



## **Review of Wm. Youatt's publication, called 'The horse'**

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## REVIEW OF WM. YOUATT'S PUBLICATION,

CALLED

### 'THE HORSE.'

It was not till this day, June 10, 1854, that accident threw in my way this publication, which, as it appears to contain matters derogatory to the interests of the public in the use of these beneficial and delightful animals, and entailing an increase of suffering to them, so I feel called upon to make on this work a few passing remarks.

Charles Clark and myself often wondered, in attending sick horses with inflamed lungs (a not very unfrequent complaint), how it could be that before our arrival they had been dosed with an enormous quantity of common linseed oil by the common farriers; and as it was a perfectly indigestible body in the Stomach, and most inveterately nauseous and disgusting to the animal, and, also, as no medicine given afterwards was of any avail upon such a mass, so they uniformly died. (Calling it sometimes castor oil, which also, we know from actual trial, is not an effective purgative with the horse.) We said one to another, how comes it they have got into this vile practice, seeing that no man we know of, or any author whatever, has ever recommended such a course? But what was my astonishment when yesterday, stumbling upon this publication, I found in it this very recommendation, at page 212, and which determined me to a further scrutiny of its contents; and found much other objectionable matter, which I thought worthy of public attention, and especially by the veterinarian and the possessor of horses. Youatt appears, indeed, to have been a man of some natural talent or gift of freely expressing himself, of which this book affords demonstrative proof. His later publications in the 'Lancet' were, however, in much better language, in which it would appear he must have received help.

In a subsequent part of this volume he puts this detestable oil into his physic ball also,\* as he calls it, by which he means purgative ball, from whence possibly this incongruous article crept into 'Morton's Pharmacopœia,' as it is also there recommended in his *physic* ball; and to his —Youatt's *physic* ball—is then added that usual resort of ignorant prescribers, *calomel*, by no means a purgative of the horse, but a bitter, griping, tormenting article; and why this calomel should be given does not appear, when more effective and assuredly milder purgatives might be had recourse to. It is true, at last comes a small smattering of aloe with it, which given alone, with a little treacle for consistence, would have done the business properly, and without any danger of suffering or uncertainty at all.

He next has a chapter on *Thick Wind*, a rather anomalous affair, and probably the effect of plethora only, or of an incipient broken wind, and not a specific disease. He speaks also of lungs becoming *fat*—miserable indeed would it have been for the poor animal if this viscus could have been so affected with fatness,—and also of *PUMICED FEET*. We have shown elsewhere, such to have been merely foundered feet, permitted by protracted age to assume this tumid, spongy appearance.

Youatt, in his account of *Broken Wind*, has not condescended to make any mention of my name, as having first discovered that it proceeded from an emphysematous state

\* This execrable practice of giving oil originated in France, see Buletin Veterinaire p. 614.

of the lungs from ruptured air-cells, letting out the air into the intervening spaces between the cells or membranes, and thus puffing them up; and which is now found to be the origin and source of several obscure species of human asthma. (See, for further particulars, 'Rees's Cyclop.,' art. *Broken Wind*.)

We here have a disease which he calls by the strange name of *Stomach Staggers*. What it is we are at a loss to conjecture, not finding any such disorder in any veterinary or farriery publication we happen to be acquainted with.

Cutting out the feet of horses sent to be shod, he strongly recommends, and which is indeed the besetting sin of all the lowest order of farriers; and though it be true that, that truculent weapon, the butteris, formerly so destructively employed in notching the inflections, is now done away with, still that vile instrument, the *sharp-drawing knife*, is most officiously wielded in its place, in slashing the frog, and often in laying open to the quick, the flesh of the foot, and which thus exposed to wet and dirt, soon becomes a *canker sore*, of most difficult cure, and of infinite trouble and loss—that, instead of recommending this cutting of the foot, he would, we believe, have done much better in a strict and urgent admonition to moderate or avoid this baneful practice. The smiths, if reproved for thus acting, tell you in excuse, that the masters or owners of the horse "will have it done," and that they have sent word to that effect to the forge. Now, the fact appears to be, that the smiths engaged in this practice (and rather fond perhaps of exhibiting their dexterity with the knife) persuade the grooms how necessary it is to be done, and that they should inform their masters of it, and to insist upon the feet being *well pared out*—making them instrumental to their own injury: hence the order, when such really comes. But they get into a ready way of making this excuse, when, in reality, no such ridiculous order had ever been sent, for the public at last begin to know what dire injuries grow out of this practice. And most certain it is that a country bumpkin, quite raw and uninstructed in the anatomy of the foot, coming into a forge, enamoured with his new drawing-knife, could fiercely do more mischief in two minutes than two years of the most prudent measures could ever restore. There ought indeed to be a school formed for the previous instruction of these men, in the good knowledge of the horse's foot, before any permission is granted them to enter the forge; by which nearly all this evil would be avoided. There is also in this volume a miserable appearance of crouching and truckling to the trade, which is shown by his concealment of, and blinking at, the well-known effects of the common shoe, when applied in the common way of nailing, in reducing and diminishing the volume of the foot; and this is done in order, possibly, to curry favour, and obtain a more extensive sale and circulation of the volume amongst them.

