

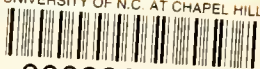
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BLACK BEAUTY




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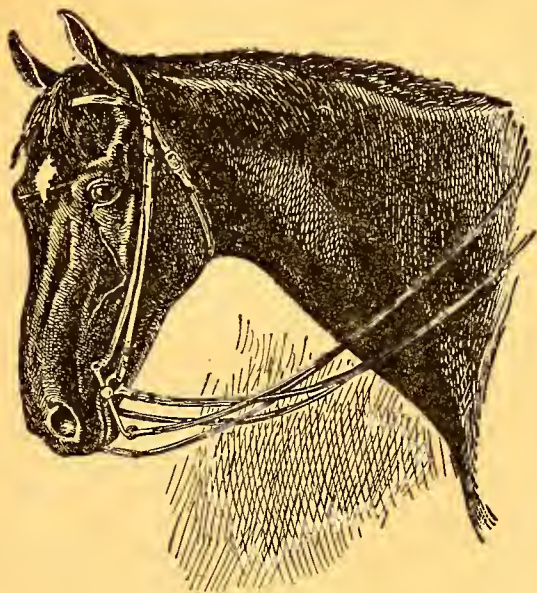
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BLACK BEAUTY

The Autobiography of a Horse

BY ANNA SEWELL



ILLUSTRATED

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1828

PUBLISHERS

BLACK BEAUTY

CHAPTER I

MY EARLY HOME

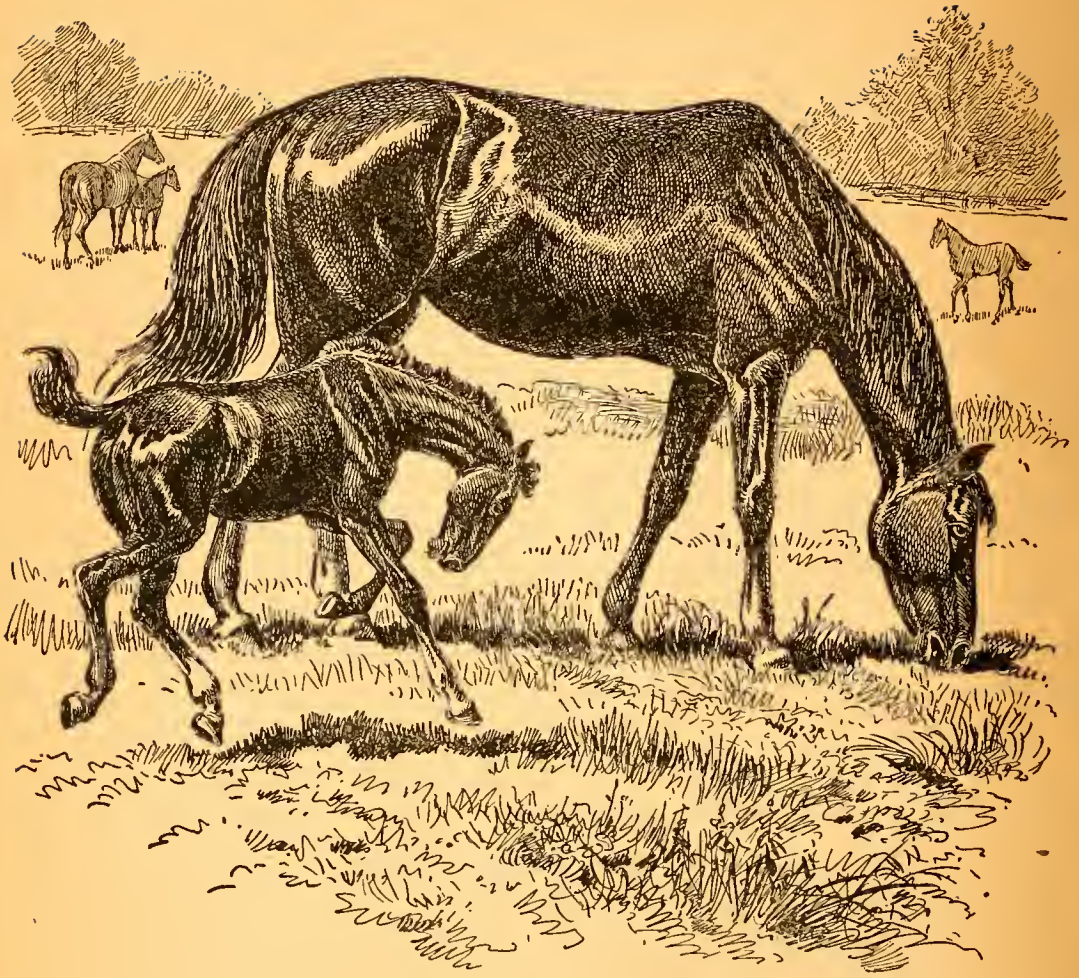
THE first place that I can well remember was a pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it. Some shady trees leaned over it, and rushes and water-lilies grew at the deep end. Over the hedge on one side we looked into a plowed field, and on the other we looked over a gate at our master's house, which stood by the roadside; at the top of the meadow was a grove of fir trees, and at the bottom a running brook, overhung by a steep bank.

While I was young I lived upon my mother's milk, as I could not eat grass. In the daytime I ran by her side, and at night I lay down close by her. When it was hot we used to stay by the pond in the shade of the trees, and when it was cold we had a warm shed near the grove.

There were six young colts in the meadow beside me; they were older than I was. I used to run with them, and had great fun. We used to gallop all together round the field, as hard as we could go, and sometimes we had rather rough play, for they would bite and kick, as well as gallop.

One day when there was a good deal of kicking, my mother whinnied to me to come to her, and then she said: "I wish you to pay attention to what I am going to say. The colts who live here are very good colts, but they are cart-horse colts, and they have not learned manners. You have been well-born and well-bred; your father has a great name in these parts, and your grandfather won the cup at the races; your grandmother had the sweetest temper of any horse I ever knew, and I think you have never seen me kick or bite. I hope you will grow up gentle and good, and never learn bad ways; do your work with a good will, lift your feet up well when you trot, and never bite or kick even in play."

I have never forgotten my mother's advice. I knew she was a wise old horse, and our master thought a great deal of her. Her name was Duchess, but he called her Pet.



"In the daytime I ran by her side."—Page 3

Our master was a kind good, man. He gave us good food, good lodging and kind words; he spoke as kindly to us as he did to his little children. We were all fond of him, and my mother loved him very much. When she saw him at the gate she would neigh with joy, and trot up to him. He would pat and stroke her and say, "Well, old Pet, and how is your little Darkie?" I was a dull black, so he called me Darkie; then he would give me a piece of bread, which was very good, and sometimes he brought a carrot for my mother. All the horses would come to him, but I

think we were his favorites. My mother always took him to town on a market-day in a light gig.

We had a plowboy, Dick, who used sometimes to come into our field to pluck blackberries from the hedge. When he had eaten all he wanted he would have what he called fun with the colts, throwing stones and sticks at them to make them gallop. We did not much mind him, for we could gallop off; but sometimes a stone would hit and hurt us.

One day he was at this game, and did not know that the master was in the next field, watching what was going on; over the hedge he jumped in a snap, and, catching Dick by the arm, he gave him such a box on the ear as made him roar with pain and surprise. As soon as we saw the master we trotted up nearer to see what went on.

“Bad boy!” he said, “bad boy! to chase the colts. This is not the first time, but it shall be the last. There—take your money and go home; I shall not want you on my farm any longer.” So we never saw Dick any more. Old Daniel, the man who looked after the horses, was just as gentle as our master; so we were well off.

CHAPTER II

THE HUNT

BEFORE I was two years old a circumstance happened which I have never forgotten. It was early in the spring; there had been a little frost in the night, and a light mist still hung over the woods and meadows. The other colts and I were feeding at the lower part of the field when we heard what sounded like the cry of dogs. The oldest of the colts raised his head and pricked up his ears, and said, “There are the hounds!” and cantered off, followed by the rest of us, to the upper part of the field, where we could look over the hedge and see several fields beyond. My mother and an old riding horse of our master’s were also standing near, and they seemed to know all about it. “They have found a hare,” said my mother, “and if they come this way we shall see the hunt.”

