

STORIES ABOUT HORSES.



sands. &c

S H E T L A N D P O N Y .

STORIES ABOUT HORSES,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THEIR

Intelligence, Sagacity, and Docility.

By THOMAS BINGLEY,

AUTHOR OF "STORIES ABOUT DOGS," "TALES OF SHIPWRECKS," ETC. ETC.

EMBELLISHED WITH TWELVE ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL.

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P R E F A C E.

A TASTE for the study of Natural History has been said to be favourable to the exercise of benevolence. “If we feel a common interest in the gratification of inferior beings,” it has been well remarked, “we shall no longer be indifferent to their sufferings, or become wantonly instrumental in producing them. We may be truly said to become susceptible of virtuous impressions from the sight and study of such objects. The patient ox is viewed with a kind of complacency ; the guileless sheep with pity ; the playful lamb raises emotions of tenderness. We rejoice with the horse in his liberty and exemption from toil, while he ranges at large through the enamelled pas-

tures ; and the frolics of the colt would afford unmixed delight, did we not recollect the bondage which he is soon to undergo. We are charmed with the song of birds, soothed with the buzz of insects, and pleased with the sportive motions of the fish, because these are expressions of enjoyment, and we exult in the felicity of the whole animated creation.”

To call up and to exercise those feelings, in the breasts of my young readers, to incite them to the love of nature, and to “look through Nature up to Nature’s God,” I again present them with another volume of Tales. With their appreciation of my former works, evinced by the daily increasing demand for them, I am highly gratified ; and hope that the present volume will be found equally interesting, and deserving of the same favourable estimation.

T. B.

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STORIES ABOUT HORSES.

CHAPTER I.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE HORSE; ITS HABITS IN A WILD STATE; AND THE VARIOUS MODES OF CAPTURING IT, AND MAKING IT SERVICEABLE TO MAN.

“WELCOME, Boys! welcome! I am delighted to see you again!” exclaimed Uncle Thomas, in a tone of voice which showed how exactly his feelings corresponded with the terms of his speech, as his nephews once more gathered round him to listen to a new series of stories which he had promised to relate to them—STORIES ABOUT HORSES. The boys were equally delighted: Frank had of late been

quite captivated with a little Shetland pony—one of the tiniest of its race—which a gentleman in the neighbourhood had procured from the North of Scotland, and which scampered about his lawn, seeming at a little distance scarcely larger than a big Newfoundland dog which he kept to watch his premises. John and Harry, though they could not help admiring the wild shaggy little creature, were somewhat more measured in their admiration; indeed it seemed questionable whether the hunter which the gentleman sometimes rode did not more take John's fancy, while the affections of Harry were set on a noble racer of the Arabian breed which they almost daily saw exercised on the Downs. The proposal of Uncle Thomas to tell them stories about Horses was therefore to each a source of delightful anticipation.

As soon as the greetings had been duly exchanged, and the boys had seated themselves, Uncle Thomas began:—

“The animal, Boys, of whose sagacity and docility I am going to relate to you many singular instances, was decidedly the noblest conquest ever made by man over the beasts of the field. Without the assistance of the Horse, civilization would have made much slower progress, and mankind would, without doubt, have been some centuries later in emerging from their primitive state of barbarism. Under the dominion of man, the Horse freely submits to his decision, and seems to have no wish but to obey his master’s commands. Under his guidance it faces danger without dismay—fires at the sound of war, and pursues the enemy with an ardour and perseverance matched only by that of its master. In short, in the words of an eminent writer, it—

‘holds a rank,
Important in the plan of Him who formed
This scale of being; holds a rank, which lost
Would break the chain, and leave behind a gap,
Which Nature’s self would rue.’”

“Were horses originally wild, Uncle Thomas?”

“Certainly, John, like all other creatures they were created free, and were, with the others, put by their Creator under the dominion of man, in the celebrated sentence, ‘have dominion over the fish of the sea,’ etc., which I dare say you will recollect, as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis.”

“Oh yes! Uncle Thomas; but are they to be found in this wild state now?”

“In some parts of the world they are to be found in great numbers in a state of wildness, Frank, but it is very questionable whether in any place where they are now to be found, they exist as an original race, but are, as seems most likely, descended from domesticated animals, which have from time to time escaped from, or been turned adrift by their owners. In South America, for instance, where before the settlement of Europeans the horse was unknown, it has now multiplied to such an extent, as per-

haps to outnumber those on the Eastern Continent. In the southern parts of Siberia, in the great Mongolian deserts, and in some parts of Russia, large herds are sometimes to be found, but in all these places their parentage can with more or less distinctness be traced to the domestic race. At the Cape of Good Hope too they are found in large troops, but there they are said to be of a small size, and very vicious and untameable.”

“Are they not also found in Arabia, Uncle Thomas?”

“They are, Frank; indeed Arabia has been long famed for the excellence of its horses. From their superiority to those of other countries, it was long thought to be their native soil, whence they had spread over the world; but this has been disputed. Whether it is so or not, it is certain that they are found more handsome, graceful, generous, and persevering there than elsewhere.”

“And do they run wild in that country, Uncle Thomas?”

“In the deserts of Arabia wild horses are to be found in considerable numbers, Harry; but the finest animals are those bred under the care of man. The Bedouin Arabs, a wandering tribe, rear them in great numbers; but before I proceed to give you an account of the Arabian horse, I must first tell you something of the habits of the animal in a wild state, which have a remarkable similarity all over the world.

“In their native plains, whether of the old or the new world, they generally congregate in herds, consisting of from five hundred to a thousand. Powerful as they are, however, they never attack other animals, but content themselves with acting on the defensive. So watchful are they, that when reposing they generally leave a sentinel to give notice of the approach of danger. When the alarm is given, the whole troop start to their feet, and after reconnoitering their enemy, either give battle, or, should the

danger seem imminent, gallop off with inconceivable speed. When they determine on repelling their assailant—generally a lion or a tiger, or some of the larger beasts of prey—they close round him in a dense mass, and soon trample him to death; but if the attack is of a more serious character, they form a circle, in the centre of which the young and the females are placed, and, ranging themselves with their heels towards their foes, repel the most vigorous attacks. What powerful weapons the heels of an enraged horse are, you may judge from a little story which occurs to me illustrative of this fact:—

“A nobleman, in the early part of the reign of Louis XV., having a very vicious horse which none of the grooms or servants would ride—several of them having been thrown, and one killed—asked leave of his majesty to have him turned loose into the menagerie, against one of the largest lions. The king readily consented, and the animal on a certain day was

conducted thither. Soon after the arrival of the horse the door of the den was drawn up, and the lion with great state and majesty marched slowly to the mouth of it, when, seeing his antagonist, he set up a tremendous roar. The horse immediately started and fell back; his ears were erected, his mane was raised, his eyes sparkled, and something like a general convulsion seemed to agitate his whole frame. After the first emotions of fear had subsided, the horse retired to a corner of the menagerie, where, having directed his heels towards the lion, and raising his head over his left shoulder, he watched with extreme eagerness the motions of his enemy.

“The lion presently quitted the den, moved cautiously about for a minute or two, as if meditating the mode of attack, when, having sufficiently prepared himself for the combat, he made a sudden spring at the horse, which defended itself by striking its adversary a most violent blow on the chest.

“The lion instantly retreated, groaned, and seemed for several minutes inclined to give up the contest ; but recovering from the painful effects of the blow, he returned to the charge with unabated vigour, making similar preparations for this second attack to those which he had previously done for the first. He moved about from one side of the menagerie to the other for a considerable time, seeking a favourable opportunity to seize his prey ; the horse, in the meantime, still preserving the same posture of defence, and carefully keeping his eye fixed on his enemy’s motions. The lion at length gave a second spring, with all his remaining strength ; but the watchful horse was prepared for him, and struck him with his hoof on the under jaw, which he fractured.

“Having thus sustained a second and more severe repulse, the lion retreated to his den as well as he was able, apparently in the greatest agony, moaning all the way in a most lamentable manner. The horse, however, was soon

obliged to be shot, as no one ever dared to approach the ground where he was kept.

“In some parts of the world the natives replenish their studs from the wild herds. It requires, however, great adroitness to secure them. In Tartary, they train large birds of the hawk species to hunt the wild horses; they are taught to seize the horse by the head or neck, when it darts off at the utmost speed, hoping in this way to rid itself of its enemy. The bird, however, pertinaciously retains its hold, till the horse, quite exhausted, becomes an easy prey to its pursuers.”

“That seems an excellent plan, Uncle Thomas; I wonder how they manage to train the bird so well.”

“It has this disadvantage, Frank, that it requires a great many assistants, spread over a large extent of country. They cannot, of course, tell beforehand in what direction the horse will run, and must, therefore, station parties at considerable distances; besides, the

horse, if very vigorous, may go a great way before he is exhausted, and if not quickly secured, will recover and be prepared for a fresh gallop before his pursuers come up. The plan practised in South America is more simple. They are there secured by means of a weapon called a lasso, which consists of a very strong plaited thong, about half an inch in thickness, and about forty feet in length. It is made of strips of untanned hide, and is kept quite pliant by being well oiled. At one end there is an iron ring, about an inch and a half in diameter, through which the thong is passed, and thus forms a running-noose. The other end is fastened to the saddle-girth of the hunter, who holds the remainder carefully coiled in his left hand.

“ Mounted on a horse which has been accustomed to the sport, the huntsman gallops over the plain in the direction of the wild herd, and, circling round them, gradually approaches. When sufficiently near some straggler from the

main body, he throws the lasso with almost unerring aim round the hind legs of his victim. In an instant he turns his steed, and with a sudden jerk pulls the feet of his captive from beneath him, and it falls on its side. Before it can recover the shock, the hunter dismounts, wraps his cloak round the animal's head, and forces into its mouth one of the powerful bridles of the country, straps a saddle on its back, and, bestriding it, removes the covering from its eyes. The astonished animal springs on its feet, and endeavours, by a thousand vain efforts to disencumber itself of its enslaver, who sits quite composedly on its back, and soon reduces it to complete obedience."

"That is decidedly better than the Tartar mode, Uncle Thomas; but I think you once told me of a man who could tame the wildest horses by merely speaking to them: that was more wonderful still."

"It was so, Frank. You refer to the case of James Sullivan, the Irishman, I suppose; and,

as I dare say neither John nor Harry ever heard of him, I will tell you all that is known of him and his mode of subduing vicious horses.

“Sullivan was a native of Cork, and followed the occupation of a horse-breaker. Though in appearance a rude, ignorant rustic, of the lowest class, he had by some means or other acquired a power over the horse, which has never been equalled. When his assistance was called in, no matter how vicious or what description of ill habit his patients laboured under, he rendered them gentle and tractable in the incredibly short space of half an hour; and this too, apparently, without the slightest attempt at severity or coercion of any kind.

“His first operation was to direct the door of the stable, in which his patient was, to be closed, and not to be opened till a particular signal was made. They remained shut up in this way usually about half an hour, during which, little or no bustle was heard. When the signal was given and the door opened, the

horse was usually found lying down, and the man by its side, playing familiarly with it, as if it had all its life been one of the gentlest of creatures."

"That was very singular, Uncle Thomas. How could he do it?"

"That is a mystery, Harry, which cannot be so easily explained. He kept his process a profound secret; and though the fact that he did possess the power cannot be doubted, no one has been able to account for it. He was known among the common people by the name of 'the whisperer,' as they fancied he communicated with the animal in this manner. Even his son, however, who followed his father's profession, was ignorant of his secret, and unable to succeed in the same way. That he acquired, by some means or other, a certain power over the fears of the animal, there can be little doubt, as in one case, to which an intelligent person was eye-witness, he perceived that the horse which had undergone, on the previous

day, a half-hour's confinement with Sullivan, betrayed symptoms of fear whenever he spoke or looked at it. What was still more remarkable was, that, though this docility was communicated so speedily, it retained a permanent influence on their dispositions."

"I cannot think what he did to them, Uncle Thomas."

"And I am sorry I cannot enlighten you, Harry. But I see it is now time to stop for the night; to-morrow I will tell you about the Arabian, which I was obliged to postpone this evening, for the purpose of introducing the account of the general habits of the horse, which I hope has not been uninteresting to you."

"We have been very highly interested, indeed, Uncle Thomas."

"Very well, Boys; good night."

"Good night, Uncle Thomas."

CHAPTER II.

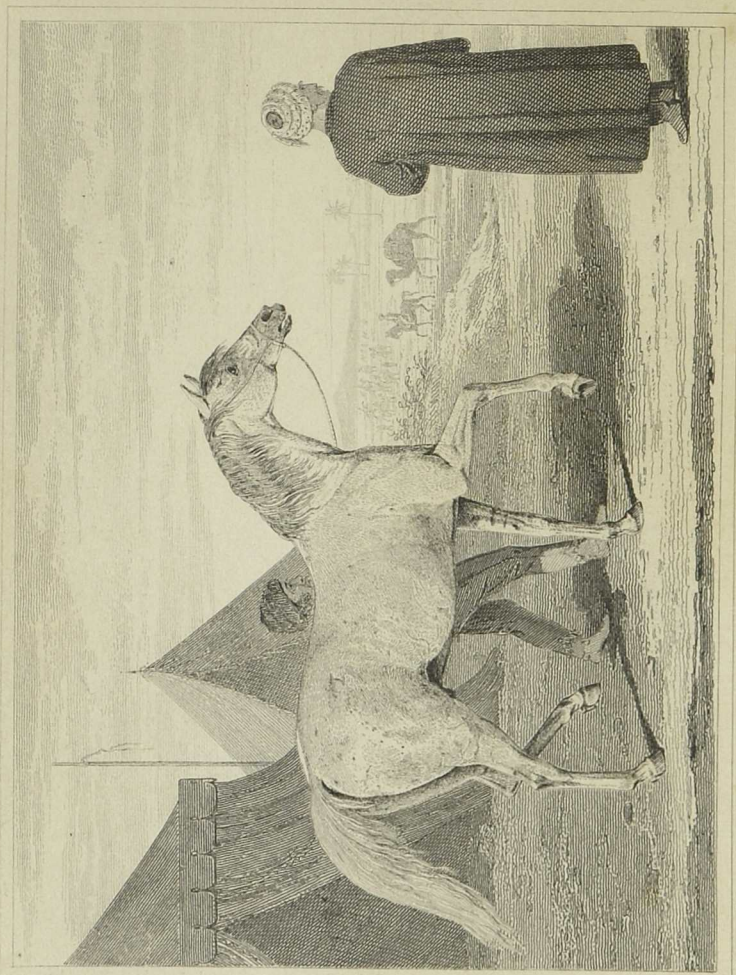
UNCLE THOMAS RELATES SEVERAL INTERESTING STORIES ABOUT ARABIAN HORSES, AND ABOUT THE AFFECTION WHICH SUBSISTS BETWEEN THEM AND THE ARABS THEIR MASTERS.

“ Good evening, Uncle Thomas ! ”

“ Good evening, Boys ! I am glad to see you have come early, as I have some long and pleasant stories for you to-night. ”

“ About the Arabian, Uncle Thomas ? ”

“ Yes, John, about your favourite, the Arabian. But, before I begin, I must describe the animal to you, that you may know what are the marks which distinguish it from other horses. The Arabian is generally about fourteen hands in height. Do you know what the term ‘ hand, ’ as applied to measuring horses, means, Frank ? ”



R. Sands. sc.

ARABIAN.

“Yes, Uncle Thomas; it is a measure of four inches, I believe.”

“You are quite right. Well, the Arabian is generally about fourteen hands in height. Its head is very beautifully formed; the forehead broad and square, the muzzle short and fine, and the eyes prominent. Its nostrils are large, and its ears small; and the skin is so fine and thin, that the veins may be distinctly traced. The neck is beautifully curved; and, though the body is light and the chest narrow, the latter conduces materially to their swiftness, and is a matter of little importance in a horse not intended for draught. Its legs are thin, and very handsome, and its tail and mane long and flowing.”

“The description does not exactly suit the racers we see exercising on the downs, Uncle Thomas.”

“I speak of the Arabian in the pure breeds, John, In this country they are crossed, for the purpose of securing some real or fancied ad-

vantage, and, of course, the more distant the descent from the original race, the less characteristic will be the distinctive marks.

“In Arabia, as elsewhere, they have various kinds of horses, some of which are highly esteemed and anxiously tended by their owners, while others are doomed to drudgery and hardship. The noble race—the Kochlani, as they are called in the Persian language—according to an European eye-witness, ‘evinces uncommon mildness of temper, an unalterable faithfulness to his master, a courage and intrepidity as astonishing as they are innate in his noble breast, an unfailing remembrance of the places where he has been, of the treatment he has received. In the most horrid confusion of a battle, cool and collected, he never forgets the place he came from, and, though mortally wounded, if he can gather up sufficient strength, he carries back his desponding rider to his defeated tribe. His intelligence is wonderful; he knows when he is sold, or even when his master is bargain-

ing to sell him. When the proprietor and purchaser meet for that purpose in the stables, the Kochlan soon guesses what is going on, becomes restless, gives from his beautiful eye a side-glance at the merchants, paws the ground with his foot, and plainly shows his discontent. Neither the buyer, nor any other, dares to come near him; but, the bargain being struck, the vendor taking the Kochlan by the halter, gives him up to the purchaser, with a slice of bread and some salt, and turns away, never more to look at him as his own; an ancient custom of taking leave of a horse, and his recognising a new master. It is then that this generous and noble animal becomes tractable, mild, and faithful to another, and proves himself immediately attached to him whom his passion, a few minutes before, might have laid at his feet and trampled under his hoof. This is not an idle story; I have been a witness of, and an actor in, the interesting scene, having bought three of these high-spirited animals in 1810 and 1811, from

Turkish prisoners. I made the bargain in the stables, and received personally, and led off the most fierce but intelligent animals, which, before the above-mentioned ceremony, I should not have dared to approach. The fact has been confirmed to me by all the Turkish and Arab prisoners, and by several rich Armenian merchants who deal in horses, and go generally to the desert to buy them. The Kochlans also evince great warlike qualities.’”

“ Oh delightful, Uncle Thomas ! how I should like to have such an animal. I am sure the racer is a real Arabian, he seems so spirited and at the same time so gentle.”

“ We can hardly wonder at the extreme gentleness of the Arabian, John, when we consider how differently they are treated from English horses, or indeed from those of any other country. The Arabs live constantly in tents, and these are always shared with their horses, so that the whole family live together in indiscriminate friendship ; the mare and her foal occu-

pying perhaps the same corner which serves the children for a sleeping place; where, indeed, they may be often seen prattling to their four-legged companions, climbing on their bodies, or hanging round their necks, with all the unsuspecting fondness of perfect security.

“Accustomed from their infancy thus to treat their horses with kindness, a spirit of affection springs up between them, which is very rarely interrupted. The use of the whip is unknown; their willing services are secured by affection alone. It is only in the utmost extremity that the spur is used, and when this is the case, they set off with amazing swiftness, overcoming every obstacle, and sometimes even falling victims to their generous ardour. Chateaubriand, a French traveller, relates an instance in which the exertions of a noble animal to save its master proved fatal. ‘When I was at Jerusalem, the feats of one of these steeds made a great noise. The Bedouin, to whom the animal, a mare, belonged, being pursued by the governor’s guards, rushed

with him from the top of the hills that overlook Jericho. The mare scoured at full gallop down an almost perpendicular declivity, without stumbling, and left the soldiers lost in admiration and astonishment. The poor creature, however, dropped down dead on entering Jericho, and the Bedouin, who would not quit her, was taken, weeping over the body of his faithful companion. This mare has a brother in the desert, who is so famous, that the Arabs always know where he has been, where he is, what he is doing, and how he does. Ali Aga religiously showed me, in the mountains near Jericho, the footsteps of the mare that died in the attempt to save her master. A Macedonian could not have beheld those of Bucephalus with greater respect.'

"The Arab is not, however, without discrimination in his love for his horse. In order to try the spirit of the animal they are said early to put them to very severe tests. The most general method of trying their swiftness is by

hunting the ostrich, which is found on the sandy plains with which those countries abound. When the ostrich sees that it is pursued, it makes for the mountains, while the horsemen follow at the utmost speed, and endeavour to cut off its retreat. The chase then continues along the plain, the ostrich using both legs and wings in its endeavours to outstrip its pursuers. Rapid as is its flight, however, a horse of first-rate speed is able to outrun it, so that the poor animal is at length compelled to have recourse to art, frequently turning, and thus endeavouring to elude its persevering pursuers. At length, finding escape impossible, it buries its head in some tuft of the scanty herbage which clothes the plain, and suffers itself to be taken. If in a chase of this kind a horse shows great speed, and is not readily tired, his character is established.

“ Sometimes, however, they put them to even severer trials—riding over their burning deserts without stopping to refresh the poor

animal, and exposed to the beating of a burning sun, perhaps for a hundred miles; arrived at the end of their journey, the horse is plunged into water, up to the middle, and if immediately after this he will eat his barley, his staunchness and the purity of his blood is considered incontrovertible, and he accordingly rises in estimation."

"That seems very hard usage, Uncle Thomas?"

