they would be very well paid for their hunting, or their trouble. They may take my word for it, there never was such a demand, I might almost say outcry, for hunters as there is at the present day.<sup>1</sup> It is very well known to many of my acquaintance that I have lately had several earnest requests to purchase hunters for my friends, but I have been quite unable to comply with them. I will not say I might not have seen two or three horses that may have suited them, but I could not think of recommending them on account of their want of condition; for what is a hunter without condition?—a source of vexation, disappointment, and danger.

All persons do not set the same store by condition that I do; but if they were as much alive to the advantages of it, they could not fail to do so. The following fact will best show the price I put upon it:—A blank

<sup>1</sup> Previous to turning out a stag one day last season before Lord Derby's hounds, I breakfasted at a gentleman's house in Surrey. Our party consisted of eight; and five of them were eagerly inquiring after hunters.

sheet of paper was offered to me about six weeks back, by a gentleman who keeps hounds, with a request that I would write my own cheque (*i.e.* a cheque for my own price) on his banker, and he would sign it, for a mare, which is certainly a model of the art of grooming as relates to the condition of a hunter ; but which offer I refused—saying, I should not refuse such an offer for the mare, but I could not part with her condition. Wishing to advance nothing of this sort without the accompanying corroboration, my customer was Mr Taylor, of Holleycombe Lodge, the Member for the city of Wells.

I have now to notice two communications in your November number on this highly interesting subject—the Condition of Hunters. The first is a very able Letter from Cheshire on the subject of clipping, to which I shall allude more fully at a future opportunity ; but as the author, *EQUESTRIS*, asks my opinion, it is—that I would have every horse clipped that has got a long coat ; and it would answer extremely well if one or two men in the neighbourhood of every Hunt would perfect themselves in the art of doing it ; for they would have plenty of custom. Caution, however, should be observed. Mr Farquharson lost one of his best horses last season in consequence of riding him too soon after the operation was performed. On the other hand, Mr Bartlett, the dealer in Oxford Street, told me last season that his horse was clipped on the Thursday, and on the Friday he swam a canal three times with the Berkeley stag-hounds, and no ill effects were produced.





HUNTER BLOOD MARE 'SPECIAL' AND HER LOVELY FOAL 'SPECIAL'.  
Owned by Sir Merrick Burrells, Knapp Castle, Hoshlam. Winner of the 1st and 50 Guinea Cup at the Royal Lane Show,  
1st and Champion at Fonthorpe Wells, 1917.



The other letter which calls for my attention is from the same part of the world, and treats of the effects of the late distemper among horses.<sup>1</sup> It concludes with the following passages:—"Though I cannot subscribe to all the doctrines advanced by your ingenious correspondent NIMROD, yet I gladly add my mite to the proof that it is a very mistaken notion to give hunters a summer's run, under the idea of freshening their feet and legs. I can now call to mind five hunters turned out last summer perfectly sound, and which became lame at grass." Now this I consider a main prop to my argument, as it is evident the writer knows what he is about, if he be not a professional man. If, as he asserts, the stable or loose house is the best place for the legs and feet, no doubt can remain as to its being the best for the body, where extremes of heat and cold, as well as accidents, can be avoided—setting aside the folly of putting a load of flesh on an animal, which must almost all come off again *at the expense of his legs*. When speaking of extremes of heat and cold, reader, mark this! *The thermometer stood two degrees lower on the twenty-fourth of June 1824 than it did on Christmas-day!* This is the old story over again, but it cannot be too deeply impressed on the observation of the reader. "*Nunquam nimis dicitur quod nunquam satis discitur.*"—"A man cannot repeat those things too often which we cannot too minutely observe," is somewhere about the English of it.

I wish I had not again to notice your correspondent X. B., as but little pleasure or amusement can arise

<sup>1</sup> See *Sporting Magazine*, vol. xv. N.S. p. 96.

to the reader from an argument in which I may, without presumption, assert my opponent is no match for me. "What impudence!" says one: "What assurance!" says another: and many there are, no doubt, who think that impudence and assurance are synonymous terms; whereas nothing can be more opposite to each other. The one is a mere boldness which a man assumes from a pretension to qualities he does not possess; the other, the natural consequence of that consciousness of being right which arises in every man's breast when he knows that he is so. To the one we owe nothing; but to the other we are indebted for the greatest treasures of antiquity—for, neither Cicero nor Demosthenes, neither Ovid nor Horace, would have written as they did, had they not talked of the immortality of their works, and of the monuments that would be raised to their posterity; and I honour the judgment of a people who allowed them a reputation which it was their interest to support.

Notwithstanding what I have said, I am in perfect good fellowship with X. B., and shall be happy to hear from him on any other subject than that of the condition of hunters and race horses, on which I not only repeat my conviction that he has nothing worth communicating to the sporting world; but there are not wanting those who think that he has obtruded his opinion without any pretensions to its being heard. It is true, as he asserts, philosophers of old did believe a thing possible, and attempted to prove it afterwards; but where, may I ask, is X. B.'s proof? Surely not in the boy (what a specimen of grooming!) who had the

care of the black mare just taken out of a paddock, and gave her too much corn ; or in the ride to Tonbridge Wells in the month of April. “ *Ne sutor ultra crepidam,*” said Apelles to the cobbler.

X. B. argues strangely. When speaking of the races between Match'em and Trajan, in which Trajan was beaten twice, he says, “ When I spoke of four months being sufficient, was it not to enable Trajan to run as he did, and that the extra training he afterwards had did not mend the matter ? ” Certainly, I assert, it did not ; because Match'em, the horse he was beaten by each time, *had his extra training also*. Had he stood after the first race, Trajan might have won the second ; but we may say of him,

“ He, like the hindermost chariot wheel, was curst,  
Still to be near, but ne'er to be the first.”

X. B. accuses me of perverting the meaning of his words. If he writes in allegory, he should tell me so ; but when speaking to matters of fact, I must take him literally. He could not but have seen that I was writing in irony when I spoke of putting five years' corn into a two-year-old ; though it would not be the first nor the second time that an old one has started as a young one.

X. B. is rather happy in his allusion to what the hunter did when he was a foal ; but perhaps it will occur to himself that he has done some things when he was a boy which it might be dangerous for him to attempt now. Let us dismiss the subject, then, with this request—that he will keep his pity for others,

and not offer it to me, for there is a pitifulness in pity which I abhor. If I give it, I never wish to receive it.

I have now a word for another correspondent—a Mr SMITH, of Woodhouses—who has ventured to contradict my assertion, that a noise, or beating, which is often heard in the inside of a hunter after a very severe run with hounds,<sup>1</sup> proceeds from the motion of the abdominal muscles, and not from the heart. I beg leave to inform Mr SMITH that I have too often experienced this to believe his or any other man's assertion to the contrary; and as it happens, I have two bits of proof close at hand—for on these matters (as I say of Mr Warde's hounds) I go not a yard without the scent. Even eloquence, without conviction, goes for nothing; and on paper it is still more essential.

About a fortnight ago we ran a fox upwards of fourteen miles, from point to point, with the Hambleton hounds; and having ridden a horse not half in condition, he was, as might be expected, somewhat distressed—never having had what could be called a check the whole way. When he got to his stable—having trotted him rather briskly to it, to enable me to send a hack to a friend—he had not recovered himself, and the motion of the abdominal vessels was as plainly to be heard as the chiming of a church clock. Having my present object in view, I sent for Mr Ayleward, the farrier, who resides at Alresford, to witness it; and not content with this, but wishing for further corroborating testimony, I took the Rev.

<sup>1</sup> This sound has been already alluded to as proceeding from spasm of diaphragm.—EDITOR.

Mr Norris, who resides near Havant (who had also seen the run), into my stable, and convinced him of the fact. What is singular, Mr Norris told me, that when he saw what I had written on this subject in one of my letters on the condition of hunters, he spoke of it to a veterinary surgeon in his neighbourhood, who immediately confirmed the truth of it—adding, that the noise could not proceed from the heart, unless the heart lay where it should not lie.

A short time since, a gentleman by the name of Taylor—who resides at Beworth, and hunts regularly with Mr Villebois', or the Hambledon hounds—informed me that a friend of his had a horse, in the inside of which, towards the hinder part of his body, he always heard a beating noise after a run, but could not satisfy himself whence it proceeded. I then told him it was from a convulsive action of the abdominal muscles.<sup>1</sup> The noise is not at all like the beating of the heart, and the ear immediately directs us to the seat of it.

Mr SMITH also doubts the use of cordials when a horse is much exhausted after a run ; but an appeal to common sense will save me the trouble of replying here. Mr SMITH may be a veterinary surgeon, which I think he is ; and he may be an excellent practitioner ; but with all the respect which I have always expressed towards that highly useful profession, there are points on which men who have much experience in riding and the management of hunters can dictate a little to them. Is it to be supposed that either themselves

<sup>1</sup> Due to spasm of the midriff.—EDITOR.

or myself could direct Mr Robson how to bring a race-horse to the post ?

There is one part of Q.'s letter which I do not approve of, and that is his motto—" *Nugis addere pondus.*" He must allow me to say—and I am sure as a sportsman he will admit the justness of my observation—that nothing which tends to fit that noble animal, the horse, for the severe, if not almost unjustifiable exertions we put him to, and thereby alleviate his sufferings, can come under the denomination of trifles. As the Poet says—

" That heart is hard in nature, and unfit  
For human fellowship, as being void  
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike  
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased  
*With sight of animals enjoying life ;*  
*Nor feels their happiness augment his own."*

Without applying these lines to Q., whose apostrophe to his favourite old hunter rescues him from the charge, too much importance cannot be attached to this subject. For my own part, I almost adored the horse before I could ride him. How much, then, must my regard for him be increased in gratitude for all the pleasure he has afforded me ! It grieves me to see him abused : but abused he must be when ridden after hounds, at the pace they now go, when he is not in proper condition for the purpose—and how few do we see that are so ! The horse is a generous animal, and waits not to be asked whether he can do what we require of him. *He goes till he dies.* But we should not trespass on his generosity : no, we should give him every assistance our reason, our judgment,



and our experience can dictate ; and I think I have said enough on this subject to make the most sceptical of your readers believe that he cannot be equal to his work till the greater part of his labours are at an end, unless he has been treated on the system I recommend. It is now becoming pretty general in some countries, I wish it may be so in all ; and if what I have written may tend to make it so, not only will one object be attained, but I shall derive an inward satisfaction of mind on which I can put no price. For this shall my sins be forgiven me ; and the sun of my old age will set without a cloud.

I think Q. was imposed upon when he was told of " the cocktail that ran four miles from grass, and came in with a dry crust on her coat." I certainly have a mare (not the one I have before spoken of) whose condition is so perfect, that if hounds are running up-wind, and slacken their pace a little, she becomes dry, as several of my brother sportsmen have witnessed ; and what makes it more remarkable, she is of a hot and fractious temper.

In one of my former letters on this subject I spoke of a method of shoeing a hunter so as effectually to prevent his cutting himself by overreaching his legs in deep ground, or in leaping brooks. It is sometimes difficult to convey our ideas on paper to the minds of others without the help of the pencil ; and some of my brother sportsmen have told me they could not exactly comprehend what part of the shoe I recommended to be bevelled off. It is the inner edge that requires bevelling.

I have never had an overreach since I have used these shoes, but I frequently see them when the precaution is omitted. A gentleman (Major Pester) had his horse very much cut a short time since with Mr Villebois's hounds ; but on my asking him the question, I found the edge of the shoe was not bevelled off.

## LETTER XVI

### ADVANTAGES OF CLIPPING—SALT MARSHES—HAY— GREEN MEAT

**O**NE of our ancient historians observes that when he tells us what he has heard, he leaves us to form our own opinions as to the truth of it ; but when he describes what he has seen, he speaks to men, and expects to be believed. Theory certainly gives us an advantage ; but in all matters of external nature, it is experience that proves.

I have already declared that I have long since been freed from vulgar prejudices and bigotry to ancient customs. I will not go so far as to assert that I would do so and so because our forefathers had not done so and so before me ; yet their not having done it would by no means deter me from the attempt : for, if we may judge from modern improvements, we have too much reason to think that, with a few exceptions, they were a very dull race of men. Other circumstances also tended to rid me of these bars to improvement, and nothing more than a passage I met with some years ago in one of our Greek authors. Being now on my travels I have not the volume to refer to, but the following is the substance.

The Emperor Darius (a pretty straightforward one, I believe), growing sick of hearing of the ancient customs of his people, and that nothing was right but what had been done by them in past ages, had recourse to the following expedient to cure them. He sent for a dozen of his subjects, and put to them the following question : “ What reward shall I give to you if you will promise to eat your fathers and your mothers when they die ? ” His subjects, with one voice, exclaimed, they hoped His Majesty would not repeat so unnatural a request, as nothing he could give them—not even his kingdom—would induce them to comply with it. On a signal being given, twelve Indians, brought thither for the purpose, were ushered into the Royal presence, and to whom the Emperor, through his interpreter, put the following question : “ What reward shall I give to you *not* to eat your fathers and your mothers when they die ? ” The savages fell upon their knees, and with yells and lamentations implored the King not to enforce such a command, as nothing should induce them to forego so signal an act of respect to their departed parents.

Having thus written, it may be easily imagined that I was not to be deterred from clipping a hunter because my forefathers had never clipped one before me ; but, on the contrary, being eager to adopt any experiment which may tend to promote my favourite object—the condition of the hunter—I availed myself of the first *favourable* opportunity of trying it ; and I now give the result.

In November 1824 I purchased a horse of fair

character, formerly the property of Mr George Delmè. He had been turned out to grass in the summer ; had had his three doses of physic ; had been hunted ; and was what is called "in condition." When, however, I came to ride him, I found him quite below the mark, and not so good by a stone as from his form and action he ought to have been. He had a long, thick coat upon him, and was what grooms call "very bad to dry"—always breaking out three or four times in the course of the evening of the day on which he hunted, and his ears were generally cold and wet. In addition to these signs of debility, he always had a damp feel to the hand, down his quarters, in the stable, after only common exercise, and he sweated with very little exertion. I gave him some tonic medicines (bark and gentian root), during the operation of which the dampness on his quarters ceased, and he appeared more healthy and vigorous ; but on leaving off the medicine the symptoms returned. I then had him clipped<sup>1</sup> and in the course of a fortnight the good effects were visible. His flesh increased ; his muscles grew larger ; he did not sweat so soon ; he dried sooner ; and the dew on his quarters, when in the stable, was very seldom to be perceived. He broke out, however, as it is termed, after every day's hunting as before, and continued to do so till the end of the season ; neither will anything obviate that, or put him into condition but being summered upon hard meat.

<sup>1</sup> The beneficial effects of clipping can hardly be over-estimated, and it should always be done with long-coated horses.—EDITOR.

It has never yet happened to me not to be able to get a short coat upon a hunter, or to make him dry soon, and not break out again after a run, when summered in the house and subjected to a proper course of alterative medicines when in his work; but should I ever be in possession of a horse whose state of body renders him liable to such inconveniences, I would instantly have him clipped. With common precautions—an extra rug and a hood at exercise for two or three days after the operation—no danger<sup>1</sup> need be apprehended; and I will take upon myself to say that a clipped horse will come out once, if not twice more in a month, and at the same time keep up his flesh better, than one with a long, thick coat. *Notwithstanding this, the natural short coat is to be preferred, and is, ninety-nine times in a hundred, to be obtained by proper stable management.*

In the second part of Mr William Percivall's "Elementary Lectures on the Veterinary Art" (with the perusal of which, as far as I have yet gone, I am extremely well pleased) are some interesting remarks which apply indirectly to clipping. "The coat of the horse," says he, "is shed twice during the year—a phenomenon exhibited with great regularity so long as the animal remains wild: but as soon as he is domesticated, this process is influenced by many circumstances connected with the stable management; though by none, perhaps, more than the temperature of the stable. Heat," adds he, "is

<sup>1</sup> It is a general practice to clip hunters in the present day.—  
EDITOR.

absolutely and indispensably necessary to the production of a fine coat : cleanliness, friction, and attention to the general health—all comprised in good grooming—contribute to this condition of the hair ; but the principal, the essential agent is *heat*, either generated by warm clothing or conveyed by natural or artificial temperature. To explain the operation of heat upon the skin and coat, it must, in the first instance, determine an unusual flow of blood to it, and probably *increases* the circulation of the cutaneous system ; the natural consequences of which are an augmentation of its secretions, among others of the perspirable fluid, and of the unctuous or oleaginous matter that pervades the hair : this gives a renewed suppleness to the skin, and a kindly feel and gloss to the coat. Without the agency of heat, then, it is absolute nonsense to talk of making horses look well in their coats. A strong sympathy," however, adds Mr Percivall, "exists between the skin and the alimentary canal ; and we might *ad infinitum* bestow our labour on the former without effect, unless we were at the same time to direct our attention to the latter."

Now, although Mr Percivall afterwards insists on the necessity of well-ventilated stables, he completely bears me out in my assertion at the commencement of my labours on this interesting subject —“ that no horse can look well in a cold stable ; neither can any hunter be in blooming condition *without the use of alterative*<sup>1</sup> *medicines* ; and that, by

<sup>1</sup> The Revising Editor has a profound respect for most of Nimrod's remarks, but fails to agree with the author when the latter expresses

some means or other, to be in health, he must have a short coat, which will enable the perspired matter to escape."

With reference to clipping, or to short natural coats, it may not be amiss to observe that Mr Percivall speaks of horses in certain climates that are hairless ; and it appears that Mr Sewell,<sup>1</sup> in the course of his visit to the Continental veterinary schools, met with, at Berlin, "a preparation of the skin of an African horse, which had not the slightest appearance of a single hair upon it."

I now beg leave to offer my sentiments on the operation of clipping the hunter in a few words. *I would recommend every horse to be clipped if turned out to grass in the summer, as affording the only possible chance of getting him into condition for hunting till hunting is almost over ; and I would clip every horse on which I could not get a good coat by any other means ; but I should much prefer a natural short coat, close in its texture, glossy to the eye, a little unctuous or oily to the touch, and quite free from curl or scurf. I should then, and only then, be sure that my horse was well.*

I should enter more upon the benefits resulting from this practice had they not been so clearly defined by a master-hand under the signature of EQUESTRIS. This writer says : "I must own myself a very decided advocate for the clipping of hunters, having observed such horses to have had a most

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the opinion that a hunter cannot be got into condition without the use of alteratives.