Soon all the dogs were tearing down the field of young wheat next to ours. I never heard such a noise as they made. They did not bark, nor howl, nor whine, but kept on a “yo! yo, o, o! yo, o, o!” at the top of their voices. After them came a number of men on horseback, all galloping

as fast as they could. The old horses snorted and looked eagerly after them, and we young colts wanted to be galloping with them, but they were soon away into the fields lower down. Here it seemed as if they had come to a stand; the dogs left off barking and ran about every way with their noses to the ground.

"They have lost the scent," said the old horse, "perhaps the hare will get off."

"What hare?" said I.

"Oh, I don't know what hare; likely enough it may be one of our own hares out of the woods. Any hare they can find will do for the dogs and men to run after." Before long the dogs began their "yo; yo, o, o!" again; and back they all came at full speed, making straight for our meadow at the part where the high bank and hedge overhung the brook.

"Now we shall see the hare," said my mother; and just then a hare, wild with fright, rushed by and made for the woods. On came the dogs; they burst over the bank, leaped the stream and came dashing across the field, followed by the huntsmen. Several men leaped their horses clean over, close upon the dogs. The hare tried to get through the fence, but it was too thick, and she turned sharp around to make for the road. But it was too late; the dogs were upon her with their wild cries; we heard one shriek, and that was the end of her. One of the huntsmen rode up and whipped off the dogs, who would soon have torn her to pieces. He held her up by one leg, torn and bleeding, and all the gentlemen seemed well-pleased.

As for me, I was so astonished that I did not at first see what was going on by the brook; but when I did look, there was a sad sight; two fine horses were down; one was struggling in the stream, and another was groaning on the grass. One of the riders was getting out of the water, the other lay quite still.

"His neck is broken," said my mother.

"It serves him right, too," said one of the colts.

I thought so too, but my mother did not join us in this opinion.

"Well, no," she said, "you must not say that; but, though I am an old horse, and have seen and heard a great deal, I never yet could make out why men are so fond of this sport. They often hurt themselves, often spoil good horses, and tear up fields, and all for a hare or a fox or a stag, that they could get more easily some other way; but we are only horses and don't know."



“Several men leaped their horses over.”—Page 6

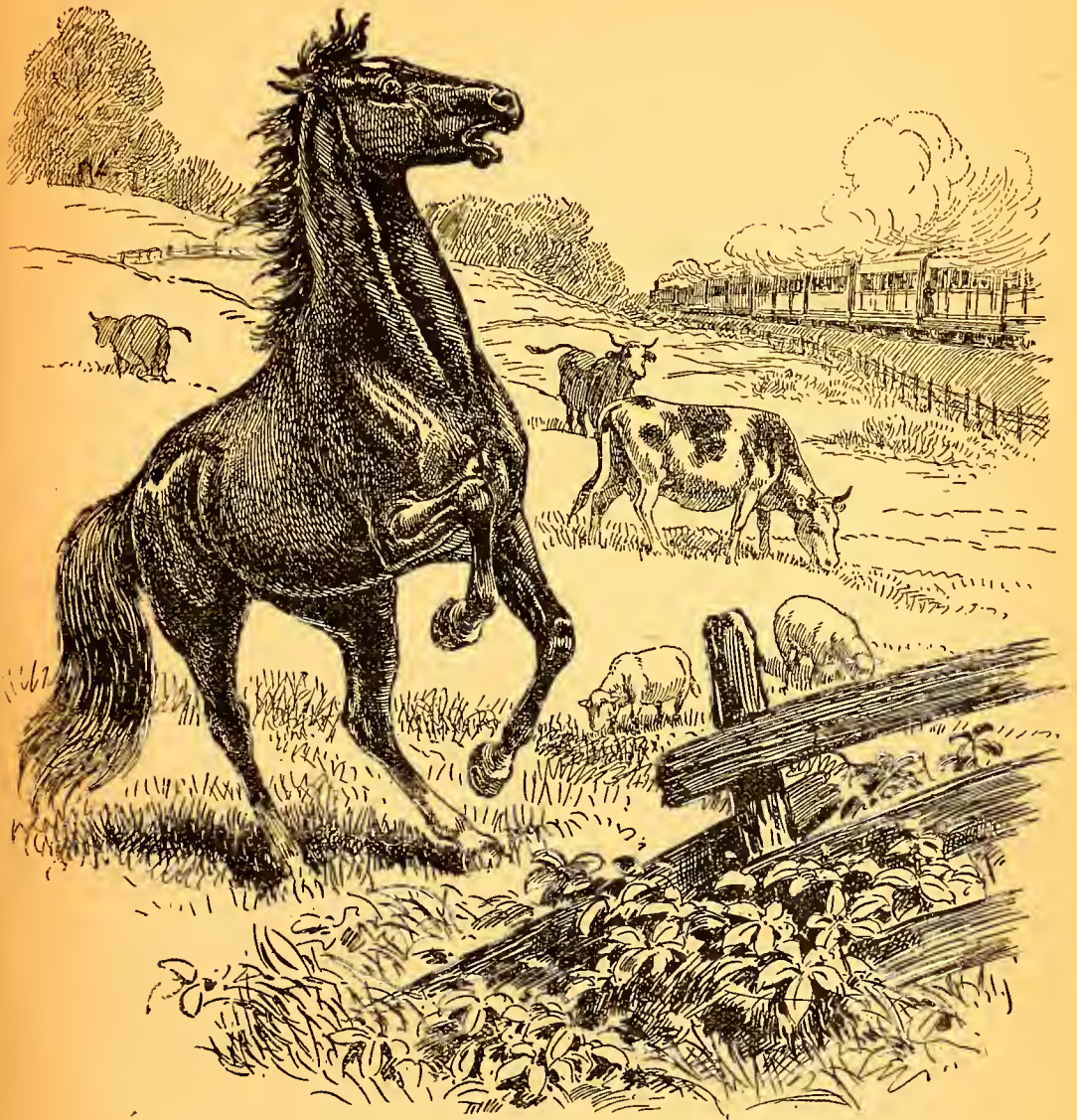
While my mother was saying this, we stood and looked on. Many of the riders had gone to the young man; but my master was the first to raise him. His head fell back and his arms hung down, and every one looked very serious. There was no noise now; even the dogs were quiet,

Every one may not know what breaking in is, therefore I will describe it. It means to teach a horse to wear a saddle and bridle, and to carry on his back a man, woman, or child; to go just the way they wish, and to go quietly. Besides this, he has to learn to wear a collar, a crupper, and a breeching, and to stand still while they are being put on; then to have a cart or chaise fixed behind, so that he cannot walk or trot without dragging it after him; and he must go fast or slow, just as his driver wishes. He must never start at what he sees, nor speak to other horses, nor bite, nor kick, nor have any will of his own, but always do his master's will, even though he may be very tired or hungry; but worst of all is, when his harness is once on, he may neither jump for joy nor lie down for weariness. So you see this breaking in is a great thing.

I had, of course, been long used to halter and head-stall, and to being led about the fields and lanes quietly; but now I was to have a bit and a bridle. My master gave me some oats as usual, and after a good deal of coaxing he got the bit into my mouth and the bridle fixed, but it was a nasty thing! Those who have never had a bit in their mouths can not think how bad it feels; a great piece of cold hard steel as thick as a man's finger to be pushed into one's mouth, between one's teeth, and over one's tongue, with the ends coming out at the corner of your mouth, and held fast there by three straps over your head, under your throat, round your nose and under your chin so that no way in the world can you get rid of the nasty hard thing; it is very hard to bear, at least I thought so. But I knew my mother always wore one when she went out, and all horses did when they were grown up; and so, what with the nice oats, and what with my master's pats and kind words, and gentle ways, I got to wear my bit and bridle.

Next came the saddle, but that was not half so bad; my master put it on my back very gently while old Daniel held my head; he then made the girths fast under my body, patting and talking to me all the time. I then had a few oats, then a little leading about; and this he did every day till I began to look for the oats and the saddle. At length, one morning, my master got on my back and rode me around the meadow on the soft grass. It certainly did feel queer; but I must say I felt rather proud to carry my master, and as he continued to ride me a little every day, I soon became accustomed to it.

The next unpleasant business was putting on the iron shoes; that, too was very hard at first. My master went with me to the smith's forge, to



"There I stood snorting with astonishment and fear."—Page 12

see that I was not hurt or frightened. The blacksmith took my feet in his hand, one after another, and cut away some of the hoof. It did not pain me at all. Then he took a piece of iron the shape of my foot, and clapped it on, and drove some nails through the shoe quite into my hoof,

so that the shoe was firmly on. My feet felt very stiff and heavy, but in time I got used to the shoes, too.