"It is so, Frank, but it is amply redeemed by their otherwise kind treatment. Many stories of the extreme attachment of the Arab to his horse are recorded. Here is one:—A person of the name of Ibrahim being reduced to poverty, was forced to allow a merchant at Rama to become part-proprietor of a favourite mare. He went frequently to see her, and would embrace her, wipe her eyes with his handkerchief, rub her with his shirt sleeves, give her a thousand benedictions, and would remain talking to her during whole hours. 'My eyes,' he would say

to her, ‘my soul, my heart! must I be so unfortunate as to have thee sold to so many masters, and not to keep thee myself? I am poor, my antelope! Thou knowest it well, my darling! I brought thee up in my dwelling as my child; I did never beat nor chide thee; I caressed thee in the proudest manner. Allah preserve thee, my beloved! Thou art beautiful, thou art sweet, thou art lovely! Allah defend thee from envious eyes!’

“There is another story of the same kind, Boys, which is still more affecting, and which at the same time affords a good specimen of the florid and impassioned style of the Arabs:—

“The whole stock of a poor Arab of the desert consisted of a mare, which the French consul at Said wished to purchase, with the intention of sending her to Louis XIV. The Arab hesitated long, but, being pressed by poverty, he at length consented, on condition of receiving a very considerable sum, which he named. The consul wrote to France for per-

mission to close the bargain, and having obtained it, he immediately sent for the Arab, to secure the mare and pay for her. The man arrived with his magnificent courser. He dismounted, a wretched spectacle, with only a miserable rag to cover his body. He stood leaning upon the mare; the purse was tendered to him; he looked at the gold, and gazing steadfastly at his mare, heaved a deep sigh;—the tears trickled down his cheeks:—‘To whom is it,’ he exclaimed, ‘I am going to yield thee up? To Europeans—who will tie thee close, who will beat thee, who will render thee miserable! Return with me, my beauty! my jewel! and rejoice the hearts of my children!’ As he pronounced the last words, he sprung upon her back, and was out of sight in a moment.”

“Poor fellow! I dare say, Uncle Thomas, that his horse was of more real value to him than the gold, poor as he was.”

“The value of everything, Frank, ought to be estimated by its power of producing happiness—

a feeling which approaches perfection in proportion as it is unmixed with regret. Thus for instance, the Arab of whom I have just told you, by the sale of his mare, might have been raised from poverty to a state of comparative riches, but if a strong feeling of sorrow for parting with his horse remained on his mind, the mere possession of riches would have been very far from producing happiness; and the same principle applies to everything else."

"I wonder how so poor a man had such a valuable horse, Uncle Thomas."

"Let the Arab be ever so poor, Harry, he always possesses a horse. In Arabia they usually ride upon mares, experience having taught them that they bear fatigue, hunger, and thirst better than horses. They are also less vicious, and more gentle. They teach them hardihood and endurance, by treatment which would almost ruin any other race. 'They are never,' says Chateaubriand, 'put under shelter, but left exposed to the most intense heat of the

sun, tied by all four legs to stakes driven into the ground, so that they cannot stir ; the saddle is never taken from their backs ; they frequently drink but once and have only one feed of barley in twenty-four hours. This rigid treatment, however, so far from wearying them out, gives them sobriety and speed. I have often admired an Arabian steed, thus tied down to the burning sands, his hair loosely flowing, his head bowed between his legs, to find a little shade, and stealing with his wild eye an oblique glance at his master. Release his legs from the shackles, spring upon his back, and he “will paw in the valley, he will rejoice in his strength, he will swallow the ground in the fierceness of his rage,” and you recognise the original picture of Job. Eighty or one hundred piastres,’ continues the same writer, ‘are given for an ordinary horse, which is in general less valued than an ass or a mule ; but a horse of well-known noble blood will fetch any price. The Pacha of Da-

mascus has just given three thousand piastres for one.' ”

“That sounds like a very large sum, Uncle Thomas.”

“So it does, Harry, but if you will take the trouble to reckon it up, you will find it is not quite so much as you imagine. Very high prices have, however, been given for first-rate Arabians in this country. Buckfoot, one of the most famous horses of his time, was sold for twelve hundred pounds; another which was brought from India, cost, including the expense of passage, etc., fifteen hundred guineas. These high prices, however, are only given for horses which have proved themselves superior Racers.”

“Are all race-horses Arabians, Uncle Thomas?”

“No, Harry, but I must not enter upon that subject to-night; we will leave it till we meet again, when I will willingly tell you all I know about the Racer. Before you go, however,

there is one little story which I must tell you:—

“An Arab sheick, or chief, who lived within fifty miles of Bussorah, had a favourite breed of horses. He one day missed one of his best mares, and could not, for a long while, discover whether she was stolen or had strayed. Some time after, a young man, of a different tribe, who had long wished to marry his daughter, but had always been rejected by the sheick, obtained the lady’s consent, and eloped with her. The sheick and his followers pursued, but the lover and his mistress, mounted on one horse, made a wonderful march, and escaped. The old chief swore, that the fellow was either mounted upon the devil, or the favourite mare which he had lost. After his return, he found the latter was the case; that the lover was the thief of his mare as well as his daughter; and that he had stolen the one to carry off the other. The chief was quite gratified to think he had not been beaten by a mare of another breed;

and was easily reconciled to the young man, in order that he might recover his horse, which appeared an object about which he was more solicitous than about his daughter."

"What an affectionate parent he must have been, Uncle Thomas!" remarked Frank, in his dry sarcastic way. At which Uncle Thomas laughed heartily, and wishing the boys good night, they separated for the evening.

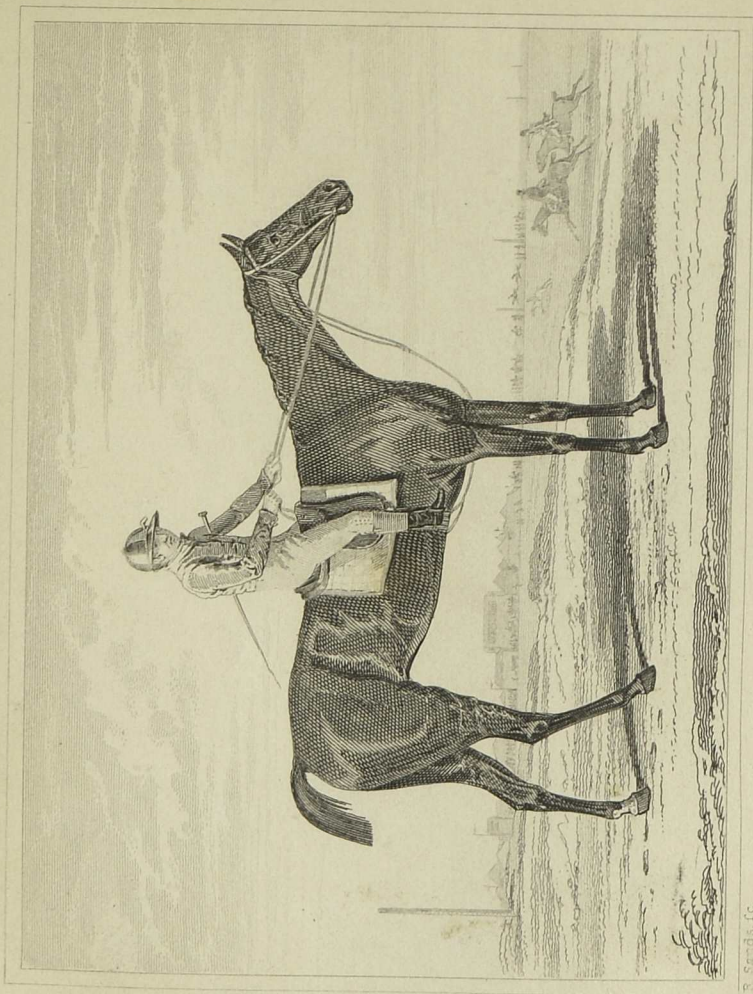
CHAPTER III.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE ENGLISH RACE-HORSE ; THE
MODE IN WHICH IT IS TRAINED ; AND ABOUT ITS EXTRAOR-
DINARY SPEED.

“TO-NIGHT, Boys, I promised, at our last meeting, to tell you about the Racer, so I begin at once :—

“The Racer, in some points, bears considerable resemblance to the Arabian, from which the most distinguished racers have been descended. They are more patient and enduring,—are capable of much longer-continued exertion than the pure Arabian ; and in speed the English Race-horse is equal, if not superior, to those of every other country.

“In training them for the race-course, I dare say you will be astonished, Boys, to hear the amount of pains which are taken. You see



RACER.

P. S. & Co. Sc.

them exercising daily on the Downs, but I am sure you cannot imagine how much care is expended upon them, before they are fit for entering the race-course, and contending for the prize. Shall I describe how they are trained, Harry ?”

“ Oh ! by all means, Uncle Thomas ; I am very anxious to hear about the mode of training Race-horses.”

“ In stables set apart for this purpose, it is usual for all the boys who are engaged in tending the horses to rise at the same hour, from half-past two in the morning in spring, to between four and five in the depth of winter. The horses hear them when they awaken each other, and neigh, to denote their eagerness to be fed. Being dressed, the boy begins with carefully cleaning out the manger, and giving the horse a feed of oats, which he is obliged no less carefully to sift. He then proceeds to dress the litter ; that is, to shake the bed on which the horse has been lying, remove what-

ever is wet or unclean, and to lay aside the remaining straw for future use. The whole stables are then thoroughly swept, the places for admitting fresh air kept open, by which the stable is gradually cooled, and the horse, having ended his first feed, is roughly cleaned and dressed.

“In about half an hour after they begin, the horses have been rubbed down and re-clothed, saddled, each turned in his stall, then bridled, mounted, and the whole string goes out to morning exercise; each boy knows his place, and one usually takes the lead. Except by accident, the race-horse never trots. He must either walk or gallop; and in exercise, even when it is the hardest, the gallop begins slowly, and gradually, and increases till the horse is nearly at full speed. When he has galloped about half a mile, the boy begins to push him forward without relaxation for another half mile. This is at the period when the horses are in full exercise, to which they come by degrees. The

boy among those of light weight that can best regulate these degrees is generally chosen to lead the gallop—that is, he goes first out of the stable and first returns.

“In the time of long exercise, this is the first brushing gallop. A brushing gallop means that the horses are nearly at full speed before it is over, and it is commonly made at last rather up hill. Having all pulled up, the horses stand for two or three minutes to recover their wind; they then leisurely descend the hill, and take a long walk; after which they are brought to water. But in this, as in everything else (at least as soon as long exercise begins), everything is measured to them. The boy counts the number of times the horse swallows when he drinks, and allows him to take no more gulps than the groom orders; the fewest in the hardest exercise, and one horse more or less than another, according to the judgment of the groom. After watering, a gentle gallop is taken, and after that another walk of considerable length; to which

succeeds the second and last brushing gallop, which is by far the most severe. When it is over, another pause, thoroughly to recover their wind, is allowed them; their last walk is begun, the limits of which are prescribed: and it ends in directing their ride homewards.

“The morning’s exercise often extends to four hours, and the evening’s to about the same time. Once more in the stable, each lad begins his labours. He leads the horse into his stall, ties him up, rubs down his legs with straw, takes off his saddle and body-clothes, curries him carefully, then goes over him with both curry-comb and brush, and never leaves him till he has thoroughly cleansed his skin, so that neither spot nor wet, nor any appearance of neglect may be seen about him. The horse is then re-clothed, and suffered to repose for some time, which is first employed in satisfying his hunger, and recovering from his weariness. All this is performed, and the stables are once more shut up, about nine o’clock.”

“That is astonishing, Uncle Thomas; I really had no idea training was such a serious matter.”

“Many thousands of pounds are annually spent, John, in thus training horses for the various race-courses. Sometimes the animals enter as completely into the spirit of the race as the riders or spectators. An instance of this, of which he was an eye-witness, is recorded in Holcroft’s Memoirs. I must first tell you, however, that Forrester was a horse of considerable note, and had won many hard-contested races in his day:—

“‘When I had been about a year and a half at Newmarket,’ says Holcroft, ‘Captain Vernon matched a horse, named Forrester, against Elephant, a horse belonging to Sir Jennison Shaftoe, whom I saw ride this famous match. I think it was a four-mile heat, over the straight course, and the abilities of Forrester were such, that he passed the flat and ascended the hill as far as the distance-post, nose to nose with Elephant.

Between this and the chair, Elephant, in consequence of hard whipping, got some little way before him, while Forrester exerted every possible power to recover his lost equality, till, finding all his efforts ineffectual, he made one sudden spring, and caught Elephant by the under jaw, which he griped so violently, as to hold him back; nor was it without the utmost difficulty that he could be forced to quit his hold. Poor Forrester! remarks Holcroft, with great feeling, ‘he lost, but he lost most honourably.’”

“How fast do racers generally run, Uncle Thomas?”

“An ordinary racer, Harry, moves at the rate of about a mile in two minutes. But there have been instances of rapidity even exceeding this. A horse called Bay Malton ran, at York, four miles in seven minutes and forty-three seconds; and Flying Childers—so called for his uncommon speed—has been frequently known to move above eighty-two feet and a half in a second, or

almost a mile in a minute! On one occasion he ran over the round course at Newmarket, which is very little less than four miles, in six minutes and forty seconds. He also ran over the Beacon course at the same place, which measures four miles, one furlong, and one hundred and thirty-eight yards, in seven minutes and thirty seconds, covering at every bound a space of about twenty-five feet!"

"I have often heard a horse named Eclipse spoken of as very fleet, Uncle Thomas. Did you ever hear of him?"

"O yes, Frank! I know all about Eclipse, which was one of the most celebrated horses of his day; and as his history is rather a singular one, I will tell it to you.

"Eclipse was bred by the famous George, Duke of Cumberland, and as he happened to be foaled during the great eclipse of 1764, the duke gave him that name. When the duke's stud was sold off, Eclipse was bought by a Mr. Wildman. This person had a friend in the

service of the duke, who pointed out to him the superior points in the form of this horse, and he hastened to attend the sale: but, before his arrival, it had been knocked down at seventy guineas. He, however, instantly appealed to his watch, which he knew to be an exceedingly correct time-piece, and finding that, according to advertisement, the appointed hour of sale had not yet arrived by a few minutes, he insisted that the sale had not been a lawful one, and that the lots knocked down should be again put up, which was accordingly done, and Eclipse was purchased by him for the sum of seventy-five guineas.

“In the first race which Eclipse ran, it happened that all the five horses which had started were close together at the three-mile post, when some of the jockeys used their whips. At this time Eclipse was going at an easy gallop, when taking alarm at the crack of the whip, he bounded off at his full speed; and although his rider was a man of powerful arm,

he was not to be restrained, and in consequence distanced the whole of his competitors.”

“Did he wish to restrain him, Uncle Thomas?”

“In racing, Harry, it is usual for the riders to set off at an easy pace, at which rate they continue, gradually increasing till they arrive at some distance from the winning post, when they put forth all their exertions. If a horse sets off at his full speed too soon he is apt to be blown before the proper time for exerting himself arrives, and thus to afford an easy victory to his opponents.”

“I understand the matter now, Uncle Thomas.”

“Before Eclipse ran for the king’s plate at Winchester, in 1769, Mr. O’Kelly purchased the half share of him for six hundred and fifty guineas; he afterwards became sole proprietor, for an additional sum of a thousand guineas. It is said that one of the Bedford family asked O’Kelly, in 1779, what he would take for

Eclipse, when he replied, 'By the mass, my lord, it is not all Bedford Level that would purchase him.' About this period he is also said to have asked, from another person, twenty-five thousand pounds down, and an annuity of five hundred pounds on his own life, besides other privileges."

"He must have been a very valuable horse, Uncle Thomas."

"O'Kelly, according to his own account, gained by this horse twenty-five thousand pounds, and the statement is believed to be correct. Eclipse won eleven king's plates, in ten of which he carried twelve stone, and in the other ten. It was calculated, that within the course of twenty-three years, three hundred and forty-four winners, the descendants of this animal, produced to their owners the enormous sum of one hundred and fifty-eight thousand and seventy-one pounds twelve shillings sterling, exclusive of various prizes. The prevailing excellence of all this horse's offspring was great speed, and they took

up their feet in the gallop with wonderful activity; they were not generally famed for stoutness, but almost all of them were horses of fine temper, seldom or never betraying restiveness. Eclipse died in 1789, at the age of twenty-six."

"The large sum you mentioned was won by betting, I suppose, Uncle Thomas?"

"I presume the greater part of it was so, Frank. It is a species of gambling which cannot be too highly reprobated. There is, however, one practice connected with racing, which is still more reprehensible, which, I fear, is of too frequent occurrence—it is that of turning off the horses when no longer fit for the race-course, to undergo the most laborious employment and the cruellest treatment. Mr. Youatt, an eminent veterinary surgeon, in a recent work, affords some details on this subject, from which every feeling mind must revolt:—

"‘Ambo, the fastest horse of his day, who won the Holywell Mostyn stakes three years in

succession, was consigned to drag an opposition coach that ran through Shrewsbury. When no longer capable of this exertion, he was degraded to yet more ignoble employment, and was at length found dead in a ditch, from absolute starvation. Hit-or-Miss, a good racer, was during the last years of his life seen drawing coal in a higgler's cart in the same town. Mameluke is at this time drawing a cab in the streets of the metropolis; and Guildford, after having won for his various owners seventeen races, was affected with incurable string-halt, and was sold at a repository for less than four pounds! Thence the hero of the turf was doomed to an omnibus. There he was cruelly used; the spasmodic convulsion that characterises string-halt sadly aggravating his torture. The skin was rubbed from his shoulders, his hips and haunches were bruised in every part, and his stifles were continually and painfully coming in contact with the pole. In this situation he was seen by the veterinary surgeon to the So-

ciety for Preventing Cruelty to Animals, and bought, in order to be slaughtered.' ”

“ Shocking ! Uncle Thomas.”

“ It is indeed dreadful, Boys, and tells loudly of the want of humanity on the part of their owners. But it gets late, so we must stop for the evening.”

“ Good night, Uncle Thomas.”

CHAPTER IV.

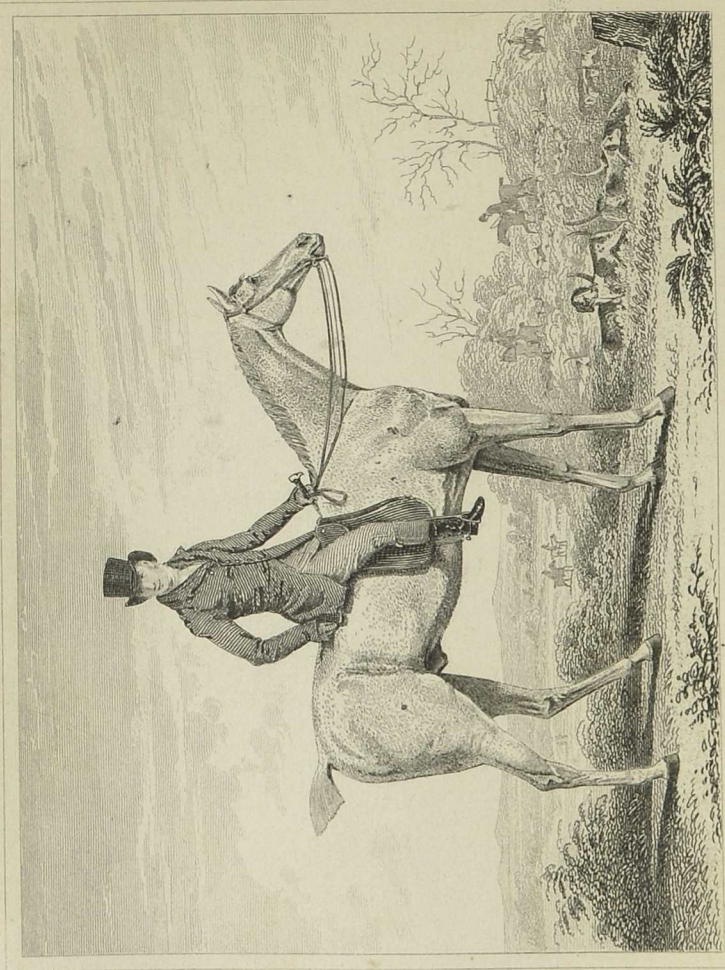
UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE HUNTER, AND RELATES MANY INTERESTING STORIES OF HIS SAGACITY AND LOVE OF SPORT.

“HERE we are again, Uncle Thomas! I hope you have some more pleasing stories to tell us to-night. The account you gave us last evening, of the fate of the poor worn-out race-horses, made us all quite sad.”

“I am happy to say, Boys, that such cruel treatment is far from general. To-night I purpose telling you about the hunter, if you have no objection.”

“Oh, certainly not, Uncle Thomas, we shall be delighted to hear about it.”

“Well, Boys, I know not that I can describe the hunter better to you than by showing you this pretty little print of him by Mr. Le Keux,



J. Le Keux sc.

HUNTER.

who is famed for his nice characteristic engravings of animals. Here he is in the middle of the hunting-field, with his master mounted on his back, and the dogs busily engaged searching for game."

"It seems a strong and powerful animal, Uncle Thomas, and appears to be considerably shorter in the body than the racer which you showed us last night."

