

Thesis:

Horse-shoeing: Its Uses and Abuses.

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Outline

Page Introduction

- 1 Man's place in animal kingdom
- 11 The horse man's aid
- 11 What has man done for horse
- 11 Need of horse shoeing.

Discussion

- 2 Definition of horse shoeing
 - 2 Preparation of the foot.
 - 3-4 Form of shoe
 - 3-4 Method of fitting
 - 4-5 Methods of nailing on and clinching
 - 5-6 Some fallacies in shoeing
 - 6-7 Bad shoeing cause of disease.
 - 7-10 Some defects that may be remedied
 10. Shoeing for speed.
 - Conclusion
 11. Much progress made in the art.
 12. Blacksmiths of to-day must be educated
 13. Should be schools founded.
- Man should be instructed
Should have diploma from school.

Man has placed himself at the head of the animal kingdom, and it is his proper place. But, without the aid of certain animals which he has domesticated he would not have attained his eminence quite so rapidly.

One of the animals that has done much toward aiding man is the horse. It has helped man to till the soil, it has hauled his loads, and carried man himself over hills and through valleys in the heat of battle. What has man done to help the dumb brute who has been faithful to duty. Some men beat their horses as though they were machines without any feeling. A horse needs as much care as a man and it is due to this fact that veterinarians are studying equine diseases and can now treat the horse when ill. It is just as essential that the horse's feet shall be taken care of as any other part of his body.

In the time of Alexander the Great we find many of the cavalry horses being left behind because their feet were badly cracked. In the ninth century shoeing was invented to prevent this cracking as well as the wearing away of the hoof. Then the shoes were laced or strapped on and only in the time of frost.

The foot is the puttiest part of a horse when properly taken care of. It is designed to bear his whole weight and when in good condition will stand a good deal of work. But when improperly shod it is a source of annoyance to the horse as well as its owner. In shoeing a horse therefore it is necessary that it is necessary that it be done properly.

The first essential is the preparation of the foot. Remove only the unnecessary growth of the foot. Do not pare the frog except to remove excessive horny growth. In rasping the hoof do not get it too thin as

this weakens the foot. Be sure that the foot is perfectly level as upon this depends the horse's ability to travel well.

The kind of shoe required depends on the size, shape and condition of the foot. In general the shoe should be broad in order to give plenty of bearing. It should be free from calks except for heavy draught horses. Tips nailed across the front of the foot are used. A shoe with a bar across the heel is an excellent form for sore feet. Then there are other forms for various purposes as a stifle shoe which projects in front of the foot. Shoes that are heavier at the toe, and those heavier at the side to prevent interfering.

There are two methods of fitting the shoe. The hot and cold. The former consists in fitting the shoe while hot thus doing away with the small depressions caused by rasping. Some smiths object

to this method because they say that it injures the hoof. But it seems to be the better method. The other method is cold fitting which is practiced by its adherents as being the only proper method.

The nailing of the shoe to the foot is an important matter and needs careful attention. The shoe should be nailed on so as not to break the wall of the hoof or otherwise weaken it. It should not be set too far back, and great care should be taken not to penetrate to the quick with the nails.

On clinching the nails pinch or twist them off then file thin. Make a small place for them to be set into the hoof. Rasp the outside of the hoof but very little as excessive rasping wears away the hoof and injures the outside of wall which is covered with a sort of varnish for protection. The average blacksmith does just the opposite of this. He does

not take pains in fitting the shoe properly. If it is too long he puts on calks if too short he sets it back and rasps away the front of the hoof. The nails are then driven up too far for safety and the horse goes lame.

The ends of the nails are left too blunt and a deep incision has to be made for the clinches. After this the smith rasps the outside of the hoof to make it look artistic and perhaps cover up defects in his work.

They often make the mistake of thinking that any piece of iron, the shape of the foot, will do for a shoe. Thus many horses are injured by having too much put into the shoe giving excessive weight for the amount of good to be derived.

Another fault is in leaving the toes too long. When this is the case, the back tendons of the leg are injured since the extra length

wits as a liver. It is just as bad to have too much latching in the toe as to have too much pursuit, as the latter results in deformation of the bones of the foot thereby causing severe lameness.

It is often the case that the horse that is shod in a hurry has the best foot because not so much of the hoof is pared away.

While when great pains is taken to much is removed. But, as a rule the farmer thinks that in the latter case he is getting the most for his money.