<sup>1</sup> This was the late Professor Sewell.



decided advantage, during the last season, with the Cheshire, Sir Richard Puleston's, and Sir Thomas Stanley's fox-hounds, as well as with the Chester harriers. Experience and observation are, in this matter, worth a bushel of *à priori* reasoning; but scientific argument and rational explanation are not wanting to aid and enforce the practice of *clipping*. In the first place and to begin with the most trifling reason—the horse is a pound lighter; and the coat affording little resistance to the brush, your groom is not half so soon fatigued in dressing, and lays double strength upon the surface. This causes a greater determination to the extreme vessels, and the insensible perspiration is proportionably increased. We invariably find a connexion between the action of the skin and that of the intestines; and this is sufficiently evident in a well groomed horse; the lacteals of the bowels seem to have a corresponding action communicated to them—they absorb and select the pabulum of the blood with increased vigour—the secreting vessels of the stomach furnish the gastric solvent more abundantly—the liver more readily acts, and separates those vitiated parts which have fulfilled their duties in the circulation, and require to be thrown out of the system, but in their transit, in the form of bile, perform other important uses, in stimulating the intestines to that regular peristaltic motion which secures a change of particles to the vessels which absorb the nourishment for the blood. But the abdominal viscera do not alone benefit by the more intimate friction which is admitted

to the skin of a *clipped* horse. The lungs are wonderfully assisted the more the insensible perspiration is increased the less work for them to accomplish, the less will be the determination to the internal vessels ; and consequently the less risk of congestion in the minute bronchial ramifications of the lungs. Every man of information knows that most important changes are effected on the blood in passing through the lungs : the blood is carried to them in a black state, or venous blood : it is returned of bright red colour, or what is called arterial blood. Now this, we know, is effected by the atmospheric air being freely admitted to the air cells of the lungs. In respiration, the air is vitiated, as well as diminished in bulk.

The groom is universally anxious that his horse should carry a fine coat ; and, to effect this, the heat of the stable is to be raised by every means in his power ; and, in consequence, the formation of ammoniacal gas takes place, and is diffused through the building, which, owing to the want of proper ventilation, cannot escape : therefore those highly delicate and sensitive organs, the eye and the lungs, are exposed to all the destructive effects, not of the heat merely, but of the pestilential effluvium raised and held in atmospheric solution by this heat. When the horse is well clipped the coat is fine, and lies well without any trouble ; therefore the groom does not find it necessary to raise the heat of his stable beyond a proper point, to effect that which he fancies, but I do not, to be a *sine qua non* of good condition—namely,

a fine coat. Never let us forget that *condition* is that state of the body in which the various powers of the horse are fitted for the most active and useful exertion ; and this must mainly depend upon the lungs : therefore, if the atmosphere contain effluvia not useful in purifying the blood as it passes through the lungs ; but, on the contrary, positively pernicious, the volume of pure air respired must be less fit for the use of the lungs in an inverse ratio to the heat of the stable. I hope to see the day when this will be acknowledged by racing grooms, when I anticipate, that, instead of the constitution of that beautiful animal, the race horse, being ruined generally, and unfit for the turf at eight years old, he will be in reality, what nature designed, only just come to his prime. As a general rule, I wish to persuade all grooms to think, whenever a stable is so warm or so close as to give the slightest irritation to the eyes of the person coming out of the open air, it is then not in a fit state for any horse to breathe, and he *cannot* breathe it without detriment to his condition, although I allow it may contribute to the smoothness of his coat, which is, in my opinion, a totally different thing.

“ A sporting friend of mine, who is always to be found in the front ranks in the Nottinghamshire Hunts, heats his stable by hot air, insisting ‘ that the horse is an animal which delights in heat ; and being found in the highest perfection in warm climates, a warm atmosphere must be natural to him, and therefore most proper ’ : but I contend, that a horse, like the Arabian or Persian, always breathing pure

uncontaminated warm air, with its full proportion of oxygen, picketed perhaps without any covering, or at most sheltered from the rain only by a tent, and, whenever exercised abroad, still surrounded by the same *pure* and warm atmosphere, cannot fairly be drawn in comparison with the English horse, which, to be useful, must be exposed to every variation of our variable climate.

“ We are keeping our pampered field and turf horses in a temperature in which we, with the heat of our bodies only at 98, could not long exist without inducing disease, either in the active form of fever and inflammation, or in the more imperceptible, though equally destructive forms of scrofula, hepatitis, and a long *et cetera* of chronic diseases. How then can we expect that the horse, with the animal heat at 100° F., and therefore more fitted to withstand cold than ourselves, should retain his health for many years when subjected to such murderous discipline? Surely the sensations of the animal itself must be the best criterion of what nature requires; and I will venture to say that nine horses out of ten will, if the stable door be open, instantly walk out into the fresh air, instead of remaining in the close contaminated atmosphere, which our wise grooms and their equally wise masters insist upon being best fitted to bring the muscular power of the horse to the greatest perfection.

“ I hail with delight any plan, any idea, which, however remotely, saves my favourite horse from the horrible discipline of living in an atmosphere



**\*LADY DISDAIN\* AND HER FOAL**  
Formerly owned by the Earl of Crews, and sold in 1905 for 3,800 Guinea



where the proper changes and purifications cannot take place in the lungs, and from the egregious folly of pampering an animal in a heat of seventy degrees, when his utility depends upon his being able to perform his work with comfort and ease in an atmosphere of forty."

"Great benefit has to my knowledge," observes another correspondent (SNAFFLE), "frequently arisen from a summer run in a salt marsh, where a part was daily flooded at high water, and where the pasture was not too luxuriant, and the necessary shelter afforded. It has, I am aware," he continues, "its disadvantages; among which may be numbered the dangers likely to arise from huddling so many horses together<sup>1</sup> as are generally found in a marsh, and that it does not suit all constitutions, or, generally speaking, young horses."

As SNAFFLE asks my opinion on this plan I readily give it, acknowledging at the same time that I never tried it, nor would I recommend anyone to do so. About two months ago I spent a week with a friend of mine in Warwickshire, who, amongst all the agreeable things this world can afford, has three good hunters in his stable. "Now," said he to me, "I have found out how to get hunters into condition! Don't preach to me about hard meat and alteratives; but give me a good salt marsh." Going the next day into the stable, I saw his favourite horse with a very enlarged hock. "What's this, Will?" said I

<sup>1</sup> There is the same risk (though a greater one) attending any horses sent to the agistor's.—REVISING EDITOR.

to his groom. "He was kicked in the salt marsh, Sir," replied Will. "This is a clever grey horse," resumed I to his groom; "what makes him so thin?" "He has been in a salt marsh." "What is the matter with his hock, that it appears twice as big as the other?" "He was kicked in the salt marsh, Sir." "Are you certain," continued I, "that neither of them has caught the glanders?" On his assuring me that neither of them had, I told him his master was always a lucky man, or he would not have come off so cheap. So much, then, reader, for the benefit of a salt marsh! But "what is salt without its saltiness?" is a question which has been asked before.

As I find I have still some opponents to my plan of summering the hunter in the house, and though some of them are so feeble that they are scarcely worth a remark; yet upon the principle that "*Nihil tam firmum est cui periculum non sit etiam ab invalido*"; or, in humble English, that "the strongest things are in danger from the weakest"; I shall bring forward a little more testimony to my aid, as I have it so close at hand.

In the first place, I rode the horse of which I have just been speaking one very wet day this last season with Mr Warde's hounds. I had another horse out which had been summered in the stable, and which returned home at the same time with the other—each drenched with rain. The horse summered in the stable was dry and had his clothes on in little more than half an hour; whilst the one summered in the field was not dry after three hours' hard labour being



bestowed upon him by two stout men. This was the first week in December.

The following is a still stronger case. In the month of January 1825, I spent a week with Mr Smith, who has the management of the Hambledon hounds; and as there were no convenient public stables at hand, he was kind enough to give me two stalls among his own stud. It so happened that we returned together one day after hunting; and whilst lounging about the kennel, about half an hour elapsed previous to our going into the house. In this short period the horse I had been riding was dry, and had his clothes on; whilst the heads and fore-quarters of those Mr Smith and his men had been riding were not finished dressing, neither were their saddles taken off. I had the clothes taken off my horse to convince Mr Smith that he was perfectly dry; and I need not add that he expressed his opinion satisfactorily as to which was the better plan—*summering the hunter in the house, or summering him, as his had been, in the fields.*

On talking over this matter with Sir Bellingham Graham—than whom no man of his years has had more experience in good horse flesh—he told me that in the summer of 1824 he unfortunately turned out an old favourite of his, which had been ten years in the stable, and he went broken-winded in six weeks! “Though getting an old horse,” said Sir Bellingham, “I would willingly give one hundred guineas to have him as good now as he was the day he was turned out.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> British veterinarians do not look upon the “grazing” theory as a cause of broken-wind.—EDITOR.

I could bring forward innumerable instances similar to the above, but my greatest triumph is now at hand :—Mr Harvey Combe, with whom I had passed a few days whilst hunting with the Old Berkeley hounds, and who, I had previously heard, and was soon convinced, was a strenuous opposer of the system of summering hunters in the house, and no argument of mine appeared to make the least impression upon him. On the last evening of our meeting, however, he addressed me thus : “ I certainly have opposed your plan, but I never shut my eyes to conviction ; and, from what I have seen of your horses, and the manner in which they have carried you, I shall not turn my horses to grass again in the summer.”

Meeting with Henry Oldaker the next morning, on my road to Sir Thomas Mostyn’s hounds, I addressed him thus : “ Oldaker, I congratulate you.” —“ On what, Sir ? ” said he. “ Why,” replied I, “ next season you will ride across the country like a gentleman ; your horses will be kept in condition in the summer.”—“ Mr Combe told me so yesterday,” continued Oldaker.

Now, reader, one hundred sovereigns is a very pretty “ find ” in any man’s pocket, and particularly so in one which is sometimes drawn a blank ; but, as I hope for salvation, I would not take that sum for this admission of Mr Combe’s. It had no little additional weight with me, as coming from a man, not only a good judge of most things, but a man remarkable for a natural independence of mind and manner, which is observable at first sight.

During the months of March and April almost all horses look well ; but I should be unjust to myself and to the system I am advocating, were I not to state that all through the *early* part of the season the condition of my horses was admitted, by all who saw them with the different packs of hounds with which I hunted, to be very superior. I should also be unjust towards my brother sportsmen were I not to inform them of every circumstance that might contribute to this superiority ; and one is, *the strict attention I pay to the quality of the hay my horses eat when getting into condition.* As there is nothing like chapter and verse upon these matters, I now state, that with fifty tons of hay in my own rick-yard, I sent five miles for that which I considered much superior, and for which I gave five guineas per ton.

During the early part of the season there was one property attending the condition of my horses which I must be allowed to mention, and which particularly attracted the notice of my brother sportsmen ; and that is—*the clean appearance of their skins after sweating.* When we see a thick scum, having a resemblance to paste, hanging upon a horse after profuse sweating, we may be assured his blood is not in a proper state ; and this is almost invariably the case up to the end of February with horses which have been summered in the fields, and whose blood has not been well cleansed by alteratives or sweating, of which, under those circumstances, time will not sufficiently admit. Some people will tell us they do not regard seeing their hunters lather when they sweat :

I never suffer mine to do so in the fields in the hunting months.

I was much pleased with an observation made to me by Mr Wilde, veterinary surgeon, of Oxford, when shewing me his conveniences for summering his hunters, of which he has a considerable number, for the use, not of the reading, but of the sporting part of the University. "That quantity of grass," said he, "(from 100lbs. to 150lbs. in weight) which a horse eats per day, when left to his own discretion, distends his bowels, and consequently weakens the powers of his digestion to such a degree, that, when he comes all at once to live on hard food, danger from inflammatory complaints must always attend him. As to the evils from grazing to hunters' legs and feet, those," continued he, "are innumerable. *Rest*, and not galloping about, kicking and stamping, is what hunters' legs require."

Although summering hunters in the stable has become pretty general in some counties, yet I have reason to believe that I go one step farther than most others do, in giving them but a small quantity of green meat. The advantage, however, of stinting them in this article of food in the summer is very evident in the winter; and I lately proved it in one instance, by a comparison with a horse out of a stable long celebrated for condition—namely, that of Sir Henry Peyton. We had run a fox very sharply with Sir Thomas Mostyn's hounds for twenty-five minutes, and came to an awkward check owing to a change of scent. Observing Sir Henry's horse smoking very

much, and the one I was riding not smoking at all, but getting dry about the neck and shoulders, I rode up to Sir Henry and pointed out the relative state of our steeds—at the same time remarking to him, that hunters should eat but a small quantity of green food in the summer, and that only at intervals. Sir Henry's horses have for many years been summered in the house, eating plenty of corn, but I have reason to believe more grass than is good for them.

I have often been asked what quantity of green meat I would give a hunter in the summer. My answer is—as much (repeated at intervals during the months of May and June) as will relax his bowels for three or four days together, and then put him back on his hay. It is a very good plan to mix hay and grass together; and in my opinion, vetches (if given at all) should never be given for any length of time alone. Soiling animals in the stable is a practice of very old date, having formed part of the Virgilian system.

I have also been more than once asked whether I do not make rather a free use of antimonial alteratives. My answer has been, that I do so—being convinced that hunters, which must not be sweated like race-horses, but which ought to have as much good keep in them as they have, cannot be got clean in their habit, and put into proper condition without them. Of their efficacy I was by accident convinced very early in life, by a circumstance which occurred in my own family. My father was a better judge of books than of horses, but, as a matter of course, had

always a certain number of the latter in his stables, though condition was a stranger there. One year, however, by the help of a Welsh pony, the riff, or mange, was introduced amongst them, and they were all regularly dressed over before the saddle-room fire with sulphurous and mercurial preparations; and regular courses of mercurial and antimonial alteratives were administered to them. The effect of all this was so great that the old gentleman used ever afterwards to declare that he never had his horses in condition *but once, and that was owing to their having the mange*. The effect, however, was visible for twelve months afterwards.

It happened to myself some years since to have a brilliant hunter in my stable; but of so vicious a disposition that all attempts to clean, with wisp or brush, certain parts of his body were attended with great personal danger. Wishing to avoid accidents, I always had him washed with warm water and soap, to which he quietly submitted, and we dried him as well as his temper would allow us. It then occurred to me that washing hunters which had very fine coats might be beneficial, inasmuch as it would be the means of their being cleaned quickly, and the effect of the warm water and the friction would be beneficial to them after their fatigue. I lately found out, during my visit to Melton, that Sir Henry Goodricke had done it for some time past in his stables in Leicestershire, and had experienced from it the very best results.

Sir Henry was one of the very hardest riders of

the day, and, as such, quite awake to the necessity of having his horses in condition. Here, however, he goes one step beyond me ; for he not only gives his hunters the best hay and oats with their green meat in the summer (with exercise also), but he adds beans to their food.

## LETTER XVII

### DISADVANTAGES OF CLIPPING—TREATMENT—COMPARATIVE EXPENSE OF SUMMERING IN THE HOUSE AND AT GRASS—FIRING

“**R**EWARD sweetens labour.” This is a proverb almost as old as Time, and it speaks the language of Truth. I have received so many flattering testimonies to the benefits derived from my system of summering the hunter, that I sit down again to the task with renewed vigour. One individual, however (perhaps of the description of persons who would not believe though one arose from the dead), says he cannot *afford* to summer his hunters in the house. I flattered myself I had succeeded in making it appear, that, in the end, it were by far the cheaper way of keeping them ; for, independently of the fact, that four horses so summered will do the work of five summered in the fields, should it be a man’s object (as the term is) *to keep his money together in his stable*, the fascinating power of high and blooming condition, with firm flesh and prominent muscle, will alone effect it—for that will always command customers. For my own part, I can safely assert, that almost all the good luck I have had with my horses has been the result



of a perseverance in keeping them upon hard meat, and secure from the mischievous effects of the unrestrained use of their legs, and the sudden, and consequently dangerous, changes of this variable climate—setting accidents quite out of the question.

I have hitherto carefully avoided asserting anything on my present subject but what has been the result of experience in my own, or in some other man's, stables ; and it is my intention strictly to adhere to this prudent plan. I shall therefore (having tried it) proceed to give my opinion of clipping the hunter, which will only occupy a few lines.

Were I to give a good price for a promising young horse for the purpose of making him a hunter, and keeping him for my own use, and a man were to come into my stable and tell me he would give me one-third of his value if I would have him clipped, I would refuse his offer. I look upon clipping as nothing but a bad substitute for good grooming, and an operation attended with several disadvantages. In the first place, when once performed it must always be repeated ; and in the second, it is a constant eye-sore to a person who is fond of seeing his horses looking well, as it effectually destroys that bloom on the skin which is not only so beautiful, but also so confirmatory of the sound health of the animal ; and lastly, by depriving him of the protection which a short thick coat, lying close to the body, affords him against the scratching of thorns and briars, it very frequently causes a horse to refuse rough places in a fence which he would not have refused before. It is a remedy

to be sure, or at least a palliative ; but I had rather a horse of mine should endure the disease it is intended to relieve, until I could bring a better medicine to his aid ; and were I to become possessed of a hunter which required clipping, I would put up with his long coat and evening sweats, until, by strengthening his general system, I got rid of the latter, to which the former is by no means a certain contributor. It is quite possible—and I have an instance at this moment in my own stable—for a horse to have a long coat <sup>1</sup> (and some horses at certain periods will not wear a short coat), but still to look very blooming to the eye, *and dry immediately after a sweat*, as is the case with the horse I speak of. I am not weak enough to suppose that clipping will not continue to be practised because one individual disapproves of it ; but I may be allowed to say I will never after this year practise it again. The horse I had clipped last winter must now, I fear, be clipped again, for I abhor the sight of him in his present state—his coat somewhat resembling a poodle dog ; but his evening sweats are got rid of by the method I pursued with him in the summer, which I shall presently detail. Clipping may be all very well for those who cannot, or will not, get their horses into condition by other means ; and to such only do I recommend it.

<sup>1</sup>Two or three of my brother sportsmen have told me that keeping their horses up in the summer has not shortened their coats so much as they expected ; but they all said they dried immediately after coming into their stables, and were not subject to evening sweats after hunting—a most material point gained. I am happy to say I have not met with one man who has had reason to repent having followed my advice.



THIS PICTURE REPRESENTS THE HUNTER BROOD MARE 'LADY MARY'

Winner of the 50 Guinea Cup at Royal Lanes, and many other Prizes. The property of C. Shephard, Esq., Arden, Aspley, Allingham



It may not, perhaps, be uninteresting to detail the way in which I treated my hunters during the summer of 1825, taken from minutes made in each succeeding week. They were six in number, and their treatment is severally described.