"It is so, Frank. But there are some other points to which I must draw your attention besides this, I will therefore describe to you, in as few words as I can, what a hunter ought to be. The whole form of a horse which is designed for a hunter ought to be well knit together, as the jockeys express it; the ears should be small, open, and pricked: or, if they be somewhat long, yet, if they stand upright, and hold like those of a fox, it is a sign of toughness and hardiness. The forehead should be long and broad, not flat; the eyes full, large, and bright; the nostrils not only large, but

looking red and fresh within, for an open and fresh nostril is always considered a sign of good wind. The mouth should be large; the wind-pipe capacious, and appear straight when the animal bridles his head, since if it bend like a bow it is not formed for a free passage of the breath. The head should be set so on the neck that a space may be felt between the latter part and the chin. The crest ought to be strong, and well risen, the neck straight and firm, the breast strong and broad, the ribs round like a barrel, the legs clean, flat, and straight, and the tail and mane should be long and thin, not short and bushy. When a hunter has been thus chosen, and has been taught to obey the signal of the bridle and hand, has gained a true temper of mouth, and has learned to stop, make forward, and turn readily—if of a proper age, he is fit for the field. It is a rule with stanch sportsmen that no horse should be used for hunting till he is five years old, although some will take them to the field at

four; but at this age a horse has not attained his full strength and courage, and will not only fail on a tough trial, but will be subject to sprains and accidents.”

“Is it true, Uncle Thomas, that some horses enter so much into the spirit of the chase, that they have been known to follow the hounds without a rider?”

“Quite, John; I remember a very striking instance of it, which took place a few years ago. A gentleman, happening to be on a visit to a friend in Wiltshire, was mounted on one of his horses, a well-bred and fiery mare. At the close of a very fine day’s sport, the huntsmen had beat a small furze brake, and for the purpose of better threading it, the gentleman dismounted, and gave the bridle of the mare to the next horseman. Puss was soon started; the ‘halloo’ was given; the person who held the mare, in the eagerness of sport, forgot his charge, loosed his hold, and, regardless of any other than his own steed, left the mare to shift for

herself. To the astonishment of all, instead of attempting to bend her course homewards (and she was in the immediate neighbourhood of her stable), she ran the whole course at the tail of the dogs; turned, as well as she could when they brought the prey about; and stopped only at the death of the hare, when she suffered herself to be quietly taken and remounted. What rendered the circumstance the more remarkable was, that she had only twice followed the hounds previous to this event, which strongly indicated her natural love of sport.

“Many instances of a similar kind might be given, Boys; for example, I believe it is no unfrequent occurrence for hunters, when no longer fit for the hunting-field, and turned to other employment, to fire at the sound of the chase, and be with difficulty restrained from joining. A remarkable instance of this, in which, however, the animals were not restrained, occurred in 1807, when the Liverpool mail was changing horses at the inn at Monk’s Heath, between

Congleton and Newcastle-under-Line. The horses which had performed the stage were taken off and separated, when Sir Peter Warburton's fox-hounds were heard in full cry. The horses immediately started after them with their harness on, and followed the chase until the last. One of them, a blood mare, kept the track of the whipper-in, and gallantly followed him for about two hours over every leap he took, until Reynard ran to earth in a neighbouring plantation. These spirited horses were led back to the inn at Monk's Heath, and performed their stage back to Congleton on the same evening."

"They must have been very spirited animals, Uncle Thomas."

"While we are talking about horses hunting without riders, Boys, I must not omit to tell you about one of the most curious instances of this kind that I dare say ever happened.

"The late Duke of Richmond kept some hunters in the county of Sussex. A monkey,

which was kept in the stable, was remarkably fond of getting on the backs of the horses, skipping from one to the other, and teasing the poor animals incessantly. The groom made a complaint to the duke, who immediately formed a plan to remedy the evil. 'If he is fond of riding,' replied his grace, 'we'll endeavour to give him enough of it;' and accordingly gave orders to provide a complete jockey dress for the monkey. The next time the hounds were out, Jocko, in his uniform, was strapped to the back of one of the best hunters. The view halloo being given, away they went, through thick and thin. The horse being fond of the sport, and carrying so light a weight, soon left all the company behind. Some of the party passing by a farm-house, inquired of a countryman whether he had seen the fox? 'Ay, zure,' said the man, 'he is gone over yon fallow.' 'And was there any one up with him?' 'Ay, zure!' said John, 'there be a *little man in yellow jacket* just gone by, riding as though the devil be in

un. I hope, from my heart, the *young gentleman* mayn't meet with a fall, for he rides most monstrous bould.' The experiment had the desired effect; Jocko was sufficiently chafed by his exercise to make him dislike the sight of the stable ever afterwards."

"Ha! ha! Uncle Thomas, that was very good indeed!"

"It is only the mischievous monkey, with his antic drollery, Boys, that likes to annoy his companions. Sometimes feelings of sincerest friendship spring up between stable companions. Here is an instance.

"A gentleman of Bristol had a greyhound which slept in the stable along with a very fine hunter, of about five years of age. These animals became mutually attached, and regarded each other with the most tender affection. The greyhound always lay under the manger, beside the horse, who was so fond of him, that he was unhappy and restless when out of his sight. It was a common practice

with the gentleman to whom they belonged, to call at the stable for the greyhound to accompany him in his walks. On such occasions, the horse would look over his shoulder at the dog, with much anxiety, and neigh in a manner which plainly said, 'Let me go too!' When the dog returned to the stable, he was always welcomed by a loud neigh; he ran up to the horse, and licked his nose; in return, the horse would scratch his back with his teeth.

"One day, when the groom was out with the horse and greyhound for exercise, a large dog attacked the latter, and quickly bore him to the ground; on which the horse threw back his ears, and, in spite of all the efforts of the groom, rushed at the strange dog, seized him by the back with his teeth, which speedily made him quit his hold; and, giving him a good shake, let him fall to the ground. He no sooner got on his feet, than he judged it prudent to make a precipitate retreat from so formidable an enemy."

“That was very kind, Uncle Thomas.”

“When the affections of the horse are gained, Frank, whether by its fellow-brutes or by man, he becomes a steady and determined friend. I know an illustration of this, which will bear a contrast with the fidelity of the dog.

“On one occasion, a gentleman, mounted on a favourite hunter, was returning home from a jovial meeting, where he had been too liberal in his potations, and thus destroyed his power of preserving his equilibrium, and rendered himself at the same time somewhat drowsy. In consequence, he had the misfortune to fall from his saddle, but in so easy a manner, that it had not the effect of rousing him from his sleepy fit, and he felt quite content to repose where he alighted. His faithful steed, instead of scampering home, as one would have expected, stood by his prostrate master, and kept a strict watch over him. He lay thus till sunrise, when he was discovered by some labourers, sleeping very contentedly on a heap of stones by the road-side.

Anxious to afford all the assistance they could, they approached the gentleman, with the intention of replacing him on the saddle, but every attempt to touch him was resolutely opposed by the grinning teeth and ready heels of this faithful and determined guardian.

“Here is another story of the horse’s attachment to his master, and of its extreme docility.

“At the table of a celebrated sportsman, in the vicinity of Sunning, Berks, the conversation happening to turn on the docility of the brute creation, the worthy host offered a wager, that his favourite hunter would, at his request, quit its quarters in the stable, and follow him into the dining-room. The bet was instantly accepted. He accordingly went to the stable, and, having untied the animal, returned to the company, closely followed by his quadruped friend. Not contented with this display, he proceeded to his bed-room, whither also he was followed by his horse. Here, however, the proofs of its obedient disposition ended, for

neither entreaty nor force could prevail upon him to descend the stairs, and in the bed-room he insisted upon passing the night. In the morning he manifested the same determination not to retrace his steps, and, after all means of entreaty and intimidation had been in vain resorted to, his master was compelled to have a breach made in the wall, through which the steed was forced to leap upon the ground, where a quantity of straw had been spread to receive him. The descent was accomplished in safety ; but owing to the trouble and expense occasioned by the visit, the owner declined for the future inviting his favourite beyond the parlour."

"I wonder how it managed to get up stairs, Uncle Thomas ; I did not know horses would ascend stairs at all."

"Oh yes, Harry, they sometimes do ; but they do not always escape so well as the Berkshire steed. For instance : 'Early one morning, a horse belonging to Mr. Richard Cove, of Cranwell, near Waddesdon, Bucks, slipped his

halter off his head, and mounted, by a very narrow pair of stairs, into the hayloft, above the stable. Having performed this unheard-of feat, the floor gave way under his weight, and he fell partly through the loft, his body hanging over one of the beams, his legs through the boards, and his head down into the rack. In the violent struggles which he made to escape, he cut and bruised himself so dreadfully, that when released, his condition was most distressing.

“ ‘The horse had finished his ration of hay, and it is very clear, from every circumstance, that he had mounted up into the loft, with a design of serving a second course into the rack, for the accommodation of himself and his associates of the stable ’ So says the narrator of the story, Boys; but I am not quite so well satisfied as he seems to be, that its motive for this daring feat was other than a selfish one. That the horse possesses much ingenuity is undoubted. For example, in a recent work of Lord Brougham’s, he tells of a horse which gained

admittance to a certain pasture, by pressing down the upright bar of the latch of a wicket, exactly as would have been done by a man; and I have heard of a hunter belonging to a gentleman in Leeds, which, after having been kept in the stable for some time, and being turned out into the field, where there was a pump well furnished with water, regularly obtained a supply from it by his own dexterity. For this purpose, he was observed to take the handle into his mouth, and work it in a way exactly similar to that done by the hand of a man, until a sufficiency of water was collected in the trough."

"That was very singular, indeed, Uncle Thomas."

"In telling you about the hunter, Boys, I have so far confined myself to stories of his sagacity and docility; but, before leaving him, I must tell you something about his speed, as well as about the other qualifications which fit him for the hunting-field.

“In a hunter, the power of leaping is an essential qualification, in consequence of the numerous obstacles which the inclosures of a cultivated country oppose to their progress. Of all the breeds of hunters, those of Ireland are the most famous leapers. I have a story to tell you about the leaping of an Irish hunter, but, for a particular reason, I pass it by at present. Here is an instance of the power of leaping, which some of those animals possess.

“A horse belonging to a dealer in Birmingham made a leap of such an extraordinary character, as caused the gentleman who witnessed it to make an accurate measurement of the space over which it passed. It was found, that in leaping over a bar three feet six inches high, the spring was taken at the amazing distance of seventeen feet seven inches from it, and the whole space of ground passed over was *nine yards and eight inches!* The horse was fifteen and a half hands high, and carried upwards of twelve stone. He afterwards leaped over the

same bar several times, and cleared upwards of *eight yards* without much apparent effort."

"Twenty-four feet, Uncle Thomas!"

"Yes, Frank. His first leap I believe to be unequalled; at least I never heard of one so great. The only one which I know of that comes at all near it is that of a horse belonging to a gentleman at Limerick, which leaped twenty-six feet in length, clearing at the same time a hedge upwards of four feet high.

"These are, perhaps, the most astonishing leaps ever undertaken voluntarily; there have been some leaps even more singular, but they may be more properly classed as escapes, than feats of power. Here is an instance:—

"In April, 1823, a grey mare, belonging to Mr. Lawson, of Larrington, near Barnardcastle, being at Durham fair for sale, a person wishing to purchase her agreed with Mr. Lawson's servant to ride her a little on the road between Durham and Sunderland Bridge, by way of trial; and while doing so, the mare being in

high condition, ran away with him, at so furious a rate, that on coming to the end of Sunderland Bridge, she was not able to make the sharp turn to go along the bridge, but leaped over the battlements, and both rider and mare were precipitated into the river on the west side of the bridge; and what is most unaccountable to relate, both escaped with scarcely any injury. The height of the bridge may be guessed from the fact that vessels of four hundred tons burden sail under it, by striking their top-gallant masts only."

"How very singular, Uncle Thomas."

"I have one or two stories of the same description, Boys, which are the more striking, because they illustrate the ever-watchful care of God over his creatures. Before I proceed with them, however, I must tell you of an extraordinary leap, which was made by a horse which had managed to escape from the groom who had charge of him, in a seaport town in the west of Scotland. Finding itself at liberty, it

ran with all its speed in the direction of a dry dock, and, being unable to restrain itself when it came to the edge it leaped down, and lighted on all-fours, on the flags with which the dock was paved, a height of thirty-four feet. After trotting about for some time on the bottom of the dock, it again ascended, by means of the very steep stairs by which it was surrounded."

"I wonder it was not injured by the hard flag-stones, Uncle Thomas."

"It certainly was a surprising escape, Frank. A very remarkable instance of the escape of a horse and its rider, under circumstances similar to those I told you of a few minutes ago, occurred some years since. A young gentleman riding between Ravenglass and Whitehaven, on a spirited blood horse, passed a chaise which caused the animal to take fright. It bolted off at full gallop, and coming upon Egremont Bridge (the middle of the battlements of which presents nearly a right angle to the entrance upon it), was going with such fury, that, unable

to retrieve himself, he leaped sidelong upon the battlements, which are upwards of four feet high. The rider seeing it impossible to recover his horse, and the improbability of saving either of their lives had he floundered over head foremost, had presence of mind to strike him on both sides with his spurs, and force him to take a clear leap. Owing to this precaution he alighted upon his feet, and the rider firmly kept his seat, till reaching the bottom he leaped off. When it is considered that the height of the bridge is upwards of twenty feet and a half to the top of the battlements, and that there was not one foot depth of water in the bed of the river where they alighted, it is really wonderful that they were not both struck dead on the spot. Yet neither the horse nor its rider were disabled from immediately pursuing their journey.

“An incident of the same kind occurred to the celebrated Lord Herbert, which he tells in these words: ‘I will tell one more history

of a horse, which I bought of my cousin Fowler, of the Grange, because it is memorable. I was passing over a bridge, not far from Colebrook, which had no barrier on the one side, and a hole in the bridge not far from the middle! My horse, though lusty, yet being very timorous, and seeing besides but very little in the right eye, started so much at the hole, that, upon a sudden, he had put half his body lengthwise over the side of the bridge, and was ready to fall into the river with his fore-feet and hinder-foot on the right side, when I, foreseeing the danger I was in if I fell down, clapped my left foot, together with the stirrup and spur, flat-length the left side, and so made him leap upon all-fours into the river, where, after some three or four plunges, he brought me to land.' ”

“These were very fortunate escapes, indeed, Uncle Thomas.”

“I have now pretty well exhausted my stories about the hunter, Harry, and must stop for the present ; but I must not forget the one

of the Irish groom, which I promised to tell you.

“Two grooms, drinking at a public-house door, one of them, who was mounted upon his master’s hunter, which he had brought out for exercise, boasted of its superior power of leaping, when the other betted that the horse could not clear a neighbouring wall. The height, viewed from the horse’s back, was tremendous; nevertheless, full to the brim with Irish mettle and whiskey, Patrick offered the leap to his horse standing. After a little hesitation, the horse reluctantly refused the leap; on which the irritated rider, turning about, and cantering to a considerable distance, turned it again, and with his riding switch cutting it about the ears, ran it at the wall. The generous horse would not refuse a second time, but made a desperate leap, and, being incapable of overtopping such an altitude, his fore-feet struck against the summit; yet the violence of his exertion carrying him over, he came to the ground on

his head and fore-quarters, and broke both his fore-legs in the fall: yet the fellow escaped with only a few contusions. Owing to the absence of his proprietor, the poor animal was kept several days in torture before he was shot!"

"That was very barbarous, indeed, Uncle Thomas."

"Good night, Boys! I am glad you feel the cruelty of the groom, and hope you will take a lesson by it, never to task a generous animal above his capacity."

"Good night, Uncle Thomas!"

CHAPTER V.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE EXTRAORDINARY FEATS OF THE COACH-HORSE, AND ABOUT THE SPIRIT AND COURAGE OF THE CHARGER.

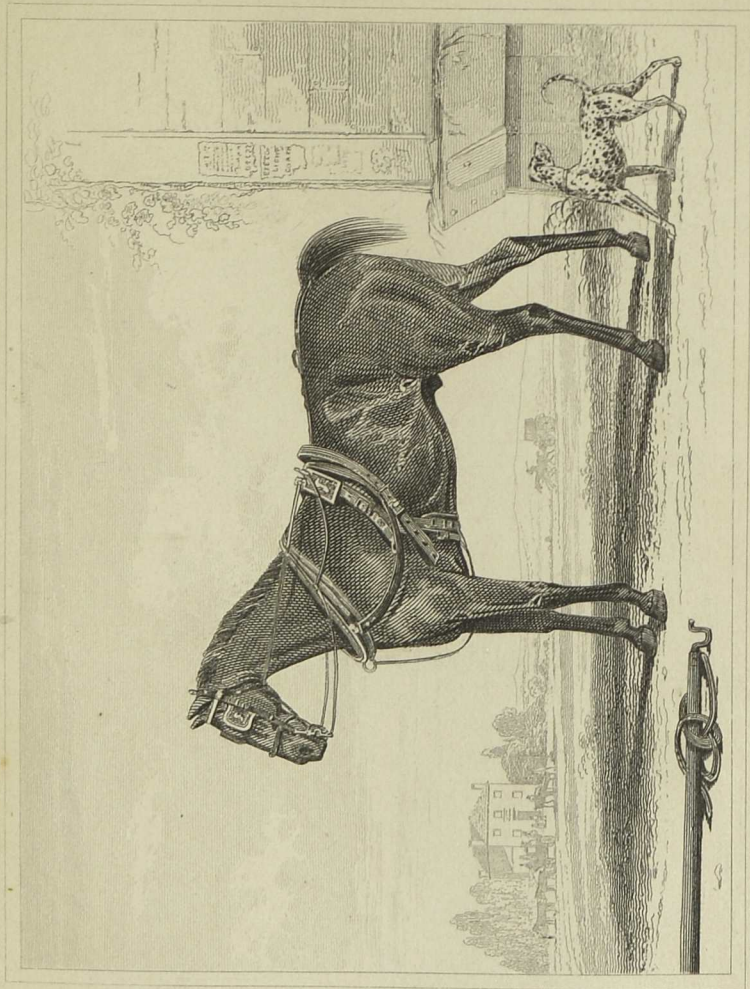
“Good evening, Boys! you are come just in time. I have been admiring this nice little picture of the coach-horse in his trappings.”

“He seems to be a fine spirited animal, Uncle Thomas.”

“That I am sure he is, Frank, and equal, I dare say, to some of the best feats recorded of his race.”

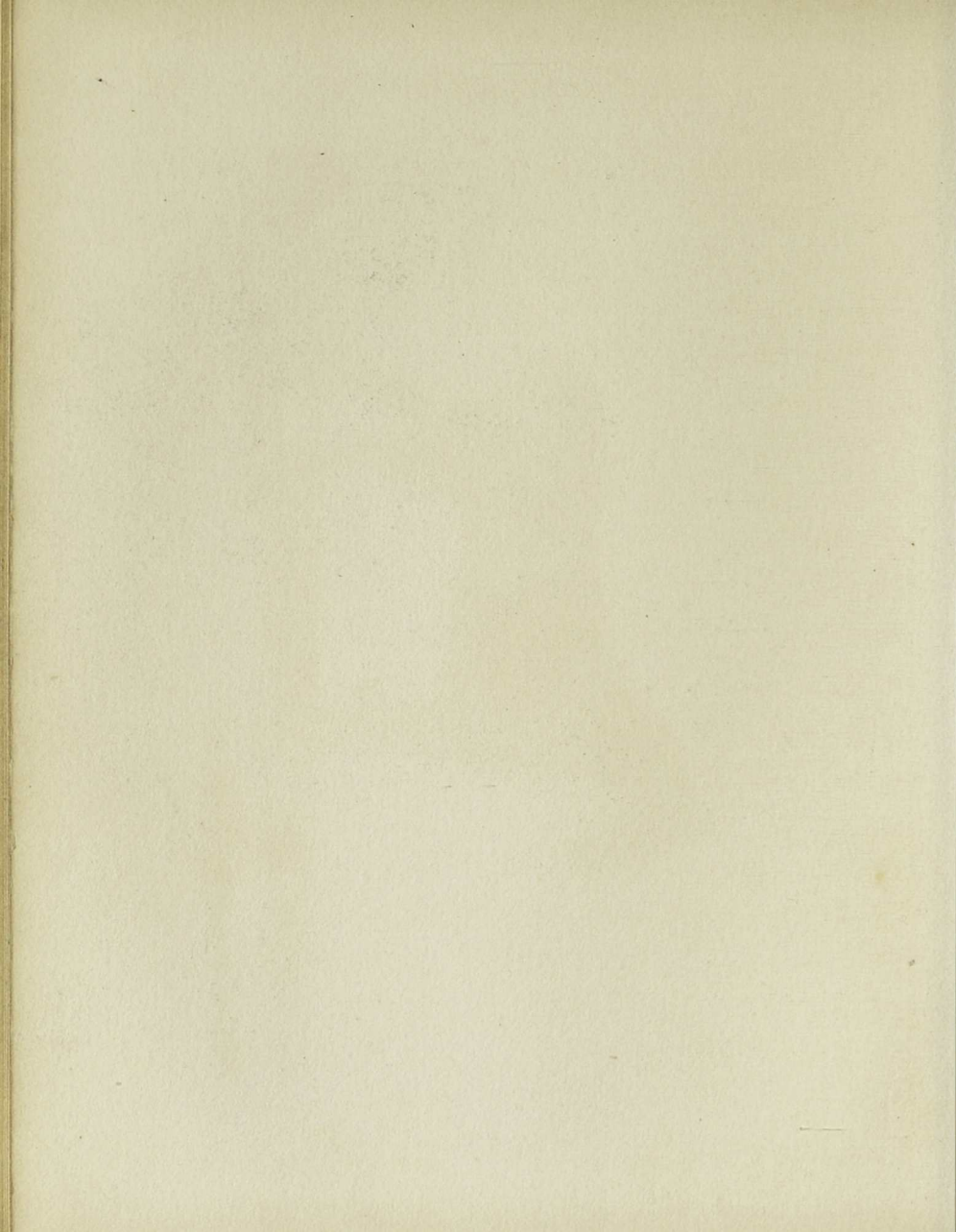
“Have you any stories about the coach-horse, Uncle Thomas?”