And now, having got so far, my master went on to break me to harness. There were now more new things to wear. First, a stiff, heavy collar just on my neck, and a bridle with great side-pieces against my eyes, called blinkers, and blinkers indeed they were, for I could not see on either side, but only straight in front of me; next there was a small saddle with a nasty stiff strap that went right under my tail; that was the crupper.

I must not forget to mention one part of my training, which I have always considered a great advantage. My master sent me for a fortnight to a neighboring farmer's, who had a meadow which was skirted on one side by the railway. Here were some sheep and cows, and I was turned in among them.

I shall never forget the first train that went by. I was feeding quietly near the pales which separated the meadow from the railway, when I heard a strange sound at a distance, and before I knew whence it came—with a rush and a clatter, and a puffing out of smoke—a long black train of something flew by, and was gone almost before I could draw my breath. I galloped to the further side of the meadow, and there I stood snorting with astonishment and fear. In the course of the day many other trains went by, some more slowly. These drew up at the station close by, and sometimes made an awful shriek and groan before they stopped. I thought it very dreadful, but the cows went on eating very quietly, and hardly raised their heads as the black frightful thing came puffing and grinding past. For the first few days I could not feed in any peace; but as I found that this terrible creature never came into the field or never did me any any harm, I began to disregard it, and very soon I cared as little about the passing of a train as the cows and sheep did.

My master often drove me in double harness with my mother, because she was steady and could teach me how to go better than a strange horse. She told me the better I behaved the better I should be treated, and that it was wisest always to do my best to please my master. "I hope you will fall into good hands, but a horse never knows who may buy him, or who may drive him. It's all a chance for us; but still I say, do your best wherever it is, and keep your good name."

CHAPTER IV

MY NEW HOME

It was early in May, when there came a man from Gordon's who took me away to the Hall. My master said, "Good-bye, Darkie; be a good horse, and always do your best." I could not say "good-bye," so I put my nose in his hand, he patted me kindly, and I left my first home.

Gordon's park skirted the village of Birtwick. It was entered by a large iron gate, and then you trotted along on a smooth road between clumps of large old trees; then another gate, which brought you to the house and the gardens.

The stable into which I was taken was very roomy, with four good stalls. The first stall was a large square one, shut in behind with a wooden gate. The others were common stalls, not nearly so large. It had a low rack for hay and a low manger for corn; it was called a box stall, and the horse that was put into it was not tied, but left loose, to do as he liked.

Into this fine stall the groom put me. It was clean and sweet and very airy. I never was in a better stall than that, and the sides were not so high but I could see all that went on through the iron rails that were at the top.

He gave me some very nice oats, patted me, spoke kindly, and then went away.

When I had eaten my oats I looked around. In the stall next to mine stood a little fat gray pony, with a thick mane and tail, a very pretty head, and a pert little nose. I put my head up to the iron rails at the top of my box, and said, "How do you do? What is your name?"

He turned around as far as his halter would allow, held up his head, and said, "My name is Merrylegs. I am very handsome. I carry the young ladies on my back, and sometimes I take our mistress out in the low chaise. They think a great deal of me, and so does James. Are you going to live next door to me in that box?"

I said, "yes."

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I said, "yes."

"Well, then," he said, "I hope you are good-tempered. I do not like any one next door who bites."

Just then a horse's head looked over from the stall beyond; the ears were laid back, and the eye looked rather ill-tempered. This was a tall chestnut mare, with a long handsome neck. She looked across to me and said, "So it is you have turned me out of my box. It is very strange for a colt like you to come and turn a lady out of her home."

"I beg your pardon," I said, "I have turned no one out. The man who brought me here put me in here and I had nothing to do with it. I never had words with a horse or mare, and it is my wish to live in peace."

"Well," she said, "we shall see; of course, I do not want to have any words with a young thing like you."

I said no more. In the afternoon, when she went out, Merrylegs told me all about it.

"The thing is this," said Merrylegs. "Ginger has a habit of biting and snapping. That is why they call her Ginger, and when she was in the box stall she used to snap very much. One day she bit James in the arm and made it bleed, and so Miss Flora and Miss Jessie, who are very fond of me, were afraid to come into the stable. They used to bring me nice things to eat, an apple, or a carrot, or a piece of bread; but after Ginger stood in that box, they dared not come, and I missed them very much. I hope they will come again now, if you do not bite or snap." I told him I never bit anything but grass, hay, and corn, and could not think what pleasure Ginger found it.

"Well, I don't think she does find pleasure," said Merrylegs; "it is just a bad habit. She says no one was ever kind to her, and why should she not bite? Of course, it is a very bad habit; but I am sure, if all she says be true, she must have been ill used before she came here. John does all he can to please her; so I think she might be good-tempered here. You see," he said, with a wise look, "I am twelve years old. I know a great deal, and I can tell you there is not a better place for a horse all round the country than this. John is the best groom that ever was. He has been here fourteen years, and you never saw such a kind boy as James is, so that it is all Ginger's own fault that she did not stay in the box stall."

The name of the coachman was John Manly. He had a wife and one child, and they lived in the coachman's cottage, near the stables.

The next morning he took me out into the yard and gave me a good grooming, and just as I was going into my box, with my coat soft and bright, the squire came to me and looked me over. He seemed pleased,



"I had a light, airy stable and the best of food."—Page 18

and said, "John, I meant to have tried the new horse this morning, but I have other business. You may as well take him around after breakfast; go by the common and the Highwood, and back by the water-mill and the river; that will show his paces."

"I will, sir," said John. After breakfast he came and fitted me with a bridle. He was very particular in letting out and taking in the straps to fit my head comfortably. He rode me first slowly, then a trot, then a canter, and when we were on the common, we had a splendid gallop.

As we came back through the woods we met the Squire and Mrs. Gordon out walking. They stopped, and John jumped off. "Well, John, how does he go?"

"First rate, sir," answered John. "He's as fleet as a deer, and has a fine spirit, too; but the lightest touch of the rein will guide him."

"That's well," said the squire, "I will try him myself to-morrow."

The next day I was brought up for my master. I remembered my mother's counsel and my good old master's, and I tried to do exactly what my new master wanted me to do. I found he was a very good rider, and thoughtful for his horse, too. When he came home, the lady was at the hall door as he rode up. "Well, my dear," she said, "how do you like him?"