From the regular course of alterative medicine which my horses go through in the course of the hunting season, it often happens that at the conclusion of it there is no immediate call for physic, and such was the case with them last spring. They ceased from their labours on the 20th of April, and (with the exception of one that was fired) continued their usual food, with very gentle exercise, till the seventh of May, when they had their shoes taken off and some grass given them in the day time, but racked up at night with hay ; and so treated till the nineteenth of the same month, when they were put entirely upon hay again. On the eleventh of June they were soiled again in the day time, till the twentieth of that month, when they were prepared for physic, which they had on the twenty-second. From that time four of them never tasted grass again ; but the other two had a few vetches (say about an armful) mixed with their hay every other day till the sixth of July, when they were all shod, and began gentle exercise. From the seventh of May, to the sixth of July—a period of eight weeks and four days—these horses were without shoes, their feet having been closely pared down ; and they were thus treated. Nos. 1 and 2 were in a building sixteen yards long by six wide, well littered down, and with an outlet into a small green-yard,

in which there was a running stream. No. 3 was in a covered building, twelve yards long by six wide, one half littered down, and the other half a well-paved brick floor, but no other outlet. No. 4 was in a box, eighteen feet by eighteen, kept quite dark to keep out the flies, which terrified him to an uncommon degree. This horse was turned out into a small paddock forty yards square, about six times in the course of the summer, after the sun was set, but no fence we could make would confine him there. No. 5 was fired, and stood in a stall all day, but put into the paddock in the cool of the evening and very early in the morning. No. 6 was kept in an airy box, but, being vicious, was not out in the paddock so often as I wished her to be. Each horse had three quarters of oats per day, and three of them had a single handful of beans in each feed. Each horse also stood two hours every day in a clay-box. The clay-box is a covered building, sixteen feet by twelve, on the floor of which a waggon load of clay was spread, and about every third morning two or three buckets of water were thrown over it. I consider this a most essential benefit to horses' feet, increased, no doubt, by their walking a certain distance every day barefoot, with their soles thinly pared and their frogs well let down on the ground. On the eighteenth of July they each had one other mild dose of physic; and in the month of August each horse ate half a pound of antimony—an ounce a day for eight successive days.<sup>1</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> A very sporting character in the North of England wrote to me last year to ask me whether I did not think the quantity of antimony

is all the physic my horses have had since the last hunting season, nor do I expect they will require any more till after Christmas ; but they have partaken freely of alterative medicine, some of them, whose nature is gross, having had one alterative ball every week.

Now, then, let us make a little calculation as to the expense of summering these horses in the way I have been describing, and compare it with what they would have cost at grass. We will call the period nine weeks for the sake of avoiding fractions. When in work, six horses in my stable ate exactly three hundredweight of hay per week ; but in these large, loose places, allowing for waste and better appetites, we will give them nearly double the quantity, and say six horses shall eat five hundredweight per week.

Two tons five cwt. of hay, at £4 per ton . . . . .	£9	0
Seventy-one bushels of oats, at 4s. per bushel . . . . .	14	4
Beans . . . . .	1	10
		<hr/>
		24 14
Six horses at grass nine weeks, at 4s. per week . . . . .	10	16
		<hr/>
Difference . . . . .	£13	18

Thus it appears that the difference in the expense of six horses summered in the house, and six horses

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here used excessive ? I answered his letter by assuring him that I had always found the best effects from it. It corrects the acrimony of the blood, promotes the secretion, and I might almost say ensures future condition. As a proof of this, it is in some shape or other the leading article in all alterative medicines for man or horse. A clergyman in Devonshire wrote to me some time since, referring me to an article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, containing a curious account of a highly-beneficial experiment on feeding pigs by the help of this drug.

summered in the fields, only amounts, after all, to £13, 18s. ; three pounds of which would at least be repaid in manure made in the time. As to the sum of £13, 18s., at least twice that amount would be realised in the value of *any one of the horses* if he were exposed to sale at the commencement of the following hunting season.

“ You are a great man for proof,” said a friend to me a short time since ; “ why do you not offer the following bet to the sporting world, and I will go your halves ? Let two hunters be tried to within half a pound of each other, on the 20th of April, when hunting generally is at an end ; and let one be turned out to grass on the 1st of May, and taken up on the 1st of August, and let the other be summered on your plan in the house. Give the horse summered in the fields a stone, and run him two miles for two hundred guineas on the 1st of November.” My answer to this was, that, in the first place, the sum proposed was unnecessarily large for the object of deciding the question ; and, in the next place, 14 lb. was great weight to give ; but as far as one hundred guineas for the match, and 10 lb. as the weight given, I was open to any man who would accept the challenge and think it but fair to say I have no doubt of the result.

I perfectly agree with my friend in thinking that on matters of this nature proof is everything ; and by way of proving *the value* of condition, I am willing to expose the history of my own stable, which will shew that the value of the animal does not consist



in the prime cost, but in the effect produced by condition. I have five horses now in my stable, which cost *only one hundred and ninety-four guineas, and one which cost seventy*. For the last-mentioned horse I have been twice offered 200 gs. and once offered 150 gs. For two of the others I was last season offered my own price. One of the five I purchased for fifteen pounds. She was twice sent to Tattersall's, and was also at half the Commission Stables in London, but, although got by Walton out of Highland Lass by Highland Fling, a son of Spadille, no one would offer five pounds for her, and no wonder—she was a weakly-looking animal, with a hollow back, a dejected countenance, and a pot-belly, and said to be half blind. I will shew her (I hate boasting) for symmetry, power, and action against anything of her size; and I have no hesitation in saying *she is equal to as much weight again as she was when I purchased her*.

When discussing the subject of summering hunters lately with a friend, who is an advocate for the grazing system, he made use of the following expression: "I dare say it may be all very well to keep them in the house in the summer, but then they have not the benefit of *the rest* which they get when at grass." I could not help smiling at this strange perversion of facts; and ventured to ask him whether, if he were to be examined in Natural Philosophy, and asked *what is rest?* he would answer, *motion?* and that would not be a whit less absurd. If rest be desirable for a hunter's legs after the labours of a winter, surely

he must obtain it more effectually in a small, confined place than when suffered to run over a large track of land, stamping the ground with his feet for sixteen of twenty-four hours of the day and night. I also put the following question to him: "Suppose I were to say to you, I am going to send one of my hunters as far as York, will you let my servant lead yours in his hand—would you not think I were mad?" He answered in the affirmative; and I believe he thought I really was so, when I told him I had rather a hunter of mine were led to Edinburgh and back, than that he should be turned out to grass (I mean merely as far as regards his legs and feet); and for this reason: when travelling on turnpike roads as they are now formed, a horse has a flat and even surface for his foot to bear upon, and he might travel at a slow rate; but when turned out on hard and uneven ground, abounding with holes, cart-ruts, etc., with the privilege of choosing his own pace, injury is frequently done to the cartilages of the foot which is never afterwards removed. My experience has led me to believe that, in most hunters of a certain age that have been ridden hard over a country, there is more or less of ossification of the cartilages of the fore feet (as well as the large flexor tendon which passes over the navicular bone), owing to the violent inflammation the laminæ have been subjected to in the excess of action in leaping, etc., to which these parts have been exposed. Should this not be the case, the fetlock joints of hunters are all apt to be injured, and the ligaments surrounding them become

inflamed and rigid, which accounts for their so often going *feelingly* (as it is called), though not absolutely lame, for the first hundred yards from their stable door. Stepping on sloping, uneven ground immediately detects this injury; and what I have said on this subject leads me to the following conclusion, which perhaps may be new to some, and rather sceptically received by others. It is my firm opinion, however, that if horses had to travel at a moderate rate—say nine or ten miles an hour—over a road faced with iron, *but presenting a perfectly level surface*, we should have very few horses lame in the feet. It is a well-known fact that, though they go much faster now than they did before Mr MacAdam taught us how to make our roads, there are not half the post-horses foundered in their feet at the present time that were so when ruts and quarters abounded in all roads, and the animals scarcely knew what it was to step upon a level surface, and have an even bearing for their feet. Exclusively of the fact of my having seen many horses which would trot quite sound on a level, hard road, but would be invariably lame on that which was sloping and uneven, my mind was made up on the subject by ocular demonstration in one of my own hacks, the particulars of which I will give. Some years since I was in the habit of frequently visiting a friend who resided twenty miles from his county town, but who generally rode over to it in the summer months on the market day, being sure to meet some sporting friends; and when I was at his house I never failed to accompany him. By way,

as he erroneously supposed, of favouring our horses, we went about twelve miles of the twenty through green lanes and fields, or what is commonly called "a bridle-road," and we always rode fast. In those days I had a very good hack, which I was in the habit of riding long distances on hard turnpike roads without ever perceiving any injury to his fetlock joints or feet; but it was not so after these twenty miles, at a quick pace, through these green lanes (in a deep country, always harder in the summer), where the foot scarcely ever was indulged with an even bearing, and the joints always on the twist. When I went into the stable in the morning I always found his fetlock joints full and sore, and he invariably went stiff and feeling upon them when first taken out. My friend, however (one of the old-fashioned sort), would never believe that the hard turnpike road was much less injurious than his green lanes, and for the reason I have already given: for which reason I again assert, that I had rather a hunter of mine were led five hundred miles on a good turnpike road than that he should be turned out for a summer's run; and here I confine myself entirely to the legs and feet. As far as the great panacea *rest* is concerned, as also his general bodily health and condition, the journey to Edinburgh would be much in his favour.

I must now return to one part of my subject on which I have been (I think I shall prove) unfairly dealt with by one or two of the Old School, who have advocated summering hunters in the fields; and I

am more anxious to do so, inasmuch as it relates to a charge of cruelty towards my favourite animal, which I should very unwillingly remain under. "How cruel," they say, "to keep a horse in a prison on a fine summer's day, and not allow him to snuff the breeze—to make his bed on his native earth—and partake of the common enjoyment of Nature!" Now, reader, mark what I have to say.

For what reason flies were sent into the world is not for us to inquire, but here they are; and one would almost imagine that a curse, like our own, was entailed upon the animals they persecute. Certain, however, it is, that their harassing properties are a considerable alloy to the common enjoyment even of those animals (cows, sheep, etc.) which are every day exposed to the noon-day sun—and this for at least fourteen of the twenty-four hours in the summer season. But how greatly must this annoyance be increased to thin-skinned, well-bred hunters! And what will they not do to get away from it? I will state a case or two that came under my own observation in the course of the summer of 1825.

One of my horses, No. 4, I have already said, is more than usually terrified by flies. My helper came to me one day, and said he could not go into the box to him. Knowing him to be a fine-tempered horse, I became alarmed when I saw him rearing and kicking to a violent degree, and thought he was seized with the staggers. At length, however, I espied a fly in a certain part of his hinder quarters, which was with much difficulty removed, and he then was quiet as

before. I endeavoured several times to turn this horse into a paddock early in the morning and late at night, but nothing but a brick wall seven feet high would have confined him in it ; and I should like to shew many of my sporting friends one fence which he came over to make his way to his stable door. All through the warm months of August and September this horse was obliged to go to his exercise *covered with clothing*, and all attempts to ride him with harriers in October were useless, as he would kick to such a degree, the moment a fly settled upon him, that it was dangerous to go near him.

Now, reader, let me ask you what would have become of this animal (No. 4) had he been turned out into some gentleman's park for the summer? Perhaps you will say he would have become used to the flies in time. We do not see that thick-hided bullocks and cows become reconciled to them, nor do I think it would have been the case with my horse ; but, allowing the fact, this circumstance would not have come to his relief until he had most materially injured his legs and feet by galloping and stamping ; and as to his body, I am satisfied that it would have been reduced to a skeleton. No. 6 also, the only one besides the two I have mentioned which was turned into the paddock, came four times over the gate, though bushed up with thorns, to get back to her stable. So much, then, for the cruelty of keeping hunters in the house in the summer ! And I think I may be allowed to say, a prison—if a stable can be called one—must lose its horrors when its inmates

make such desperate efforts to return to even its solitary cells.

It may be asked whether I take any pains to keep my stables cool? I answer, none, but those which are within every man's reach. I open the air-valves over the horses' heads; take the casements out of the windows, and darken the stable as much as I can by placing old horse-cloths against the windows, which latter method very much contributes to keep flies from entering, as we know they will not play in the dark. Another summer, however, I mean to be provided with straw mats, to fit the open parts of the windows, which, if made thin enough, will sufficiently admit external air, and, by being dipped three or four times a day in water, will, by evaporation, greatly cool the internal air, as well as completely defeat the flies.

Owing to the multiplicity of stables which my horses inhabit in the course of the winter, my object has been to keep them as cool as I could; consequently I did not put the casements into my stable windows until the 5th of September, when the thermometer suddenly dropped to 52 in the shade; and I kept them naked till the nineteenth of that month.

When in Leicestershire last season, Sir Harry Goodricke asked me my opinion of firing the hunter. Now, although I intend to treat upon this part of our stable discipline as I proceed with my subject, I told Sir Harry that I scarcely felt myself justified in giving a decided opinion on the effect of firing, as

I did not think I had had a dozen horses fired in the course of my life. I certainly have had wonderful luck with the legs of my hunters, and I attribute it to causes which I must not now stop to describe: but among the chief are, the frequent use I make of alteratives—keeping away general as well as local inflammation (the principal causes of almost all disease); also never hurrying my horses in their work when first getting into condition (the late Sam Chifney was of opinion that there was as much art in training horses' legs to stand work, as in training their bodies to run); the frequent use of bandages, and a loose place after work; and, lastly, the absolute rest I give them in the early part of the summer, which enables the limbs to regain their almost primitive tone and vigour. There are cases which I shall hereafter speak of, in which firing, however skilfully performed, is of no avail; but in justice to the operation, or rather to the necessity for it—for it is a sharp one—I have no scruple in saying that, *when properly executed* (but the task is frequently difficult), it succeeds much oftener than it fails. It so happens that I have two horses in my possession now that I have fired since I have possessed them; one because the sinews were about to give way, and the other because the legs always filled after a hard day, with occasional symptoms of lameness—all of which symptoms have since disappeared; and in the other case the operation completely succeeded. Nevertheless, when it can be avoided it should never be had recourse to; and the present system of mercurial charges, applied in



the summer time to horses' legs, greatly diminishes the necessity for it. The reader must be aware of the disadvantage I labour under in treating of so many subjects in so limited a space; they must expect, therefore, that I shall have occasion to return to some of them at a future opportunity—particularly the preparing hunters for their work, with the least possible expense of legs, which can only be done to advantage with horses of a gross habit of body by the effect of alterative medicines. As the hunting season, however, is now commenced, I wish to guard my brother sportsmen against an evil which has deprived me of three good hunters in my time, but which might have been avoided if proper precautions had been taken—I mean fever in the feet, and other inflammatory attacks, produced by severe work with hounds. I do not so much address myself now to those persons who keep first-rate grooms, as they are generally awake to this danger; but many of my brother sportsmen, who, though equally fond of the sport, and desirous of keeping in the front rank, may not have that advantage.

After a severe day every horse ought to have some gentle medicine, if it were only to keep off fever, and bring him sooner into the field again; and, in general, an alterative ball or a diuretic ball will be sufficient. Should he, however, appear much distressed, one of the following balls should be given, which, by its stimulating quality and its general effect on the secretions, will greatly tend to restore him, and prevent ill consequences:—

Ethiops Mineral	.	.	.	4 ounces.
Diapente	.	.	.	8 ounces.
Balsam of Sulphur	.	.	.	8 ounces.

To be made into sixteen balls.

The above, the reader will observe, is one of the old-fashioned recipes, but they may be assured of its good effects. It was the favourite nostrum of the noted Mr Perry Wentworth, and was given to me by Mr Peacock of Basingstoke.

I conclude my present letter with the following hint. Last autumn twelvemonth I purchased a mare at Messrs Tattersall's for thirty-nine guineas. She was the property of Mr Payne, of Selby Hall, in Northamptonshire, and, as I afterwards learnt, was sent up to be sold for what she would fetch, being a tremendous puller. On getting her home I tried her in all the bridles I was possessed of, but could make nothing of her, and was on the point of sending her back to the hammer, to get what I could for her, when a thought struck me that I could try what my saddlers could do for me. Being a man of few words on these occasions, I wrote them the following note: "Brown mare *versus* Nimrod; you know what I mean." They immediately sent me down the facsimile of the bridle Mr Lindo used to ride The Clipper in, which is in the following form: the length of the cheek is nine inches; that of the port two inches and a half; and there are three players hanging down over the tongue, which prevent the mouth from getting dead. When I first rode her in it she attempted all her old tricks (Mr Payne told me, in Leicestershire, that she ran away with him over three gates before he got a pull at her),

rushing at her fences, and running her head anywhere ; but she soon found out that she was mastered, and I now ride her in a common bridle with the greatest ease. When Mr Chadwick saw me on her one day last season with Lord Anson's hounds, he observed the Clipper was the only bridle that was ever made for a hard-pulling hunter, as, with all its severity, it never produced a dead mouth—which I certainly found to be true. Of course it requires a light hand, or danger would attend it at fences.

## LETTER XVIII

### CONDITION OF HUNTERS RESUMED

**I**T is upwards of two years since I wrote my last letter on this interesting subject, but I now intend to pursue it to its conclusion.

In these my labours I am encouraged and solaced by one reflection. Four seasons have now elapsed since I awakened the attention of my brother sportsmen to a different treatment of their hunters at the various periods of the year ; and I have never yet had this cast in my teeth—“ *I have tried your plan : I have followed your directions in my stable : but I have received no benefit therefrom.*” On the contrary, I have had assurances out of number of the excellent and permanent effects derived from a steady perseverance in them ; and, as Truth is called the daughter of Time, I think I am justified in coming to the conclusion—that I AM RIGHT. Certain is it I have had some opponents ; but theory alone has been brought to bear against me, and that could not stand long. Classically speaking, we might as well give the preference to the historian Livy’s eloquent account of Hannibal’s celebrated Passage of the Alps to that of the soldier Polybius, who personally explored his route.

Now, lest I should be deemed presumptuous, I shall take this opportunity of counteracting such an



HUNTER BROOD MARE 'TINA' AND HER FOAL  
Winner of numerous Prizes. Owned by R. Neelham, Esq., Beaten Lodge, Kantsch 60



impression. About two years back a hard-riding Warwickshire sportsman addressed me thus: "We are highly indebted to you for *your* excellent plan of treating hunters in the summer." "Pardon me," I said, "it is not *my* plan; it was known and practised before I was born." "That might be," replied my friend, "but to yourself is due the credit of having made manifest what was not made manifest before." This, then, is the credit I take; and here ends my preface.

I am not aware that, at the present moment, I have anything very particular to add on the subject of summering the hunter—nothing certainly as far as theory can direct me; but a little practical matter must always be welcome to those who have studs. At the conclusion of last hunting season (*i.e.* the season of 1826 and 1827) I hired Thomas Morris, Mr Hay's groom, for the Marquis of Cleveland; and having heard from several of the very superior condition of Lord Cleveland's hunters this last winter, I wrote to Thomas Morris to know how they had been treated in the summer, and I here transcribe his answer. "January 2, 1828. My stud is looking as well as any I ever saw, and all the gentlemen in the country praise them much. I have not a lame horse among the twenty-three we have *here* (Newton House), which is not often the case in any stables at this period of the year. Part of the stud were kept in boxes all the summer, and the remainder were kept in stables all day, and turned out at night. Each horse had a bushel of corn per week, and came up very well. I

never had horses in better condition in my life." I am proud to think that my labours on this subject have not been thrown away on so old a sportsman as Lord Cleveland.