“Very few, Harry, and these principally about its speed and endurance. Such exertions, too, have mostly been made in consequence of



R. Sands, sc.

COACH - HORSE.



bets. For instance, in the year 1822, a gentleman, named Houlston, made a match for fifty guineas, to drive tandem *fifteen* miles in one hour, and to trot the first seven miles. The horses did the first four miles in eighteen minutes and twenty-two seconds, and the other three in fourteen minutes eight seconds, leaving twenty-seven minutes for the eight miles gallop. The horses did the eighth mile in three minutes ten seconds, the next four in thirteen minutes twelve seconds, and the remaining three miles in ten minutes and fifty seconds, winning the match by eighteen seconds. It was esteemed by sportsmen a beautiful performance; and the pacing of the horses at the gallop was a great treat.

“Here is another. In the same year Mr. Ambrose undertook to drive, at a trot, fifteen miles in one hour. The match took place over a piece of turf of three miles on the Epping road, for a stake of five hundred sovereigns. The referees decided, with a third person as

umpire, that it was won by rather more than a second. The horse broke into a gallop in the last mile, and was turned.

“ But perhaps the most extraordinary achievement of the kind, Boys, was one undertaken by a gentleman named Giles, namely, to drive a favourite mare twenty-eight miles in two hours. The performance accordingly took place on Sunbury Common, and was won with the greatest ease, in less than one hour and fifty-eight minutes. The fame of the match, which was eagerly watched by many thousands of spectators, reached the Continent, and a gentleman from the Netherlands came to England expressly for the purpose of purchasing the mare, which he did, as well as the light and elegant carriage in which she performed the match, at a high price.

“ I know very well, Boys, that these stories do not interest you so much as some that I have told you, so I will now take leave of the coach-horse, and tell you something about the horse

which is generally used as a charger; but I first must read to you an epitaph on a favourite coach-horse, which is erected at Goathurst, near Bridgewater, in Somersetshire, the seat of Sir Charles Tynne, Bart. One likes to see the services of a faithful and generous animal thus appreciated. The tomb is decorated with the various trappings and accoutrements with which the favourite was commonly arrayed; and in the centre is the following ingenious inscription:

“To the memory of one who was remarkably steady, these stones are erected. What he undertook, with spirit he accomplished: his deportment was graceful, nay, noble; the ladies admired and followed him; by application, he gained applause. His abilities were so powerful, as to draw easily the divine, the lawyer, and the statesman into his own smooth track. Had he lived in the days of Charles I., the cavaliers would not have refused his assistance; for, to the reins of due government he was always obedient. He was always a favourite, yet at all times he felt the wanton lash of lawless power. After a life of laborious servitude, performed, like Clarendon's, with unimpeached fidelity, he, like that great man, was turned out of employment, stript of his trappings, without place or pension: yet, being endued with a generous, forgiving temper, saint-like, not dreading futurity, he

placidly met the hand appointed to be his assassin. Thus he died—an example to all mortals under the wide expanded canopy of Heaven.’

“I will now, Boys, tell you some stories about the Charger; which is not, however, a distinct breed of horses, but springs from the same stock as the hunter and the coach-horse; indeed, the qualities required for the charger and the hunter are pretty much the same. Like the hunter, he enters into the spirit of the field, and,

“‘When he hears from far

The sprightly trumpets and the shouts of war,
Pricks up his ears, and, trembling with delight,
Shifts place, and paws, and hopes the promised fight.
On his right shoulder his thick mane reclined,
Ruffles at speed, and dances in the wind;
Sudden he stops; then, starting with a bound,
He turns the turf, and shakes the solid ground;
Fire from his eyes, clouds from his nostrils flow,
He bears his rider headlong on the foe.’

“A very curious illustration of the force of habit in well-trained troop-horses, occurred in the case of those of a dragoon regiment, that had been sent to grass in the West Riding of

Yorkshire. One hot summer day, a tremendous thunder-storm came on, when the horses, occupying a large enclosure, were observed to collect in a body, and, afterwards, '*form in a line,*' with as much regularity and exactness as when exercised on a field-day; and, whilst the 'thunder rolled its awful burden to the wind,' and the lightning glared on every side, maintained their position during the continuance of the storm, exhibiting one of the most magnificent spectacles the mind can well conceive."

"Did they mistake it for a battle, Uncle Thomas?"

"No doubt of it, Harry. Some of these old campaigners are the most knowing animals imaginable.

"During the late war, a regiment of cavalry was ordered to embark from Plymouth Dock for the Peninsula. Amongst the horses was an old campaigner, which had been, it was said, more than once on the same errand, and appeared to have made up his mind *not to go on*

foreign service. In pursuance of this determination, he resisted, with all his might, every attempt to sling him on board the ship, kicking and plunging so furiously, that the men employed at length gave up the attempt in despair. A resolute fellow of a sailor, seeing how the matter stood, came forward, vowing he would conquer him, and instantly grasped the horse round the neck, with the design of fixing the necessary apparatus: Jack, however, reckoned without his host; the horse, by a sudden plunge, shook him off, and, turning his heels, gave him a severe kick, which laid him sprawling on the pavement, galloped off, and, after making a circle round the assembled crowd, returned to the spot where his antagonist lay, and fairly hurled him into the water, whence he was picked up by the crew of a boat which happened to be at hand.

“When no longer able for active service, it is astonishing how long he retains his love for the duties to which he has been accustomed.

The poet Rogers, in the 'Pleasures of Memory,' notices this :—

“And when the drum beats briskly in the gale,
The war-worn courser charges at the sound,
And with young vigour wheels the pasture ground.’

But I can give you one or two practical examples, which I am sure will amuse you.

“Towards the end of last century, a farmer in Ireland bought, at a sale of cast-off horses, an old troop horse which was unfit for regimental service. The animal being quiet, the farmer, who lived in the neighbourhood of Dublin, mounted his daughter on it, and sent her to town with milk. She unluckily arrived at the Exchange at the time when the soldiers were relieving guard. The horse, hearing the music to which he had been accustomed, became ungovernable by his fair rider, and, trotting, snuffing, and snorting, bolted into the Castle Yard, with his rider and her milkpails, and took its place in the midst of the ranks, to the no small amusement of all present.”

“That was very droll, Uncle Thomas!”

“Another instance, somewhat of the same kind, occurred in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. Some squadrons of the Scots Greys being out for exercise, the trumpets were ordered to sound a halt, when a horse which was dragging a cart of sand happened to be passing, pricked up his ears, gave a loud neigh, and rushed into the middle of one of the troops, where he quietly took up his station, to the no small annoyance of those in his immediate neighbourhood. The unfortunate carter was immediately assailed by the adjutant for his carelessness; but the poor man protested that he could not help it, as the horse had made an instantaneous bolt from him, dragging the halter out of his hands. He informed the adjutant, that he supposed his horse had taken the troops in question for some old comrades, as he had, about two years before, bought him at a sale of cast dragoon horses.

“There is another story, Boys, which also

shows how lasting is the impression which the word of command makes upon the mind of the animal:—

“A gentleman riding on a strong, spirited horse, passed a pedestrian on the slope of the Downs, at Brighton, at nearly full speed. The horse had formerly been a charger in the 10th Royal Hussars, and the pedestrian, who had known him when attached to that regiment, instantly recognised him. In a loud and authoritative tone, as the horse dashed by him, he vociferated the commanding word, ‘HALT!’ It was a mandate to which the animal had been trained, and he had not forgotten it. The check it produced was as sudden as unexpected; the rider, completely unprepared for such a shock, was thrown over the horse’s head, and alighted on his back some yards in advance; as good fortune would have it, without receiving any material injury.”

“That was rather a dangerous experiment, Uncle Thomas, was it not?”

“It was so, indeed, Frank, and might have been productive of the most serious consequences. I will conclude my account of the charger, by reading to you the epitaph on Sir Ralph Abercromby’s charger, which is buried in the garden, under the south-west gallery at Marsa, near Floriand, in the island of Malta.

“‘Alas, poor General!

Thy toils and broils, and scenes of war are o’er;

Alas, thou sleep’st to wake no more!’

“‘Here lies the celebrated charger of the late Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Abercromby, who was killed at the memorable battle of Alexandria, 21st March, 1801, where this noble animal received, on that glorious day, seven musket-balls and two sabre cuts, when he afterwards became the property of John Watson, of Malta, who placed this stone over his remains, in token of his rare services, peculiar qualities, high spirit, and good temper.

“‘This esteemed horse departed this life of miseries, September 12th, 1823, aged 36 years.

“‘Sua cuique voluptas.’”

CHAPTER VI.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE HACKNEY, OR ROADSTER.

“THERE is another horse, which differs so little from the charger, or the coach-horse, that I think it as well to proceed with the few stories I have to tell about him at once. The horse to which I refer is called the hackney, or roadster, and is generally used by persons who travel on horseback.”

“I know the horse you mean very well, Uncle Thomas; we frequently see gentlemen riding them on the highway.”

“I am glad you know them so well, Boys, as it will save me the trouble of describing it to you, which I confess would be rather a difficult task.

“When hackneys have been long accustomed

to the road, they sometimes become the most knowing animals imaginable. Here is an account of one, which I lately saw in a Scotch newspaper.

“ ‘A friend of ours,’ says the editor of the Dumfries Courier, ‘who travels a good deal in the course of the year, visiting in his rounds many out of the way corners, where inns and milestones are alike scarce, has a mare that follows him like a pet dog, and fares very much as he does himself. Her name is Jess, and when a feed of corn is difficult to be got at, she can make shift to breakfast, dine, or sup, on oat or barley-cakes, seasoned with a slice from the gudewife’s cheese. Though her staple beverage is drawn from the pump-trough, the crystal well, or the running brook, she can tipple at times as well as her betters, particularly when the weather is either sultry and oppressively hot, or disagreeably raw and cold. In the warm days she prefers something cooling, and very lately we had the honour of treating her to

a bottle of ale. The liquor, when decanted, was approached in a moment, and swallowed without the intervention of a breath. For some miles its effects were visible in the increased speed and spirits of the animal; and we are informed that the same thing takes place when the cordial is changed in winter to a gill of whiskey! The latter, of course, is diluted in water, several per cents below the proper strength of seamen's grog; and her master is of opinion, that a little spirits, timeously applied, is as useful a preservative against cold in the case of a horse as of a human being. Our friend's system is certainly peculiar, but his mare thrives well under it; and we will be bold to say, that a roadster more sleek, safe, and docile is not to be found in the whole country."

"That is very singular, Uncle Thomas. I never heard of a horse eating bread and cheese and drinking ale before."

"I dare say not, Harry; it is not a very

common accomplishment in a horse. They are fond of good living, however, as well as their 'betters,' as the editor says. A gentleman in the north of Ireland had a horse, which used to disengage his head from the halter, then to open the door of the stable, and go out, in the middle of the night only (when no doubt he reckoned himself most secure from detection), and regale himself on corn in a field at a considerable distance from the stable. He always returned to his stall before the break of day, and continued this practice for some time without being detected. He adroitly opened the door, by drawing a string fastened to the latch, with his teeth; and it is said that, on returning to the stable, he again shut the door. But I rather think, Boys, this fact must be accounted for in some other way."

"How do you think it was done, Uncle Thomas?"

"I have no doubt, John, that he undid the fastening of the door in the manner described;

but on his return, I dare say it swung back of itself after he had forced it open, without his troubling himself about it."

"Do you recollect John Gilpin's famous gallop, John?"

"Oh yes! Uncle Thomas."

"Well, here it is on a small scale, and scarcely less laughable than the expedition of the worthy cit. A gentleman in the neighbourhood of Chester, having occasion to send his servant to that town on horseback, it happened that a glazier, who had been mending some windows at his house, asked the servant to be permitted to ride behind him, to which he assented. No sooner was he mounted, than the horse, alarmed by the rattling noise made by the glass which the glazier carried, started off at full speed, and, coming to the lodge-gate, which was five feet six inches high, and spiked on the top, though he had never before been known to leap, he cleared it at once; and, wonderful to say, neither of his riders (although it

was the glazier's first appearance on horseback) was thrown from his seat, nor received any injury from their perilous expedition."

"I dare say they were both pretty well frightened, Uncle Thomas."

"More frightened than hurt, it appears, John. One of the good qualities of the roadster consists in a very retentive memory, which enables him to find out places where he has once been, of which I can give you a very striking instance:—

"A gentleman, on one occasion, rode a young horse, which he had bred, to a distance of thirty miles from home, and to a part of the country where he had never before been. The road was a cross one, and extremely difficult to find; however, by dint of perseverance and inquiry, he at length reached his destination. Two years afterwards, he had occasion to pursue the same route. He was benighted three or four miles from the end of his journey. The night was so dark that he could scarcely see the horse's head; he had a black and dreary moor to pass, and

had lost all traces of his route, and was for some time even uncertain whether he proceeded in the proper direction. To add to his miseries, the rain began to fall heavily. He now contemplated the uncertainty of his situation : ‘ Here am I,’ said he to himself, ‘ far from any house, in the midst of a dreary waste, and I know not which way to direct my course. I have heard much of the memory of the horse, and now is the time to try it ; it is my only hope.’ He threw the reins on the horse’s neck, and, encouraging him to proceed, soon found himself safe at the gate of his friend. It must be remarked, that the horse could not possibly have been that road with the exception of the time before-mentioned, at two years’ distance, as no person ever rode him but his master.”

“ That was very sagacious, Uncle Thomas.”

“ A short time ago, Boys, I told you about a horse which used to escape from its stable at night to steal corn. Here is one of more open robbery. His owner was probably some

unprincipled person, who had trained him to such evil courses :—

“ One of the constables of St. George’s in the East, London, lately made a complaint before the magistrates at Shadwell office, against a horse for stealing hay. The complainant stated, that the horse came regularly every night, of its own accord, and without any attendant, to the coachstand in St. George’s, where he fully satisfied his appetite, and then galloped away. He defied the whole of the parish officers to apprehend him; for if they attempted to go near while he was eating, he would throw up his heels and kick at them in the most furious way, or he ran at them, and if they did not get out of his way, he would bite them. The constable, therefore, thought it best to represent the case to the magistrates.

“ One of the magistrates said, ‘ Well, Mr. constable, if you should be annoyed again by this animal in the execution of your duty, you

may apprehend him if you can, and bring him before us to answer your complaints ! ” ”

“ It must have been a very naughty animal, Uncle Thomas. ”

“ So much for the influence of evil friends or companions, Harry. You remember the precept, ‘ Evil communication corrupts good manners. ’ It holds true in the case of animals as well as of mankind.

“ In a book which I lately read, I found a curious account of a gentleman who travelled over a great part of the world on a hackney : as he seems to have been somewhat of an original, I will give you a short account of him if you please.

“ The gentleman, whose name was Wilson, was a native of Cornwall, and inherited an estate of about one thousand pounds a year in that county. In the year 1741, when he was twenty-three years of age, he set off for the Continent on his travels, riding on horseback, accom-

panied by one servant. He first visited every European country, in doing which he spent eight years. He then embarked for America; was two years in the northern part, and three more in South America, travelling as a Spaniard, which he was enabled to do, from the extreme facility with which he spoke the language. The delightful climate and luxuriance of Peru enchanted him so much that he hired a farm, and resided nearly a year on it. He next visited the East: he passed successively through all the territories in Africa to the South of the Mediterranean, Egypt, Syria, etc., and all the dominions of the Grand Seignior; passed twice through Persia, once through the northern, and once through the southern provinces; over India, Hindostan, and part of Siam and Pegu; and made several excursions to the boundaries of China. On his return he stopped at the Cape of Good Hope; penetrated far into Africa from that quarter; and, on his return to the Cape, took the opportunity of a ship sailing to Batavia,

and visited most of the islands in the Great Indian Archipelago. Returning to Europe, he landed at Cadiz, and passed in a straight line from that place to Moscow, in his way to Kamschatka. Soon after this period, however, all trace of him was lost. He was in correspondence with several Cornish gentlemen, so late as the year 1783, when he was supposed to be preparing to set out for Siberia. A gentleman, who saw him at Moscow in that year, represented him as healthy, vigorous, and in all respects as hearty as other people at forty-six, though he was in his sixty-sixth year. He was never heard of after that period, and is supposed either to have died suddenly, or to have settled in some remote corner of the world, whence intelligence was difficult to be conveyed."

"I should have liked to have been his companion in his wanderings, Uncle Thomas."

"I know no horse that would have carried you better, Frank, than a good hackney; but I must tell you something about the speed for

which some of them have been very remarkable, especially in trotting, which is the peculiar pace of the roadster. Perhaps the most celebrated trotter was a mare named Phenomena, which was bred in Norfolk, by Sir Edward Astley. When twelve years old, she was matched by her owner to trot seventeen miles within one hour, which she performed, on the road between Cambridge and Huntingdon, in fifty-three minutes, a feat unheard of in the annals of trotting. So surprising did this seem, that the fairness of the match was doubted by many, and very large bets were offered that she would not again do the same distance in the same time. The challenge was accepted, and, within a month after her former amazing performance, she again trotted the seventeen miles, to the astonishment of the assembled spectators, a few seconds under fifty-three minutes! Very heavy bets were depending on this match.

“Prior to her last performance, she was matched to trot nineteen miles within the hour,

for a bet of two hundred guineas to one hundred ; but, on her winning the match with such ease, the opposite party thought proper to forfeit. Her owner then offered to trot her nineteen miles and a half in one hour ; but no one would venture to take up the match, in consequence of its being proved, by several stop-watches, that, during her last performance, she trotted four miles in less than eleven minutes. This alarmed the sportsmen, who one and all declared that she literally flew, and were of opinion that she could trot twenty miles within the hour ! observing, they would have nothing more to do with her.

“ From hard labour and other causes, this most extraordinary animal became so reduced, in every respect, that, in 1810, she was actually offered for sale at the low price of seven pounds !

“ In February, 1811, when twenty-three years old, she again trotted nine miles in twenty-eight minutes and thirty seconds. Within six months after this event, having then passed into other

hands, she won four extraordinary matches in one day. After performing such Herculean tasks, she became, in her twenty-sixth year, the property of the late Sir R. C. Daniel, who, to his credit be it spoken, succeeded in bringing her into such high condition, that within a few months, notwithstanding the hardships to which she had been subjected, she still retained her beautiful symmetry, and appeared fresh and clean on her legs; convincing proofs of an equally excellent stamina, strong constitution, and good nursing.

“This wonderful mare was about fourteen hands three inches high; colour, dark brown, and her near fetlock-joint white.”

“She must, indeed, have been a phenomenon, Uncle Thomas.”

“Poor animal! her treatment seems to have been what, I fear, is not at all uncommon—overtasked, so long as able and willing, and neglected and ill-treated when no longer equal to the unreasonable demands made upon her

exertions. How few there are, Boys, who make it a matter of conscience to treat their animals with unwearying kindness! and yet, how well they repay this kindness I will show you, by relating to you a story of a horse, which ought properly to have come under consideration at our last meeting, but which I then overlooked.

“A horse belonging to the military depôt at Woolwich had proved so unmanageable to the rough-riders, that at length no one amongst them durst venture to mount him. His mode of throwing or dismounting his rider, consisted in lying down and rolling over him, or by crushing his leg against some wall or post. All means to break him of these perilous tricks proving unavailing, the animal was brought before the commanding officer, with the character of being ‘incurably’ vicious, and with a recommendation, on that account, that he should be ‘cast,’ and sold out of his Majesty’s service.

“Colonel Quest, hearing of this, and knowing

the horse to be thorough-bred, and one of the best-actioned and cleverest horses in the regiment, besought the commanding officer to permit him to be transferred into the riding troop. This was consented to, and the transfer was no sooner accomplished, than Colonel Quest determined to pursue a system of management directly opposite to that which had been already attempted. He had him led daily into the riding-school—suffered no whip to be shown to him while there, but patted him, and tried to make him execute this and the other little manœuvre; and as often as he proved obedient, rewarded him with a handful of corn or beans, or a piece of bread, with which bribes his pockets were invariably well supplied. In this manner, and in no great distance of time, was the rebel not only subdued and tamed, but rendered so perfectly quiet, that a little child could ride him. He became, at length, taught to kneel down while his rider mounted, and to perform various evolutions, and dances, and tricks,

which no other horse in the school could be brought to do. In fine, so great a favourite did he become, that his master gave him the appellation of 'The Darling.' ”

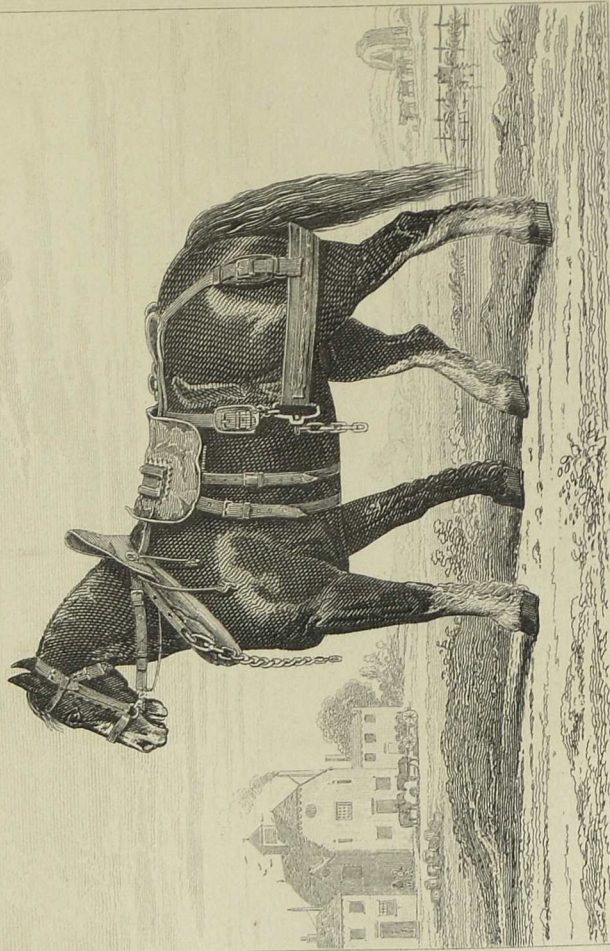
CHAPTER VII.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT CART-HORSES, AND DESCRIBES
SEVERAL OF THE PRINCIPAL VARIETIES.