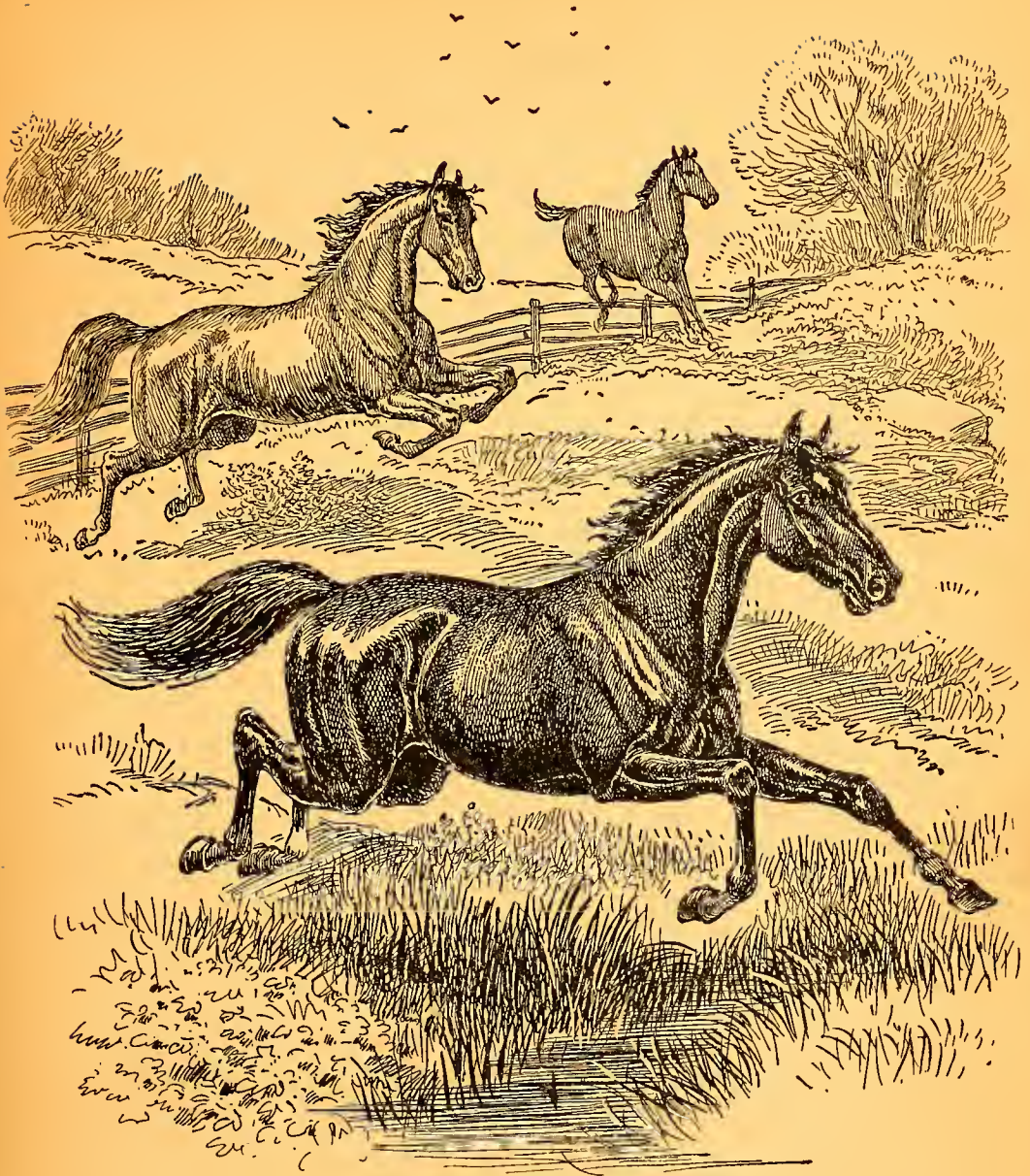
"He is exactly what John said," he replied; "a pleasanter creature I never wish to mount. What shall we call him?"

She said: "He is really quite a beauty, and he has such a sweet, good-tempered face and such a fine intelligent eye—what do you say to calling him 'Black Beauty'?"

"Black Beauty—why, yes, I think that is a very good name. If you like it, it shall be his name;" and so it was.

John seemed very proud of me; he used to make my mane and tail almost as smooth as a lady's hair, and he would talk to me a great deal. Of course, I did not understand all he said, but I learned more and more to know what he meant and what he wanted me to do. James Howard, the stable boy, was just as gentle and pleasant in his way, so I thought myself well off.

A few days after this I had to go out with Ginger in the carriage. I wondered how we should get on together; but except laying back her ears when I was led up to her, she behaved very well. She did not shirk her work, but did her share full honestly and I never wish to have a better partner in double harness.



“Liberty!”—Page 18

As for Merrylegs, he and I soon became great friends. He was such a cheerful, plucky, good-tempered little fellow, that he was a favorite with every one, and especially with Miss Flora and Miss Jessie, who used to

ride him about the orchard, and have fine games with him and their little dog Frisky.

I was quite happy in my new home, and if there was one thing I missed it must not be thought I was discontented. All who had to do with me were good, and I had a light, airy stable and the best of food. What more could I want? Why, liberty! For three years I had had all the liberty I could wish for; but now, week after week, month after month, and no doubt year after year, I must stand up in a stable night and day except when I was wanted, and then I must be just as steady and quiet as any old horse who had worked twenty years. Now I am not complaining, for I know it must be so. I only mean to say that for a young horse full of strength and spirit, who has been used to some large field or plain, where he can fling up his head and toss up his tail and gallop away at full speed, then round and back again with a snort to his companions—I say it is hard never to have a bit more liberty to do as you like.

CHAPTER V

MERRYLEGS

MR. BLOOMFIELD, the vicar, had a large family of boys and girls, and sometimes they used to come and play with Miss Jessie and Miss Flora. When they came, there was plenty of work for Merrylegs, for nothing pleased them so much as getting on him by turns and riding him all about the orchard and the home paddock.

One afternoon he had been out with them a long time, and when James brought him in and put on his halter, he said: "There, you rogue, mind how you behave yourself, or we shall get into trouble."

"What have you been doing, Merrylegs?" I asked him.

"Oh!" said he, tossing his little head, "I have only been giving these young people a lesson. They did not know when they had enough, so I just pitched them off backwards; that was the only way to make them understand."

"What?" said I, "you threw the children off? I thought you did know better than that! Did you throw Miss Jessie or Miss Flora?"

He looked very much offended and said; "Of course not. I would not do such a thing for the best oats that ever came into the stable. Why, I



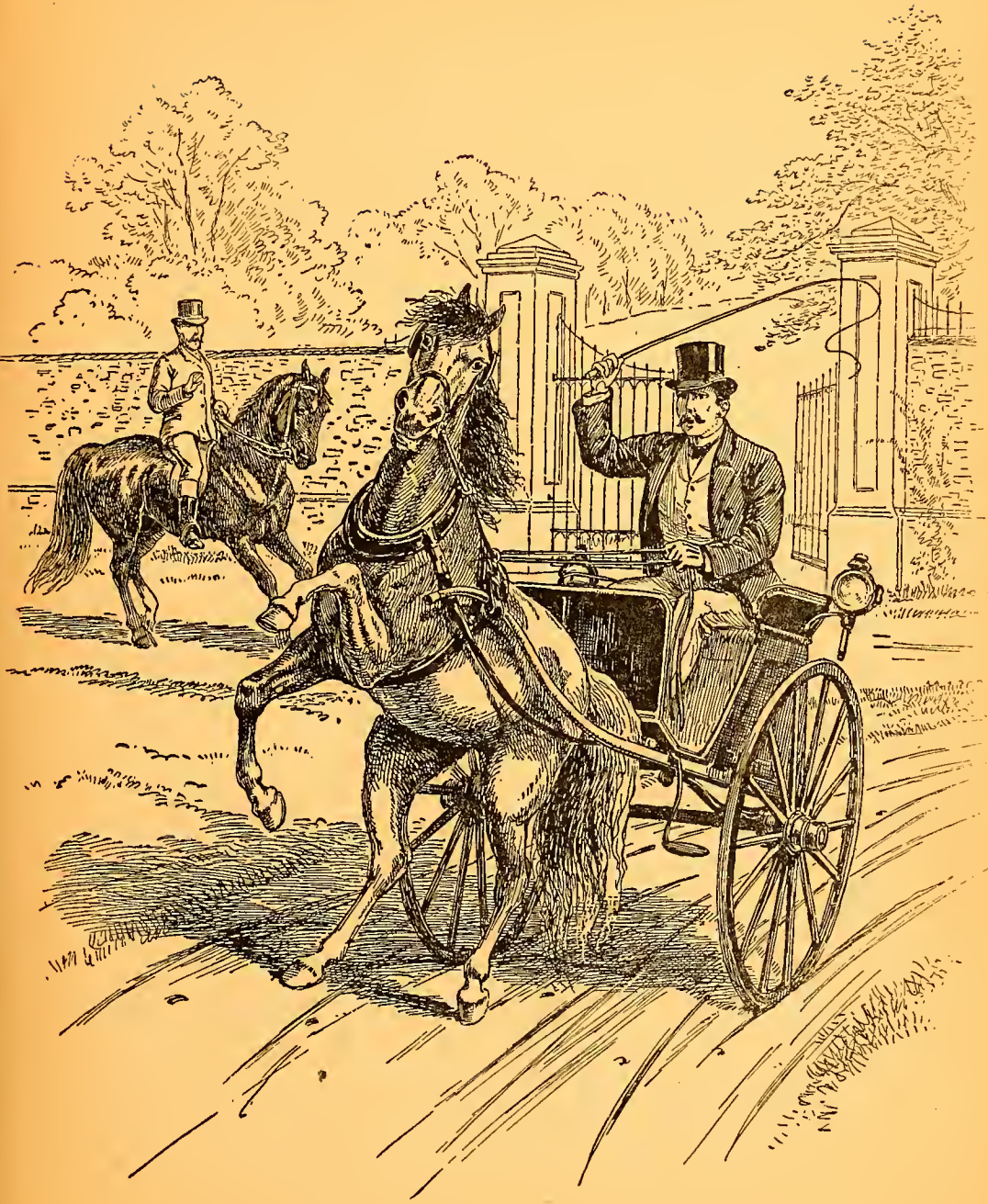
"I just rose up on my hind legs and let him slip off."—Page 20