Some excellent authorities have stated that the cause of nine-tenths of unsoundness in horses feet is due to improper shoeing and such is found to be the case to-day. It requires just as much skill to shoe a horse as it does to be a surgeon, a doctor, or as much skill as in any artisan trade. Men say "Anybody can shoe a horse," as

"Anybody can be a farmer." But it requires years of experience before one can be a successful shiver. It cannot be learned in a month nor in a year. Yet there are men who have become proficient in this line of work.

Among the defects that may be remedied by shoring are the following:

Often we see a horse that travels well for a time then stumbles. The causes of this may be numerous. But the principal one is wearing shires that are too heavy thus preventing the proper use of the feet. Sometimes the toe may be too long causing the same results. To remedy this defect remove the cause. Put on lighter shires without calks, shorten the toe.

Interfering is a defect in the gait the horse hitting the opposite leg with his foot. This irritates the horses leg rendering him lame. To do away with

this weight the inside of the shoe in such a manner as to enable the horse to put forth more effort and carry the foot past the opposite leg.

When a horse is a knee knocker he hits his leg back of the knee with his foot. This is remedied by weighting the toe in front by making the shoe heavier at the toe.

If a horse is allowed to run barefooted too long his feet become tender, and then injuring the sensitive portion of the foot, giving rise to corns. These may also be caused by fast work on hard roads. On shoeing the affected foot first place leather the shape of the foot then nail on the shoe. This forms a protection against stones. If necessary room may be left for insertion of other material to form a cushion and absorb medicine.

Contracted heels is a common

cause of lameness in horses feet. The heels become closer together than normal through improper shodding or disease causing pressure on the sensitive portions of the foot. In shodding a foot like this the object is to get perfect elasticity. For this reason a bar shoe is put on allowing pressure of frog on the bar. This spreads the foot tending to bring it to its proper shape.

A foot with a quarter-crack, which runs on inside, is also shod with a bar shoe. The crack is fastened together the pressure enabling it to grow together much better.

A horse with coffin joint lameness is shod with a high-heeled shoe as this position enables horse to gain relief from the pain.

A horse that has thrown his stifle bone out of place is shod with a shoe projecting in front to prevent movement of foot, beyond a certain distance, backward.

When the mobility of the foot is impaired a curved shoe is put on which admits a rolling motion.

A horse sometimes overreaches with his hind feet catching his fore foot. To prevent this leave the toe a little longer than the shoe to obliterate clicking sound and also lighten the shoe.

Besides being shod for beneficial results in diseased feet horses are shod to aid in working, also for speed.

For the latter they are shod with shoes of various shapes and sizes. Some have weights at the toe, others at the side of the shoe.

Trotting horses are shod with shoes which give greater action.

Running horses are generally shod with plates for protection but are light.

The progress made in horse-shoeing since its invention is

marvelous. As the world has progressed it has made many discoveries in scientific lines, it has done much in literature and art. And like every thing else horse shoeing has advanced; but is far from being perfect yet. It is like other things in that there is always room for improvement.

The forms of the old Roman shoes were nearest to those of the present time yet they were very rude and not as well formed.

The shoes of other countries have been of various shapes. some covering entire wall of the foot.

It seems that some of those shoes were far better than those of to-day; for while rude they came nearer being adapted to use they were intended for.

The day is past when any man may become a blacksmith with a few months experience. The world has reached such a stage

in its progress that it demands trained men who are specialists in their line of work and capable of doing best possible work.

The engineer of to-day is far different from the one of yesterday what was laboratory work yesterday is shop work to-day.

The machinist, the foundryman, the carpenter, all must be the best or they are not up with the times.

So it must be with the horseshoer; instead of being a man of limited knowledge he must be an expert in his line. He must be acquainted with the different forms of feet and the proper method of shoeing each one.

He must ^{have} means to adjust foot to the proper angle.

The successful horseshoer of to-day will be the one who is not a mere artisan but an artist, who does nothing but shoe horses.

The chance for an education at the present time is far above that of

quarter of a century ago. There are industrial schools all over the country that fit a person for nearly any trade they wish to follow. But there is one trade not taught in these schools, and that trade is horse-shoeing. This should not be for it is just as important as any other trade.

There should be schools established to teach the anatomy of the horses foot, the different forms of feet, different kinds of shoes, and method of application of these shoes as well as preparation of the foot for shoeing. They should then be allowed to put in practice what they learn in lectures. They should be kept in this line of work till thoroughly prepared to shoe a horse in an intelligent and scientific manner.

May the time come when a horse-shoer must have a diploma from such a school as this.

Then will the industry be bet-

ter and horses feet will be more sound, and horses will become more valuable.

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