“THERE is, Boys, another race of horses, or rather, I should say, several other races of horses, which are kept for the purpose of drawing heavy burdens—for doing, in fact, the drudgery of life—to which I must now introduce you.

“Perhaps the finest breed of Cart-horses is the large black horse, of which here is an admirable representation, in his harness, ready, at his master’s command, to put his shoulder to the load.

“The black cart-horse, which is principally bred in the midland counties of England, furnishes those admirable teams which we see in



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BLACK CART HORSE.

coal-merchants', brewers', and other heavy carts and waggons about London, where the immense weight of the animal's body aids his great strength to move the heaviest loads. There have been instances in which a single horse of this kind has drawn, for a short distance, the enormous weight of three tons, half of which is known to be their ordinary draught.

“ From their immense size and power, these horses are prized all over the world. Even in the distant provinces of India, the native rulers regard them with feelings of admiration. On a late occasion, when Lieutenant Burnes was sent on a mission to appease the wrath of Runjeet Singh, the chief of Lahore, dray-horses were deemed the most acceptable present that could be offered to that august personage. In that part of India, they are known by the style and title of English elephants; and Runjeet Singh was so much delighted with the ponderous brutes, that he addressed a letter to the Governor-General of India, expressing admiration

of the animals themselves, and stating, in the true style of Eastern exaggeration, that the lustre of their ample shoes was so splendid, that the moon had been puzzled whether it should or should not enter into competition with them, and venture to shine after their arrival at Lahore !

“That was being very polite, indeed, Uncle Thomas.”

“I have a few stories to tell you about the black horse, Boys ; but before doing so, I will describe the other breeds to you.

“The next in importance are the Cleveland bays, which are by some persons thought to be the handsomest working horses in England. They are clean, well-made animals, as well as strong and active, and answer equally well for the coach, team, or saddle. During the war, they were much sought after for the use of the cavalry regiments of the British army.

“In the west of Scotland they breed a race called the Clydesdale horse, which unites, in a

great measure, the advantages of the black horse and the Cleveland bay. It has, in some degree, the size of the former, united to the activity and energy of the latter. They are very highly prized in Scotland, for their good temper and general usefulness.

“The Suffolk Punch is another most useful draught-horse, which is much used in the county from which it takes its name, and the neighbourhood. It is remarkably compact, firm, strong, and good-winded, so that it can continue long at work.

“These are the principal breeds; but so many crosses take place, that it is sometimes impossible to distinguish the varieties. Do you think you will remember them, John?”

“Oh yes, Uncle Thomas, I think I shall. We are obliged to you for pointing out the different breeds; I really did not know there had been so many varieties.”

“I will now Boys, tell you some stories about these Cart-horses.

“An unparalleled instance of the power of a horse, when assisted by art, was shown near Croydon. The Surrey iron railway being completed, and opened for the carriage of goods from Wandsworth to Merstham, a bet was made that a common horse could draw thirty-six tons for six miles along the road, and that he should draw this weight from a dead pull, as well as turn it round the occasional windings of the road.

“A number of gentlemen assembled near Merstham to witness this extraordinary performance. Twelve waggons loaded with stones, each waggon weighing about three tons, were chained together, and a horse, taken promiscuously from the timber cart of Mr. Harwood, was yoked into the team. He started from near the Fox public-house, and drew the immense chain of waggons, with apparent ease, to near the turnpike at Croydon, a distance of six miles, in one hour and forty-one minutes, which is nearly

at the rate of four miles an hour. In the course of this time he was stopped four times, to show that it was not by the impetus of the descent the power was acquired. After each stoppage, a chain of four waggons was added to the cavalcade, with which the same horse again set off with undiminished power. And, still farther to show the effect of the railway in facilitating motion, the attending workmen, to the number of about fifty, were directed to mount the waggons; still the horse proceeded without the least distress; and, in truth, there appeared to be scarcely any limitation to the power of his draught. After the trial, the waggons were taken to the weighing machine, and it appeared that the whole weight which he had dragged with so much ease weighed upwards of fifty-five tons!"

"That was an extraordinary load, indeed, Uncle Thomas!"

"It was so, Frank. But there are several stories illustrative of the sagacity of the horse,

which I have to tell you, which I think will interest you quite as much. Here is one of 'Old Tommy':—

“There was an old horse, well known in the pretty village of Rainford, and even for many miles round, by the name of 'Old Tommy.' This horse was famed, not merely for his great age, and long and valuable services, but more especially for the tractableness of his disposition. His sagacity was particularly shown on an occasion, when he lost one of his shoes in the pasture: being aware of his loss, and knowing, from long experience, the comfort of good shoes, he lost no time, on the opening of the gate, in repairing to his old friend, the blacksmith, who soon discovered and supplied his want. He then made the best of his way home, and prepared for the service of the day. It need not be added, that he was a great favourite with his master, who valued him very highly, on account of his sagacity and long service.”

“That was excellent, Uncle Thomas. To what age do horses generally live?”

“That, Harry, depends greatly on the treatment which they receive, and on the amount of labour which they are forced to undergo. I will tell you about one or two very aged horses by-and-by; but there is another instance of sagacity which I must first tell you of.

“A horse belonging to a person in Glasgow had been several times ill, and as often cured by a farrier who lived at a short distance from his master’s residence. He had not, however, been troubled with a recurrence of his disease for a considerable time, till one morning, when he happened to be employed at some distance from the farrier’s workshop. Arranged in a row with other horses engaged in the same work, while the carters were absent he left the cart, and, unattended, went direct to the farrier’s door. As no one appeared with the horse, the farrier immediately surmised that he had been seized with his old complaint. He was soon convinced of

this by the animal lying down, and showing, by every means of which he was capable, that he was in distress. The farrier quickly administered the usual dose, and sent him home to his master, who had by that time sent persons in all directions in search of him.

“ Now, Harry, to answer your question regarding the age to which cart-horses attain—

“ Some years ago, there was, at Warrington, a horse which had attained the great age of sixty-two years, an age at which it is supposed no other horse ever arrived in modern times. When we take into account that Billy was a cart-horse, and accustomed to hard labour all his life, his case is certainly most extraordinary. Billy belonged to the Mersey and Irwell Navigation Company, and more than half his life had been spent in towing boats ; his sight was still good, and he possessed the use of his limbs in tolerable perfection ; his colour was of a chestnut dun, and he was scarcely fifteen hands high. He grazed in summer on the luxuriant

pasture of the banks of the Mersey, and in winter was taken into stable, and fed on mashes and soft food. On his death, the head of this horse was presented, by the proprietors of the Mersey and Irwell Navigation Company, to the Natural History Society of Manchester, in whose museum it still remains.

“ Here is another instance :—

“ In the year 1828, there was in the possession of a farmer in Scotland, a horse which had attained the age of thirty-eight years, and which continued strong and active. He was four years old when he was purchased by the farmer, so that he acted the part of a faithful servant thirty-four years. He ate his corn and hay readily, was in good condition, and seemed to retain his sight unimpaired. As a proof of his strength and activity, it may be mentioned, that the farm on which he lived contains one hundred and twenty acres, all the ploughing on which was in the year preceding performed by this old favourite and another horse, without

assistance. It rarely happens, however, that cart-horses are fit for work after arriving at the age of twenty-four years.

“We might learn wisdom from the horse, Boys, if we chose, as you will see in the story I am going to tell you about his diligence and punctuality. It is one related by Captain Brown :—

“In the spring of 1829, when the ploughman from whom I had the story was engaged in harrowing, a relative of his, who had been long abroad as a sergeant in the army, returned home, his purse well stored with cash. During his stay in the neighbourhood, he had a particular pleasure in regaling his old comrades, and seldom failed to send them home tipsy. Our hero, who had the care of a pair of beautiful Clydesdale horses, on returning home one evening quite tipsy, went, as usual, before going to bed, to supper his horses, and give them a drink. For the latter purpose, it was his practice to let them loose, when they went by them-

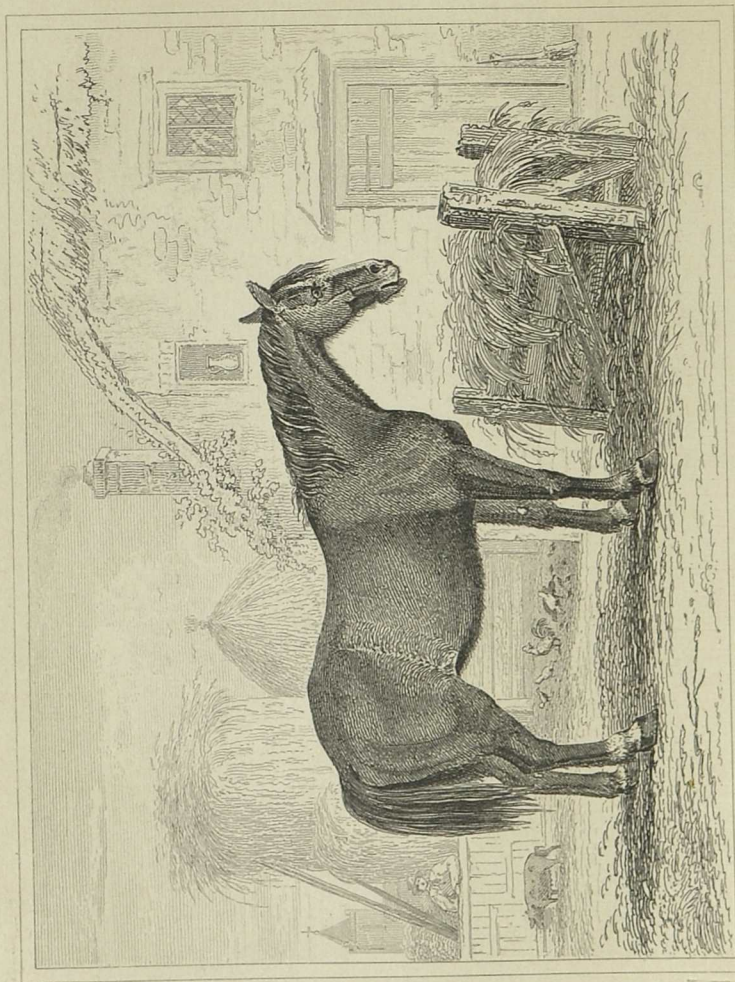
selves to a running stream hard by, and, after quenching their thirst returned to the stable. On the evening in question, it would appear John had forgot either to tie them up or to shut the stable door. Next morning, the dissipation of the previous night had made him so sleepy, that he could not get up till two hours later than his usual time. On going to the stable, he found the door open, one of the steeds gone, and the other standing loose in his stall. He searched everywhere in vain for the absent horse; at length he met a boy who told him, that about half-past six o'clock he observed one, without halter or attendant, going into a certain field. The man, overjoyed at his information, hastened thither, and, to his surprise, found the strayed animal standing in a ploughed field, by the side of the harrows, from which he had unyoked him the preceding evening.

“Horses, Boys, among their other good qualities, are famed for their memory. I have already told you several stories illustrative of

this ; but there is one of the cart-horse, which I cannot omit.

“ A person passing along the streets of Bristol recognised a horse, bestrode by a countryman, to be one which he himself had lost about nine months before. He at once seized his property, and put in his claim : ‘ This is my horse,’ said he, ‘ and I will prove it in two minutes, or quit my claim.’ He then caused the countryman to dismount, liberated the horse from restraint, let him go at large, and declared his proof to be, that the horse would be found at his stables, which were at some distance—a fact that was proved, in a few minutes, by the two claimants and several bystanders repairing to the stables, where they found the horse ‘ quite at home.’

“ There is one breed of cart-horses, Boys, of which I must tell you before I conclude—what is called the common cart-horse, which you frequently see employed in the cart or plough. He is a much inferior animal to the black horse, both in size and strength ; his form is



COMMON CART HORSE.

heavy, his motions slow, and his aspect without sprightliness. Here is a picture of him, which is certainly far from a flattering one. Rough and ungraceful as he there appears, however, Boys, he is a very valuable servant, and though unequal to the heavy work performed by some of his more showy brethren, the farmer finds him better adapted for light soils and the common occupations of every-day life.

“To-morrow evening, Boys, I will tell you about the ponies, of which there are several kinds, but for the present, I must bid you good-bye.”

“Good-bye, Uncle Thomas.”

CHAPTER VIII.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE PONY, PARTICULARLY ABOUT THE SHELTYE OR SHETLAND PONY; AND ABOUT THE PONIES OF EXMOOR FOREST.

“GOOD evening, Uncle Thomas; you see we never forget our appointment with you.”

“SO I perceive, Frank; and by way of a treat to you, I mean this evening to tell you about Ponies; I shall begin with the Shetland ponies, but first of all, can you tell me where Shetland is, from which those little creatures derive their name?”

“ON the northern coast of Scotland, Uncle Thomas.”

“RIGHT, Frank! Well, the ponies, though they are called Shetland, are to be found in all the islands on the north and west of Scotland,

and also on the mountainous districts of the mainland, round the coast. They are called *garrons* by the Highlanders, and are found of all colours. They are beautifully-formed little creatures; their heads small and their limbs fine; their manes and tails long and flowing. They are in general from seven and a half to nine and a half hands in height, and are prodigiously strong in proportion to their size. One, nine hands in height, has been known to carry a man, weighing twelve stone, forty miles in a day. They are high-spirited and tractable little creatures, and in the places I have mentioned, are suffered to run wild about the mountains."

"Indeed! Uncle Thomas; and how are they caught when they are wanted?"

"Various modes are adopted, Frank, according to the nature of the ground. Sometimes the wild Highlandmen—men almost as wild as the animals they chase—hunt them into a bog, where sinking at every step, they are soon captured. In other places they are forced

to ascend the steepest hills, and their pursuers seize them by the hind legs, when from the violence of their struggles to escape, and the determined hold of their captor, both frequently tumble down together."

"That is very rough work, Uncle Thomas,"

"There are various other ways, Boys, for taking these ponies, when they are wanted for breaking. Sometimes they are hunted from height to height by successive pursuers, until, overcome by fatigue and want of breath, they are unable to proceed, and lie down and suffer themselves to be taken. Sometimes, however, they are not captured at all, but driven in large herds to the lowlands in an unbroken state, to be sold at some of the great fairs.

"To show you how docile the little creatures are, I can tell you a curious story of one which was placed in a situation in which I dare say no horse ever was before :—

"A gentleman having been presented with one of these handsome little animals, which

measured only seven hands in height, was anxious to convey his present home as speedily as possible ; but, being at a considerable distance, he was at a loss how to do so most easily. The friend who presented it said, ' Can't you carry him in your chaise ? ' The experiment was made, the sheltie was lifted into the bottom of the gig, and covered up with the apron, and some bits of bread were given him to keep him quiet. The docile little creature lay quite peaceably till the gentleman reached his destination ; thus exhibiting the novel spectacle of a horse riding in a gig."

" A horse riding in a gig, Uncle Thomas ! Ha, ha ! that was very singular indeed."

" Hardly less singular, Frank, was an incident which took place with a messenger, who was employed some years ago, by the Laird of Coll, to ride post, upon a Shetland pony, from the Highlands to Glasgow and Edinburgh, the ordinary weight carried being fourteen stone. Being stopped at a toll-bar in his way, the man

good-humouredly asked the toll-keeper whether he should be required to pay toll if he passed on foot, carrying a burden; and being answered in the negative, he took up the horse and bags in his arms and carried them through the bar to the great amusement of the spectators."

"He was a very little post-horse, I think, Uncle Thomas, and I fear would not get over the ground very fast."

"In those times, Frank, travelling post was not such a rapid affair as it is now; but I dare say the little pony moved faster than you imagine. For instance, a Shetland pony, eleven hands high, and carrying five stone, was once matched, for one hundred guineas, to run from Norwich to Yarmouth, and back again, a distance of forty-four miles. Great as the distance was, he performed it with ease, in three hours and forty-five minutes; perhaps the greatest feat ever done by a horse of his height.

"But the little Shetlander, besides his

strength and speed, has other qualities to recommend him :—

“A young girl, the daughter of a gentleman in Warwickshire, playing on the banks of a river which runs through his grounds, had the misfortune to fall into the water, and would in all probability have been drowned, had not a little pony, which had long been kept in the family, plunged into the stream, and brought the child safely ashore, without the slightest injury.

“That was delightful, Uncle Thomas. He seems to be almost as sagacious as the dog.”

“In an old York newspaper there is an account of a Shetland pony, Boys, which seems to have been quite a wonder in its way. I will read it to you, if you please :—

“ ‘There is at present (October, 1790), in a village to the south of Haddington, a very small black pony of the Shetland breed, which was foaled in the year 1743, and in the year 1745, was rode at the battle of Prestonpans, by a

young gentleman, who afterwards sold it to a farmer near Dunbar, from whom it came to the present proprietor. This pony, which is now forty-seven years of age, looks remarkably fresh, and can trot above eight miles an hour, for several hours together; has a very good set of teeth; eats corn and hay well; is able to go a long journey; and has not undergone the least alteration whatever, either in appearance or in power, for these twenty years past.' "

"He must have been a tough old pony, Uncle Thomas. Do the shelties generally attain so great an age?"

"No, Frank, I do not think they are longer-lived than their more bulky brethren. In their case, as well as the others, individuals have been known to attain to very great ages. One is said to have died a few years ago, at Wigton, in Scotland, in his fortieth year. He belonged to an innkeeper, and till about twelve months before his death, he was considered one of the best hacks in the district."

“What sort of ponies are those of Exmoor, Uncle Thomas? I heard a gentleman lately speak very highly of them.”

“The Exmoor ponies, Frank, are very hardy creatures, though they are far from being pretty: on the contrary, they are rather ugly ill-made animals; but they are very useful, and are almost untiring.

“I am sorry I cannot give you a very detailed account of these animals, but a gentleman who on one occasion rode one of them for five or six miles, declared that he never saw such astonishing power and action in so small a compass. On another occasion the owner of this animal travelled from Bristol to South Molton on him, a distance of eighty-six miles. He started from Bristol at the same time as the coach which runs that way, and beat it by half an hour. The same pony once gave evidence of his surprising agility, by leaping over a gate at least eight inches higher than his back.”

“That was a good leap, Uncle Thomas.”

“Capital! Frank. But I must bid you good night; I have a visit to make to-night, and promised to go early.”

“Good night, Uncle Thomas!”



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FORRESTER.

CHAPTER IX.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE NEW FOREST AND DARTMOOR PONIES, AS WELL AS ABOUT THE CEFAL OR WELSH PONY.

“TO-NIGHT, Boys, I will go on with my account of the Ponies, which I was obliged to leave unfinished last evening. Here is an engraving of the Forester, a race of Ponies which runs wild in the New Forest, Dorsetshire.”

“I do not like him half so much as this other one of the Shetland Pony (*see Frontispiece*), Uncle Thomas.”

“I dare say not, Harry ; it is far from being so handsome an animal as the Sheltie ; but it is almost, if not quite, as useful. They are found in large numbers in the extensive domain of the New Forest, and though they run about in a state of wildness, they are all private property.

In the summer season they may be seen in herds of a score or two, feeding like deer in the glades of the forest. When wanted, their colts are either hunted down by men on horseback, or caught by stratagem. As they are very hardy, they are useful for all kinds of labour.

“In Devonshire there is another breed of ponies, which are celebrated and much sought after, on account of their sure-footedness: they are very hardy, extremely nimble, and well suited to the barren tracts and mountainous roads around Dartmoor, whence they take their name. The best account I have seen of these ponies is the one which I will now read to you:—

“The size of this variety is somewhat larger than that of the Exmoor breed; they are even more ugly, being ill-groomed, and having little attention paid to them. They present a very picturesque appearance, with their long ragged hair, some inches in length, under the jaws.