am as careful of our young ladies as the master could be, and as for the little ones, it is I who teach them to ride. When they seem frightened or a little unsteady on my back, I go as smooth and as quiet as old pussy goes

when she is after a bird, and when they are all right I go on again faster, you see, just to use them to it; so don't you trouble yourself preaching to me; I am the best friend and the best riding master those children have. It is not them, it is the boys; boys," he said, shaking his mane, "are quite different; they must be broken in, as we are broken in when we are colts, and just be taught what's what. The other children had ridden me about for nearly two hours, and then the boys thought it was their turn, and so it was, and I was quite agreeable. They rode me by turns, and I galloped them about, up and down the fields and all about the orchard, for a good hour. They had each cut a great hazel stick for a riding whip, and laid it on a little too hard: but I took it in good part, till at last I thought we had had enough, so I stopped two or three times by way of a hint. Boys think a horse or pony is like a steam engine, and can go as long and as fast as they please. They never think that a pony can get tired or have any feelings; so as the one who was whipping me could not understand, I just rose up on my hind legs and let him slip off behind—that was all. He mounted again, and I did the same. Then the other boy got up, and as soon as he began to use the stick, I laid him on the grass, and so on, till they were able to understand—that was all. They are not bad boys; they don't wish to be cruel. I like them very well, but, you see, I had to give them a lesson. When they brought me to James and told him, I think he was very angry to see such big sticks. He said they were not for young gentlemen."

"If I had been you," said Ginger, "I would have given those boys a good kick, and that would have given them a lesson."

"No doubt you would," said Merrylegs; "but then I am not quite such a fool as to anger our master or make James ashamed of me; then, besides, those children are under my charge when they are riding. I tell you they are entrusted to me. Why, only the other day I heard our master say to Mrs. Bloomfield, 'My dear madam, you needn't be anxious about the children; my old Merrylegs will take as much care of them as you or I could. I assure you I would not sell that pony for any money, he is so perfectly good-tempered and trust-worthy.' Do you think I am such an ungrateful brute as to forget all the kind treatment I have had here for five years, and all the trust they place in me, and turn vicious, because a couple of ignorant boys use me badly? No, no! you never had a good place where they were kind to you, and so you don't know, and I am sorry for you; but I can tell you good places make good horses. I



“Sawyer,” he cried in a stern voice, “is that pony made of flesh and blood?”—Page 22

wouldn't vex our people for anything; I love them, I do," said Merry-legs, and he gave a low "ho, ho, ho," through his nose, as he used to do in the morning when he heard James' footsteps at the door.

The longer I lived at Birtwick, the prouder and happier I felt at having such a home. Our master and mistress were beloved by all who knew them. They were good and kind to everybody and everything. There was no oppressed or ill-used creature that had not a true friend in them, and their servants took the same tone.

I remember my master was riding me toward home one morning, when he saw a powerful man driving toward us in a light pony chaise, with a beautiful little bay pony. Just as he came to the park gates, the little thing turned toward them; the man, without a word of warning, wrenched the creature's head round with such force and suddenness that he nearly threw it on its haunches. Recovering itself, it was going on, when he began to lash it furiously. The pony plunged forward, but the strong, heavy hand held the pretty creature back with force almost enough to break its jaw, while the whip still cut into him. It was a dreadful sight to me, for I knew what fearful pain it gave that delicate little mouth; but master gave me the word, and we were up with him in a second.

"Sawyer," he cried in a stern voice, "is that pony made of flesh and blood?"

"Flesh and blood and temper," he said; "he's too fond of his own will, and that don't suit me."

"And do you think," said master sternly, "that treatment like this will make him fond of your will?"

"He had no business to make that turn; his road was straight on!" said the man roughly.

"You have often driven that pony up to my place," said master; "it only shows the creature's memory and intelligence; how did he know that you were not going there again? But that has little to do with it. I must say, Sawyer, that more brutal treatment of a little pony, it was never my painful lot to witness." Master rode me home slowly, and I could tell by his voice how the thing had grieved him.

BLACK BEAUTY



'Now, John," he said, "ride for your life."—

CHAPTER VI

GOING FOR THE DOCTOR

ONE night I was lying down in my straw fast asleep, when I was suddenly roused by the stable bell ringing very loud. I heard the door of John's house open, and the sound of his feet running up to the Hall. He was back again in no time. He unlocked the stable door, and came in, calling out, "Wake up, Black Beauty! You must go well now, if ever you did;" and almost before I could think, he had got the saddle on my back and the bridle on my head. He just ran around for his coat, and then took me at a quick trot up to the Hall door. The squire stood there, with a lighted lamp in his hand. "Now, John," he said, "ride for you life—that is for your mistress' life; there is not a moment to lose. Give this note to Doctor White; give your horse a rest at the inn, and be back as soon as you can."

John said, "Yes, sir," and was on my back in a minute. The gardener who lived at the lodge was ready with the gate open, for he had heard the bell, and out we went and away through the park and through the village and down the hill.

There was before us a long piece of level road by the side of the river. John said to me, "Now, Beauty, do your best," and so I did. I wanted no whip nor spur, and for two miles I galloped as fast as I could lay my feet to the ground. I don't believe my old grandfather, who won the race at Newmarket, could have gone any faster. When we drew up at Doctor White's door, the church clock was just striking three. John rang the bell twice, and then knocked at the door like thunder. A window was thrown up, and the doctor put his head out and asked, "What do you want?"

"Mrs. Gordon is very ill, sir, and master wants you to come at once. He thinks she will die if you can not get there. Here is a note."

"Wait," he said, "I will come down,"

He shut the window and was soon at the door. "The worst of it is," he said, "that my horse has been out all day, and is quite done up; my son has just been sent for, and he has taken the other. What shall we do? Can I have your horse?"

“He has come at a gallop nearly all the way, sir, and I was to give him a rest here; but I think my master would not be against it, if you think fit, sir.”

“All right, I will soon be ready.”

John stood by me and stroked my neck. I was very hot. The doctor came out with his riding whip. “You need not take that, sir,” said John. “Black Beauty will go till he drops. Take care of him, sir, if you can, I should not like any harm to come to him.”

“No, no, John,” said the doctor, “I hope not,” and in a minute we had left John far behind.

I will not tell about our way back. The doctor was a heavier man than John and not so good a rider; however, I did my very best. When we came to the hill, the doctor drew me in. “Now, my good fellow,” he said, “take some breath.” I was glad he did this, for I was nearly spent, but that breathing helped me, and we were soon in the park. Joe Green, who was now the stable boy, James Howard having obtained another situation, was at the lodge gate; my master was at the Hall door, for he had heard us coming. He spoke not a word, and the doctor went into the house with him, while Joe led me to the stable. I was glad to get home; my legs shook under me, and I could only stand and pant. I had not a dry hair on my body, the water ran down my legs, and I steamed all over—Joe used to say, like a pot on fire. Poor Joe! he was young and small, and as yet, he knew very little, and his father, who would have helped him, had been sent to the next village; but I am sure he did the very best he knew how. He rubbed my legs and chest, but he did not put my warm blanket on me; he thought I was so hot I would not like it. Then he gave me a pailful of water to drink. It was cold and very good, and I drank it all. Then he gave me some hay and corn, and, thinking he had done right, he went away. Soon I began to shake and tremble and turned deadly cold. My legs ached, my loins ached, and my chest ached, and I felt sore all over. This developed into a strong inflammation, and I could not draw a breath without pain. John nursed me day and night. My master, too, often came to see me. “My poor Beauty,” he said one day, “my good horse, you saved your mistress’ life, Beauty; yes, you saved her life.” I was very glad to hear that, for it seems the doctor had said if we had been a little longer it would have been too late. John told my master he never saw a horse go so fast in all his life. “It seems as if the horse really knew what was the matter,” he said. Of

course I did, though John thought not; at least I knew as much as this—that John and I must go at the top of our speed, and that it was for the sake of our mistress.

