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DEVOTED TO THE  
DIFFUSION OF VETERINARY KNOWLEDGE.

VOLUME II.

EDITED BY

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## THE REMAINS OF BLACK HAWK.

David Hill, Esq., of Bridgport, Vermont, has generously donated the osseous remains of this once highly prized horse to the Veterinary College of Boston, and they are now in possession of the Faculty, undergoing the necessary preparation, and ere long we shall give the public an opportunity of viewing the skeleton of an animal whose fame is equal to that of the most distinguished of the equine stud of America.

Most of our readers are probably aware that Black Hawk was sired by Sherman Morgan. His dam was a three-quarters-blood mare, obtained from the Provinces. He was remarkably intelligent, (an attribute of the horse which some persons question,) and was never known to exhibit the least combativeness, but was in the stable, rather docile for a stud horse; yet a snap from Mr. Hill's fingers would arouse the latent fire of his disposition; then he was all action, all horse, yet graceful and tractable.

On Thursday, February 12th, we arrived at the residence of Mr. Hill. Next day, the remains of the animal were disinterred from their resting place. We observed that he had been decently interred, about six feet below the surface of the earth; his body resting on some clean straw. His shroud was composed of blankets, and over all was placed a large door. He had been in the ground for a period of 74 days, having died on the first day of December, 1856; yet owing to the coldness of the season, his body was in a better state of preservation than might otherwise have been expected. Hence, we had an opportunity of forming some idea of his condition at the time of death, and the cause of the same, which we shall refer to in a subsequent number of this Journal.

It was our intention to divest the bones of their muscles and tendons, and in this state bring them to Boston; but on a few hours' exposure to the atmosphere, they became very offensive, consequently it was thought best to cleanse and prepare them. In performing this task, Mr. Hill and his son Charles rendered us every assistance in their power, and to them we are under great obligations. Want of space prevents us extending these remarks, and we shall therefore postpone the subject for our next issue.

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## DEATH OF BLACK HAWK.

In our last we promised to offer a few remarks in regard to the condition of "Black Hawk" at the time of death, and the cause of the latter. It must be borne in mind, however, that the animal had been buried during a period of seventy-four days, consequently the appearances of the body, and parts of the same, at this subsequent period, must not be taken as conclusive evidences of the actual pathological condition at the time of death, but allowances must be made for the same.

The body, as the reader is informed in our last number, was in a remarkable state of preservation; the panniculus carnosus and subcellular tissues were almost entire, having undergone but slight decomposition. The odor from the carcass was not very offensive, but became so after a short exposure to the atmosphere.

On opening the abdominal cavity the first thing that attracted our attention was the immense amount of fat contained in the omental and other tissues, indicating that the animal was, while alive, in a state of adipose plethora. The whole contents of the abdomen were free from all signs of disease; the kidneys were embedded in a dense mass of fat, and the only change observable in them was, that they were softened. There was no lesion of the urinary apparatus yet it had undergone the same discoloration that was noticed in other parts. The same remarks apply to the liver, spleen and pancreas; they were not decomposed,

but merely softened and discolored. The large intestines were occupied by an immense quantity of shorts and masticated hay, which appeared almost as fresh as on the day it was taken into the stomach. The stomach showed no traces of disease; its cuticular region presented the usual blanched aspect, and the villous, was of a light red tint and glossy. The diaphragm appeared more decomposed than any other part of the body; it was gangrenous and hung in shreds by its tendinous attachments to the walls of the thorax. On examining the contents of the thorax we found the heart to be of large dimensions, yet no appearance of local hypertrophy; the right ventricle,\* which is the receptacle for venous blood, was empty, yet its interior surface was studded all over with an infinite number of deposits about the size of a millet seed, white as phosphate of lime, and very much resembling that substance; these were readily scraped off with the finger-nail. The presence of these deposits might not be the result of disease, for we have noticed in the human body only a few days after death, on the pleura and peritoneum, a roughness, which, on passing the fingers over, felt like small particles of sand. The *cornuæ* of this ventricle were unusually prominent, and the *cordæ tendenæ* were all entire.

The surface of the left ventricle differed very materially from that of the right; it had a dark velvet appearance, and was coated with a thick, tenaceous deposit of blood, showing conclusively that it had been the seat of intense inflammation, — a disease sometimes termed endocarditis. The lungs were much blackened, and probably at the time of death were in a state of congestion, as there was but little blood in any other part of the body, and the impression we had at the time, was that the animal had been largely depleted. This however might not have been the case, for the veins and arteries of the neck having been severed shortly after death, in removing the head, the body may thus have been drained of blood. There was no appearance of the least alteration in the structure of the lungs, and from the fact, as we are informed by Mr. Hill, that the horse was down on the floor many times just previous to death, we infer that there was no disease of the organs of respiration, for horses seldom lie down when the lungs are the seat of any grave disease, until a few minutes before they expire.