“A gentleman, on one occasion, being de-

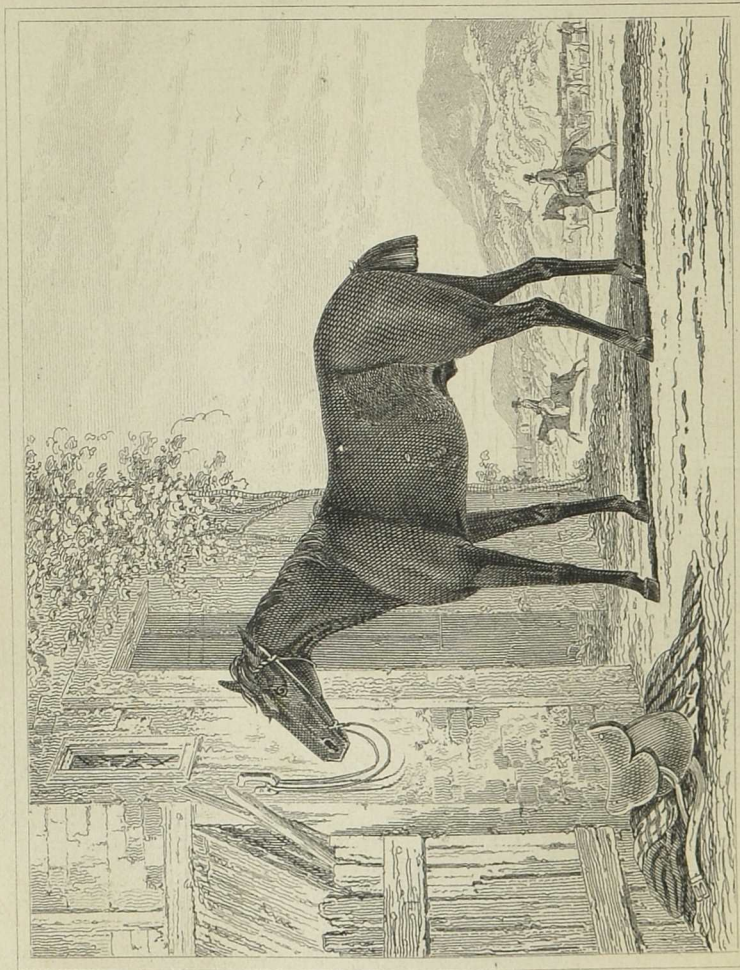
sirous of possessing himself of one of the Dartmoor ponies that was running wild amongst the herd, and which had a better appearance than his fellows, for the purpose of securing it, got the assistance of several men, who succeeded in separating this individual from the rest. They drove it among some rocks, by the side of a pointed hill, called in that district a *tor*. One of the men followed the pony on horseback, while the gentleman stood in the low grounds, watching the progress of the chase. The poor animal, being driven into a corner, and seeing no prospect of escape, made a desperate leap, fairly cleared the man on horseback, and flew with such precipitation down the hill, that he distanced his pursuers, and again joined his companions.

“In that picturesque and beautiful district, many of the farmers are without even a single cart or car, the whole produce of the farm, and manure, being carried on panniers, on ponies’ backs. Sometimes, in harvest, oxen are used

to drag their crops on sledges, this, however, is not very common. They also use what they term *crooks*, for carrying light articles on horseback. They are formed of willow poles, about an inch and a half in thickness, bent in the manner of an ox-bow, with one end considerably longer than the other; these are joined by a pair of cross-bars, from eighteen inches to two feet long. Each horse has two pair of them, slung to him so that the shorter ends rest against the pack-saddle, and the longer ones stand four or five feet from each other, and rise from fifteen to eighteen inches above the horse's back. The loads are piled within and between these crooks.

"This is all I know about the Dartmoor ponies, Boys, so I proceed to tell you of another race, called Welsh ponies.

"The ponies of Wales seem to be an original and unmixed breed. They are much esteemed for the neatness and beauty of their forms, for the nimbleness of their motions, and, above



R. Sands sc.

WELSH PONY.

all, for being remarkably sure-footed on the most difficult roads, which renders them extremely valuable in the mountainous tracts to which they originally belong. In point of size and hardiness, they bear a close resemblance to the best of the native breed of the Highlands of Scotland, and other hilly countries in the north of Europe. These animals are almost unequalled in their endurance of fatigue, and prefer a hard pavement to a soft road. For the singular property of keeping their footing on the rocks, the Welsh ponies are hardly less distinguished than the goat: and be the ascent or descent ever so steep and rugged, if the rider can maintain his seat, the pony is sure to keep its footing. Indeed, in respect to firmness of hoof, and skill in planting it, it is little if at all inferior to the mules used in the Andes.

“An amusing little anecdote, connected with this power of moving with safety and expedition among its native rocks, is told of a Welsh

gentleman, who came down from his native hills, mounted on a *ceffal*, which is the Welsh name for these ponies, to join the train of one of the kings of England. Coming in last on a certain occasion, the king reproached him with the slowness of his steed. This raised the virtuous indignation of the Welshman, and he replied, with more sincerity than courtly grace, ‘Hur is as coot a shentleman as te pest, but her ceffal is only a shentleman on te rock, and let them try a riding there!’

“Here is an interesting little story of the sagacity of the Welsh pony:—

“A favourite pony mare, belonging to a gentleman in Montgomeryshire, had a colt which grazed, with its mother, in a field adjoining the Severn. One day the pony hastily made its appearance in front of the house, and pawed with her feet, and made other noises, as if to attract attention. Observing this, a person went out, when she immediately galloped off. Her owner desired that she should be fol-

lowed, and all the gates from the house to the field were forced open. On reaching the field, the pony was found looking into the river, over the spot where the colt was found drowned."

"Poor creature! What a pity the poor colt was drowned, Uncle Thomas!"

"There is one other story about the Welsh pony, Boys, which shows almost equal sagacity:—

"A gentleman, on one occasion, mounted on a favourite old shooting pony, had beaten for game all day, without meeting with any success, when, on a sudden, to his great astonishment, his pony stopped short, and could not be persuaded to move, either by dint of whip or spur. The gentleman accordingly desired his game-keeper to go forward to ascertain what was the matter, when the pony immediately *drew* after him; that is, followed him in the same manner that a pointer advances upon game. The keeper soon started a covey of partridges, and fired, and

killed his bird. As the pony was an old stager, his master having been accustomed to ride him in his shooting excursions for many years, it is supposed that he had, from long experience, acquired a knowledge of the scent of the birds.

“These are nearly all the stories which I remember of the pony, Boys; but there is another little horse which slightly excels some of them in size, of which I must tell you before we proceed to something else—the Galloway, I mean :—

“This useful animal takes its name—or, I should rather say, took its name, for the breed is said now to be extremely rare, John—from a district in Scotland, whence it was originally derived. It is a stout, compact, little horse, and is celebrated for its speed, and steadiness on the road. Here is an account of him by a writer on agriculture, who spoke of its excellencies from practical experience. Will you read it for us, John?”

“ If you please, Uncle Thomas.”

“ ‘ There was once a breed of small elegant horses in Scotland, similar to that of Ireland and Sweden, and which were known by the name of Galloways, the best of which sometimes reached the height of fourteen hands and a half. One of this description I possessed, it having been bought for my use when a boy. In point of elegance and shape, it was a perfect picture ; and in disposition it was gentle and compliant. It moved almost with a wish, and never tired. I rode this little creature for twenty-five years, and twice, in that time, I rode one hundred and fifty miles at a stretch, without stopping, except to bait, and that not for above an hour at a time. It came in at the last stage with as much ease and alacrity as it travelled the first. I could have undertaken to have performed, on this beast, when it was in its prime, sixty miles a day for a twelvemonth running, without any extraordinary exertion.’ ”

“ That was an extraordinary animal, Uncle

Thomas. I wonder that the breed was no more esteemed."

"Some of the feats recorded of the galloway, Frank, show him to have been a most valuable animal. In 1814, one started from London along with the Exeter mail, and, notwithstanding the numerous changes of horses, and the very rapid driving, he reached Exeter a quarter of an hour before it; thus performing the astonishing distance of one hundred and seventy-two miles, at an average of about nine miles an hour. The cruel experiment was, however, fatal to the future energy of this hardy creature, which, with good treatment, might have been long an invaluable servant. Twelve months after this astonishing feat, he was seen in a distressing state of disease, exhibiting a picture of the utmost wretchedness, brought on by the barbarous inhumanity of man."

"How very cruel, Uncle Thomas!"

"Nothing can be more so, Boys; and I hope the stories of inhumanity which I have from

time to time told you, will make a deep impression on your minds, and induce you to treat such animals as come under your power with kindness and consideration. I will interrupt, for a moment, the stories I have to tell you of the performances of the galloway, to introduce one of its kindness, which will show you what a good-tempered creature it is, and how improper it is to treat it in the way of which I have just told you :—

“ A blacksmith in one of the remote parishes of Scotland, on one occasion, purchased a lamb of the black-faced breed, from an individual passing with a large flock. It was so extremely wild, that it was with great difficulty it could be separated from its fleecy companions. He put it into his field, in company with a cow and a little white galloway. It soon began to exhibit indications of fondness for the pony, which, not insensible to such tender approaches, showed by its conduct that the attachment was reciprocal. They soon became inseparable com-

panions; whether the pony was engaged in the labours of the field, or in bearing his master to church or market, the lamb was his invariable attendant. Such a spectacle soon excited a great deal of attention; and, when likely to be too closely beset, the lamb would take refuge between the pony's legs, with looks of conscious security. At night it regularly repaired to the stable, and reposed under the manger, at the head of its favourite. When separated, which only happened when effected by force, the lamb would raise the most plaintive bleatings, to which the pony responded with a sympathising neigh. On one occasion they both strayed into an adjoining field, in which there was a flock of sheep; the lamb joined them, at a short distance from the pony, but, as soon as their owner removed him, it quickly followed, without casting 'one longing, lingering look behind.' Another instance of the same description happened when the pony was ridden through a flock of sheep, accompanied, as usual,

by his friend, which followed, without showing the least inclination to remain with its natural companions.”

“That was delightful, Uncle Thomas.”

“To return to the equestrian feats of this active little animal. In the year 1802, a galloway was matched to run, over Sunbury Common, one hundred miles in twelve successive hours. The match was won easily, in eleven hours, thirty-six minutes.

“Another match, still more surprising, was performed at Newmarket, by one which went over one hundred miles a day for three successive days. It did its work easily, and at the conclusion did not seem at all distressed.

“One more, Boys, and I have done. About the middle of last century, Sir Charles Turner, of Berkleatham, made a match with the Duke of Queensberry, the former undertaking to ride ten miles within the hour, in the course of which he was to take thirty leaps, each leap to be one yard, one quarter, and seven

inches high. It was for four thousand guineas a side. Sir Charles performed it, mounted on a galloway, in less than forty-seven minutes, to the astonishment of every person present."

CHAPTER X.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT SEVERAL DIFFERENT BREEDS OF ASIATIC HORSES, INCLUDING THE TARTAR, TOORKOMAN, AND CALMUCK VARIETIES.

“HAVING finished, Boys, all that I have to tell you about the principal breeds of Horses which we have in Britain, I must now proceed to describe to you the various foreign races. Would you like to hear about them, Frank ?”

“Oh yes, Uncle Thomas.”

“Well, the first of which I shall speak are the Tartar horses, of which there seem to be several distinct races ; but, for the present, we will confine our attention to those which are found wild in the deserts of Independent Tartary, between Persia and the Caspian Sea. Though possessed of great speed, they are said

to be clumsy, ill-made animals. They are generally of a mouse-colour, and the hair with which they are covered is thick and strong, having more the appearance of wool than that of the horses of any other country. Their manes are short and bushy. They are very timid, taking alarm at the least noise, and darting off with the greatest precipitation. They form themselves into herds, and each herd is headed by one of the boldest and strongest males, who directs their movements ; and so completely are they under his control, that if he is killed or disabled, the herd separates, and becomes an easy prey to their pursuers. When they are captured they are extremely difficult to tame, and cannot be mounted for a length of time without danger. So great, indeed, is their aversion to servitude, that they not unfrequently die in the second year of their captivity.

“The inhabitants of these Tartarian deserts are wandering pastoral tribes, who lead an unsettled life, removing from place to place, as the

pasturage for their flocks becomes exhausted. To them the horse stands in the place of the ox to other people. They feed on its flesh, and of the milk of their mares they make cheese, as well as consume it in a fresh state; from it also, they possess the art of extracting a fermented liquor, which possesses a strong power of intoxication. It is only the feeble and ill-made animals, however, which they kill for food. When, on a journey, a Tartar is attacked by the cravings of hunger or thirst, he opens a vein of the horse on which he rides, and solaces himself with a draught of its blood."

"Is not that very cruel, Uncle Thomas?"

"It is a practice which I cannot justify, Harry; but you must not look for very refined feelings among those rude sons of the desert.

"Baron de Tott, in his Memoirs, gives a curious account of the manner in which he was entertained in one of their encampments:—

"‘The man,’ says he, ‘soon returned with a vessel full of mare’s milk, a small bag of the

flour of roasted millet, some white balls, about as big as an egg and as hard as chalk, an iron kettle, and a young man, tolerably well dressed, the best cook of the horde. I carefully watched his proceedings. He first filled his kettle three parts full of water, putting in about two pints; to this he added about six ounces of his meal. His vessel he placed upon the fire, drew a spatula from his pocket, wiped it upon his sleeve, and stirred the liquid till it began to simmer. He then took one of the white balls (they were cheese made of mare's milk, saturated with salt, and dried), broke it in little bits, threw them into his ragout, and again began to stir. His mess thickened, he still stirring, though at last with effort, till it became of the consistence of dough. He then drew out the spatula, put it again into his pocket, and, turning out the contents of his kettle, by reversing it in his hand, presented me with a cylinder of paste in a spiral form. I was in haste to eat it, and was really better pleased with this ragout

than I had expected. I likewise tasted the mare's milk, which, perhaps, I should have found equally good, could I have divested myself of prejudice.'

"Though the prejudices of the Baron would not allow him to relish the mare's milk, Boys, it is very nutritious. From it the Tartars make a fermented liquor, which, for want of a better appellation, I shall call by the name by which it is known among themselves—Koumiss."

"Can you tell us how it is made, Uncle Thomas? It seems very strange to make a fermented liquor from milk."

"I believe I can, Frank. They collect a quantity of fresh milk, the produce of one day, and add to it a sixth part of water, pouring the whole into a wooden vessel. A small portion of old koumiss is added, to cause fermentation. The vessel is then covered with a thick cloth, and set in a place of moderate warmth. At the end of twenty-four hours the milk becomes sour, and a thick scum gathers

on the top. The whole is then carefully stirred or beaten, till it is intimately blended, when it is again suffered to remain at rest for twenty-four hours. It is then poured into a narrower vessel, and the agitation is again repeated. When this is done sufficiently, the operation is completed, and it is ready for use. As the thick particles separate themselves and fall to the bottom, it has to be well shaken before it is used."

"It seems a simple enough process, Uncle Thomas."

"Situated as these people are, Boys, it must of necessity have simplicity to recommend it. Its nutritious qualities, which are said to be very great, must of course arise from the inherent properties of the milk. As an instance of its powerful medicinal qualities, it is said that a nobleman, who laboured under a complication of diseases, went, by advice of his physician, into Tartary, for the purpose of testing its efficacy. When he set out, he was so weak,

that he required to be assisted into his carriage, but after drinking koumiss for the short space of six weeks only, he returned home, free from disease, and so plump and fresh-coloured, that at first sight his friends failed to recognise him.

“ It is from this that they distil the intoxicating liquor of which I told you. Dr. Clarke, in his ‘Travels in Russia,’ gives an account of the manner in which this operation is performed :—

“ ‘ A subsequent process of distillation afterwards obtains an ardent spirit from the koumiss. We brought away a quart-bottle of it, and considered it very weak bad brandy, not unlike the common spirit distilled by the Swedes, and other northern nations. Some of their women were busy making it in an adjoining tent. The simplicity of the operation, and of the machinery, was very characteristic of the antiquity of this chemical process. Their still was constructed of mud, or very coarse clay; and, for the neck of the retort, they employed a cane. The re-

ceiver of the still was entirely covered by a coating of wet clay. The brandy had already passed over. The woman who had the management of the distillery, wishing to give us a taste of the spirit, thrust a stick, with a small tuft of camel's hair at its end, through the external covering of clay; and thus collecting a small quantity of the brandy, she drew out the stick, dropped a portion upon the retort, and waving the instrument above her head, scattered the remaining liquor in the air. I asked the meaning of this ceremony, and was answered, that it is a religious custom, to give always the first drop of the brandy which they draw from the receiver to their god. The stick was then plunged into the receiver a second time, when more brandy adhering to the camel's hair, she squeezed it into the palm of her dirty hand, and having tasted the liquor, presented it to our lips."

"That was very nasty, Uncle Thomas!"

"We must not expect, Harry, the same

feelings of refinement to exist in two states of society so different as that of the civilized inhabitants of Europe and the half-savage Asiatics. But we must confine our attention to their horses at present.

“To the north of the Caspian Sea there is another race of horses which have been long famed. They are called Toorkomans. They are generally from fifteen to sixteen hands high, with long bodies and large heads, and are far from pleasing in the eyes of an Englishman ; but they are capable of undergoing the greatest fatigue, and the distance to which they are sometimes forced to travel by the plundering hordes of Tartars to whom they belong, is truly astonishing.

“Sir John Malcolm, one of the best authorities on subjects connected with Persia and the neighbouring countries, speaking of these Toorkomans, says—‘ There are probably no horses in the world that can endure so much fatigue. I ascertained, after the minutest examination of

the fact, that those small parties of Toorkomans who ventured several hundred miles into Persia, used both to advance and retreat at the average of nearly one hundred miles a day. They train their horses for these expeditions as we should do for a race ; and the expression they use to describe a horse in condition for a foray is, that his flesh is marble.

“ ‘ We are assured,’ Sir John continues, ‘ from authority we cannot doubt, that parties of twenty or thirty Toorkoman horse often venture within sight of the city of Isfahan. They expect success in these incursions, from the suddenness of their attack, and the uncommon activity and strength of the horses on which they ride. Their sole object is plunder ; and when they arrive at an unprotected village, the youth of both sexes are seized, and tied on led horses, (which the Toorkomans take with them for the purpose of carrying their booty,) and hurried away into a distant captivity, with a speed which generally baffles all pursuit. When I

was in Persia, in 1800, a horseman, mounted upon a Toorkoman horse, brought a packet of letters from Shiraz to Teherary, which is a distance of five hundred miles, within six days.' ”

“ That is astonishing, Uncle Thomas. ”

“ Equally astonishing, Frank, is the Tartar mode of treating a horse when on one of their excursions. Before proceeding on a foray, they knead a number of small hard balls of barley-meal, which, when wanted, they soak in water ; and this serves as food to both themselves and their horses. It is a frequent practice with them, and indeed is common to all the Tartar tribes, in crossing deserts where no water is to be found, to open a vein in the shoulder of the horse, and to drink a little of his blood ; which, in their opinion, benefits rather than injures the animal, while it refreshes the rider. ”

“ Surely that cannot be true, Uncle Thomas ? ”

“ It is rather a difficult matter to believe, I confess, Frank, but when the same objection

was made by some one to the Tartars themselves, he was answered by being shown several old horses, on which there were numerous marks of their having been bled, and he was assured that they had never been touched by the lancet but on such an occasion."

"The next race of which I will speak is the Calmuck, which, like the Tartar horse, is more distinguished for its speed and endurance than for its beauty. They are very early inured to fatigue, as in all the expeditions undertaken by these wild hordes, the foals are accustomed to follow their dams, and with them are subject to all the inclemency of the weather.

"Dr. Clarke, from whose Travels I have already read you several extracts, Boys, gives an amusing account of the Calmuck riders:—"Calmuck women," says he, "ride better than the men. A male Calmuck on horseback looks as if he were intoxicated, and likely to fall off every instant, though he never loses his seat; but the women sit with more ease, and ride

with extraordinary skill. The ceremony of marriage, among the Calmucks, is performed on horseback. A girl is first mounted, who rides off at full speed. Her lover pursues, and if he overtakes her she becomes his wife, and returns with him to his tent. But it sometimes happens that the woman does not wish to marry the person by whom she is pursued, in which case she will not suffer him to overtake her; and we are assured that no instance occurs of a Calmuck girl being thus caught, unless she has a partiality for her pursuer."

"That is a very curious sort of marriage, Uncle Thomas. Is the speed of those Calmucks much greater than that of the English horse?"

"In endurance, Harry, there is no comparison between the English horses and the Calmucks or Toorkomans, though, in one instance, in which two of them were matched against two English race-horses, they were fairly distanced.

"A trial of this sort took place at St. Petersburg, between certain horses of the Calmuck

breed and some of those of the best English blood, in the year 1825. The distance was forty-seven miles. A number of the best horses from the Don, the Black Sea, and Ural, were brought to compete with English racers. Many trials were made of their powers, and the fleetest and most enduring horses were selected. There were two Cossack horses, which were tried against two racers, named Sharper and Mina. When they started, the Cossacks took the lead, followed by the English horses, at about two or three lengths' distance. Before they were half a mile off, one of the stirrup-leathers of Sharper broke, which startled him, and he ran away with his rider, followed by Mina; and it was not until they had gone more than half a mile up a steep hill, that they could be checked. They accomplished half the distance in an hour and four minutes, Sharper and Mina being then quite fresh; but only one of the Cossacks was up. They were returning in good style, when Mina fell lame, and discon-

tinued the race. The Cossack horse now began to slacken his pace; the Russians commenced dragging him on by the bridle; his saddle was taken off and thrown aside, and a little boy placed on his back. The effects of running away now began to tell on Sharper, and he evidently laboured. But he had the decided advantage of the other, which was dragged along by the Cossacks by the bridle, with the assistance of a rope, some pulling him along by the tail, relieving one another by turns, while others rode by his side to keep him up; but all would not do, for Sharper gained the race by eight minutes, having performed the distance in two hours and forty-eight minutes. The English horses at starting carried three stone more than the Cossacks, which Sharper continued to do, although the other was ridden by a child.