In his chapter on horses eating *poisonous herbs*, he recommends to be given them *vinegar and gruel*, on what authority we know not; but we believe firmly had he recommended instead, some warm spicy medicament in proof spirit, it would have served this purpose much better, and by thus exciting the action of the stomach to an increased power and activity of digestion, he would have obtained a digestion of these said matters, and then their poisonous effects would have been done away with, as may be seen in our account of the digitalis in the '*Pharmacopœia Equina*.' Fond of the shop and its enticing articles, he orders *corrosive sublimate* to be administered to the horse in ten-grain doses, twice a day! We believe, if strictly complied with, many a brave animal would have been sent to his lasting quietus by such a physicking. Next, he obliges us with his notions concerning the *bots of horses*; and here he honours my name with a mention, the only one in the book, and describes the grub of the *astrus equi* of my enumeration, but omitting altogether the three other species, which in their grub state infest also the stomach of the horse,

viz., the *hæmorrhoidalis*, *veterinus*, and *salutiferus*; the first of these, the *hæmorrhoidalis*, it is, that hangs to the fundament of the horse in quitting the intestines, and not the *æstrus equi* of my enumeration, as he supposes. By a strange mistake, or inadvertence rather, the great Linnæus has described the real *æstrus equi* under the name of *bovis*, or the *ox bot*, supposing it was the same bot infested both animals. But for a more full account of these most curious insects and their ways, the reader is directed to the 'Linnean Society's Transactions,' vol. iii, p. 289, and vol. xv, p. 402, where he will find all the species at present known enumerated. Also, we may observe, these larvæ of the *æstri* do not adhere in a general way, as he imagines, to the white dense covering, or *epithelium*, which is lining the upper half of the stomach, but are found sticking to the red membrane near the pylorus.

We now come to his account of the *spasmodic colic*, as he calls it, viz., the dangerous *gripes* of horses; and his cure for it consists in the giving "*turpentine, bleeding, opium, and calomel*, and running them about." By *turpentine*, he probably means spirits of turpentine, a fiery fluid, whose acrimonious nature we have elsewhere exhibited in our treatise expressly on this complaint. And next, as to the *bleeding*, we should apprehend such a proceeding would rather tend to debilitate the system, than rouse the digestive powers, the main object to be sought and kept in view in this case, seeing that the disorder is simply at first only an arrested digestion. And, assuredly, *opium*, if given here, would have a directly sedative effect, in no way conducive to the object sought for. And, lastly, *calomel* is certainly no provocative to digestion, but would, probably, by its great weight, remain inactive at the bottom of the stomach till the case was decided in death or recovery. And "as to running the horse about" in a state of intense suffering, it would be almost certain, as we have repeatedly known, to bring on an entanglement of the bowels if at least the case should have been a violent one. In proof of this, we may refer to a noted case that happened in the King's Stables at Brighton, as narrated by the artist himself in the 'Veterinary Journal,' vol. ii, p. 348, where the article turpentine was indeed plied, *à l'outrance* to both ends of the intestinal tube, and the running about also was not omitted. He died, however, to the great chagrin of his royal owner, for he was one of his best horses. Other examples we could adduce, but for the most part they are but little spoken of.