Although in the progress of these letters I may be again called upon to revert to the ill-effects of turning out horses in the summer, I shall dismiss it now with only one observation, which particularly applies to the *misconceived notion of a summer's run giving rest to a horse.*

It is the idea of immortality that apologises for *our* sorrows, and renders the present condition of humanity in the smallest degree intelligible. The sufferings of animals must ever remain a paradox ; but here I had better put a finger on my lip—for I believe we are told God gives no account of His conduct to us children of men. However, that they are not exempt from the general curse is too apparent to admit of cavil ; and among their natural tormentors, flies may be reckoned first.<sup>1</sup>

I am not going to descant upon every species of the fly, from the gnat which plays in the sunbeam to the pestiferous zimb which depopulates countries, and whose distant hum strikes terror into the rhinoceros and elephant, and makes them coat themselves in mail<sup>2</sup> to resist him ; but simply of those well-known insects which so unceasingly annoy our horses

<sup>1</sup> Virgil speaks of the moaning of cattle in a state of nature ; and thus says St Paul : " For we know that the whole creation groaneth in pain together until now."

<sup>2</sup> They roll themselves in mud and mire, which, when dry, coats them over like armour. The prophet Isaiah speaks of this fly.



and cattle in hot weather in this country. During a hot day of July, when the sun was at its height, I walked down to one of my meadows, in which there were a brood mare, two two-year-olds, and two yearling colts. There was water—a running brook—in the meadow, and there was also plenty of shade. But where did I find these suffering animals? Did I find them in the shade, *sub tegmine fagi*? No; the *æstrus* was there. Did I find them in the water? No; the blood-suckers were there also. I found them crowded together in the middle of the field; at one time rubbing each other's heads together to get rid of the smaller flies from their ears and eyes—the latter highly inflamed; then stamping their feet with violence against the ground; then walking a sort of figure not very unlike that of a modern quadrille; and lastly—all patience under their suffering being exhausted—galloping from one end of the field to the other as hard as their legs could carry them. And this is what some choose to call rest.

Hitherto I have treated chiefly of the condition of the hunter in health, so shall now proceed to enumerate and refer to some of the principal diseases commonly affecting hunters and other horses.

Vertigo, or Megrimis.	Curb.	Humours, Local and
Broken Wind.	Coat and Clipping.	General.
Bangs and Blows.	Cutting.	Lampas.
Broken Knees.	Crib-biters.	Lungs, Inflamed.
Blisters.	Capped Hocks.	Legs, Big.
Bowels, Inflamed.	Docking.	Unnerving.
Bleeding.	Foot-lameness and	Physic.
Blindness.	Shoeing.	Roaring.
Corns.	Firing.	Ring-bone.

Rowels.	Strains.	Thorns in Legs.
Sinews.	String Halt.	Wind.
Sore Backs.	Salt and Water, its	Ditto, Thick.
Spavins.	Effects on Legs.	Windgalls.
Splints.	Sand-crack.	Worms.
Staked Horses.	Teeth.	Yellows, etc. etc.
Strangles.	Thoroughpin.	

## VERTIGO, OR MEGRIMS

Affections of the brain and convulsive disorders are by no means of rare occurrence in horses; for instance, the vertigo, or megrims, in coach-horses—although from a more judicious mode of feeding we see less of the latter than formerly. Such horses are unsafe either to ride or drive. This is one of those obscure diseases that veterinary surgeons have to protect themselves against when certifying a horse as sound. It is of most frequent occurrence in harness-horses.

## BROKEN WIND

Once broken-winded, it is almost a waste of words to say much about him. The only cure is the copper.<sup>1</sup>

What broken wind really is, appears to me to be still somewhat of an undecided point; neither have dissections, by the most skilful practitioners, by any means solved the problem. The best proof of this is to be found in the several views taken of it by our ablest writers on the veterinary art, each differing, and some most materially, from others. Whether the air-cells of the lungs are ruptured or not, to this moment appears doubtful; but such

<sup>1</sup> Nimrod's cure is certainly a radical one.—EDITOR.

must have been the presumption before the complaint was christened. The walls of the stomach are usually found to be attenuated.<sup>1</sup>

One point, I believe, is allowed. Broken wind is ninety-nine times in a hundred preceded by chronic cough. Now, were I a groom, I should have but little fear of chronic cough (from which indeed one-third of our hunters are not at this moment free); for as the said cough is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred produced by plethora, occasioned by bad grooming, improper food, and inattention to the state of the bowels, I should know what I had to contend with, and, by regarding it as the warning voice, steer my course accordingly.

Mr W. Percivall says (Lecture 38), "Exercise—at least laborious and *unprepared-for* exercise (an excellent epithet this)—is an obvious source to which we may trace disease (*i.e.* of the lungs)." Nothing can be more true than this; yet my experience has never presented me with an instance of a man taking his unprepared horse into the field, and (although thousands have been killed by it) *riding him with hounds until his wind was broken*. It is certainly a general impression that a horse's wind can be broken by hard riding up hills, etc., but such views are erroneous. Feeding on dusty or mouldy hay, and driving immediately after feeding, especially on bulky food, are very liable to be followed by broken-wind.

If a man has a broken-winded horse in his stable,

<sup>1</sup> The pathology of broken wind is still very unsatisfactory.—  
EDITOR.

and (which is often the case) still finds him serviceable, he tells him, almost as plainly as if he could speak to him, what treatment to pursue. He must not be fed on bulky or dry food, and never driven until reasonable time has elapsed after feeding and watering.

I have reason to believe there is a great similarity in the suffering of a badly broken-winded horse and the human asthmatic. A very intimate friend of mine was violently affected with asthma for fifteen years of his life. Although the horse never recovers his natural health when once he becomes broken-winded, my friend got rid of his asthma about twelve years back, and has enjoyed excellent health since. He attributes his recovery to going to India with his regiment; but he has frequently told me no earthly consideration would tempt him to accept of existence accompanied by that disease.

Now when we consider, first, how great are the restorative powers of the horse, and what able hands the veterinary art is in, we may marvel at no cure being found for this too-frequent grievance. But so it is; and so will the disease be perpetuated as long as horses are made use of and domesticated by man. A "double" *expiratory* effort and a cough are significant of this complaint.

#### BANGS AND BLOWS

Sportsmen are necessarily exposed to these evils in their stables. If the injury be on the sinew, and severe, the safest way is to give up the horse for the

season. My treatment has always been this: A dose of physic, and foment till inflammation subsides, then gently stimulate.

It may be here remarked, that giving up a horse for the season is pleasanter in theory than in practice. Admitted: but in the end it will prove economy; and let it be remembered, that in all stables of hunters which are ridden anywhere near hounds, the calculation scarcely admits of not more than four sound horses in five. Injuries of this nature are best left in the hands of a veterinary surgeon.

#### BROKEN KNEES AND USE OF KNEE-CAPS

I have little to offer here. The first two hunters I ever possessed having broken their knees on the road, made me careful in the use of knee-caps for travelling, when the mischief generally occurs. I can remember when these things, called knee-caps, were a constant source of torment, not only for ever coming loose and slipping down, but seriously injuring the skin in wet weather.

I have no faith in the various nostrums for the cure of broken knees. When inflammation is subdued we must trust to nature for the rest. Mr W. Percivall tells us (Lecture 33),<sup>1</sup> "that if the cutis vera, and consequently the bulbs of the hair, be injured, a scar, or bare place, is the consequence—a few light-coloured or white hairs only growing upon the place, which appear to be the offspring of defective pulps."

<sup>1</sup>A series of veterinary lectures published nearly a century ago.—EDITOR.

A sportsman thinks little of a broken knee in a hunter, provided the blemish be not very great, or the action of the joint rendered defective by it. I remember selling a horse fifteen years back for a large price in Leicestershire, forgetting to tell the purchaser he had a broken knee until the deal was concluded, with the exception of the money being paid. Scarcely a remark was made by him on my informing him of it, and he paid me the following morning. A hunter must be absolutely free from any stiffness of knees and shoulders.

#### BLISTERS

I never argue against the use of anything by the abuse of it: we might as well inveigh against gold and silver at once; but I confess I am a determined enemy to the indiscriminate use of strong blisters. The legs of many horses are made of such good and lasting materials that they bid defiance to such treatment; but can anything be more absurd than the (I am sorry to say) still prevailing practice of blistering a sound horse all-fours<sup>1</sup> previous to turning him up for the summer? Is not the effect of blister to excite violent inflammation on the parts to which it is applied, and consequently to relax the cellular membrane or skin? In all cases of lameness arising from weakness and relaxation of the limb, their application must be most injurious; and to their

<sup>1</sup> To blister a horse upon all four limbs at the same time, is a cruel and useless procedure, though seldom practised.—  
EDITOR.

use do I attribute the ruin of many hundreds of English hunters.

I was pretty effectually cured of the indiscriminate use of blisters very early in life ; and the lesson, having cost me a hundred and thirty guineas, made a rather lasting impression. I roused the sleeping lion, and could not pacify him again ! I now nearly confine the application of blisters to bony excrescences in their *very incipient* state, among which of course are included spavins, splints, and ring-bones ; also to the external surface of the body, as counteractors of internal inflammation, or counter-irritants, as they are called ; and here they avail but little unless very speedily had recourse to. If *judiciously* applied in strains, I do not condemn their use, as they serve to unload the vessels near the affected part.

Indiscriminate blistering of horses' limbs, etc., must be condemned, but the judicious employment of blistering agents is frequently attended with the most beneficial results. Hunters and other horses do after several years' hard work—more especially if such animals have been worked before they have arrived at maturity—begin to get very puffy about the joints below the knees and hocks, or it may be at the last named joints themselves.

It is seldom, under these circumstances, that marked benefit fails to follow the application of a blister, properly applied. Apart from the utility of vesicants for such purposes as the foregoing, the swelling that a blister creates is often of service in throwing an injured part into a state of repose, thus

enabling the effused inflammatory products to establish a fresh bond of union in the meantime.

The most useful blistering agent is cantharides (Indian blister beetle or Spanish-fly), either as an ointment or as a liniment.

Mercurial compounds are largely employed or a combination of these and the foregoing. Iodine ointment will thus blister and is particularly valuable, where a joint is at all "puffy" as in bog-spavin, etc. The addition of an equal quantity of common tar greatly enhances its value for such purposes.

Before the application of a blister, the hair ought to be clipped off, the part washed with soft soap and warm water, and then thoroughly dried. Rub the blister into the skin for twenty minutes, employing smart friction.

To prevent the blistering agent from scarring the parts below, smear the latter freely with vaseline.

The animal must now be tied up for twenty-four hours, or else a cradle used.

In the course of three or four days smear the blistered area with vaseline or some oleaginous preparation.

#### BLINDNESS.

Here comes another of the curses on good horse-flesh. "Although the diseases to which the eye of the domesticated horse is obnoxious," says Mr W. Percivall, "when compared in number with the many set down by ophthalmic writers to the organ in man, are certainly very few, yet there is one among them that



has proved in all ages of veterinary medicine so pestilential, and that even at the present day so obstinately pursues its end in spite of all remedial measures, that this of itself is a sufficient reason for us to become well acquainted with the anatomy and physiology of the eye, and pay more than ordinary attention to it in a state of disease." It is scarcely necessary to observe the writer here alludes to *cataract*. Now it may with propriety be asked, why not remove a cataract from the eye of a horse as well as from that of a man? My only answer is, it has been tried, and found to be impracticable; but Mr W. Percivall plainly tells us why. In the first place, a horse in spectacles would be awkward even on the road (among blind ditches particularly so); and, after the loss of the natural lens, art must supply the deficiency. In the second, cataract being almost invariably a sequel of inflammatory action, and various other parts being at the same time likewise the seat of disease, it is rarely unaccompanied with morbid alterations in other textures: in fact, adds he, it too often happens that there is a total disorganization of the whole globe. Unless, therefore, we can perform miracles as well as operations, and restore all these altered parts to their pristine condition, we had better never think of handling a cataract knife.

Now, although two years ago I had it in my power to state that up to that period I never had had a hunter go blind in my possession, yet I consider this in some measure fortuitous, and will not suffer it in the least to diminish the caution necessary in purchas-

ing highly-priced horses. Of course, although I was *once* careless enough to give two hundred and twenty guineas for a horse which had a small cataract in one eye, I have for the most part examined the eyes of horses I have been about to purchase most minutely, and with what little skill I am possessed of, in reference to that delicate organ ; but I am decidedly of opinion that none but professional men are able to give a true judgment upon it, and even theirs can only safely apply to its present state. “ In these inspections,” continues Mr Percivall, “ we should not depart satisfied with barely looking into the organ : we ought to compare one eye with the other ; mark the prominence of the *membrana nictitans* ; the transparency and convexity of the cornea ; the pellucidity of the aqueous humour ; the colour and brilliancy of the iris ; the colour, figure, and size of the pupil ; the magnitude, blackness, and prominence of the *corpora nigra*,<sup>1</sup> and last, but not least, of all, repeatedly mark the activity with which the pupil alters its dimensions on suddenly admitting light to the eye. Surely this will convince us that we private gentlemen are incompetent to this task.<sup>2</sup>

The following are stated by Mr P. as unfavourable prognostics :—“ a sunken or gloomy aspect of the eye altogether, compared with the other ; prominence of the *membrana nictitans* ; a watery state of the eye ;

<sup>1</sup> These small sooty like bodies have been known to cause “ shying ” through being displaced from their normal position.—EDITOR.

<sup>2</sup> I have a mare in my possession now, stone blind from cataract ; but I could sell her to any common purchaser as sound, if he only looked superficially into her eyes.

dimness of the cornea, particularly around its margin ; dulness or discoloration of the iris ; *corpora nigra*, yellowish or spotty ; pupil smaller than the other, perhaps hazy or milky, or containing a minute white speck in its centre, which is incipient cataract."

Whether or not horses are near-sighted<sup>1</sup> I will not venture to pronounce, although I see no good reason why a preternatural convexity of the cornea should not exist, as in man. I certainly have had several horses which appeared not to be able to appreciate some of the commonest objects on the road until they came close to them, although they have been those of everyday occurrence ; and this does not look unlike it. A hack I purchased in Yorkshire must, I think, have been thus affected. *Although bred in Yorkshire*, a heap of stones by the road-side was an object of terror to him ; and although I once rode him over twenty-one in succession, he shy'd when he approached the twenty-second ; I have also had horses with apparently very perfect eyes which I could never persuade to leap flying.

Mr W. Percivall says, "the loss of one eye does not enfeeble sight, because the other acquires greater energy, though it much contracts the field of vision." It is, however, said to render the conception erring ; and the cause of misjudgment of distances is the one commonly brought forward to prove this. Now the following experiment satisfies me, that as far as

<sup>1</sup> It is nearly a century since these remarks were penned, but the observation of the keenly observant sportsman in this matter is borne out in the present day.—EDITOR.

leaping *fences straight before him*, the loss of an eye is no detriment to a horse. I sit at this present moment with a pencil-case held just at the end of my nose, and, shutting one eye, it exactly hides from my view the handle which opens the door. I shut the other eye, and the said pencil-case just covers the back of a dictionary in a bookcase *seven feet from the door*. Here then is great error of conception as far as relates to focal distance ; and if I were to follow the direction of the pencil-case it would at one time lead me to the dictionary and at another to the door, according to the eye through which I looked at it ; but when I stand *four yards from the window*, and have the pencil-case held up to one of the panes for my view, it does not appear to vary more than one inch when looked at with either eye, which cannot at all affect a horse judging his focal distance at a fence.

Notwithstanding this, and notwithstanding some of the very best hunters I ever saw have been one-eyed horses, I do not like them. Unless very handy, and of excellent tempers indeed, they are apt to strike trees and gate-posts on their blind sides ; and where is the horse that at times does not require to have all his eyes about him ? A twig, or briar, will also sometimes injure the sound eye, and then danger is at hand. Nothing, however, can exceed the structure and economy of the eye, particularly as to its protection from injury ; and so careful has the Creator been that his creatures should enjoy the blessing of sight, no animal is produced with less than two. Nor is this all ; although the image of every object is

pictured on the retina of each eye, whilst we have two, yet we do not see the object double, but the same as if we looked at it with only one.

The horse enjoys a much wider range of lateral vision than man, and he can direct it backwards, which the latter is unable to do. This extensive and varied view not only serves to guide him in his rambles in quest of food; but, adds he, *since his principal weapons of defence are his heels, with what certainty could he have directed their stroke without this faculty?*

The eyesight of a hunter should be absolutely perfect, and no professional man would ever dream of passing such a horse as even *usefully* sound.

Nebulous deposits upon the cornea; displacement of the *corpora nigra*; adhesion of the iris to the lens; cataract; amaurosis or glass eye; ophthalmia and (in tropical countries) filariæ (worms) are the chief diseases attacking the visual organs.

Necessarily any of the aforesaid abnormalities constitutes unsoundness and most of these are of a permanent (ophthalmia, etc., excepted) nature. When purchasing a hunter, in fact any horse, the Editor strongly advises gentlemen to have a professional examination (not the examination of an unqualified veterinary surgeon), so that much annoyance and expense may be saved. He is sorry to say that the selection of horses is frequently entrusted by gentlemen to coachmen and grooms, who know nothing whatsoever as to the intricacies involved in the examination of horses as to soundness.

## BLEEDING

Error has had full scope here ; but when we consider that, although the circulation of the blood is one of the most important discoveries in the whole history of physic, it has been involved in the greatest difficulties, our surprise will cease, more especially when we recollect in what ignorant hands the lancet and phleme are to be found, and often in full practice. However, as it is on the increased or diminished velocity of this fluid that health or disease depends, it is quite evident that a knowledge of those diseases which are influenced or produced by an increased action of the heart and arteries, and those which are the result of a diminution in the vital powers, must be indispensably necessary to guide the judgment in the important operation of blood-letting.

The following passage is well worthy of being impressed on the minds of all who are in possession of horses. The erroneous opinion that bleeding can be productive of no ill consequences can only arise from a total ignorance of the foregoing observations. The practice of abstracting blood under every circumstance (which is too common) must be attended with the greatest hazard and danger ; for in all diseases attended with a languid circulation, or where there is a thinness or putrescency of the fluids, blood-letting must be highly injurious, by inducing a greater degree of debility, and favouring the disposition to gangrene or mortification. Here then is the necessity of consulting the pulse of a horse before his veins are opened.

Certain is it, that *a judicious use of the phlema* is one of the most important operations in practice, and our chief dependence in the early stages of some acute and dangerous inflammations, for when this has been copiously resorted to, medicine acts under the most favourable circumstances, and many lives are saved by it.

I confess I have never seen much benefit derived from topical bleeding; but let it not be supposed that I mean to deny the benefit of it. I only here speak from my own experience. One hint, however, should not be disregarded—*bleed in proportion to strength and powers of life.*<sup>1</sup>

#### CURBS

The term “curb” is applied to a variously sized convexity a few inches below, and in the same straight line, with the point of the hock.