“I am afraid there must have been something wrong, Boys, if this account is correct. But we stop for the night. To-morrow evening I will tell you about some foreign European,

and about some American horses, of which I have a few stories to tell you. I fear you have not found the descriptions of the Asiatic horses so interesting as I could have wished.

“Oh yes, Uncle Thomas, we have been very much interested, indeed!”

“Very well, Boys, good night.”

“Good night, Uncle Thomas!”

CHAPTER XI.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS OF SEVERAL DIFFERENT BREEDS OF
EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN HORSES.

“TO-NIGHT, Boys, I mean to tell you about the horses of some of the most northern European nations, and will begin with those of Norway, as they have, of late years, been so frequently imported into this country. Did you ever see a Norwegian pony, Frank?”

“Oh yes, Uncle Thomas, we see a couple of them very often, drawing a chaise along the road ; I admire them very much.”

“They are very hardy animals, braving, unhurt, the inclement seasons of Norway, and feeding during the long winter on chopped straw and hay, mixed with black bread. In general, a pleasing kind of familiarity exists

between the Norwegians and their horses, which they encourage by frequently feeding them by hand.

“They are like the horses of most hilly countries, remarkably sure-footed, and ascend and descend steep and slippery places in safety. When descending, they draw their hind legs together under them, in the same manner as the mules of the Alps, and thus slide down. When the steep is not sufficiently inclined or smooth enough for this, they move with the greatest caution and circumspection, first gently treading on the stones with one foot, to try if they are secure. If the rider, in a case of this sort, leaves the matter to the horse, he is safe; but, should he attempt to control him, he runs the greatest risk of breaking his neck, by precipitating both himself and his horse to the bottom.

“The mountain fastnesses of Norway afford places of asylum for wolves and bears, both of which are determined enemies to the horse. In repelling the attacks of these animals, the Nor-

wegian horse uses his fore-legs and teeth with the greatest determination. Sometimes, however, the bear, which is a heavy, powerful animal, closes with it, and seizes it by the legs, which he grasps so vigorously as to defy the horse's utmost exertions to shake him off. In this case, the animal gallops off with his enemy hanging by him, and runs till, exhausted by fatigue and loss of blood, he falls down and becomes its prey."

"I hope the Norwegian pony is not very often attacked in this way, Uncle Thomas?"

"I hope not, Harry, particularly as he is of a very generous disposition, and affords as good an instance of the exercise of reasoning powers as is recorded of almost any other animal:—

"A young Norwegian gentleman being one day on a visit to a neighbouring town, was so well entertained by some friends there, that in returning home, he felt his head too light for him to keep a firm seat on his saddle. The horse on which he was mounted seemed sen-

sible of this, and regulated his paces according to the state of the rider ; but on coming to a steep ascent, where the road was slippery, on account of some rain that had fallen, he was unable to take such sure steps as before, and the rider having thereby lost his balance, fell from his saddle, with one foot hanging in the stirrup. The horse immediately stopped, and twisted its body in various directions, in order to extricate its master ; but in vain. At length, after having surveyed him for some time, as he hung in this awkward situation, quite unable to extricate himself, it stooped, and laying hold of the brim of its master's hat, raised his head a little by it ; but the hat slipping off, he fell to the ground as before. The horse then laid hold of the collar of his coat, and raised him so far from the ground, that he was enabled to draw his foot out of the stirrup ; and, being all the while sensible of his dangerous situation, he became somewhat sober, and got upon his legs, mounted, and reached home in safety.

The horse, thereafter, was an especial favourite of his master, who kept him till he died."

"It certainly was an instance of great intelligence, Uncle Thomas. I suppose the horses of Denmark are of the same breed?"

"Not exactly so, Frank; but there is no great difference. They are generally about fifteen hands high, and are very hardy. The King of Denmark is said to have in his stud upwards of eleven hundred horses. In the museum at Copenhagen, Mr. Rae Wilson saw, suspended from the ceiling, in the attitude of flying, the skin of one of their most celebrated steeds. Its history is this:—

"In consequence of a bet entered into between Frederick the Fourth and Count Haxhausen, the former engaged that his footman would run a certain distance at greater speed than this horse, which had always been considered as remarkable for its fleetness. The distance chosen was from Copenhagen to Fredericksberg, which is twenty English miles, and

the time allowed was forty-eight minutes. The competition took place accordingly, and the man was successful, having actually accomplished this arduous task in one minute less than the time fixed. Notwithstanding it may be considered impossible for any human being to perform so great an undertaking, yet the fact has been substantiated by unquestionable evidence. So completely overpowered was the poor fellow, however, that on his arrival in presence of the king, he took off his hat, to pay respect to his Majesty, and instantly dropped down dead at his feet."

"Twenty miles in forty-eight minutes, Uncle Thomas! That is twenty-five miles an hour. Surely that cannot be correct?"

"I tell the story, Frank, as Mr. Wilson gives it in his 'Travels in Denmark.'

"I know not how the truth may be,
I tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

"The Swedish horses, Boys, are a strong,

hardy, active race of animals, almost untiring, and living and thriving on the coarsest fare. Their hoofs are firm, and they are very sure-footed. They thus make excellent roadsters, but as I know no stories relating to them, I must leave them to tell you about the German and Hungarian horses.

“In such an extensive and populous empire as Germany, there are many varieties of horses. The breed which generally prevailed, however, in horses of the first class, was a large, heavy, but noble-looking animal, with finely arched neck and well-set head. It has, however, of late years, been greatly improved by the introduction of more active breeds, from various countries. In Hungary, they have a light, active, and spirited breed of troop-horses, which attracted considerable attention during the wars, from the activity and skill of the troops by whom they were mounted ; but in that country, also, the native breeds have been improved by foreign blood.

“The Hungarian gipsies are said to be the most expert and unprincipled horse-dealers in existence. They very frequently resort to the following trick to make the horse appear brisk, lively, and active :—The rider alights at a short distance from the place where he intends to offer his horse for sale, and beats the poor beast till he has put the whole of the muscular system into motion with fright. When it arrives at the place of destination, the mere act of lifting the arm, exciting the remembrance of the treatment it has suffered, causes the animal to jump about, or set off at full speed. The buyer, ignorant of the discipline it has just undergone, looks upon this as a sign of its vivacity; and presuming that care and good feeding will improve the horse’s appearance, strikes a bargain, though the next day he probably discovers he has been imposed upon, the poor creature hardly being able to move a leg. In Swabia, and near the Rhine, the gipsies have another device. They make an incision in

some concealed part of the skin, through which they blow till the animal looks plump and fleshy, and then apply a strong adhesive plaster, to prevent the escape of the air."

"Can that be really true, Uncle Thomas? It seems a piece of shocking cruelty."

"I should hope such deceptions and cruelties are not much practised, Frank; indeed it cannot be supposed that these frauds have no exceptions, as, in that case, no one would deal with gipsies; but as they always sell their horses cheap, the temptation of the poor to deal with them is too strong to be resisted. There is another piece of trickery on the part of these gipsies, of which I must tell you, before I proceed to relate to you some stories about these horses. It is this:—In these parts the farmers and other rural inhabitants are extremely superstitious, and are stanch believers in witchcraft and other absurdities, which have long been banished from the minds of more enlightened nations. Of this the cunning gipsies take full

advantage, and when the farmers' cattle are feeding in the fields, they entice them to follow them by presenting to them handfuls of fodder. They then besmear the nose and mouth of the animals with some preparation, which causes them to loathe all kinds of food, as everything smells of the nauseous mixture. In consequence of this forced abstinence, the animal soon pines away. Its owner, fully satisfied that it is bewitched, calls in the assistance of the gipsies, some of whom are of course easily found. The exorcist is generally a woman. She goes into the cow-house, and having excluded every one, and remaining for some time in the pretended exercise of her charms, calls in the farmer, and tells him of his cow's recovery, and as a proof shows it him eating heartily, when she of course is amply rewarded. The only charm which she exercises all the while is to wash the animal's nose and mouth clean from the preparation with which she, or some of her friends, has besmeared it, when, its sense of smell

being restored, the animal greedily devours its food, after having so long suffered from hunger.

“ But I am forgetting that it is Stories of Horses about which we are now engaged, so I must leave the gipsies to tell you of a very remarkable instance of affection and intelligence in some Hanoverian horses :—

“ In the electorate of Hanover there is a small island, named Kroutsand, which is surrounded by two branches of the river Elbe. As it affords valuable pasture, there is generally a number of horses and cattle feeding upon it. It is, however, liable to be overflowed at the time of spring-tide, when the wind blows in a direction opposite to the current, and thus causing an accumulation of water which cannot escape so quickly as when unopposed.

“ One day the water rose so rapidly, that the horses, which were grazing in the plain with their young foals, suddenly found themselves standing in deep water, upon which they set up a loud neighing, and collected themselves toge-

ther, on the highest part of the island. In this assembly they seemed to determine on the following prudent measure, as the only means of saving their young foals, who were now standing in the water as high as the belly, and in the execution of which some old mares also took a principal part, who cannot be supposed to have been influenced by any maternal solicitude for the safety of their offspring. Every two horses took a young foal between them, and, pressing their sides together, kept it wedged in, and lifted up, quite above the surface of the water.

“All the horned cattle which were on the island had already set themselves afloat, and were swimming in regular columns towards their home. But these noble steeds, with undaunted perseverance, remained immovable under their cherished burdens for the space of six hours, till, the tide ebbing, the water subsided, and the foals were at length placed out of danger.

“The inhabitants who had rowed to the

place in boats saw with delight this singular manœuvre, whereby their valuable foals were preserved from a destruction otherwise inevitable, and every one who heard of the circumstance was much astonished and delighted at the sagacity of the horses."

"Delightful! Uncle Thomas. I like to hear such stories as that."

"Such traits in the characters of animals are certainly very pleasing, Boys, even when their influence is confined to their fellow-brutes. One hardly knows which most to admire, the instinctive love of the mothers for their offspring, or the sagacity which prompted them to take the most effectual measures for their safety. To show you how spirited and determined these German horses are, I will tell you of an adventure which happened during the 'Thirty Years' War.'

"During that destructive war, which, for a space of thirty years, desolated Germany, and which was terminated by the peace of West-

phalia, the carriers who conducted the inland traffic of the country used to unite themselves in large companies, in order that they might travel with greater security, and for their mutual defence against the marauding parties which infested every part of the empire.

“One of these carriers happened to possess a horse of an extremely vicious disposition. It was greatly addicted to biting and kicking, from which even its master was not always secure, and which often embroiled him with his fellow-travellers. One evening, while they were pursuing their journey, the party was attacked in a ravine by a band of hungry wolves, and, after a long contest, finding they should not be able to get quit of them without allowing them some prey, it was agreed that they should pay the owner of the vicious horse the price of the animal, and make a sacrifice of him to the wolves. The bargain was soon concluded, and on the horse being turned

loose, the wolves immediately attacked him. He, however, defended himself courageously with his teeth and heels, retreating at the same time into the interior of the forest, while the carriers availed themselves of the opportunity to hasten on to a place of security, not a little rejoiced at having got rid of troublesome companions, so much to their advantage.

“As they were sitting at supper in the inn where they usually stopped for the night, a knocking was heard at the house door, and, on its being opened, a horse pushed his head in. The girl, frightened, shrieked out, and called to the carriers, who, coming to her assistance, were no less surprised than rejoiced to see the heroic conqueror of the wolves, though much wounded, yet still faithful to his master; and on account of his meritorious conduct upon this occasion they agreed to forgive him his former misdemeanours, and retain him in their company.”

“He must, indeed, have been a determined animal, Uncle Thomas, to overcome a whole pack of wolves.”

“I have, Boys, pretty well exhausted my stories about the horses of the Old World, and must now say a few words about the American horses; but, before doing so, I wish to direct your attention to a curious story about the abolition of torture in the examination of criminals in Germany. It is true that the horse has not much to do with the matter, but as it was one of the instruments used in bringing about this great and beneficial change, I think I may introduce it here without much violence.

“A German judge having, in the exercise of his duty, frequent opportunities of observing the effect of the rack on supposed criminals, in making them confess almost anything which it was desired to extort from them, so as to be released from the torture, even though the crime which they pretended to confess involved the loss of life, resolved to make it a subject of experiment.

“ In Germany it is a capital crime—that is, a crime liable to the punishment of death—to kill a horse, ass, or mule. He, accordingly, one evening, after taking care that all his servants should be busily employed, and that no one should on that evening have access to the stable except the groom, when all were asleep went into the stable and cut off the tail from his horse, in consequence of which the poor animal bled to death. Great confusion, it may be supposed, followed the discovery of the mischief. In the morning, when the master was informed of what had happened, he of course appeared greatly incensed. Strict inquiries were instituted to ascertain who could have committed an act of such atrocity, but without effect. It was no difficult matter for the servants to exculpate themselves, the groom only excepted, and he was apprehended and committed to prison. The poor fellow, upon his arraignment, it may be supposed, pleaded not guilty; but the presumption being very strong against him, he was

ordered to the rack, where the extreme torture soon wrung from him a confession of the crime alleged, he choosing to submit to death rather than endure the misery he was undergoing. Upon this confession, the sentence of death was passed upon him, when his master went to the tribunal, and there exposed the fallibility of confessions obtained by such means, by owning the fact himself, and disclosing his motives for the experiment ; since which time the practice of applying the torture in any case has been discontinued in Germany."

"That was a very admirable mode of exposing its injustice, Uncle Thomas ; but the poor horse"—

"Was sacrificed, Frank, by an enlightened man, for the purpose of obtaining a greater good. I dare say the judge felt keenly the necessity of so cruelly injuring the poor animal, but you must bear in mind that it was necessary to commit a capital crime, or the torture

would not have been inflicted, and his object would thus have been defeated.

“I have already, Boys, told you about the horses of South America, and the mode in which they are captured. In North America they have an infinite variety of horses, all of them bearing more or less resemblance to those of Britain. Indeed, the most celebrated horses have descended from animals imported from this country; but they make rapid advances, and in a few years they will doubtless be fully able to compete with our English steeds.

“It will, under these circumstances, be unnecessary for me to describe the different breeds. I will, therefore, at once tell you two or three stories of American horses, passing by altogether their many racing achievements, which I am aware have more interest to the jockey than to any one else.

“Here is an instance of persevering exertion which is almost incredible. I tell it, however,

in the same way as I had it. It is contained in a letter dated from Kingston, in Jamaica :—

“ A vessel which lately arrived here from America, with a cargo of horses, etc., laboured under such very bad weather and contrary winds on her passage that the captain was reduced to the necessity of lightening her, by ordering some of the live stock to be thrown overboard. Among them was a white horse, which, possessing more strength, courage, and agility than his companions, actually buffeted the waves for two days, kept company with the vessel through a sea tremendously heavy, and at the expiration of that time, the weather moderating, the animal was taken on board and brought into port, where he is now alive and doing well.”

“ Can that be really true, Uncle 'Thomas ?”

“ I doubt it very much, Harry, and think the time must have been greatly exaggerated. I conceive it possible for him to have followed the ship for some hours, but ‘two days’ really exceeds belief.

“In the neighbourhood of Boston, a few years ago, an unfortunate affair took place, arising from a horse’s resentment at being imposed on by his master :—

“A person, residing in that neighbourhood, was in the habit, whenever he wished to catch his horse, to take into the field with him, as is usual, a quantity of corn in a measure. On calling to him, the horse would come up and eat the corn, while the bridle was put over his head. But the owner having deceived the animal several times, by calling him when he had no corn in the measure, the horse at length began to suspect the design, and coming up one day, on being called, looked into the measure, and seeing it empty, turned round, and with his hind legs struck his master such a blow as killed him on the spot.”

“Poor fellow! that was very unfortunate, Uncle Thomas!”

“Very much so, Boys. The Canadian horse is a hardy animal, remaining exposed to

the inclemencies of Canadian weather without injury. In winter it acquires an increased supply of hair, to protect it from the cold. They are much used during this season for 'sleighing,' or dragging a sledge over the snow and ice. In passing the rivers it is not uncommon for sledge, horse, and riders to be at once, and without warning, precipitated into the water, the ice not being strong enough, in some places, to bear their weight. In this case the travellers instantly jump on the ice, which, though unable to support their sledge and horse, is sufficiently strong to bear themselves. As soon as they gain their feet, their first operation is to pull a rope, with a running noose, which is always worn round the horse's neck, and thus to strangle them, and prevent their farther struggles, which tend only to injure and sink them. When this is accomplished, they rise in the water, and float on one side, and are thus drawn on the ice, when the rope being loosened respiration returns, and they soon recover.

Sometimes this rough sort of treatment takes place several times in one day."

"I wonder that it does not kill them, Uncle Thomas !"

"The Canadians say, Frank, that horses which are often on the Lakes get so accustomed to it, that they think nothing of it. But I must stop for the evening ; it is now late ; I have detained you rather longer than usual to-night, Boys, that I might finish what I had to say about horses. To-morrow I will tell you about Mules, as well as about the Ass and the Zebra, all of which naturalists class along with Horses."

"Good evening, Uncle Thomas !"

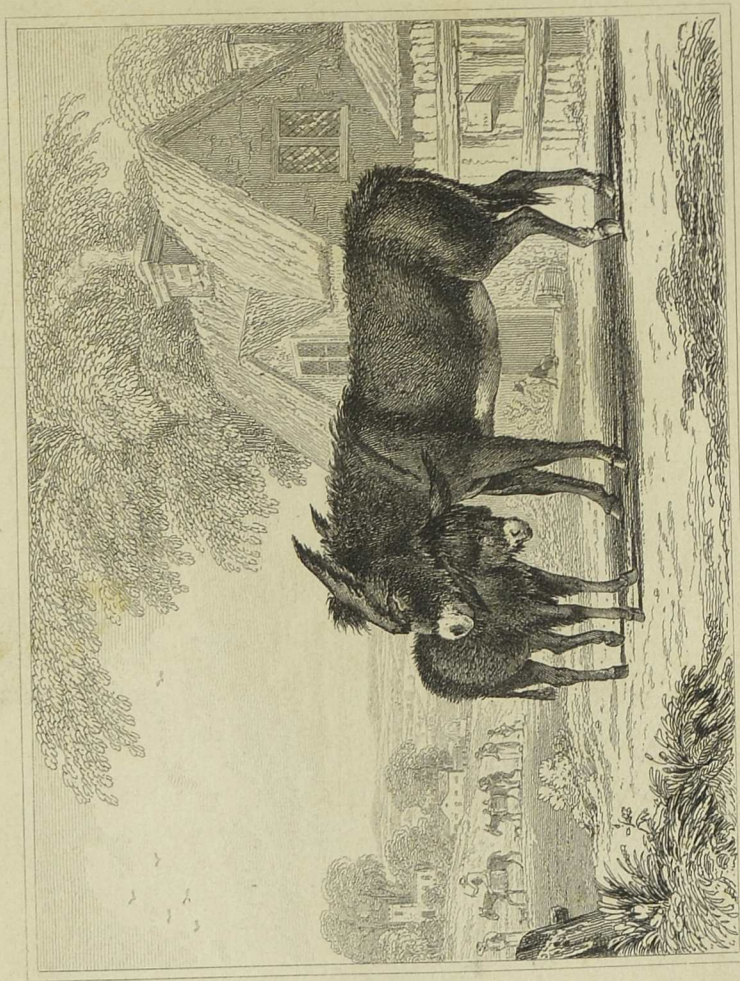
CHAPTER XII.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE ASS, THE MULE, AND THE ZERRA; AND CONCLUDES HIS STORIES ABOUT HORSES.

“HERE is a picture of the Ass, Boys, which I think you will agree with me in admiring. I don’t think I ever saw one which conveyed a more perfect idea of the animal’s character—its quiet and inoffensive manners, and the patience with which it submits to a life of indignity and suffering.”

“Oh yes, Uncle Thomas, it is beautiful! And the little colt too, which it so kindly fondles. I saw one exactly like it on the common this morning!”

“The Ass, Boys, though in Britain the humble slave of the poor, and doomed to a neglect which he by no means deserves, in more



J. le Kox f.c.

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favourable climates, and under better treatment, is a sprightly handsome creature. In Spain, for instance, they are large, strong, and stately animals, and are accordingly much more highly esteemed than with us. He is there the servant of the great, and is accordingly well fed and well treated; with us, he is on the contrary condemned to the lowest servitude, and is not only treated with indignity, but oftentimes experiences all the misery of harsh and ill usage. Naturally patient and persevering, they are loaded with enormous burdens, or compelled to drag the heaviest weights; yet their constitution is so hardy, that they are able to undergo even this harsh treatment; and even in the depth of winter the most wretched hovel is sufficient shelter from the cold; and so temperate are they with respect to food, that they can subsist on such vegetables as almost any other animal would reject. The thistle and plantain, which generally grow in abundance on waste lands, and along the sides of roads, afford them a

sufficient feast after their day of toil is concluded.

“Yet degraded and ill treated as the poor Ass is, Boys, it is sensible of kindness, and soon becomes attached to a kind and considerate master:—

“An old man, who some time ago sold vegetables in London, had an Ass which carried his baskets from door to door. He frequently gave the poor industrious creature a handful of hay, or some pieces of bread or greens, by way of refreshment and reward. The old man had no need of any goad for the animal, and seldom indeed had he to lift up his hand to drive it on. His kind treatment was one day remarked to him, and he was asked whether the beast was not apt to be stubborn. ‘Ah!’ he said, ‘it is of no use to be cruel; and as for stubbornness I cannot complain, for he is ready to do anything or go anywhere. I bred him myself. He is sometimes skittish and playful, and once ran away from me—you

will hardly believe it, but there were more than fifty people after him, attempting in vain to stop him; yet he turned back of himself, and never stopped till he ran his head kindly into my bosom.' ”

“Oh delightful, Uncle Thomas! I had no idea that the stupid-looking Ass could have been so affectionate.”

