

18820-4

Edm^d Coleman to R. H. Cross

Enclosure

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Veterinary College
Nov: 9th 1811

Sir.

I had the honor to receive
your letter on the 29th Ult. with a printed
Copy of a Prospectus by Captain Blagrave
and an Answer by W. Price, Ordnance
Veterinary Surgeon in the Medway
District; and also an Order from the
most Hon^{ble} Board, for me to state
what Method of shoeing is now
practiced, on the Horses of the Royal
House Artillery, and Royal Artillery
Drivers and whether the Practice
originally instituted by myself, -
corresponds with the present Practice,
and if any, and what Deviation has
been made therefrom, and further to
desire me to report my Opinion of the
System of shoeing Horses as practiced
under Captain Blagrave.

In compliance with this Order I have
the honor to state, that the Principles
of shoeing, as Published by me, and -
adopted in His Majesty's Service in the
Year 90, differs in no material Point

R. H. Crew Esq^r

Yours &c &c

Yours

from the Method which I have felt it my duty to recommend from that time to the present.

To detail the whole Practice of shoeing, in a letter would be impossible, but it may be proper to state for the Information of the Most Honorable Board, that the best Mode in my Opinion, to prevent Thrushes, Canker, and Contracted Feet, and to preserve the Frog of its natural form and Structure, is to give it prepure; for in Proportion as the Frog is more or less absent from the surface of the Ground, it is liable to those and other diseases. But the leading Principle of shoeing beyond all others, and which from fifteen Years experience, we have found highly beneficial to His Majesty's Service, is to make the Horny Sole concave, with a drawing Knife, and the crust to project below the Sole, which effectually prevents borns, or Bruises, or any prepure from the Shoe.

This Practice Sir, is, and in my Opinion, ever will be of much greater Importance than the form of the Shoe, in as much as it is a Principle in the shoeing of Horses; meaning by a Principle,

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an invariable Rule, with any kind of Shoe, for all Horses, of all Ages, of every description, used for all Sorts of Work, on all kinds of Roads, and in every Country. But in regard to the Shoe itself I have ever inculcated, that the Art of Man has never been able, and never will be able to make one kind of Shoe applicable to various, and opposite kinds of Feet. The proper Practice of shoeing does not admit the Possibility of such Simplicity. That which is the best Shoe, for one Horse, may be the worst Shoe for another. But as a general Horse Shoe for the Army I have recommended under certain circumstances, and certain Restrictions, a Shoe with Heels, thinner than the Toe; as best adapted to preserve the Frog, free from Thrushes, & Canker, and the Heels from contraction. I have however strongly enforced, both in my Lectures, and Publications, to prevent any unnatural Stress on the Tendons & Ligaments of the Leg; that the Substance of the Heels of the Shoes, should always be regulated by the depth of the Horn at the Heels; by the Shoe the Horse has been previously accustomed to wear, by the quantity of Horn which can be safely removed from the Toe; and by the

Length

Length and Obliquity of the Pastern Joint; always bearing in Mind, that the depth of the Horn & Iron united at the Heels is not to be diminished below the Natural Standard. It is very practicable by allowing the Horn to grow at the Heels and removing the ordinary Superfluous Parts of the Toe at each Time of shoeing, to use thin Heel Shoes, and yet to obtain if necessary even a greater depth of Substance of Horn & Iron united than in ordinary shoeing. If Captain Blagrove had ever done me the Honor to look at my Observations on shoeing he would have seen, that where the Horse is accustomed to wear thick Heel Shoes, and the Heels of the Hoof are low; and the Toe not capable of being shortened my System in such Cases, has ever been to avoid the thin Heel Shoe; and from observing where Shoes with thick Heels, are for a time necessary, that the feet often became contracted and the Frog diseased; I made a few Years since, as I humbly conceive an important Improvement in the Practice of shoeing by employing a Clip at the inner part of each Heel of the Shoe; so as to embrace the inner Heel of each Bar, and thereby prevent during the necessity of using thick Heel Shoes those Diseases which

which are the general Result of raising the Frog much above the Ground; — namely contracted heels, Thrushes & Canker. Hence I presume Capt^m Blagrove supposes my Practice of shoeing to be at variance with the Principles, when in fact thin Heel Shoes indiscriminately applied, until the growth of Horn at the heels^{is} admitted of a Reduction in the Quantity of Iron, have been always forbid. — These, Sir are, and always have been, my Principles of shoeing; they may be founded in error; but after much labor and many Years Experience, I have seen no Cause to alter my Opinions. — Whether the Practice of any of the Vet^l Surgeons in His Majesty's Service, has been at variance with their Theory. I cannot determine, but I can readily believe that some Officers like Capt^m Blagrove may conceive themselves, from being somewhat acquainted with the Exterior of the Horse, fully competent to understand the Mechanism & Economy of the Horses foot; the Principles and Practice of shoeing, and even the treatment of diseases incident to Horses, and the Vet^l Surgeons rather than be at variance with their commanding Officers, and doubting their own Authority to resist, have quietly permitted

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the Farriers to apply any sort of Shoe -
most agreeable to their Officers Wishes.