One or both hocks may be “curby,” and the curbs equal or unequal in size.

The so-called “curby hocks” are most necessarily affected with curb, this term being employed to indicate sickle-shaped or over-bent hocks. It is hocks of this conformation that are particularly prone to the development of curb. It is chiefly during the “formative” stage that lameness is present, but the legacy of the inflammatory action, *i.e.* the curb, does sometimes cause recurrent lameness owing to fresh

<sup>1</sup> Bleeding is not much practised by veterinary surgeons in the present day. It is useful in the case of a plethoric animal attacked with acute pulmonary engorgement, and in the early stages of acute founder.—EDITOR.

inflammatory action being started. They *may* have their origin in a blow: but I think we may safely conclude that, as hunters are more subject to them than any other description of horse, they generally proceed from violent exertion of the hinder legs in carrying weight (sprain) at a rapid pace, through deep ground, and also from the effect of leaping.<sup>1</sup>

Curbs are produced by inflammation, followed by effusion. Common sense or reason would naturally prescribe repellent lotions, physic, etc.; but these are only auxiliaries. The plan I have always adopted has been—first, a dose of physic, then immediately to blister (mildly), and *repeat the blister as soon and as often as circumstances will admit*. The late Mr W. Percivall recommends a patten-shoe being put upon the foot of the affected limb, in order to relax the extensor muscles of the hock. I have had, as may be expected, several cases of curbs in my stable; but I have generally found them yield to repeated blistering. I have occasionally worked horses whilst the disease existed, and still they have progressed towards soundness. It is an excellent plan to fire curbs and blister in a few days afterwards. By this, however, I do not mean to say that curbs are to be made light of—for, on the contrary, they are very much to be dreaded; and I never rode a good run, over a deep country, that I did not expect to be favoured with one: and the very best formed hocks are not exempt.

<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that curb is frequently produced in this manner.—EDITOR.



When curb is forming rest is the first essential of treatment.

#### CORNS

Horses that work on limestone roads are more subject to corns than those which travel over gravel ; but I was not prepared to hear they are in some measure periodical. The smith, however, who shoes my horses, shoes about two hundred post and coach horses ; and he assures me that numbers of them are affected at particular times, and at others they are comparatively free from them. "Very wet roads," he says, "are one exciting cause."

If we examine the right hand of any hard-working mechanic, we shall find what exactly corresponds with our idea of a corn. The cuticle of the palm (as in the case with the heel or the sole of the foot) grows morbidly thick by the effect of external pressure ; but this is in reality a different disease from what has been so named in the horse's foot. In nine out of every ten horses affected with corns, it is the inner quarter of the sole of the fore-foot that is the seat of corn, *i.e.* the bruise. If recent it is reddish, but if older, greenish black. It may suppurate.

The following recipe was given me by a very old sportsman, who assured me of its utility :—

Venice turpentine, half a pound.  
 Tar, half a pint.  
 White rosin, one ounce.  
 Burgundy pitch, one ounce.

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<sup>1</sup> Any kind of bruise to the horny sole is liable to produce a corn, and when such is present, it is looked upon by veterinary surgeons as sufficient ground for rejection during examination of a horse as to soundness.—EDITOR.

The above to be boiled up and applied *daily* on a pledget of tow. Before applying it never fail to scrape the part with a drawing-knife, and in six dressings the corn will disappear.<sup>1</sup>

#### CAPPED HOCKS

There are several forms of capped hocks varying from a mere thickening of the skin, to that of actual disease of the point of the os-calcis, and the causes operative in the production of this condition are of a variable nature. Strictly speaking, all forms of capped hock should constitute unsoundness, being a deviation from the normal structure of the part.

One or both hocks may be capped, and the size of the enlargements varies considerably.

Many capped hocks are exceedingly unsightly, destroying the contour in this region.

Acute inflammation of the point of the hock is usually the result of direct violence, and is accompanied by all the signs of acute inflammation, viz. increased heat ; pain or tenderness and swelling.

The usual form of capped hock is unaccompanied by the foregoing signs, with the exception of swelling.

Repeated kicking against the stall post or through pressure upon the points of the hocks when the animal is in the recumbent position, are causes of capped hock.

#### CRIB-BITING

It has been asserted that this habit or vice, whichever we choose to term it, is more prejudicial to

<sup>1</sup> The presence of a corn constitutes unsoundness, and rightly so, because lameness frequently arises.—EDITOR.

*character* than to bodily exertion. This is in part true ; for we are all aware how many first-rate horses, of all descriptions, are crib-biters. In my own stable I am not able to state that I have seen any ill effects from the habit, but I have never had a horse very much given to it, or one which could not be in great measure prevented by a strap. However, although I last year gave one hundred guineas for a crib-biter, I have generally taken the advice which an old sportsman and excellent judge of a horse whispered in my ear many years back—"Never buy a crib-biter," said he : "*he is always getting worse.*"<sup>1</sup>

#### CATARRH OR COLD

It is not necessary to say anything beyond a few words, in a work of this description, relative to catarrh. Any veterinary surgeon examining a hunter (in fact any horse) in soundness will either defer his examination until the animal is better of its cold, or suspend the certificate until satisfied as to the benign nature of the catarrh. This is a wise and expedient attitude to adopt, and the only safe one in the interests of his clients and himself.

#### COAT AND CLIPPING

In one of my former letters I have noticed the changes that take place in the coats of horses ; the effect the moulting season has on the constitution ; and I have also given my opinion on clipping, and

<sup>1</sup> Crib-biting is frequently the outcome of idleness. It is often associated with wind sucking.—EDITOR.

which opinion I shall never alter. The hair being a covering which nature has provided for the skin of animals to protect them from *cold, heat, and external injury*, to deprive them of it is an outrage on Nature, which can never stand its ground; and although the practice is on the increase, and although in some individual cases I do not condemn it, yet, generally speaking, it is nothing but a substitute for bad grooming and idleness.

Mr W. Percivall's "Lecture (32nd) on the Hair of the Horse" is extremely interesting to anyone who has curiosity to inquire into the wonderful operations of Nature, and the coat of this animal holds a conspicuous place even there. Why a horse should change his coat *twice* every year it is not for us to inquire; but in what manner the change is effected may not be unworthy of detail.

A hair, it seems, is composed of three parts—the bulb, the root, and the stem. At moulting time the pulpy substance at the root of the hair shrinks and dries up; the stem, consequently, no longer supplied with nourishment, loses its support and falls off; at the same time a new pulp appears by the side of the old one, which, during the absorption of the latter, grows and gives root to a new hair; so that the root and stem only, and not the bulb, undergo the process of regeneration. "The coat of the horse," adds Mr P., "is shed twice during the year—in spring and autumn—a phenomenon exhibited with great regularity so long as the animal remains wild; but as soon as he is domesticated, this process is influenced by

many circumstances connected with his stable management, though by none more perhaps than by the temperature of the stable."

With reference to the influence of colour on horses' coats, the following is worthy of remark. The three primitive colours—those of which all the other appear to be either shades or combinations—are white, red, and black. According to Richerand, the lighter the shade the finer the hair; as a proof of which, he says, there are fewest *black* hairs in a square inch of skin, more *chestnut*, and most *light-coloured*. "This assertion," says Mr Percivall, "our observation appears to confirm; for it is comparatively uncommon to meet with a *black* thorough-bred horse, though it is a very prevailing colour among cart horses; and the glossy silken coat, for which the former is so much admired, is in none more conspicuous than in those that are light-coloured."

The *effect* of a good dressing on the coat of a horse, ripe in his condition, is too well known to require even a word; but the *cause* may not be apparent to all. It seems there is an unctuous matter emitted from numbers of that infinity of pores which the skin has on its surface, which keeps up a constant greasiness of it; and this abounds so plentifully in those parts subject to friction, such as the bend of the knee and hock, as often, from want of cleanliness, to generate a troublesome disease. Warmth and friction consequently contribute to the condition of the hair, by increasing the circulation of the cutaneous system; the natural consequences of which, says Mr P., are,

an augmentation of its secretions, among others of the perspirable fluid, and the unctuous or oleaginous matter secreted by the sebaceous follicles. This gives a renewed suppleness to the skin, and a kindly feel and gloss to the coat.

I am happy to have it in my power to quote the following passage, as it is so completely corroborative of what I have before written on this part of my subject. "The appearance of the hair," says Mr Percivall, "may be adduced as a sign of internal derangement. The fact is, this is one of the most remarkable instances we have of the sympathy existing between the skin and the alimentary canal; and we might *ad infinitum* bestow our labour upon the former without effect, unless we were at the same time to direct our attention to the latter. Here a dose of physic, or, *what is better, some laxative medicine*, is required to render the currycomb and brush availing in polishing the coat of the horse."

On the occasional stare of the coat this accomplished writer is worth hearing. "Simply taking a horse," says he, "into an atmosphere colder than the one he has been habitually exposed to, will make the hair stare. Now this can be no other than the effect of contraction, not of the skin itself, but of the muscular fibres which adhere to it—the *panniculus carnosus*. In truth, it is something similar to what happens in the erection of the bristles, though that is a voluntary act, while this is not dependent on the will. In the one case cold is the stimulus to contraction; in the other, volition."

I know of nothing to add on this subject, except the remark, that, although the coats of entire horses are universally finer than geldings, yet I know of no superiority in this particular between geldings and mares. The question why *blind* horses generally have a fine coat in winter and a rough one in summer, must, I suppose, continue to remain unanswered.

#### CUTTING LEGS

##### *Speedy-cut, and Brushing*

Or *Interfering*, as it is called by some. I think owners of horses troubled with this great fault are not sufficiently aware that striking one leg against the other is often a defect of the upper, as well as the lower extremity of the leg. In choice of young horses I have carefully avoided those which hit their legs, particularly the hinder ones. The speedy-cut often arises from excess of action, but knocking the hind legs together is an infallible sign of weakness. Shoeing may remedy it a little; but a plain leather boot is most to be depended upon. Speed-cutting is a dangerous defect, and it is a frequent cause of rejection of horses. The Editor also rejects horses that strike their hind fetlocks (interfere) if the conformation of the hind limbs is favourable to this annoyance.

#### DOCKING

As nearly every horse used for pleasure undergoes this operation, it would almost appear a waste of words to bestow a line on the subject; but, whether

it be from the consequent frequency of the operation, or carelessness after it, I do not pretend to determine, fatal results sometimes arise from it. Notwithstanding this, and the severity of the operation, we have been, I fear, too fond of it in our hunters' stables, and I am obliged to confess that taking two inches off horses' tails has now and then put fifty pounds into my pocket.

Docking colts when at the mare's foot has been recommended, as, by taking the weight from the extremity of the tail, it will be carried higher when the animal arrives at maturity. The proper length for the docks of hunters, or other pleasure horses—at least those of full size—is eight inches; which, allowing for a fourth part of that length in hair, forms a fair medium between two extremes. A good tail is a great set-off to well turned hind quarters; but to my own eye nothing is more disfiguring than the *swish*, unless it be on a well-bred galloway.

Human nature must blush at some of her errors. When I was a boy, all cart horses were docked *close to their quarters*, under the erroneous impression of making them strong in the spine. At that time of day, this cruelty was heightened by it being the practice of farmers, with few exceptions, to turn out their cart horses in the summer—a system now nearly exploded in all good husbandry.

#### DIURETICS

I have sufficient reason to be convinced that thousands of horses are rendered unserviceable by



the violent and indiscriminate use of diuretic balls, and particularly so when given during the time of their being liable to be put to strong work. Too great an increase of the urinary secretions very much impoverishes the blood, and subjects horses to numerous and often fatal diseases.

On this subject the reader had better hear what Mr Percivall says in his 55th Lecture. "The general use of diuretic medicines, coupled with the known susceptibility of the organ itself, renders the kidney the seat of frequent disordered function, and now and then of violent and destructive disease. The disordered function is probably the result of increased action, which may or may not amount to inflammation: if it do not in the first instance, the frequent repetition of the stimulus does not fail to give rise to it, most likely in the chronic form; and this languid inflammation, which within certain limits would die away on a total discontinuance of the existing cause, aggravated from time to time by the same injurious diuretic influence, becomes at last established."

In the purchase of hay, and in the management of my own, I have always avoided having it too much fermented, or mow-burnt, as it is called; for, from its great excitation of the kidneys, it greatly debilitates, and produces, in coach-horses, the complaint termed "*the lick*," a certain sign of a disordered stomach, and impoverished habit. Ship oats, or indeed any that have been heated and become stale, will have an injurious effect on the kidneys, and for that reason ought to be carefully avoided.

It is scarcely necessary to say that horses which sweat frequently and profusely stale but little ; so little, indeed, that grooms are now and then apprehensive of something wrong, and a urine ball is the consequence. This proves the sympathy between the skin and the kidneys, and accounts for the good effect of our mild diuretic alteratives. Let me not, however, be supposed to condemn the occasional use of diuretic balls ; for I am well aware of their eminent services in several complaints ; and it is by their power of causing a reversion of action in favour of the kidneys that we generally remove dropsical swellings of horses' legs. They are also useful to cart horses, whose robust frames are better able to withstand them ; and they are also very serviceable when an evacuant is wanting (as on a journey), and there is not time to give physic. Carrots act as a slight diuretic with horses ; for which reason they are excellent alteratives.

#### FIRING

The actual cautery is largely employed by veterinary surgeons in all parts of the world. Its universal adoption, is to some extent, a measure of its utility. That it has been abused, few, if any, will deny, but when judiciously employed it has no equal in veterinary practice. The fore limbs of hunters are often materially strengthened by a light line or cross line firing.

Point firing (pyro-puncture) is a good deal employed to such diseases as splint, ringbone, bone-spavin, etc., and leaves but trifling scarring.

That firing is a painful operation is indisputable, nevertheless it is preferable to what may be a greater evil, viz. lameness.

When a hunter begins to show signs of wear in his fore-limbs, the Editor advises firing as the best means of toning up the sinews, etc.

#### HUMOURS

Theory on this subject has undergone a great change within the last twenty years. True it is that horses which live well, and are not properly treated, are liable to a morbid and vitiated state of the blood, the virulence of which (the grease for instance) is sufficiently proved by the difficulty with which it is got rid of, and the animal restored to its natural and healthy state. The characteristic strength and vigour of the horse, however, is amply displayed by the immense and long-continued local discharge which he will sometimes undergo, without the constitution appearing to be much affected by it.

It is well known that a very considerable number of hunters have passed through my hands, and of course some of them horses of high character, by the prices I obtained for them. In short, at one time of my life, my friends used to tell me, that, from the frequent purchases I made, there was but a shade between me and the licensed horse-dealer. It might have been so ; but we will let that pass ; and I will proceed to state one fact, which I think I may say is nearly, if not quite, unequalled in the annals of horse-dealing—I NEVER HAD A HORSE RETURNED

TO ME AS UNSOUND ; and, as I assert this in the face of the world it is fair to assume that my assertion is correct. Perhaps it may be asked what has this to do with the present subject—that of humours ? My answer is, I kept my horses clean in their habits, and, barring accidents, consequently sound.

## LAMPAS

This term is employed to indicate a fulness of the palate immediately behind the upper incisors.

Normally, it is very full during the cutting of the incisors, and very erroneous opinions are entertained as to its being a cause of a horse not taking his food properly. The criminal practice of burning the lampas has long been abolished, and rightly so, being as cruel as it was useless. If the gums need lancing at all this must be left to a M.R.C.V.S.

## LEGS (BIG)

What is termed a big leg, is generally the result of swelling taking place in the sheath of tendons after violent strains, and those, perhaps, not properly treated ; also from blows, where the parts become lined by a thick coat of lymph ; also from a deposition of morbid fluid in the cells of bones. The bones themselves, indeed, sometimes become thick from external injuries—that is to say, the body of the bone is occasionally found thickened from a deposition of bony lamina over the original bone. Again, I read, that bones will sometimes lose their vitality, and the neighbouring vessels will take on the ossific

action, and deposit a considerable quantity of new bone to supply its place.

So much for the theory of big legs. They are eyesores, it is true ; but thousands of good hunters and coach-horses have them, and are as sound as when they were foaled. Indeed it is a rare circumstance to see an old hunter's legs quite free from these callosities, although not so rare since the indoor system has been pursued in the summer months, as, by the help of rest and proper regimen, absorption takes place more freely.

Barring the effects of severe accidents, nothing more contributes to the general healthy state of a horse's legs than keeping him internally clean, and bandaging his legs with flannel after severe work, so as not only to determine the blood to the skin, but to increase the circulation of it throughout the limb. Warm water and a loose box are auxiliaries. The legs of many hunters, however, will get round, do what we will with them ; but I would never take active measures with them unless lameness were the consequence. Bathing callous legs in cold salt water <sup>1</sup> is very strongly to be recommended. On this part of my subject I shall quote Osmer, whose sentiments so accord with my own, and with the result of my experience in guarding against the consequence of severe work. "To remove the inflammation of the glands," says he, "and to prevent an induration and enlargement of the ligamentous parts, and the integuments of the fetlock joint—the consequence of re-

<sup>1</sup> Put two double handfuls of salt into a pail of cold water.

peated violence—it is a good custom for all sportsmen to cause the joints of a horse, after a day's hunting, to be well fomented with flannels dipped in warm water; and some warm flannel clothes or rollers should be moderately bound thereon for the ensuing night."

Before I dismiss this part of my subject I must observe, that in nothing do horses differ so much as in the nature, or rather quality, of their legs. True it is, that perfect security against accidents is not consistent with the scheme of Nature: on the contrary, we may say, a certain insecurity is inseparable from the delicacy of all animal structure. Nevertheless, some horses are hard-riden for several successive years, and yet their limbs remain uninjured. This can only be accounted for, I think, by the balance between the power of exertion, and the capability of resisting the shock that exertion produces, being pretty equally divided. For instance, a horse with a heavy man on his back must receive a severe shock in alighting from a high leap; but still, if the inert power of resisting that shock bear a relation to the muscular power with which he springs at it, he is not likely to receive injury from it.<sup>1</sup> I am not now going to enter into the mechanical structure of the animal, and thence to account for the vast difference we find in the legs of horses; but I have always preferred those in which the shank or cannon-bone is short, and *which are a*

<sup>1</sup> This is the case with a man. The elasticity of his limbs is always accommodated to his activity. Were it not so, half the opera dancers would break down.

*long time in drying* after having been wetted with water. I also require a large grasp of flat, ropy sinews, not caring so much about the main size of the bone, as the material of the adjacent parts.

#### NEURECTOMY OR UNNERVING

This operation is performed for the purpose of prolonging the working power of a horse when it has become lame through some disease of the limb, such lameness not being removable by other means. It is chiefly amongst the poorer classes of horses that the operation attains its maximum value.

Neurectomy does not aim at the removal of the cause of the lameness, but simply destroys sensation below the seat of operation.