CHAPTER VII

THE PARTING

I had lived in this happy place three years, but sad changes were about to come over us. We heard that our mistress was ill. The doctor was often at the house, and the master looked grave and anxious. Then we heard that she must go to a warm country for two or three years. The news fell upon the household like the tolling of a death-bell. Everybody was sorry. The master arranged for the breaking up of his establishment. We used to hear it talked about in our stable; indeed, nothing else was talked about. John went about his work, silent and sad, and Joe scarcely ever whistled. There was a great deal of coming and going; Ginger and I had full work.

The first of the family to go were Miss Flora and Miss Jessie and their governess. They came to bid us good-bye. They hugged Merry-legs like an old friend, and so indeed he was. Then we heard what had been arranged for us. Master had sold Ginger and me to an old friend, the Earl of W——, for he thought we should have a good home there. Merry-legs he had given to the vicar, who was needing a pony for Mrs. Bloomfield, but it was on condition that he should never be sold and that when he was past work he should be shot and buried. Joe Green was engaged to take care of him and to help them in the house, so I thought that Merry-legs was well off.

“Have you decided what to do, John?” asked the master.

“No, sir, but I think if I could get a situation with some first-rate colt-breaker and horse-trainer, it would be the right thing for me. A great many young animals are frightened and spoiled by wrong treatment, which need not be if the right man took them in hand. I always get on well with horses, and if I could help some of them to a fair start I should feel as if I was doing some good. What do you think of it, sir?”

“I don’t think I know a man anywhere,” said master, “that I should



"Ginger and I brought the carriage up to the Hall door for the last time."—Page 28

think so suitable for it as yourself. You understand horses, and somehow they understand you, and I think you could not do better."

The last sad day had come; the footman and the heavy luggage had gone off the day before, and there were only master and mistress, and her maid. Ginger and I brought the carriage up to the Hall door for the last time. The servants brought out cushions and rugs and when all were arranged, master came down the steps carrying the mistress in his arms. (I was on the side next the house, and could see all that went on); he put her carefully in the carriage, while the house servants stood round crying.

"Good-bye, again," he said; "we shall not forget any of you," and he got in. "Drive on, John." Joe jumped up, and we trotted slowly through the park and through the village, where the people were standing at their doors to have a last look and to say, "God bless them."

When we reached the railway station, I think mistress walked from the carriage to the waiting room. I heard her say in her own sweet voice, "Good-bye, John. God bless you." I felt the rein twitch, but John made no answer; perhaps he could not speak. As soon as Joe had taken the things out of the carriage, John called him to stand by the horses, while he went on the platform. Poor Joe! he stood close up to our heads to hide his tears. Very soon the train came puffing up into the station; then two or three minutes, and the doors were slammed to; the guard whistled, and the train glided away, leaving behind it only clouds of white smoke and some very heavy hearts.

When it was quite out of sight, John came back. "We shall never see her again," he said—"never." He took the reins, mounted the box, and with Joe drove slowly home; but it was not our home now.

CHAPTER VIII

A STRIKE FOR LIBERTY

THE next morning after breakfast, Joe put Merrylegs into the mistress' low chaise to take him to the vicarage. He came first and said good-bye to me and to Ginger, and Merrylegs neighed from the yard. Then John put the saddle on Ginger and the leading rein on me, and took us across the country to Earlshall Park, where the Earl of W— lived. There was a very fine house and a great deal of stabling. We

went into the yard through a stone gateway, and John asked for Mr. York. It was sometime before he came. He was a fine looking, middle-aged man, and his voice said at once that he expected to be obeyed. He was very friendly and polite to John, and after giving us a slight look, he called a groom to take us to our boxes, and invited John to take some refreshment.

We were taken to a light, airy stable, and placed in boxes adjoining each other, where we were rubbed down and fed. In about half an hour John and York, who was to be our new coachman, came in to see us.

“Now, Manly,” he said, after carefully looking at us both, “I can’t see any fault in these horses; but we all know that horses have their peculiarities as well as men, and that sometimes they need different treatment. I should like to know if there is anything particular in either of these that you would like to mention.”

“Well,” said John, “I don’t believe there is a better pair of horses in the country, and right grieved I am to part with them, but they are not alike. The black one is the most perfect temper I ever knew; but the chestnut, I fancy, must have had bad treatment. She came to us snappish and suspicious, but when she found what sort of a place ours was, it all went off by degrees. But she has naturally a more irritable constitution than the black horse, and if she were ill-used or unfairly treated she would not be unlikely to give tit for tat. You know that high-mettled horses will do that.”

“Of course,” said York, “I quite understand; but you know it is not easy in stables like these to have all the grooms just what they should be. I do my best, and there I must leave it. I’ll remember what you have said about the mare.”

They were going out of the stable, when John stopped and said, “I had better mention that we have never used the check-rein with either of them; the black horse never had one on, and the dealer said it was the gag-bit that spoiled the other’s temper.”

“Well,” said York, “if they come here, they must wear the check-rein. I prefer a loose rein myself, and his lordship is always very reasonable about horses; but my lady—that’s another thing; she will have style, and if her carriage horses are not reined up tight she wouldn’t look at them. I always stand out against the gag-bit, and shall do so, but it must be tight up when my lady rides.”

The next day Lord W——came to look at us. He seemed to be much

pleased with our appearance. "I have great confidence in these horses," he said, "from the character my friend Gordon has given me of them. Of course, they are not a match in color, but my idea is that they will do very well for the carriage while we are in the country. Before we go to London I must try to match Baron; the black horse, I believe, is perfect for riding."

York then told him what John had said about us.

"Well," said he, "you must keep an eye to the mare, and put the check rein easy. I dare say they will do very well with a little humoring at first. I'll mention it to your lady."

In the afternoon we were harnessed and put in the carriage and led round to the front of the house. It was all very grand, and three times as large as the old house at Birtwick, but not half so pleasant, if a horse may have an opinion. Presently we heard the rustling sound of silk as my lady came down the flight of stone steps. She stepped round to look at us. She was a tall, proud looking woman, and did not seem pleased about something, but she said nothing, and got into the carriage.

The next day we were again at the door. We heard the silk dress rustle, and the lady came down the steps, and in an imperious voice, said, "York, you must put those horses' heads higher; they are not fit to be seen."

York got down, and said very respectfully, "I beg your pardon, my lady, but these horses have not been reined up for three years, and my lord said it would be safer to bring them to it by degrees; but, if your ladyship pleases, I can take them up a little more."

"Do so," she said.

Day by day, hole by hole, our bearing reins were shortened, and soon, instead of looking forward with pleasure to having my harness put on, as I used to do, I began to dread it. Ginger, too, seemed restless, though she said very little.

One day my lady came down later than usual, and the silk rustled more than ever. "Drive to the Duchess of B——'s," she said, and then, after a pause, "Are you never going to get those horses' heads up, York? Raise them at once, and let us have no more of this humoring nonsense."

York came to me first. He drew back my head and fixed the rein so tight that it was almost intolerable; then he went to Ginger. The minute York took the rein in order to shorten it, she took her opportunity, and reared so suddenly that York had his nose roughly hit and his hat



“My young mistress was sitting easily with a loose rein.”—Page 33

knocked off, while the groom was nearly thrown off his legs. At once they both flew to her head, but she was a match for them, and went on plunging and rearing and kicking in a most desperate manner. At last she kicked right over the carriage pole and fell down, after giving me a severe blow on my near quarter. There is no knowing what further mischief she might have done, had not York sat himself down flat on her head to prevent her struggles. The groom soon set me free from Ginger and the carriage, and led me to my box.

Before long, Ginger was led in by two grooms, a good deal knocked about and bruised. York came with her and gave his orders, and then came to look at me. He felt me all over, and soon found the place above my hock where I had been kicked. It was swollen and painful. He ordered it to be sponged with hot water, and then a lotion was put on.

Ginger was never put into the carriage again, but when she was well of her bruises one of Lord W——'s sons said he should like to have her; he was sure she would make a good hunter. As for me, I was obliged still to go in the carriage, and had a fresh partner called Max, who had always been used to a tight rein.

What I suffered with that rein for four long months in my lady's carriage would be hard to describe; but I am quite sure that, had it lasted much longer, either my health or my temper would have given way. Before that I never knew what it was to foam at the mouth, but now the action of the sharp bit on my tongue and jaw and the constrained position of my head and throat always caused me to froth at the mouth more or less.