The synovial membranes of the joints of the fore extremities were all of a deep red color, showing that they had been the seat of intense inflammation. This will account for the violent character of the pain the animal was noticed to suffer under, prior to death. The above appearance of the joints of the *fore* extremities was not observable in those of the *hind*.

\*The ventricles are known to anatomists, as anterior and posterior.

From the information we have gleaned, and from our own observations while dissecting the subject of these remarks, we agree with Dr. Gale, who was called upon to give advice in regard to the case, that the disease was of rheumatic origin. There is abundant evidence that the animal was predisposed to this affection; one fact alone will sustain this theory, viz: that he had a prior attack of the same.

Mr. Hill's account of the last sickness of Black Hawk is as follows:— On the 28th of November, 1856, I went to the stable and observed that the horse was sick; he appeared to be in great pain, and pointed his fore legs, like a foundered horse. I abstracted about half a pail-full of blood, and gave one pint of linseed oil; shortly after I bled him again (quantity not stated;) he then got down, and on rising, sweat profusely. Next morning I found him standing, but he could not advance the body only by throwing the weight of the same on the hind extremities, which did not appear to be affected. In the course of twenty-four hours the bowels responded to the oil; he then appeared to be thirsty; gave an occasional dose of nitrate of potassa, about a teaspoonful at a time, in water, and excited peristaltic action of the bowels by administering enemas of soap-suds. His limbs were bathed with warm water, bandaged and rubbed, but all our efforts proved unavailing; he experienced no sort of relief from the treatment; and finally, three days from the period of the attack, he got down and seemed to die without a struggle. His death occurred on the first day of December, 1856.

There is no doubt that Black Hawk was fed with too liberal a hand. How far the plethoric condition, which was evident from the quantity of fat found in the abdominal cavity, contributed to the development and fatal termination of his last illness, we are unable to demonstrate, but certain it is, that fat or plethoric horses and disease are "hail fellows, well met," so that if horse owners desire to keep their animals in a physiological condition, they must avoid the popular error of piling on the fat.

A very valuable lesson may be derived from the above. Here is a horse suffering from an acute malady, which the authorities contend can be subdued or controlled by the fleam or lancet; this animal was pretty essentially phlebotomized and without the least mitigation of the inflammatory symptoms, and we have no doubt, as our friend, Dr. Wood, has remarked, that the prostration of the animal, by bleeding, operated unfavorably; consequently we must not place too much confidence in remedies even when sanctioned by high authority.

The following remarks in reference to the death of Black Hawk are from the pen of Dr. G. S. Gale, contributed for the "Vermont Stock Journal:"—

The death of Black Hawk took place at the stable of David

Hill, Esq., Bridport, Vt., Dec. 1, 1856. The *immediate* cause of death was congestion of the lungs. He had had several attacks of rheumatism, the last of which occurred a few days previous to his death, and was very severe and painful. The rheumatic inflammation, probably, affected his heart, as is common in man. The amount of pain and suffering exceeded anything I ever witnessed in the brute creation. There was no *post mortem* examination, but the skin was removed, and will be suitably preserved, and his remains were interred, with his "martial cloak (blanket) around him." Whether they will remain in peace, and a monument be erected over the spot to commemorate his pre-eminent fame, (as has been proposed,) or whether they will rise by the hand of the *resurrectionist*, and, after having undergone various manipulations, grace the anatomical museum of the capital of the Empire State, as *has been requested*, I cannot say. The distinguished Professor of Anatomy in the Albany (N. Y.) Medical College has offered to prepare, at his own expense, the bones of Black Hawk, and suitably mount the skeleton in the Museum of the College, which is always open to the inspection of the public. The Professor thinks this would serve to "perpetuate the fame of one of the most remarkable of the equine race." Mr. Editor, whether a monument is erected over his remains, or his skeleton grace an anatomical museum at Albany or elsewhere, is not so material, as the question how the improvement of the noble race he has left among us shall be continued. This last question is of paramount importance to the farmers of Vermont, and of Addison county in particular. The "Vermont Stock Journal" comes in just the "nick of time," and I hope and expect it will be the medium of enlarged thoughts and wise experience."

The bones of Black Hawk are now in possession of the Faculty of the Boston Veterinary College. — ED.