The forms of neurectomy practised are, viz. *median* and *plantar*. In both operations about half an inch of nerve is cut out. Median neurectomy is performed upon the inner side of the fore-arm, practically on a level with the elbow.

The lower operation is carried out at the back of the leg, just above the fetlock joint, and its chief use is to destroy the pain arising from disease in connection with the navicular bone (navicular-thritis), more rarely sidebone. Median neurectomy is chiefly resorted to for obscure lameness believed to arise below the seat of operation. Of the two operations it is, probably, the most useful.

When purchasing a hunter care must be exercised to avoid being taken in with one that has been "undone" or unnerved. Loss of sensation—tested by

pricking the limb with a pin—and the presence of a scar in the regions named, are worthy of attention when selecting.

A horse that has been unnerved has no market value, though it may be marketable; in fact such animals are frequently disposed of.

#### PHYSIC

In my second letter on “Condition of Hunters,” I touched a little upon this head, but promised to return to it at a future time, it being one of the greatest importance to all owners of horses. I am happy, however, to have it in my power to state that, in consequence of the late general diffusion of veterinary science, the *modus operandi* is now so much better understood, that fewer accidents arise from the improvident use of immoderate cathartic medicines than when I first started in life, or when I commenced writing these letters. When I look back, indeed, and reflect upon the copious doses of aloes, good or bad, which we were in the habit of administering, I cannot persuade myself that the intestines of our horses were not better lined than they are at present.

The method of administering physic to the horse, and his treatment in its operation, being now pretty generally understood, and, I have reason to believe, practised, under the guidance of moderation and reason, I shall not dwell on it long; but the point on which it is most difficult to decide is, at what periods it is most advantageous to give it to horses in high condition. In cases of internal inflammation—to



which, next to copious blood-letting, we know it to be the most powerful check—we do not stand in need of a guide. As an auxiliary to condition, it is acknowledged to be as essential as good hay and corn. But the secret consists in knowing when it should be given to preserve the condition it has so much contributed to establish; and it is certainly best understood in racing stables, where, amidst what we might be induced to term *the excesses of physic and sweating*, the ultra of condition is to be seen.

The theory of purgation is a subject which it will not be expected I should enter upon at any length. Suffice it to say, that the two principal objects are, to unload the bowels of matter that is of no farther service to the body, and therefore only an incumbrance to it; and to excite a determination of blood to the internal surface of the intestinal canal, in order that some of it may be evacuated in the form of secretion. Thirdly, cathartics increase the influx of the biliary and pancreatic secretions, and therefore promote health by their influence on the digestive organs.

I was much pleased with one of those pithy hints which Mr Abernethy gave his pupils at a late lecture. “*Gentle medicines*,” said he, “bring about the secretions; I do not like *to bully the organs into health*.” This exactly accords with my ideas of the effects of physic on horses. I am quite certain that a gentle purgative should be given to every horse full of hard meat once in six weeks throughout the year, exclusively of somewhat stronger physic at particular seasons,

such as before and after work, and the consequent changes in quantity and quality of food. The febrile heat, occasioned by the severe work we give them, causes a deficiency in that mucus (as every observant groom must be aware of, whenever he sets fair his horses' bed) which facilitates the passage of the food, and which deficiency of course produces costiveness, and all its dangerous consequences. I am quite sure that not only is this treatment beneficial to general condition, but a means of warding off those inflammatory attacks to which all horses, but particularly those who eat much corn, are so subject. When bowels are overloaded no animal is safe; for the coats of the intestines lose their proper tone, and a healthy secretion is denied them.

What I have now said is founded on my own practical observation, more deeply impressed on my mind by the several narrow escapes I have had of losing valuable horses from not paying attention to their bowels, when *apparently* in the best of health; but I am anxious that the reader should be furnished with still better authority; and shall therefore present to him the following passage from Mr William Percivall's Lecture on Purgation and Purgative Medicines:—

“ I shall next cursorily point out the healthy states, and some of the diseased or disordered conditions of body, in which we are in the habit of administering cathartic medicines: for purgatives are sometimes given in health, as preparatives, or auxiliaries to putting horses into condition; whereas they are never given in disease but to remove that which is

the cause of the malady, or that which has more or less influence in its progress or continuance. The simplest view we can take of the exhibition of a dose of cathartic medicine is the expulsion of the fæcal contents of the large intestines in a shorter time than they otherwise would have been discharged. This is what is called "unloading the bowels," and is the principal intention in purging horses that have been recently taken up from grass. But it is scarcely possible thus to limit its operation ; for every *laxative* that we administer must in some degree augment the intestinal secretions, if not the biliary and pancreatic as well, and thus *remotely* be productive of other consequences. When we improve the condition of a horse in apparent health by the administration of alteratives, or laxatives, or cathartics, we are said to accomplish it by urging the various organs employed in the digestive process to a more vigorous performance of their functions ; but if all the melioration the animal's constitution has evidently experienced be duly estimated, this confined reasoning appears to be inadequate and unsatisfactory. There would seem to be disorder or derangement somewhere in the system in all these cases, the removal or rectification of which, either temporary or permanent, was the remote effect of the medicine, and that on which its salutary efficacy depended. How much do a few well-timed doses of laxative medicine contribute to restore the condition of a poor horse !—how influential soiling is in inducing a thriving diathesis, and promoting fatness and sleekness, and every other ap-

pearance of robust health!—and yet these meliorated states probably were not preceded by any *signs* whatever of disorder or disease! And it is in the alterative and laxative forms that cathartics are so beneficial in promoting health that appears to be flagging: in fact, they are effectually, under such circumstances, veritable tonics.”

Again.—“There are certain *manifestly disordered* states of body also in which laxatives are preferable to purgatives in full doses. In all cases of habitual pursiness or thickness of breath from previous organic disease, in broken wind, in evident imperfection of the digestive process, and in some cutaneous affections, their judicious exhibition will often be found to be eminently serviceable.”

As nothing that I can write can so satisfactorily account for the operations of properly-applied cathartics, or laxatives, as auxiliaries to the condition and the general safety of horses' health, I shall conclude this part of my subject by saying, that I never used any kind of oils as laxatives to promote condition; but have found great benefit in two drachms of Barbadoes aloes, with one drachm of ginger, made into a very small ball, and given (generally) two mornings in succession. From five to seven drachms of Barbadoes aloes is sufficient for any hunter provided that the animal be duly prepared beforehand by giving it several warm sloppy bran and linseed mashes. Six drachm physic balls should always be kept in stock by the stud groom, and the best balls are those obtained from a veterinary surgeon.

## RING-BONE

It has three times happened to me to have horses lame without being able to ascertain the cause, and on sending them to veterinary surgeons for examination, the answer has two or three times been—"incipient ring-bone." No ring-bone, however, appeared.

Horses with short unyielding pasterns, that have been worked on hard roads when young, are most subject to this disease—and a most formidable one it is: for nothing but the red-hot iron has any chance to contend with it, and even that will not always do. A very small excrescence at the junction of the pastern with the coronary bone will sometimes produce violent lameness, and resist all remedies; whereas another as big as one's fist is comparatively harmless. In 1820 I gave a farmer in Worcestershire £80 for a horse with a ring-bone as big as half a twopenny loaf. He had, in consequence, been sold for £15. After riding him a season I sold him for £150, and he was never lame afterwards from that cause.

The presence of ring-bone necessarily would condemn a hunter, in fact any horse. A horse may have this disease of the bones on one or both fore-feet, or it may be, on the hind, though more frequently the first-named. In some instances very large ring-bones are present, yet the animal remains free from lameness. Considerable differences of professional opinion frequently arise as to the presence or absence of ring-bone, spavin, etc. The term ring-bone is often used as indica-

tive of any enlargement about the fetlock, pastern, coronet, etc.

#### ROARING

Here is one of the very deep curses on good horse-flesh, and nearly as destructive as foot-lameness. How many hundred—aye, I may say thousand—otherwise fresh, young, and sound horses have I seen afflicted with this disease, and therefore, in most cases, useless for fast work! I am happy to say, however, it has been my good fortune never to have had a horse turn roarer in my own stable, having entered it sound; and I only purchased two, which cured me of going to that market again. One nearly broke my neck at a fence, having entirely lost all his powers in the space of five fields; and the other I christened *The Bull*, for he could have been heard half a mile off if he got into deep ground. Notwithstanding this, I have seen two brilliant hunters that were roarers.

#### ROARING, WHISTLING, GRUNTING, ETC.

Roaring, and its modification, whistling, are abnormal respiratory sounds, and exceedingly common amongst horses of every class.

Both sounds vary in their intensity, according to the degree of disease present. Many hunters are affected, though they continue to do their work, but no wise man would ever think of purchasing such a horse were he aware of its existence. If a hunter is not sound in his wind and sight, his value becomes reduced to whatever he will fetch. The mere fact of one man

buying a roarer, or another man purchasing a hunter with defective eye-sight, yet both of these continuing to do their work as well as others, sound in these respects, is not the slightest argument in favour of advising anyone to buy a horse with these infirmities.

Nothing short of given away prices should be an inducement, and the bargain ? may be a dear one at this.

Too much care cannot be exercised to ascertain soundness of wind and sight.

Many hunters are sold with this warranty—perhaps the only recommendation their vendor can give. Roaring may be developed quite suddenly. A horse may be passed as sound to-day, yet become a rank roarer to-morrow. Any professional man, after considering the various causes of this defect, will support the Editor in this opinion.

In the majority of instances this abnormal sound is due to fatty degeneration of certain of the laryngeal muscles, whereby the adjusting mechanism of the larynx (air inlet) is interfered with. The functions of the nerve (left recurrent) may be aberrated. Morbid growths in the respiratory passage are other causes.

Sometimes a pedunculated growth near the glottis becomes displaced, and occludes the latter, temporarily or permanently. Morbid growths in the nasal passages are occasional causes of roaring, and occasionally strangles leaves the latter as a legacy.

Grunting—when an attempt is made to strike a horse, is regarded as suspicious of roaring or whistling. It is not necessarily an indication of this, because some horses will grunt and yet, on testing, prove perfectly

sound in their wind. Moreover, a horse sometimes grunts in acute pleurisy.

#### THE TEETH AND AGE

In a work of this description it is not necessary to enter into a detailed account relating to the horse's teeth, and its age as judged from an inspection of the same.

Briefly, the Editor wishes to say that a horse has a *temporary* or sucking set of teeth, and a *permanent* one.

The temporary incisors make their appearance in "*pairs*," and are subsequently replaced in "*pairs*" by the permanent ones. There are a *central* pair, a *middle* pair, and a *lateral* or corner pair, and these make their appearance in the order named. Therefore the upper and lower jaws have each six incisor teeth.

In horses—exceptionally in mares—there are four tusks, but these are *permanent* from the commencement, but do not appear until about the age of four years, and are well up at five years.

There are twelve *temporary* molars—three in each jaw—and these are called the first, second, and third, in order to distinguish them from the fourth, fifth, and sixth, that subsequently follow, but are *permanent*.

When the dentition of the molars is complete, this makes the number twenty-four.

The first pair of temporary incisors appear shortly after birth. These are the *centrals*, to be followed in about a month by another pair—the *laterals*—and by the time the foal is six months the *corner* temporary incisors will be in the mouth.



These changes occur practically simultaneously in the upper and lower jaws, but when judging the age of a horse—up to eight years at any rate—it is usual to inspect the cutting surfaces of the lower incisors only, and to some extent by viewing the teeth when the mouth is shut. A yearling has a complete set of *temporary incisor* teeth, and these continue to wear until the animal has turned two years.

There is a great deal of difference between a *sucking or temporary incisor* tooth and a *permanent* one. The former are smaller, whiter, and don't show the same well-marked groove on their front face that the permanent incisors do.

The reader will soon know the difference if he examines the mouth of a colt that is two and a half or three and a half years old.

The first pair or centrals are replaced shortly after the colt has turned two years (two years and a quarter, say), and these *central* permanents are about half way up at two and a half years, and then *tables* come into wear at three years. The laterals are replaced just about one year later, three years and a quarter, developing in the same manner, followed by the *corner* permanents at four years and a quarter, fully up at five years.

This completes the permanent dentition of the incisors.

The subsequent changes are noted by inspection of the "tables" or cutting surfaces of these teeth. It is at the ages of six, seven, and eight that particular attention has to be paid to the wear and shape of

the tables, and the alteration (together with its subsequent obliteration) in the shape of the "mark" (bean). This mark is practically worn out at twelve years. For a full description of the age of the horse, the reader must refer to some book on dentition of animals, such as that by F. T. Barton, M.R.C.V.S.

#### SALT

In my younger days the grand specific for a bad sprain in a horse's sinews was a cataplasm made of common salt and white of egg mixed with vinegar and oatmeal. Salt is now, however, put to other purposes and given internally to all sorts of cattle with very excellent effect; and appears likely to be as much esteemed among the essentials to the well-doing of the brute race in our day, as it was formerly of the human. I really think it a good alternative—particularly in the cart-horse stable, where I have experienced its good effects, by increasing the urinary secretions and preventing humours. When applied to horses' legs in the way in which I have before spoken of it, it will be found beyond expectation efficacious: I mean, bathing legs in cold salt and water, to promote absorption, and to reduce enlargements from blows, sprains, etc.

#### SAND-CRACK

It is somewhat curious that the only instance of sand-crack that ever happened to my stud was to a new hoof—never shod—on a mare that had been

at grass nearly twelve months, and to which case I have before alluded. From so many years' adherence to the indoor system, with all descriptions of horses which have fallen to my lot, mine would have been the stables which many persons would look to for this destructive disease ; whereas it does not produce one single instance. I was early in life nearly persuaded that unctuous applications were injurious to hoofs ; but my experience soon gave me proof to the contrary.

Sand-crack may appear in either the fore or the hind feet, and be partial or complete.

In the former case the *superficial horny tubes* of the hoof wall are merely split across, whereas in complete sand-crack the fissure or crack penetrates throughout the thickness of the wall.

Sand-crack always begins at the top of the hoof, gradually extending in a downward direction. The simplest form of such cracks (spurious sand-cracks) very often begin at the lower edge of the wall in the fore feet, but they are not of much significance.

The wall of the hoof is thinnest towards the quarters, and it is here that sand-crack generally shows itself in the fore foot or feet. In the hind feet it is usually situated at the toe. There are, however, numerous exceptions. Sometimes it causes lameness, constituting unsoundness.

#### SPAVINS

I have possessed several hunters with what are called *blood-spavins* (a preternatural expansion of the

vessel passing over the hock), but I never regarded them, as I have always found them harmless. I have also had several horses with every appearance of *bone-spavins*—that is to say, bony enlargements of the inside of the hock joint. It has been my good fortune never to have suffered by their presence, no lameness having been produced by them. Some years since I sold a hunter for a good price in Mr Tattersall's yard. "Do you warrant him sound?" said he. "To be sure I do," replied I: "I have ridden him nearly three seasons, and he has never been once lame." "But he has two bone-spavins," resumed Mr T. "I know he has," was my reply. The horse remained sound, and gave his owner the greatest satisfaction.

A bone-spavin consists of a variable-sized enlargement upon the inner and lower aspect of the hock, affecting all classes of horses, from that of the "Sheltie" to the Clydesdale.

The bony deposit represents the legacy of an active inflammation of the bone and its covering (periosteum) at the area of the spavin, *i.e.* the enlargement, the latter varying from about the size of a marble to that of a child's fist, but size bears no relationship to the degree (if such be present) of lameness. In other words, a horse may have a huge spavin or spavins, yet remains perfectly free from lameness, whereas a trifling spavin sometimes causes persistent lameness.

Hence the reason why veterinary surgeons lawfully reject a spavined hock or hocks. The professional examiner necessarily attaches greater importance

to bone-spavin on a horse required for fast work, than the same on a cart-horse.

Age has also an important bearing when estimating future probabilities. The Editor would never dream of passing a horse having bone-spavin as sound, irrespective of age, work, breed, etc. The client must take the risk if he decides to purchase.

The chief difficulty in determining the existence or non-existence of bone-spavin is when both hocks are enlarged at the seat of spavin, more especially if the animal has large, clumsy hocks. Even expert opinions differ under such circumstances as these, so that it is not very likely that the non-professional will be able to satisfy himself in a case of this kind.

*The term occult* (hidden) spavin-lameness is used when it is believed that there is a degree of inflammation at work, chiefly confining itself to the smaller bones of the hock joint, without leaving the residue of the inflammation at the usual seat of spavin.

A *bog-spavin*—as the name implies—is a puffy condition of the whole hock. It is a misnomer to employ the suffix “spavin” to a hock in this condition.

Again, the term “blood-spavin” is used when the vein passing over the front face of hock appears more prominent than usual. Such is not the slightest detriment to a horse, and it is wrong for any man to reject a horse for such, in fact were I the seller, I should oppose such opinion, and very stoutly too.

Hereditary predisposition has, it is believed, something to do with the appearance of bone-spavin.

Perhaps I may attribute my not having suffered

by spavins to the great attention I have paid in my purchases of horses to the proper form of the hinder legs. I received a lesson on this point in very early life, and never lost sight of it afterwards. There is a particular formation of the hock joint which, in severe work, will nearly ensure either spavins or curbs.

The proper way to examine the hocks of a horse is to stand in the front of him, and look at them, as it were, between his forelegs, likewise view the hocks in profile.

#### SPLINTS

A splint consists of a small deposit of bone, commonly situated at the back of the upper third of the canon bone. Like spavin, the splinty deposit is the legacy of a circumscribed inflammation of the bone, or structures intimately connected with the latter (ostitis and periostitis).

At least 50 per cent. of the lighter breeds of horses have splint, and its presence is a frequent cause of rejection. Splints vary in their size, situation, number, and shape. Veterinary surgeons attach a great deal of importance to the situation of a splint or splints, likewise the class of animal, its age, and the nature of the work it has to perform.

When splints are located close to the knee, few veterinary surgeons would recommend the purchase of such a horse. The worst forms of splint, in the Editor's opinion, are those tiny deposits immediately below the knee that abrade or press upon the soft structures adjacent thereto.

These minute splinty particles often produce obscure forms of lameness in the fore-limb, and require very careful manipulation to detect their presence. They are easily overlooked.

Strictly speaking, it is the duty of every veterinary surgeon to reject for splint, because one can never give a positive forecast as to what may or may not happen. Moreover, it is a deviation from the normal condition, no matter whether it interferes with the present or future utility of the animal—the latter having been given as a legal definition of soundness.

Sometimes the splinty deposit is on the outside of the canon bone, but towards the front of it.

When examining the limb for splint, care must be taken not to confuse the button of the splint bones (inner and outer) with splint. The Editor remembers a horsekeeper asking him to look at a cart foal *born with splints*, but it was the buttons of the splint bones that were very prominent that deceived the innocent—one must add ignorant—horsekeeper. The writer was thankful that he had sufficient of that necessary commodity—tact and modesty, not to let the horsekeeper appear such a simpleton before his stable subordinates.