Such Instances have come to my own
Knowledge. But I presume these Facts
have nothing to do with the Merits or
Demerits of the System of Shoeing itself.
Neither can I be considered accountable
for the Conduct of every Vet^l. Surgeon
in the Army. At Woolwich the Principles
and Practice of Shoeing have been
most strictly followed under the
immediate inspection of M^r. Perceval
since 1763; and I am glad to have this
Opportunity to bear testimony of his
great Attention and ability.

It is not for me to expatiate on the good
Effects of my own System, but I beg leave
to refer the most Honorable Board to -
Gen^l. M^r. Lead, Lloyd, & Douglas; who
have not only had ample Opportunities
to observe Veterinary Practice for
fifteen Years, but have paid the most
marked Attention to the Subject, and from
being well acquainted with the former
Method of shoeing, are the most competent
to duly appreciate the Value of each.

In regard to Captain Blagraves System
of shoeing Horses, I have read his Prospectus
over and over again, but I cannot find a
single Line in the Book, from which I
can form even a Conjecture of his Practice;

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its great Object seems to be to inform the
World "of a new Institution to increase the
"Comforts and cure the Diseases of Horses,
"and to remedy the supernumerary Sores
"which the Plausible Theories of certain
"Professors have brought upon him, and
"to state "that the Lives and Limbs of many
"valuable Horses have fallen Victims to
"its Absurdity." In this Prospectus Capt^l.
Blagrave objects to the thin heel Shoe
from the unnatural Stress which the Hoop,
of the Heel imposes on the Tendons and
Ligaments. But I have already pointed out
that if the Tendons are more than naturally
exerted, the Shoe is not applied as I have
directed; for the very Principle of the thin
Heel Shoe, is that the Hoop and the Shoe
together are to be as high as with ordinary
Shoes; but this Shoe, and every other Shoe
may be misapplied, and if invariably
used, for various and opposite kinds of
Feet, do mischief.

The Shoe recommended by Captain Blagrave
I am informed is thick at the Heel, the same
as the common Shoe, and that the Heels
project backwards beyond the Posterior
Parts of the Hoof. Whether this is actually
Capt^l. Blagraves Practice I cannot
determine; but that Thrushes, contracted
feet and cankers, are the common
effects of thick Heel Shoes is undoubted,
it is well known to Captain Blagrave,

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late Commanding Officer, Genl. Douglas, that before the appointment of District Veterinary Surgeons in the Ordnance Service more Horses were diseased with Thrushes, Corns and Grease, Royal Artillery Drivers at the Out Posts, with Thrushes, Corns, Grease, many of which were lost to the Service, and even obliged to be shot. than has taken Place at Head Quarters from the Year 96. to the present Period. In fact Grease, Corns, Thrushes, & Corns in Horses of the Royal Horse Artillery or Royal Artillery Drivers at Woolwich, are rarely ever seen. — The only Part of Capt. Blagraves Practice which I believe to have any Claim to Novelty is the Length of the Shoe. I know of no Author, or Practitioner or any other Man, who has ever before recommended a Shoe to be longer than the lower & posterior Part of the Hoof. I cannot perceive any Advantage from this Projection of the Shoe behind the Hoof and I think two Evils must be likely to happen. The Toes of the hind feet will be liable to tread on the Projecting Heels from which Accidents the Horse may tear off his Shoe and fall; and at every Step the Pressure of the Ground on the Extremity of the Heels of the Shoes must operate as a Lever to loosen the Shoe and make it necessary to place the Nails far back in the Hoof: and the Horse will in consequence be more liable from the Thinness of the Crust at this Part to

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be pricked in Shoeing, and also to contracted feet. I have only to add that if any Part of my Principles or Practice of Shoeing are not clearly understood by the most Hon^{ble} Board, I shall feel great Satisfaction from being allowed the Honor to explain the Principles & Practice of Shoeing on a Hoof properly Shod. —

I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your most obedient
humble Servant
Edw.^d Coleman
P. N. S.

Edw. M.