We are led to pay great attention, in the early part of our practice, to these deplorable occurrences, entailing ruin sometimes to the poor man, and often to the rich no little anguish. At length, by watching, dissection, and care, we arrived at more clear notions of the treatment required, and saved afterwards nearly every case that occurred, of which we here give a scanty outline for the sake of its more general diffusion, referring the reader, however, for more extensive particulars, to our express dissertation upon it. (2d ed., London, 1837, pr. 3s.)

The arrested digestion may arise from several depressing causes, such as chills from draughts of air, or showers of rain wetting the skin, from too much food taken in the stomach at one time, or too greedily eaten, or not being sufficiently chewed, or it may have been of an improper nature or in bad condition. The digestive action once arrested, a chemical action succeeds, and the fermentation extricates air; this air distending the intestines almost to bursting, creates intolerable suffering, and the intestines contracting on the air, induces sometimes spasm. The horse lies down, paws with his fore-feet, rolls, kicks, and flings himself about, every now and then looking earnestly at his flanks. The undigested mass getting dry by the heat, increases his suffering, and soon brings on mortification and death.

After the knowledge gained by several unsuccessful cases, and instructed by dissection after death, and watching the course of the disease, we found the cases were all lengthened and their

termination protracted, when we used cordials. Now grown bolder in their application, and disregarding the fear so natural of exciting inflammation, we determined on pushing these remedies farther than we had ever done, promoting by every accessory we could devise the return of the lost digestive action; and this we did by keeping the animal in the warm, covering him well with rugs, or these being deficient, with plenty of straw, and pouring into his stomach a warm aromatic tincture, made of the crushed or ground *pimento-berry*, steeped in proof spirit, left standing together for a week or more, and then strained off and kept in the cupboard of the stable for immediate use on the first indication of the disease; waiting about every three quarters of an hour between the exhibition of it. Rubbing the abdomen with the hand passed under the cloths, was also of salutary effect, as were occasional injections of warm water, in which a little soap had been dissolved, and small portions of warm water to dilute the collections in the intestines, but not so profusely given as to destroy the action of the tincture upon the stomach. Some of these cases would give way to a single exhibition of the tincture; others, more violent, would require a repetition of it. In our treatise on it is given a case of Lord Dundas's mare, related by my nephew, Charles Clark, which required seven hours before relief was obtained, and all hopes had nearly vanished.

We reject the epithet, *spasmodic colic*, to this complaint, as the spasms are not a necessary concomitant of this disorder, and the term *gripes* we adopt as being more simple, distinctive, and unmistakable.

At page 155, we find him recommending the strong use, to use his own expression, of the bearing rein, as it is called, which certainly with more truth might be termed the torturing rein; indeed the French, with more propriety, do call it the *fausse rein*, or false rein. Not only are the jaws grievously punished by it, but the windpipe and larynx also are sufferers from it, occasioning distortion, and occasionally ulceration; and this from a mistaken notion of the horse's neck forming an arch, which its anatomy and bones of the neck will show is not the case, it being nearly straight in its natural and proper position: the rising crest of a horse well fed is arched enough without keeping his head forced down and neck bent in this ridiculous manner.

He is found strongly recommending the administration of blue vitrol (sulphate of copper) for the cure of Glanders. We first proclaimed the beneficial properties of white vitrol (sulphate of zinc) in this complaint, and of farcy gleet also, but combined with cantharides and warm spices (See '*Pharmac. Equina.*') Now, this sulphate of copper, so vehemently recommended, appears merely an evasive copy of my recommendation, but without the beneficial adjuncts, and is therefore comparatively of little value.

He appears an advocate also for dividing the nerves of horse's legs; an operation almost formerly strongly recommended by the Veterinary College, but now nearly disused and disclaimed by the generality of well-informed veterinarians. When it is really done (for it is only pretended), we have seen the hoofs separate and fall off; for, deprived of their nerves, the arteries do not perform their offices, and the horses stump about in a miserable manner when thus deprived. Indeed, Wm. Moorcroft, who first tried it on the horse, very candidly condemned the practice. The lameness, indeed, caused by contraction and its consequences, can never be fully removed by thus further deteriorating the foot, where no part is given in vain.

Strongly recommended by the Row, this work has much circulated, among the lower orders more especially, of the profession. Indifferent books, however, have their uses, in that their errors being pointed out, serve as shoals and landmarks to be avoided by future navigators.