Lameness through splint is not at all uncommon, though mostly occurring during the *formative period*.

#### STAKED HORSES

It may be readily supposed that, from the number of years I have followed fox-hounds in the strongest inclosed counties of England, I have witnessed the

death of several hunters by dropping short at their fences, and alighting with the belly on the points of dead stakes, or live growers, either of which will have the effect of letting out the intestines ; neither does it require a deep wound to do this, as the rim of the belly is but thin. Once in particular I saw a most distressing case, which occurred when Mr Corbet hunted Warwickshire. Towards the close of a very fine run, a brook presented itself to our career. Four of us charged it in a line, and got well over ; but as we were going, best pace, over *the next field but one*, Will Barrow, the huntsman, called out to Mr Tarleton, of Bolesworth Castle, Cheshire, to this effect :—" Stop, Sir ; your horse's guts are out." On looking at him, I saw his intestines hanging down to the ground ; and, it is almost needless to add, I saw his remains on their road to the flesh-gallows the next morning.

Now previously to the arrival of a veterinary surgeon, there is only one thing to be done by a horse which is staked. The protruded intestines should be replaced as carefully as possible ; and, *without any time being lost*, a pocket handkerchief should be applied to the orifice so as to prevent the admission of air.<sup>1</sup> The saddle should be taken off ; and by means of the girths tied together by the pocket handkerchiefs of friends—for generally some of the field pull up on such occasions as these—a bandage over the part should be formed. The horse should then be walked quietly to the nearest stable, and there await the arrival of

<sup>1</sup> Injuries of this nature nearly always call for immediate destruction of the animal.—EDITOR.



medical aid. In case the intestines do not protrude, this is, I believe, as safe a plan as can be pursued. Staked wounds upon the chest, shoulder, etc., ought to be washed with some antiseptic and a veterinary surgeon immediately sent for.

#### STRING-HALT

There has been a good deal of speculative amusement about this rather common defect; but the ablest practitioners of the veterinary art are, I believe, quite at sea as to the cause,<sup>1</sup> or cure. I never saw but one horse with the string-halt in the *fore-leg*. He was going about five miles an hour in a baker's cart, and it gave a singular appearance to his action. The baker told me he was not a shilling the worse for it, for the purpose he put him to.

The following is my own experience of string-halt. I purchased a horse in Ireland for £25 which had it in both hind-legs to a great degree, but no horse could beat him over the Kildare country with the little parson on his back, who was the owner of him. I sold him to Colonel Wardle, who rode him several years. He afterwards became the property of a brother-in-law of mine, who rode him till he reached his twenty-sixth year. He was then shot with whole stockings, for I really believe he never fell down in his life. I am much inclined to think the peculiar action of horses thus affected renders them safe on the road. Mr Benson bought a horse, called *Jack-Catch*, from me,

<sup>1</sup> The causes of string-halt are variable, though in many cases of a very obscure nature.—EDITOR.

when he hunted in Warwickshire, and I believe he was never better carried—the horse continuing sound for several seasons, although he had string-halt to a considerable degree in one hind-leg. I once had a hunter which had it in both his hind-legs when being “turned over in his stall,” as the grooms say, but never when out of his stable: and I had also a cart mare much afflicted with it; and here it is an evil. On the road it is no detriment to her; but at plough, when going very slow, it breaks the uniformity of her action, and consequently interferes with that of the others. Several good race-horses have been partially affected by string-halt.

#### SPRAINS OF TENDONS, ETC.

Although all muscular and ligamentous parts are liable to lameness, horses are seldom lame above the leg. Nine times in ten the injury lies between the knee and the ground. I have no reason to complain of injuries to my stud from sprains, having experienced very few bad cases. I can only recollect breaking down one hunter (by a down-leap on to a hard road), and one hack—a thorough-bred one, who broke down in both hind-legs at the same moment, when going at the rate of fifteen miles an hour on a turnpike road.

There has been a wonderful deal of nonsense written about sprains in horses' legs<sup>1</sup>—such as preternatural

<sup>1</sup> “A sprain is a preternatural extension, or forcible elongation, of the tendons, or a sudden twist of some particular joint, by which the ligamentary junction sustains an injury, and produces lameness. Horses having encountered such accidents should be turned out in a still and quiet pasture, where they may be free from alarm

extension, and forcible elongation, of the tendons, etc. etc. ; but as long as I have been enabled to consult my reason on such matters, I have always treated a sprain as a violent inflammation of the part, and done all in my power to repel it by fomentations, cooling lotions, and a dose or two of physic. Rest—absolute rest—however, is the grand specific : and does not the animal tell us this ? for when a horse goes lame, is he not then resting the injured limb ?

Blistering and firing, as I said before, are coupled together like two hounds, and one or the other of them generally is resorted to in the cure of bad sprains. If there is enlargement after inflammation is subsided, some stimulant must be used ; but, since I have experienced the effect of the mercurial plaster, I am quite out of conceit with blistering. If firing must be resorted to, the operation should not take place till some weeks after the injury has been done.

Bad riders are very apt to lame their hunters in riding them over a country. If it were possible to give every man a good hand on his horse, there would not be so many lame ones as there are.

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and disturbance. When at unrestrained liberty, it is natural to conclude they adapt the gentleness of their motion to the state of their case, and exert themselves no more than a proper respect to their own safety may render secure. It is a self-evident fact, that a restoration of elasticity or strength of part is more likely to be obtained by rest, and the efforts of nature, than any topical application that can be made !” (Taplin’s “Sporting Dictionary.”)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although this paragraph foot-note is derived from a very old book, it does, nevertheless, express the state of affairs admirably.—EDITOR.

## SORE BACKS

*Saddle-galls*

It is many years since I have had occasion to discontinue the use of a horse by reason of a sore back. Common attention to saddles (made by good saddlers), by drying, beating, and brushing the pannels of them after use, is all that is wanted here. Heavy women, however, and many horsemen, from a peculiarity of seat, are apt to wring horses' backs. The skin also of some horses is so tender that it will gall with very slight pressure. Strong repellent lotions, if the skin is not broken, are the best means to apply at first ; but if a sit-fast takes place, either the knife or some very strong detergent ointment must be had recourse to. I have seen some very awkward cases of sore backs, proceeding from various causes, and often very difficult of cure. They require a nice treatment, and veterinary aid should be timely called in. One of the best preventatives of saddle-gall is that of leaving the saddle on for about an hour or so after one comes in. This allows the back to gradually cool.

## STABLES

Having, in a vast number of instances, seen horses produced in very bright condition from very indifferent stables, I was for many years of my life very indifferent about the structure of them. Few men, however, have put their good and bad properties to the test more than I have done, in the roving life I have generally led with my horses in the winter

months. It may appear strange, but in my younger days, I cared little what sort of a building my horses were put into, provided I had it in my power to stop up every hole and crevice about it, and as nearly as possible approximate it to a hot-house. As for ventilation, I never dreamed about it; neither did I consider it at all essential to the health of my stud. All I can say is, that with such fearful odds against me, I had no inflammatory complaint in my stable until I had been an owner of hunters for more than ten years, during more than eight of which my daily morning salutation to my groom in the winter was—"Well, Ned, is the stable warm and comfortable?" "Pretty well, Sir." "That's right, Ned: put lots of dung outside the door; stop up every crevice over their heads; stuff the foot of your old stocking in the key-hole; and mind there is no cracked pane in the window." Now it is quite evident that Ned<sup>1</sup> and his master were two ignorant boobies; notwithstanding which their horses looked, and were, well. I must also add, that this practice was not confined to my own stable, but was in pretty general use with some of my neighbours, who liked to see their horses look bright and well; and furthermore, I am quite satisfied inflammatory attacks were not more frequent or fatal among hunters at the period I am speaking of, than they are at present.

<sup>1</sup> This Ned, it must be observed, was a most excellent groom, and, having served me faithfully for nine years, obtained £100 per annum wages as hunting groom, and now keeps a very respectable inn.

In a small pamphlet on the *Diseases of Horses*,<sup>1</sup> the writer chiefly attributes what may be termed the indisposition of horses to the improper construction of stables ; and for which he considers the county of Salop to be notorious. “ The consequences,” says he, “ of an ill-ventilated stable are of a very serious nature ; they are not calculated upon until your horse points them out in language not to be misunderstood ; and, unless the most active measures are adopted, the rapid progress of the diseases produced by it will baffle all your endeavours, and your horse become unsound for life. When a stable is too much crowded or ill-ventilated, a *very powerful poison* is generated there—the pernicious effect of which soon shews itself, especially if you bring a fresh horse within its sphere of action.” Mr H. then proceeds : “ A hunter is brought from grass in full health ; he is put into a crowded, ill-ventilated stable ; in the course of the night, or on the following day, he is seized with a violent shivering ; irritation in the throat follows, with a cough, difficulty of breathing, and inflamed eyes.” Mr H. now produces some cases of horses thus affected, which, however, we can only look upon as the natural consequence of bringing a horse, which for three or four months has been breathing fresh air in his pasture, all at once to respire the hot and stimulating atmosphere of a crowded or ill-ventilated stable.

Now notwithstanding my conviction of the high temperature in which a horse kept all the year round

<sup>1</sup> By Mr Edward Hickman, V.S., etc., published in 1823, and dedicated to John Mytton, Esq.

in the stable will live and enjoy the highest health, yet my common sense points out to me the necessity of the means of ventilation. These means, however, should, for hunters or race-horses, be limited. No streams of air; no broken windows (for a horse should stand in an equal temperature, and this he can never have if the windows of his stable are broken, as it will then depend on the point the wind blows from); but small wooden tunnels, ascending through the roof, the tops of which should be constructed so as to prevent the rain descending through them.

It does not require a philosopher to point out to us, that, when the air of any building becomes more rarified than the external air, a wind or current of air is pouring in from the crevices of the windows and doors, to rest the equilibrium; but the light air with which the room is filled must find vent, in order to make way for the heavy air which enters. This fact is proved in the following way, and has often been the sport of children. If we set a door a-jar, and hold a candle near the upper part of it, we shall find that the flame will be blown *outwards*, shewing there is a current of air flowing out from the upper part of the room. Now if we place the candle on the floor, close by the door, we shall perceive, by the inclination of the flame, that a current of air sets into the room, and therefore the flame will be blown *inwards*. In fact, the current of warm light air is driven out to make way for the cold air which enters; and this, I believe, is the case in the grander scale of Nature. The light air about the equator, which expands and

rises into the upper regions of the atmosphere, ultimately flows thence back to the poles, to restore the equilibrium.

The influence that cold, combined with humidity, exercises over the animal economy, is too well known to be dwelt or enlarged upon, and I never yet saw a horse produced in perfect condition from a cold and damp stable. The latter evil property is not sufficiently appreciated; but, very early in life, I saw its baneful influence. A friend of mine, residing under the Broadway hills in Worcestershire, paid the greatest attention to the condition of his hunters, but never could attain it there, although, to the eye, his stable was everything we could desire, *and it was warm and well-ventilated*. When his stud moved to Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire, where his stable was very inferior to look at, they immediately improved in their condition. The fact was, the first-named stables were damp, although he drained them; and the latter were dry.

Mr Percivall (Lecture 38) says—"He that has clean and cool stables will have a healthy stud; and the converse of this will never fail to engender disease. Above all other considerations then, in taking the colt from his natural state, it behoves us to guard him from the vicissitudes of cold and heat, and to keep him in an atmosphere as pure as that of which we have just deprived him." This is strongly in favour of the regular in-door system, for we know the outdoor system is anything but regular: yet, with great deference to Mr P., he has gone a little too far here.





THORO'GHBRED STALLION 'DIAMOND JUBILEE'

Bred and owned by His Majesty King Edward VII. Own broodmare Florized II and Persimmon. Sires, St. Simon; Dam, Poollia II. Winner of the Derby 1900 and an ideal type of sire for weight-carrying Hunter stock.



In the first place, it is impossible to keep a stable as pure as the open air; and, in the next, it is by no means essential to a horse's health that it should be so, or that he should be kept cool—*on the contrary* if a hunter or race-horse. I maintain the contrary on experience; and affirm that a temperature of sixty-two or sixty-three is almost essential to the perfect condition of horses. Here, with respect to the race-horse, I am backed by Mr Darvill in his treatise on "Training the English Race-horse," who says that thorough-bred horses, which have originated in a hot climate, are not to be got into racing condition unless kept in a stable of a certain temperature of heat, which he estimates at sixty-three.<sup>1</sup>

Another writer on the diseases of horses says: "The moment parturition is accomplished, the subsequent existence of animals depends so much on respiration that they enjoy health, activity, and vigour, or become enfeebled, emaciated, and diseased, according to the degree of purity or the state of contamination of the atmosphere in which they breathe. For it is to be observed that the air, in its passage through the lungs, undergoes a decomposition—the oxygen, or vital part, being absorbed by the blood; and with this fluid carried to every part of the system, to which it imparts life and vigour.

I have good reason to believe there is no vapour which acts more offensively on the eye-sight than

<sup>1</sup> Mr Darvill properly observes there should be a thermometer in every stable, which should be consulted before it is shut up at night.

animal excretions ; and our own feelings convince us of this whenever we enter a dirty stable. Here, however, a great change has taken place in the practice of grooms, and a most beneficial one it is to horses under their care. The old plan was to put a very large bed of straw in a horse's stall twice a week, removing very little of the foul litter at other times. The consequence was a great accumulation of offensive matter, the greater part of which is now removed every day, and fresh straw supplied. Another improvement has also suggested itself. The truss is cut through with a hay-cutting knife, which makes the straw go much farther, and for this obvious reason—when it is of tolerably long growth, one end of it gets stained, whilst the other is quite clean ; but in this case, of course, it must all be thrown out together.

Apologising for this trifling digression, I proceed to state that a clean, wholesome, warm, and dry stable is a great desideratum in getting horses into condition ; and, although I would not carp at trifles, yet if a person were to say to me, “ I will build you stables for eight hunters for your own use,” the following should be the plan.

I would have two four-stalled stables, in which I would keep only six horses—*i.e.* three in each ; and I would have a loose box at the end of each. If possible I would have a southern aspect, with windows opening from the top or downwards, or else on a pivot in the centre, and placed so high in the wall that, when open, the air may be circulated through

the stable without affecting one horse more than another ; and the height of the interior should be only twelve feet in the clear. I would have the stalls paved nearly flat, with only a trifling inclination to the centre ; each of the stalls should be no more than six feet wide.<sup>1</sup> There should be at least twelve feet behind the horses, and the exterior walls and doors should be very thick. The wooden partition walls of the loose boxes should be only nine feet high, with wooden bolts to the doors ; and each box should not exceed ten feet square. The saddle-room, well fitted up with saddle cupboards, boiler, etc., and quite apart from the stable. Of ventilation I say nothing, that being a matter of course ; but I would have the sides of the stalls nine feet high at the head, with small iron racks, and pillar reins for each horse to be dressed in. I should always be very particular about the stall-posts ; for these are very frequently the cause of severe injury. When I went to see the King's stables at the new palace at Pimlico, I was astonished to see almost every other horse in them with capped hocks. On inspecting the stall-posts I perceived the cause. They were of fluted stone, and with angles, which proved that Mr Nash knows nothing about the *inside* of stables. Stall-posts should be made of wood, quite smooth and circular ; and they should extend to the ceiling, or at least ten feet high.

Methinks I hear the question asked—Would you

<sup>1</sup> The drainage should be surface, and the floor composed of roughened cement, etc.—EDITOR.

not have more loose boxes? A trifling addition converts each stall into a box. Two bars, from the two centre stall-posts to the wall, convert these stalls into loose places, quite sufficient for the purpose we require of them; and the horse that is loose is prevented, by a very simple contrivance, from annoying the one that is tied up. In the stables of Sir John Dashwood King, at Halton House, Bucks, I first saw this used. It consists of a light cast-iron guard, hitched to the stall-post in the first place, and then to the top bar or rail, and extending only far enough to prevent the loose horse touching the quarters of the one tied up with his mouth, which otherwise he would be inclined to do: thus it is evident that, out of eight horses, four may always be loose, which, in my opinion, is quite sufficient for horses in constant work. One little improvement, however, may be suggested here. To one of the loose boxes at the end there should be an outside door; then, in case of a horse expected home out of stable hours, he may be taken into his box and dressed without disturbing the stud.

When we consider that after every hard day's work with hounds an effusion of lymph takes place in all those parts which are exposed to severe friction, it is unnecessary to remark that the sooner absorption of that lymph takes place, the sooner is our horse fit for work, and the less liable is he to become injured from the effects of bangs or blows which his legs may have received. Now an admirable auxiliary here is the power a horse has, when loose, to shift his position

as often as he feels inclined, and to put his whole frame into motion, to the very great relief of all the muscles and joints in his frame. Loose boxes are also recommended for mares in the spring of the year, for reasons too obvious to specify, and for all horses labouring under disease, or lame, and for such as carry very heavy weights.

The permanent objection to loose boxes for general use consists in the great space of ground they occupy, so that it is impossible to keep a large stud loose.<sup>1</sup>

#### LEAPING BAR

In the leaping bar, weights are suspended at the extreme ends; so that in leaping, should a horse push or strike against the bar, it bends down to the earth before him, and he infallibly clears it, even if he were not to leap a foot high. As some horses may not be disposed to leap when they have discovered the trick of the bar, it may be loaded with more weight, and they may thus be punished into the performance. The bar may also be fixed by bolting it with a little bolt shot into the side posts. The notches in the posts are to receive the axles of the bar, to raise or lower it as required. This may be said to be a sort of cockneyish contrivance, but I think there is merit in it: and I am far from condemning the use of leaping-bars, as it is so much the fashion now not to consider a horse a perfect hunter unless he will leap timber in a stand.

<sup>1</sup> The value of isolated loose boxes cannot be over-estimated.—  
EDITOR.

## THORNS IN LEGS AND STUBS

There are few cases of mechanical injury to which the horses of fox-hunters are more liable than thorns in their legs, or stubs in their frogs or fetlocks. With thorns, of course, the first point to be desired is extraction, but then it is often difficult to find the seat of them; also, when the seat of them is found, they are not always easy to be got at, in which case I have never been sparing of the knife or lancet. Sometimes, however, we are compelled to wait for suppuration, which must be encouraged as much as possible. In two instances it has happened to me that four or five gatherings of pus have been collected and discharged before the thorn would make its appearance—it having been, of course, deeply seated. I have the point of a black-thorn, three-quarters of an inch long, now in my possession, that a hunter of mine carried nearly a whole season in his fetlock joint, causing suppuration after every day's work. He was a game horse, or he would not have worked sound with it, which he never failed doing when he had got a mile from his stable.