CHAPTER IX

A RUNAWAY HORSE

EARLY in the spring, Lord W—— and part of his family went up to London, and took York with them. Ginger and I and some other horses were left at home for use, and the head groom was left in charge.

The Lady Harriet, who remained at the Hall, was a great invalid, and never went out in the carriage, and the Lady Anne preferred riding on horseback with her brother or cousins. She was a perfect horsewoman, and as gay and gentle as she was beautiful. She chose me for her horse, and named me Black Auster. I enjoyed these rides very much.

There was a gentleman of the name of Blantyre staying at the Hall. He always rode a bright bay mare named Lizzie, and praised her so much that one day Lady Anne ordered the side-saddle put on her and the other on me. When we came to the door, the gentleman seemed very uneasy. "How is this?" he said. "Are you tired of your good Black Auster?"

"Oh, no, not at all," she replied, "but I am amiable enough to let you ride him for once, and I will try your charming Lizzie. You must confess that in size and appearance she is far more like a lady's horse than my own favorite."

"Do let me advise you not to mount her," he said; "she is a charming creature, but she is too nervous for a lady. I assure you, she is not perfectly safe; let me beg of you to have the saddles changed."

"My dear cousin," said Lady Anne, laughing, "pray do not trouble your good careful head about me. I have been a horsewoman ever since I was a baby, and have followed the hounds a great many times, and I intend to try this Lizzie that you are so fond of; so please help me to mount."

There was nothing more to be said. Just as we were moving off a footman came out with a slip of paper and a message from the lady Harriet. "Would they ask this question for her at Doctor Ashley's, and bring the answer?"

We went gayly along till we came to Doctor Ashley's gate. There Blantyre alighted and was going to open the gate for Lady Anne, but she said, "I will wait for you here, and you can hang Auster's rein on the gate."

He hung my rein on one of the iron spikes, and was soon hidden among the trees. Lizzie was standing quietly by the side of the road a few paces off, with her back to me. My young mistress was sitting easily with a loose rein. There was a meadow on the opposite side of the road, the gate of which stood open. Just then, some cart horses and several young colts came trotting out in a very disorderly manner, while a boy behind was cracking a great whip. The colts were wild and frolicsome, and one of them bolted across the road and blundered up against Lizzie's hind legs, and she gave a violent kick and dashed off into a headlong gallop. It was so sudden that Lady Anne was nearly unseated, but she soon recovered herself. Blantyre came running to the gate. He looked anxiously about, and just caught sight of the flying figure, now

far away on the road. In an instant he sprang to the saddle, and, giving me free rein dashed after them.

For about a mile the road ran straight, and then bent to the right, after which it divided into two roads. Long before we came to the bend, she was out of sight. Which way had she turned? A woman was standing at her garden gate, and looking eagerly up the road. Blantyre shouted, "Which way?" "To the right!" cried the woman, and away we went up the right-hand road; then for a moment we caught sight of her; another bend and she was hidden again. Several times we caught glimpses and then lost them. An old road mender was standing near a heap of stones. As we came near he made a sign to speak. Blantyre drew the rein a little. "To the common, to the common, sir; she has turned off there."

We had hardly turned on to the common, when we caught sight of the green habit flying on before us. My lady's hat was gone, and her long brown hair was streaming behind her. The roughness of the ground had very much lessened Lizzie's speed, and there seemed a chance that we might overtake her.

About half-way across the heath there had been a wide dike recently cut, and the earth from the cutting was cast up roughly on the other side. Surely this would stop them! But no, with scarcely a pause, Lizzie took the leap, stumbled among the rough clods, and fell. Blantyre groaned. "Now, Auster, do your best," he cried. He gave me a steady rein. I gathered myself well together, and with one leap cleared both dike and bank.

Motionless among the heather, with her face to the earth, lay my poor young mistress. Blantyre kneeled down and called her name; there was no sound. Gently he turned her face upward; it was ghastly white and the eyes were closed. He unbuttoned her habit, loosened her collar, felt her hand and wrist, then started up and looked wildly round him for help.

At no great distance there were two men cutting turf, who, seeing Lizzie running wild without a rider, had left their work to catch her. Blantyre's hallo soon brought them to the spot. The foremost man asked what he could do.

"Can you ride?"

"Well, sir, I bean't much of a horseman, but I'd risk my neck for Lady Anne; she was uncommon good to my wife in the winter."



“Away we went up the right-hand road.”— Page 34

“Then mount this horse, my friend—your neck will be perfectly safe—and ride to the doctor’s, and ask him to come instantly. Then on to the Hall. Tell them all that you know, and bid them send me the carriage with Lady Anne’s maid and help. I shall stay here.”

“All right, sir, I’ll do my best, and pray God the dear young lady may open her eyes soon.”

With these words he scrambled somehow into the saddle, and with a “Gee up,” and a clap on my sides with both his legs, he started on his journey. I shook him as little as I could, but once or twice on the rough ground he called out, “Steady, Woah! Steady!”

There was a great deal of hurry and excitement after the news became known. Ginger was saddled and sent off in great haste for Lord George. It seemed a long time before Ginger came back, and we were left alone. She then told me all that she had seen.

“We went at a gallop nearly all the way,” she said, “and got there just as the doctor rode up. There was a woman sitting on the ground with Lady Anne’s head in her lap. The doctor poured something into her mouth, but all that I heard was, ‘She is not dead.’ After a while she was taken to the carriage, and we came home together. I heard my master tell a gentleman who stopped him to inquire, that he hoped no bones were broken, but she had not spoken yet.”

Two days after the accident, Blantyre paid me a visit. He patted and praised me very much, and told Lord George that he was sure I knew of Anne’s danger as well as he did. “I could not have held him in if I would,” he said. “She ought never to ride any other horse.” I found out by their conversation that my young mistress was now out of danger and would soon be able to ride again. This was good news to me, and I looked forward to a happy life.

CHAPTER X

REUBEN SMITH

I must now say a little about Reuben Smith, who was left in charge of the stables when York went to London. No one more thoroughly understood his business than he did, and when he was all right there could not be a more faithful or valuable man. I believe everybody liked him; certainly the horses did. The only wonder was that he should be in a under situation, and not in the place of a head coachman like York; but he had one great fault, and that was love of drink.

Colonel Blantyre was obliged to return to his regiment, and it was



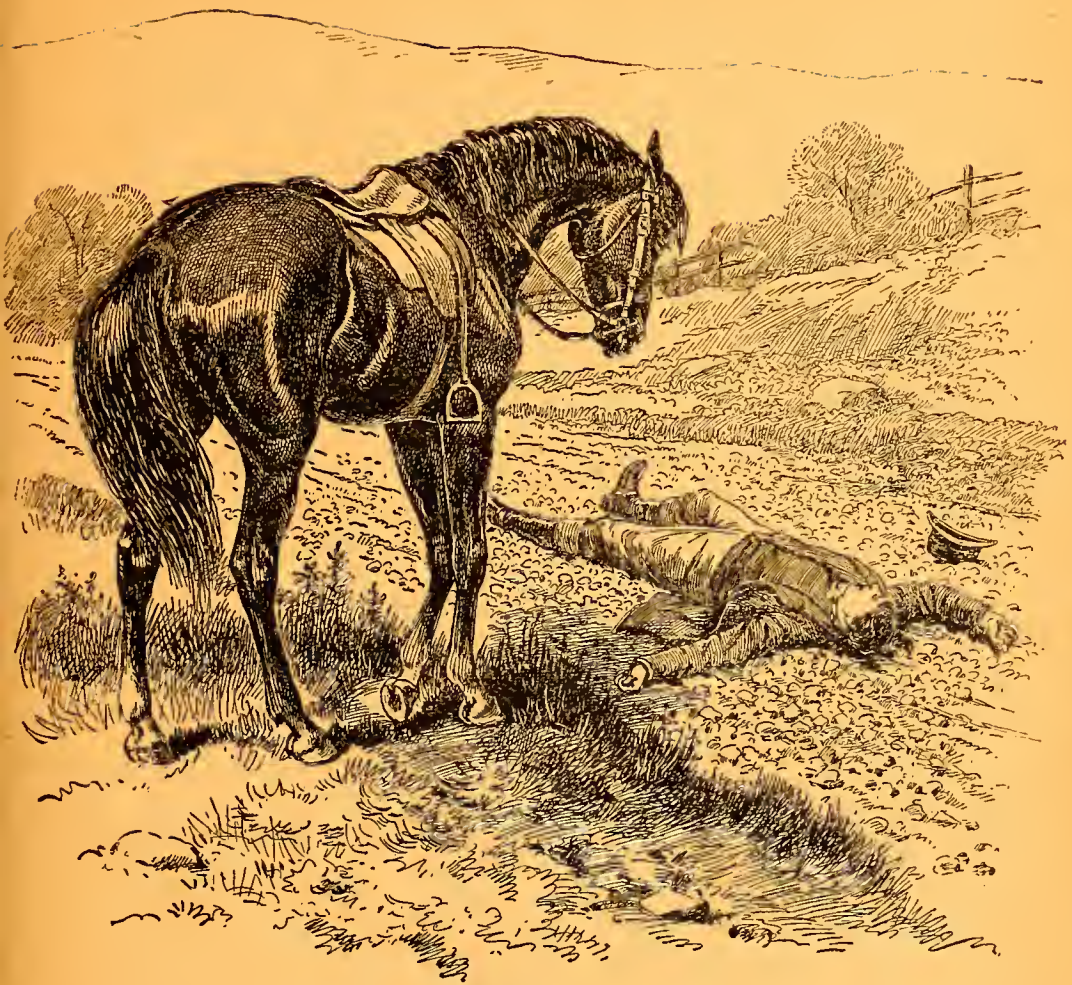
"With scarcely a pause, Lizzie took the leap."—Page 34