“I dare say not, Frank. Over-worked and ill fed as you see him, yet patiently putting his shoulder to the load, and even when doing his best cruelly beaten and abused, it is not at all to be wondered at that he so rarely displays his better qualities; when properly treated, however, even in the matter of speed, his performances are far from contemptible:—

“In the year 1826, a gentleman of Ipswich undertook to drive an Ass in a light gig to London and back again, a distance of one hundred and forty miles, in a couple of days. The animal went to London at a pace little short of a good gig-horse, and fed at different

stages well ; on his return he came in without the aid of a whip, at the rate of seven miles in an hour, and performed the whole journey with ease."

"I was not aware that speed was one of the characteristics of the Ass, Uncle Thomas."

"In a wild state, John, they are remarkably swift. Indeed it is with the greatest difficulty they are overtaken. A traveller in India, who visited a region where they abound, discovered several herds of them ; amounting to sixty or seventy. Anxious to obtain a nearer view of them, he galloped towards them ; but although mounted on a horse of proved speed, he never was able to approach them nearer than twenty yards. Dull and unintelligent as the poor Ass seems to be, he is far from being so in reality.—A few years ago one was employed at Carisbrook Castle, in the Isle of Wight, in drawing water by a large wheel from a very deep well, supposed to have been sunk by the Romans. When his keeper wanted water, he would say

to the ass, ‘Tom, my boy, I want water; get into the wheel, my good lad;’ which Thomas immediately performed, with an alacrity and sagacity that would have done credit to a nobler animal; he knew the precise number of times necessary for the wheel to revolve upon its axis to complete his labour; for, every time he brought the bucket to the surface, he constantly stopped and turned round his honest head to observe the moment when his master laid hold of the bucket to draw it towards him, because he had then a nice evolution to make, either to recede or advance a little. It was pleasing to observe with what steadiness and regularity the poor animal performed his labour.

“There is another story from an old writer which shows how susceptible he is of training. I dare say, Boys, you never heard of an Ass acting on the stage before:—

“In a description of Africa, published about the middle of the sixteenth century, there is an

account of an Egyptian ass, which seems to have done wonders in this way. The author says, ‘When the Mahometan worship is over, the common people of Cairo resort to the part of the suburbs called Bed-Elloch, to see the exhibition of stage-players and mountebanks, who teach camels, asses, and dogs to dance. The dancing of the ass is diverting enough; for, after he has frisked and capered about, his master tells him, that the Soldan, meaning to build a great palace, intends to employ all the asses in carrying mortar, stones, and other materials; upon which the ass falls down with his heels upwards, closing his eyes, and extending his chest, as if he were dead. This done, the master begs some assistance of the company, to make up the loss of the dead ass; and having got all he can, he gives them to know that truly his ass is not dead, but only being sensible of his master’s necessity, played that trick to procure some provender. He then commands the ass to rise, who still lies in the same

posture, notwithstanding all the blows he can give him, till at last he proclaims, that by virtue of an edict of the Soldan, all are bound to ride out next day upon the comeliest asses they can find, in order to see a triumphal show, and to entertain their asses with oats and Nile water. These words are no sooner pronounced, than the ass starts up, prances, and leaps for joy. The master then declares, that his ass has been pitched upon by the warden of his street, to carry his deformed and ugly wife; upon which the ass lowers his ears, and limps with one of his legs, as if he were lame. The master, alleging that his ass admires handsome women, commands him to single out the prettiest lady in company; and, accordingly, he makes his choice, by going round, and touching one of the prettiest with his head, to the great amusement of the company.’”

“How very curious, Uncle Thomas! An ass is certainly the last animal I should have expected to act in this way.”

“ Without actual experiment, Boys, it is extremely difficult to predict how far the education of any animal may be carried. Some of their acts, which we call instinctive, are, however, equally wonderful :—

“ In March, 1816, an ass belonging to Captain Dundas, R.N., then at Malta, was shipped on board the *Ister* frigate, bound from Gibraltar to that island. The vessel struck on a sand-bank, off the Point de Gat, and the ass was unfortunately thrown overboard, in the hope that it might possibly be able to swim to land ; of which, however, there seemed but little chance, for the sea was running so high, that a boat which left the ship was lost. A few days after, when the gates of Gibraltar were opened in the morning, the guard was surprised to see Valiant, as the ass was called, present himself for admittance. On entering the town, he proceeded immediately to the stable which he had formerly occupied. The poor animal had not only swam safely on shore, but, without guide or compass, had found

his way from Point de Gat to Gibraltar, a distance of more than two hundred miles, through a mountainous and intricate country, intersected by streams, which he had never traversed before, and in so short a period, that he could scarcely have made one false turn.”

“It is indeed surprising, Uncle Thomas.”

“Surprising, Frank, is too inexpressive a term—mysterious it might well be called, as are indeed all the exhibitions of this sublime faculty.

“Under good treatment, even in this country, the despised ass sometimes displays most unexpected powers. A few years ago, a gentleman, returning from Epsom races, had his attention attracted by the performance of one which was dragging a donkey-chaise, in which were seated a man and woman of no small dimensions. It was going at a very rapid pace. ‘Curiosity,’ says the gentleman, ‘led me to follow them, when, as far as I could judge by my own horse, 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 that 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 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, by which I found that he was a blacksmith, residing at Mitcham, in Surrey. ‘Do you keep your ass on the 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.”

“Did you ever hear the ass bray, Harry?”

“Oh yes, Uncle Thomas!”

“And you thought it most musical, I dare say, Harry. I have heard of an ass which was very fond of music. It ranged in a park, in the middle of which stood a family mansion. The owner was a lady, who had an excellent voice, and, whenever she began to sing, the ass never failed to draw near the window, and listen very attentively. Once, when a piece was performed, which no doubt pleased him better than any he had heard before, he left his ordinary post, walked without ceremony into the music-room, and, in order to add to the concert what he thought was alone wanting to render it perfect, began to bray with all his might.”

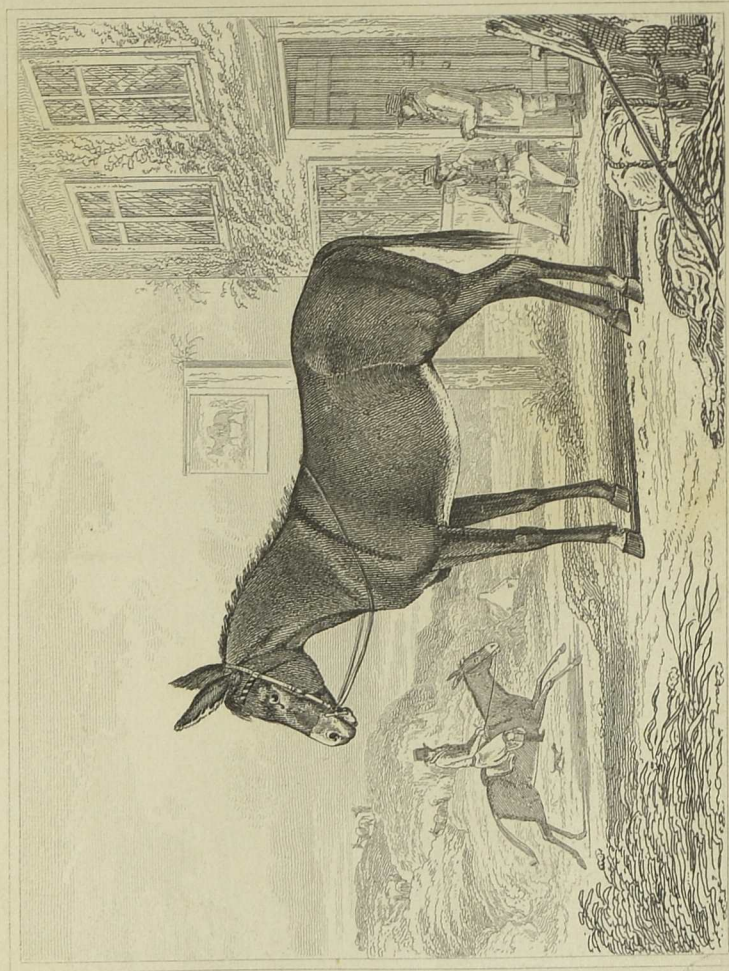
“Excellent! Uncle Thomas. I dare say to the no small amusement of the company.”

“Do the Mules exhibit the intelligence of either of their parents, Uncle Thomas?”

“Not to any great extent, Boys: they are principally noted for their sure-footedness. In mountainous countries this property renders

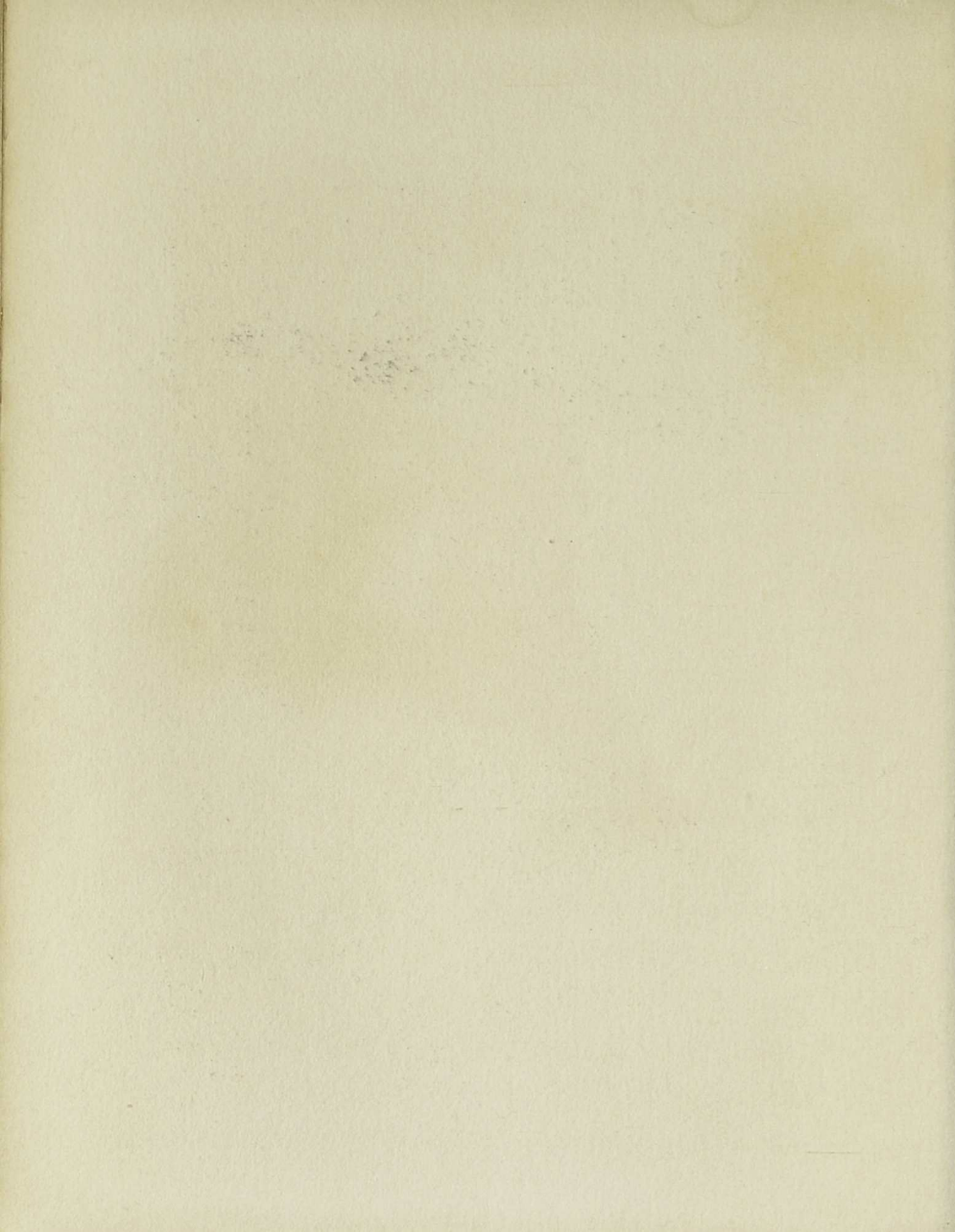
them most valuable. The manner in which they descend the precipitous declivities of the Alps and the Andes is most extraordinary.

“In many of the roads, or rather tracks, which lead from these mountains to the plains, on one side are steep eminences, and on the other frightful abysses; and as they generally follow the direction of the mountain, the road, instead of lying on a level, forms, at every little distance, deep declivities, of several hundred yards downward. These can be descended only by mules; and these animals seem sensible of the danger and the caution that is necessary. When they come to the edge of one of these precipices, they stop, without being checked by the rider: and if he inadvertently attempts to spur them on, they continue immovable, apparently ruminating on the danger that lies before them, and preparing themselves for the encounter. They not only attentively view the road, but when it is very steep and rugged, tremble and snort at the danger. Having pre-



R. Sands. fc.

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pared for the descent, they place their fore-feet in a posture as if they were stopping themselves ; they then draw their hind feet together, but a little forward, as they do when about to lie down. In this attitude, having taken as it were a survey of the road, they slide down with almost inconceivable swiftness. In the meantime, all that the rider has to do is to keep himself fast on the saddle, without checking the rein, for the least motion is sufficient to disturb the equilibrium of the mule, in which case they both unavoidably perish. Their address in this rapid descent is truly wonderful ; for in their swiftest motion, when they seem to have lost all command over themselves, they follow exactly the different windings of the road, as if they had previously settled in their minds the route they were to follow, and had taken every precaution for their safety. In these journeys, the natives place themselves along the sides of the mountains, and holding by the roots of the trees, animate the beasts with shouts, and

encourage them to persevere. Some mules, after being long used to such travelling, acquire a kind of reputation for their safety and skill, and their value rises in proportion to their fame."

"It seems a very dangerous mode of travelling, Uncle Thomas."

"Accidents happen much seldomer than one would expect, Frank, from the extreme sure-footedness of these animals. But their safety is not the only quality they have to recommend them. There is a passage in Townsend's 'Journey through Spain,' which Harry will have the goodness to read to us, which shows, not only the superiority of the Spanish mules, but casts a pleasing light on the intelligence and docility of the animal. Here it is:—

"In this little journey, I was exceedingly diverted and surprised with the docility of the mules, and the agility of their drivers. I had travelled all the way from Barcelona to Madrid, in a 'coche de colleras,' with seven mules; and, both at that time and on subsequent occa-

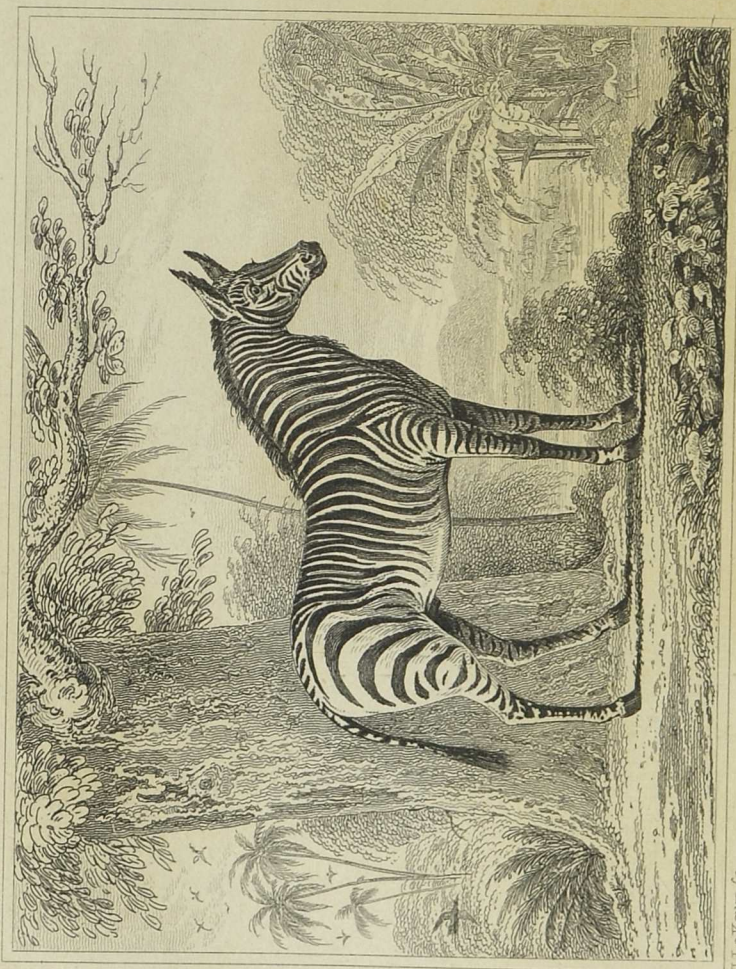
sions, had been struck with the quickness of understanding in the mule, and of motion in the driver ; but, till this expedition, I had no idea to what extent it might be carried.

“The two coachmen sit upon the box, and, of the six mules, none but the two nearest have reins to guide them, the four leaders being perfectly at liberty, and governed only by the voice. Thus harnessed, they go upon the gallop the whole way ; and when they come to any short turning, whether to the right or to the left, they instantly obey the word, and move altogether, bending to it like a spring. As all must undergo tuition, and require frequently some correction, should any one refuse the collar, or not keep up exactly with the rest, whether it be, for example, ‘Coronela’ or ‘Capitana’—the name pronounced with a degree of vehemence, rapidly in the three first syllables, and slowly in the last, being sufficient to awaken attention and to secure obedience ; the ears are raised, and the mule instantly exerts its strength. But,

should there be any failure in obedience, one of the men springs furiously from the box, quickly overtakes the offending mule, and thrashes her without mercy; then, in the twinkling of an eye, leaps upon the box again, and calmly finishes the tale he had been telling his companion.

“In this journey I thought I had learnt the names of all the mules; yet one, which frequently occurred, created some confusion, because I could not find to which individual it belonged, nor could I distinctly make out the name itself.

“In a subsequent journey, the whole difficulty vanished, and my high estimation of the mule, in point of sagacity, was confirmed. The words in question, when distinctly spoken, were ‘*Aquella otra*,’ that is, ‘You other also;’ thus, supposing *Coronela* and *Capitana* to be pairs, if the coachman had been calling to the former by name, ‘*Aquella otra*’ became applicable to the latter, and was equally efficacious



J. LeKew sc.

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as the smartest stroke of a long whip ; but if he had been chiding ‘Capitana,’ in that case ‘Aquella otra’ acted as a stimulus to ‘Coronela,’ and produced in her the most prompt obedience.”

“Thank you, Harry !”

“I have now, Boys, pretty well exhausted my ‘Stories about Horses ;’ but before concluding, I must tell you something about the Zebra, which naturalists have classed along with the Horse. Here is a picture of him ; you see how finely marked he is !”

“It is a very beautiful creature, Uncle Thomas. Is it used for riding, like the horse ?”

“No, Harry, it is far too wild an animal for that. Every attempt that has been made to tame it has hitherto proved a failure.”

“Where does it come from, Uncle Thomas ?”

“It is chiefly found in the southern parts of Africa, Harry, and we are told that large herds of them are frequently seen feeding in the ex-

tensive plains which lie towards the Cape of Good Hope. Their watchfulness is such, that they will suffer nothing to come near them, and their swiftness is so great that they easily leave every pursuer far behind.

“From the experiments which have been made, it seems unlikely that the zebra ever can be so tamed as to perform the services of the horse or the ass; though one which was unfortunately burnt at the Lyceum, near Exeter Change, some years ago, was so docile, that it allowed its keeper to put children on its back, without exhibiting any signs of resentment. On one occasion it is said that a person even rode it from the Lyceum to Pimlico, a distance of about a mile and a half. It was, however, descended from half-reclaimed parents. Another, which was brought from the Cape of Good Hope, by General Dundas, in 1803, and which was afterwards purchased, and deposited in the Tower Menagerie, became more docile than the generality of zebras brought to Europe,

and was tolerably obedient to her keeper, when in good humour. This man was servant to the general, and attended her during the voyage home. He would sometimes, with great dexterity, spring on her back, and she would carry him a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards, when she generally became restive, and would oblige him to dismount. Sometimes, when irritated, she plunged at the keeper, and attempted to kick him. She one day seized him by the coat with her teeth, and threw him on the ground; and, had he not got out of her way with some rapidity, she would, in all probability, have destroyed him. He had much difficulty in managing her, from the irritability of her temper, and the great extent to which, in almost every direction, she could kick with her feet, and the propensity she had of seizing with her teeth whatever offended her. Strangers she would by no means allow to approach, unless the keeper held her fast by the head, and even then there was a risk of receiving a blow

from her hind feet. So you see, Boys, it is not always the most showy animals which are the most useful.

“I must now bid you good bye for the present. I have many more ‘Stories’ to tell you, so I hope we shall soon meet again. I hope those which I have just concluded of the Horse will make a due impression on your minds, and lead you to adopt the language of the poet:—

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable! who sit'st above these heav'ns,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine!”

“Good bye, Boys!”

“Good bye, Uncle Thomas!”

THE END.