The following case will shew how necessary it is to cut and search for thorns when there is every reason to believe a horse is lame from that cause. Some years since I sold a mare to an intimate friend for a good round sum. The second season he lamed her, and, after having been severely fired by the late Mr Walton, V.S., of Shiffnall, she was turned out for the summer. When she came into work again the follow-



ing autumn, a large black-thorn issued from between hair and hoof! She was then sound; but it availed nothing, for she caught cold at grass, became a roarer, and this capital mare—for there were few better—was thus rendered useless from want of proper management.

More hunters are ruined by stubs or splinters of wood running into their legs and feet than by thorns. Indeed, when we reflect on the many hundred times in the course of a season that hunters, ridden in close woodland countries, alight, from high banks, on ground nearly covered with sharp-pointed stubs, from which faggots, stakes, etc., have been cut, we must confess our surprise that accidents do not oftener happen. Many good horses, however, are, I fear, annually lamed by being stubbed, as we call it, many of which are so far injured as to be destroyed.

In the first place, there is no judging of wounds but from appearance and locality; therefore a description of them is useless. Add to this, it so often happens that ligaments, tendons, or nerves become wounded, the treatment of which—fatal consequences being always so near at hand—requires all the skill of the regularly-bred veterinarian, who alone is fit to direct it, and observe the attempts of Nature in their progress. Contused and lacerated as the parts are from accidents of this nature, we cannot be surprised at the violent inflammation which too often ensues. Wounds about the elbow, etc., are very liable to be followed by an accumulation of air beneath the skin.

## THOROUGHPIN

A thoroughpin, if present, is situated at the back of, and just above the point of the hock. It shews itself as a bulging or slight distension, either upon the inner or outer side, but when manipulated with the finger, the latter by pressure causes the bulging to grow larger to either one side or the other. In plain language, the fluid can be pressed through from side to side, hence the name — thro-pin, from whence the term thoroughpin has been derived. Sometimes both sides bulge. It constitutes unsoundness, but very rarely causes lameness, yet nearly all veterinary surgeons reject horses having it.

Far too much importance is attached to this simple matter.

## BURSAL ENLARGEMENTS

*Wind-galls*

Puffy swellings in the neighbourhood of joints and tendon sheaths have been, though erroneously, termed wind-galls.

Such swellings are specially common at or about the fetlock joints, but by no means confined to these situations. It is very seldom that a bursal enlargement causes lameness. Horses that are prematurely worked, or horses that are hard-worked, commonly show swellings of this nature about the joints.

The hock and knee are frequently affected. If large, the movement of the joint, etc., is hampered.

THE HUNTER

SELECTION—CONFORMATION—AGE

BY FRANK TOWNEND BARTON



## THE HUNTER

SELECTION—CONFORMATION—AGE

BY FRANK TOWNEND BARTON

**P**ROBABLY there is no other class of horse that requires the exercise of so much sound judgment as that appertaining to the selection of the hunter.

Keen perceptive powers, combined with ability to try the animal as to its suitability to the country in which it has to be used, are indispensable.

A hunter may perform its work satisfactorily in one country, but, when taken into another, may give an indifferent, if not a bad account of itself: thus, for instance, the stiff fences in the Melton country present obstacles not equalled in any other.

In selecting a hunter, colour seldom plays any part, and one sees horses of almost every colour in the hunting field; the old maxim coming into play "that a good horse can never be a bad colour"; though, of course, individual preference sometimes dominates.

Bay, brown, light or dark chestnut, and grey are the principal colours, more especially bay and brown, with either white or black points: most chestnuts have white, usually about the legs.

With reference to age and height, much will depend upon circumstances. Weight-carrying hunters are

always more difficult to procure, and command higher prices, especially if brilliant performers, several hundred guineas frequently being paid for such.

Boys' hunters may range from 12½ to 14.2 hands in height, whilst for short, light-weight men, 15½ hands to 15.3 hands may be taken approximately as the height ; but the height of a hunter is quite subsidiary to that of its build, although, as previously stated, the nature of the country in which the horse has to be used must be the guide.

Where the fences are high, tall horses are necessary, but build must not be sacrificed to this.

Some hunters are nearly 17 hands, but a short man on a tall horse never looks well, either in or out of the hunting field, and most hunting men value their appearance in the saddle, more especially if the meet is attended by ladies.

When selecting a hunter pay particular attention to its *conformation*—good conformation being of paramount importance, whilst *action* is equally so. Both are more important than even *absolute* soundness, though the writer believes and always advises the selection of the soundest animal obtainable.

The head should be light, a heavy head in a hunter being most objectionable ; the forehead straight ; the eyes large and full ; the ears erect, thin, and covered with thin hair ; whilst the skin covering the head and face should also be thin, rendering the various prominences upon the skull easily felt, and readily seen.

The high-class hunter should have a mild, keen,

and extremely intelligent facial expression, impressive of alertness to a degree.

The country is full of half-bred hunters with no more expression on their faces than that of vanners, and such horses can be picked up at all sorts of prices.

The neck must be long, narrow towards the poll, giving an oblique carriage to the head, a lofty carriage being undesirable in the hunter. As the shoulders are approached, the neck should perceptibly increase in width, be of moderate thickness, and clean along its upper border, with a closely-cropped mane. Many hunters are very weedy in the neck, and if this is the case, the horse is unable to recover itself in the event of a fall, as the muscles of the neck materially assist in raising the fore-part of the body, in its attempt to regain balance.

The upper border of the neck should pass into high withers, and most of the best hunters are high in this region.

The back and the loins of medium length, whilst the latter must be broad and clothed with powerful muscles, passing into neatly turned quarters—the so-called “goose-rump” being of objectionable conformation.

The chest must be deep; in fact, it is a *sine quâ non* that a hunter should be “well-hearted,” *i.e.* have plenty of space for the free play of heart and lungs under extreme exertion.

A slightly flat side is a recommendation, though the ribs must not be short, otherwise the horse be-

comes "tucked up" or "washy" in appearance. When selecting a hunter the intending buyer must fix his eyes upon the shoulders, not only whilst the horse is at rest, but also when jumping, as good shoulder action is one of—if not the most important points in a hunter. In action it must be free and full, yet fine withal; because if the shoulders are logged up with muscles (heavy shoulders), the free action of the joint is interfered with, thus preventing the animal from freely bending itself at the jumps.

Width of chest is not requisite, and often means bulky shoulders.

Arms strong and powerful; fore-arms of good breadth above, ending below in broad-jointed, clean-cut knees, not necessarily without a blemish; in fact, some of the best hunters have the so-called "banged" knee or knees, which, unless it interferes with the animal's utility, is merely a blemish, and ought not to be allowed to handicap a clever horse in relation to sale, though blemishes usually call for a slight reduction in the price. A stiff knee is certainly detrimental, so also is a low daisy-cutting action, as such horses have no power to freely flex and extend their joints during the leap.

The cannons, fetlocks, and feet demand special examination. The so-called "clean" legs are indispensable, and every horseman knows the meaning of this term, which implies skin, bone, and tendon, felt—or seen and felt. If a hunter's legs are of this description there is little fear that they will fill up after a heavy day's work.





**CHOCOLATED HUNTER SIRE, 'THE TUSMAN'**

A winner of many Races. Owned by A. Knowles, Esq., Nantwich. This is a beautifully formed Horse, equal to an almost every particular, and may be taken as the type of Sire to breed from.



The fetlocks must be free from disease and capable of full flexion ; from here we proceed to the pasterns ; and the intending buyer must keep his eyes open, as a great deal of information can be gained from the conformation in this region, though some latitude must be allowed in the case of aged hunters, more especially if they have done a lot of work.

The ideal pastern is one with a moderate degree of obliquity—broad in front, deep from back to front, and well rounded at the sides. It must be covered with thin skin (clean pasterns). Pasterns that are too oblique, too long, or light in bone, are of bad conformation, whilst short, upright pasterns are extremely objectionable, and generally the result of lameness, more especially if one pastern is short and upright, and the other oblique. Do not purchase a hunter with pasterns of this description.

Windgalls, ringbone, and other exostoses are very common about the pasterns, and, of course, fatal to a horse's value (excepting the first-named). Another point of importance is the tendency, through premature wear, or, it may be, through too much work, of the fetlock joints to become puffy, but in these cases the fore limbs will probably be over-bent.

Much the same remarks are applicable to the hind fetlocks and pasterns.

The feet must be sound—concave on their lower surface, proportionate in size, of good slope, well open at the heels, neither contracted nor cracked, both representing unsoundness.

No mention has so far been made of splint in this letter, which, if present, is situated between the knee and the fetlock—usually at the back of the cannon. Although this constitutes unsoundness, the age of the animal, and the position of the splint, must be taken into consideration.

Particular attention must be paid to the hocks and to hock-action ; in fact, the hocks represent, not only the horse's safety, but that of the rider as well.

A good hunter should be able to flex and tuck its haunches under it almost as freely as a man can bend his arm, and this it cannot do if one or both hocks happen to be spavined, swollen, or their free play interfered with from any other causes. The hock-joints must be broad and deep from front to back, clean in outline and covered with thin skin, neither too upright nor yet overbent, forming an obtuse angle with the gaskin above and the cannon below ; if the angle is too acute, the hock becomes overbent—the so-called sickle-shaped hock ; whilst, on the other hand, if the angle be too obtuse, it tends to straighten it—"upright hock," which is often thick, and wanting in that *cleanness* so essential in typically-formed hocks.

The first and second thighs must be neatly turned, and clothed with powerful muscles.

In addition to critical inspection the *ensemble* of the hunter should be that of a thin-skinned, big-boned, small-headed, fine-shouldered, deep-chested, clean-limbed animal, with a neatly-turned, compact body, and having a facial expression of great keenness,

docility, and quick perception, all which the born hunter must not only *possess*, but be able to *apply* such according to circumstances.

Although the author does not intend to trespass upon the subject of soundness in the hunter, he cannot refrain from mentioning the importance of three essentials—viz. sound sight, sound wind, and a sound heart.

If a hunter's clock is not sound, a catastrophe is almost sure to happen. If its sight is defective it is very liable to misjudge distance, or to make a false jump. If its wind is not normal, it not only becomes an annoyance to its rider, but it is liable, under severe exertion, to sudden collapse.

We refer to roaring, yet willingly admit that many roarers are excellent hunters.

*Temperament* plays an equally important part, not only for the safety of other horses, but also for that of the hounds, likewise the rider, as more than one man has been kicked to death by his own horse, after a fall from it.

The moral is, avoid purchasing a vicious hunter. *Abilities to perform* necessarily stand pre-eminent—otherwise no hunter.

An elderly gentleman, or one of nervous temperament, ought to select what is known as a "seasoned" hunter, say a gelding at seven or eight years, that has been carefully used; and much the same remarks apply to the ladies' hunter; but younger men generally prefer a hunter of about five years, very often schooling it themselves for, say, two years.

Cheap, old, and worn-out hunters, with little or no action, are practically valueless, and judges are quite right in keeping such low down in the prize list in jumping competitions, no matter how cleverly they may perform their work. A hunter at six years, if it has been judiciously used and derived from the right stock, ought to be in its prime, and, if clever, its price may be anything from eighty to several hundred guineas ; but absurdly high prices are often paid for horses not worth one-tenth their value, and if Nimrod's remarks have been digested there will be no difficulty in appreciating the truth of this statement.

Before concluding this chapter, those in search of a hunter, or stud of hunters, must try the animals themselves, under all conditions, because some hunters will jump very differently in cold blood to what they do when following hounds.

Some hunters are tremendous pullers, in fact, defy all attempts to hold them, and such are only fit for dare-devil riders.

One cannot be too careful concerning the selection of a ladies' hunter, as she is placed at tremendous disadvantages.

There is a remarkable difference in temperament—one hunter will probably rush at his fences in a reckless and headstrong manner, whilst another will even walk to its jump and clear it in a businesslike manner, as instanced in the case of a horse seen by the writer<sup>1</sup> at the Olympia Show in 1907.

<sup>1</sup> Frank T. Barton.

Such a horse as this is invaluable to an elderly gentleman, or timid horseman.

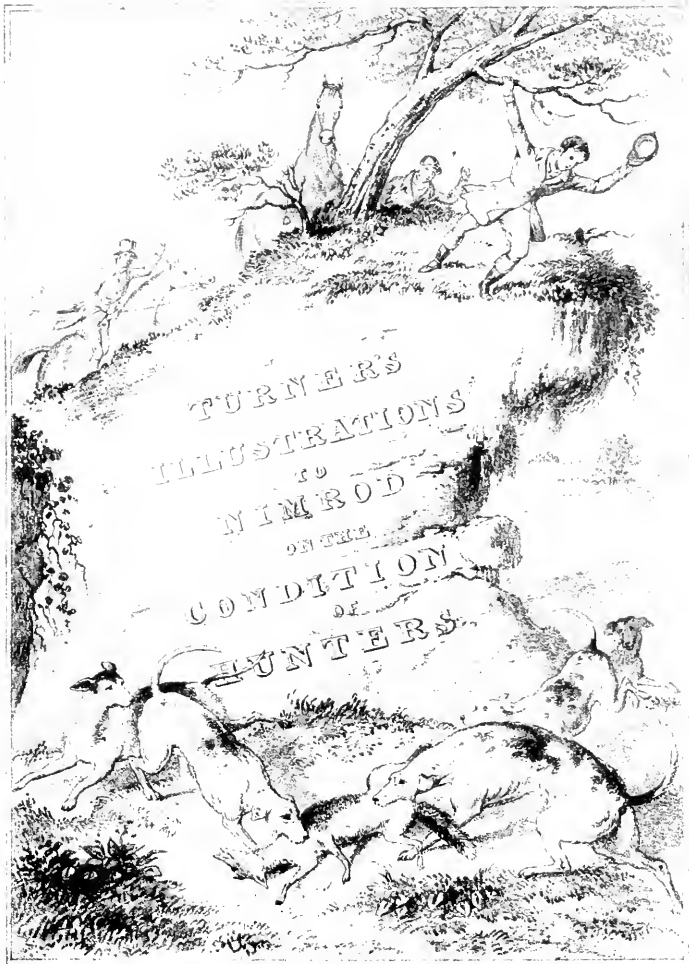
One horse may be particularly good at timber, but fail at water, where width and height are combined as a jump.

There are multifarious sources for the purchase of hunters, but by far the largest proportion are bought and sold at Tattersall's, though of course care must be exercised to note the conditions of sale, as all horse repositories—no matter whether in London or in the provinces—are filled with "all sorts and conditions" of animals. It must also be borne in mind that a steady and brilliant hunter is an extremely scarce commodity, and will always command a ready sale, either in or out of season.

THE END







TURNER'S  
ILLUSTRATIONS  
TO  
NIMROD  
ON THE  
CONDITION  
OF  
HUNTERS.





1  
PERSPECTIVE TO "AMROD ON THE CONDITION OF HUNTERS"





2

THE MEET

To get a Horse fit to appear by a covert side











+  
NEARLY DONE UP  
I have had many tired ones come into it





THE STAND STILL.

When a Horse is very much exhausted.





HOOUNDS IN FULL CRY

But the Mare carried me close to the Hounds the whole day



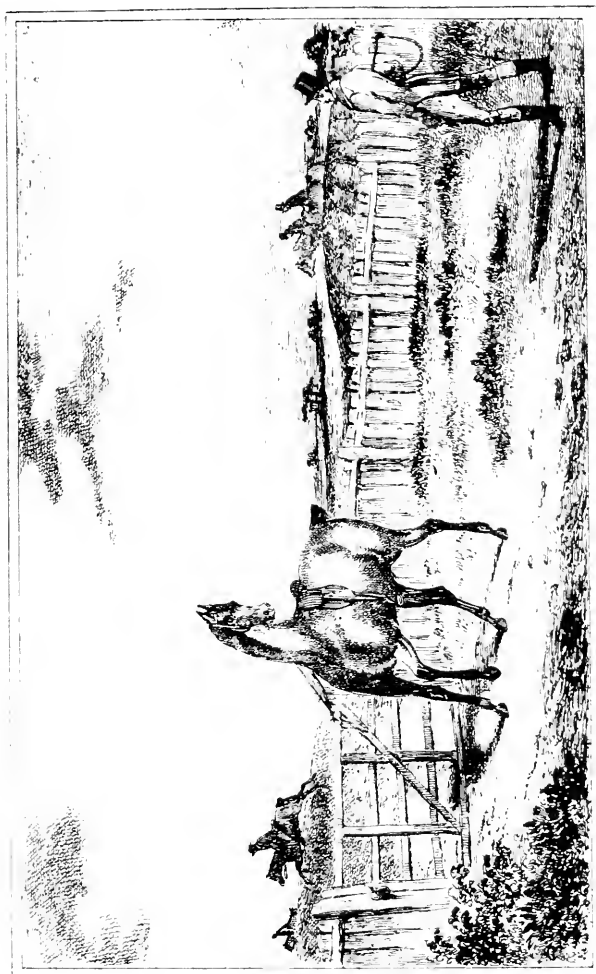


A COLD BATH

All the world knows that Sir Henry is one of the very hardest riders of the day







S

THE RIDER SPILL'D

Rushing at her Fences, and running her Head anywhere





CLEAKING THE BROOK

Jumping the Brook at the extremity of Kingham Field



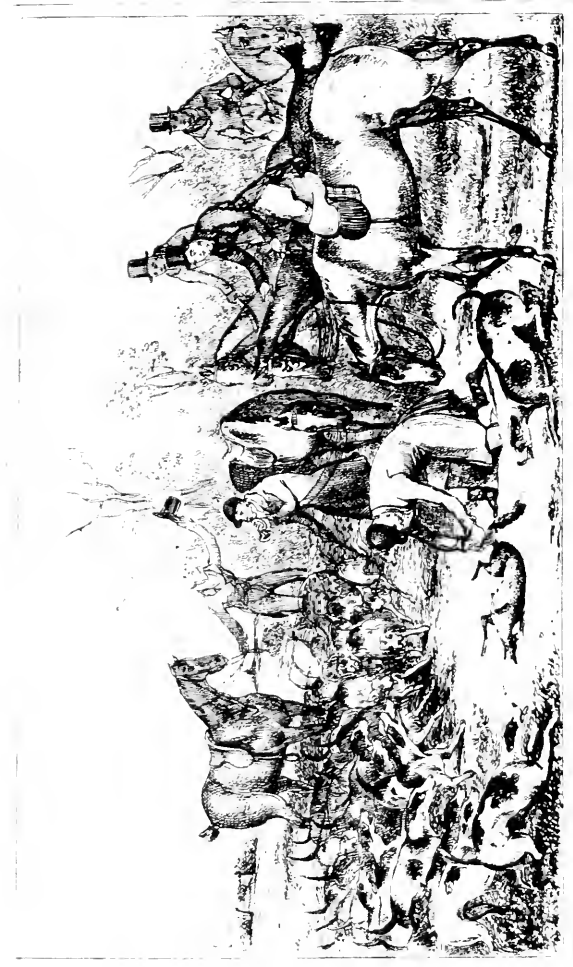












12

THE DEATH OF THE FOX  
And was killed in the Plantation



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