arranged that Smith should drive him to town and ride back. For this purpose he took a saddle with him, and I was chosen for the journey. At the station the Colonel put some money into Smith's hand and bade him good-bye, saying, "Take care of your young mistress, Reuben, and do not let Black Auster be hacked about by any ramdon young prig that wants to ride him—keep him for the lady."

We left the carriage at the maker's, and Smith rode me to the White Lion, and ordered the ostler to feed me well, and have me ready for him at four o'clock. A nail in one of my front shoes had started as I came along, but the ostler did not notice it till just about four o'clock. Smith came into the yard at five, and said he should not leave till six, as he had met some old friends. The man told him of the nail, and asked if he should have the shoe looked to. "No," said Smith, "that will be all right till we get home."

He did not come at six. It was nearly nine o'clock before he called for me, and then it was in a very loud, rough voice. Almost before he was out of the town he began to gallop. The roads were stony and going over them at this pace, my shoe came loose, and when we were near the turnpike gate, it came off.

Beyond the turnpike gate was a long piece of road upon which fresh stones had just been laid—large, sharp stones, over which no horse could be driven quickly without risk of danger. Over this road, with one shoe gone, I was forced to gallop at my utmost speed. This could not go on; no horse could keep his footing under such circumstances; the pain was too great. I stumbled and fell with violence on both my knees. Smith was flung off by my fall, and, owing to the speed at which I was going, he must have fallen with great force. I soon recovered my feet and limped to the side of the road, where it was free from stones. The moon had just risen above the hedge, and by its light I could see Smith lying a few yards beyond me. He did not rise; he made one slight effort to do so, and then there was a heavy groan. I uttered no sound, but I stood there and listened. One more heavy groan from Smith, but though he now lay in the moonlight, I could see no motion. The road was not much frequented, and at this time of the night we might stay for hours before help came to us. It must have been nearly midnight when I at last heard the sound of horses's feet. As the sound came nearer I was sure I could distinguish Ginger's step. I neighed loudly, and was overjoyed to hear an answering neigh from Ginger and men's voices. They



“I stood there and listened.”—Page 38

came slowly over the stones and stopped at the dark figure that lay on the ground. One of the men jumped out and stooped down over it. “It is Reuben,” he said, “and he does not stir.”

They raised him up, but there was no life, and his hair was soaked with blood. They laid him down again, and came and looked at me. They soon saw my cut knees.

Robert then attempted to lead me forward. I made a step, but almost fell again. “Hallo! he’s bad in his foot as well as his knees. Look here—

his hoof is all cut to pieces; he might well come down, poor fellow! I tell you what, Ned, I'm afraid it hasn't been all right with Reuben."

The next day, after the farrier had examined my wounds, he said he hoped the joint was not injured; and, if so, I should not be spoiled for work, but I should never lose the blemish. I believe they did their best to make a good cure, but it was a long and painful one.

As soon as my knees were sufficiently healed I was turned into a small meadow for a month or two. No other creatures were there and though I enjoyed the liberty and the sweet grass, yet I had been so long used to society that I felt lonely. Ginger and I had become fast friends, and now I missed her company extremely. I often neighed when I heard horses passing in the road, but I seldom got an answer; till one morning the gate was opened, and who should I see coming in but dear old Ginger. The man slipped off her halter and left her there. With a joyful whinny I trotted up to her; we were both glad to meet, but I soon found that it was not for our pleasure that she was brought to be with me. Her story would be too long to tell, but the end of it was that she had been ruined by hard riding, and was now turned off to see what rest would do.

One day we saw the earl come into the meadow, and York was with him. They examined us both carefully. The earl seemed much annoyed at the result.

"There is three hundred pounds flung away for no earthly use," he said; "but what I care most for is that these horses of my old friend, who thought they would find a good home with me, are ruined. The mare shall have a twelvemonths' run, and we shall see what that will do for her; but the black one must be sold. 'Tis a great pity, but I could not have knees like these in my stable."

"No, my lord, of course not," said York; "but he might get a place where appearance is not of much consequence, and still be well treated."

"They'll soon take you away," said Ginger, "and I shall lose the only friend I have, and most likely we shall never see each other again. 'Tis a hard world!"

About a week after this, Robert came into the field with a halter, which he slipped over my head, and then led me away.

CHAPTER XI

A HORSE FAIR

No doubt a horse fair is a very amusing place to those who have nothing to lose; at any rate, there is plenty to see.

Long strings of young horses out of the country, fresh from the marshes and droves of shaggy Welsh ponies, no higher than Merrylegs; and hundreds of cart horses of all sorts, some of them with their long tails braided up and tied with a scarlet cord; and a good many like myself, handsome and high-bred, but fallen into the middle class, through some accident or blemish, unsoundness of wind, or some other complaint. There were some splendid animals quite in their prime, and fit for anything. They were throwing out their legs and showing off their paces in high style, as they were trotted out with a leading rein, the groom running by their side. But round in the background there were a number of poor things, sadly broken down with hard work, with their knees knuckling over and their hind legs swinging out at every step; and there were some very dejected looking old horses, with the under lip hanging down and the ears lying back heavily, as if there was no more pleasure in life and no more hope. There were some so thin you might see all their ribs and some so covered with sores on their backs and hips, that they were dreadful to look at. These were sad sights for a horse to look upon, for who knows but he may some time come to the same state.

I was put with some useful looking horses, and a good many people came to look at us. The gentlemen always turned from me when they saw my broken knee; though the man who had me swore it was only a slip in the stall.

The first thing was to pull my mouth open, then to look at my eyes, then feel all the way down my legs and give me a hard feel of the skin and flesh, and then try my paces. It was wonderful what a difference there was in the way this was done. Some did it in a rough, off-hand way, as if one were a only piece of wood; while others would take their hands gently over one's body, with a pat now and then, as much as to say, "By your leave." Of course, I judged a good deal of the buyers by their manners to myself."

There was one man, I thought if he would buy me, I should be happy. He was not a rich gentleman. He was rather a small man, but well-made, and quick in all his motions. I knew in a moment, by the way he handled me, that he was used to horses. He spoke gently and his gray eye had a kindly, cheery look in it. It may seem strange to say—but it is true all the same—that the clean, fresh smell there was about him made me take to him. There was no smell of old beer and tobacco, which I hated, but a fresh smell as if he had come out of a hayloft. He offered twenty-three pounds for me, but that was refused, and he walked away. I looked after him, but he was gone, and a very hard-looking, loud-voiced man came. I was dreadfully afraid he would have me, but he walked off. One or two more, who did not mean business came and looked at me. Then the hard-faced man came back again and offered twenty-three pounds. A close bargain was being driven, for my salesman began to think he should not get all he asked, and must come down; but just then the gray-eyed man came back again. I could not help reaching out my head toward him. He stroked my face kindly. "Well, old chap," he said, "I think we should suit each other. I'll give twenty-four pounds for him."

"Say twenty-five, and you shall have him."

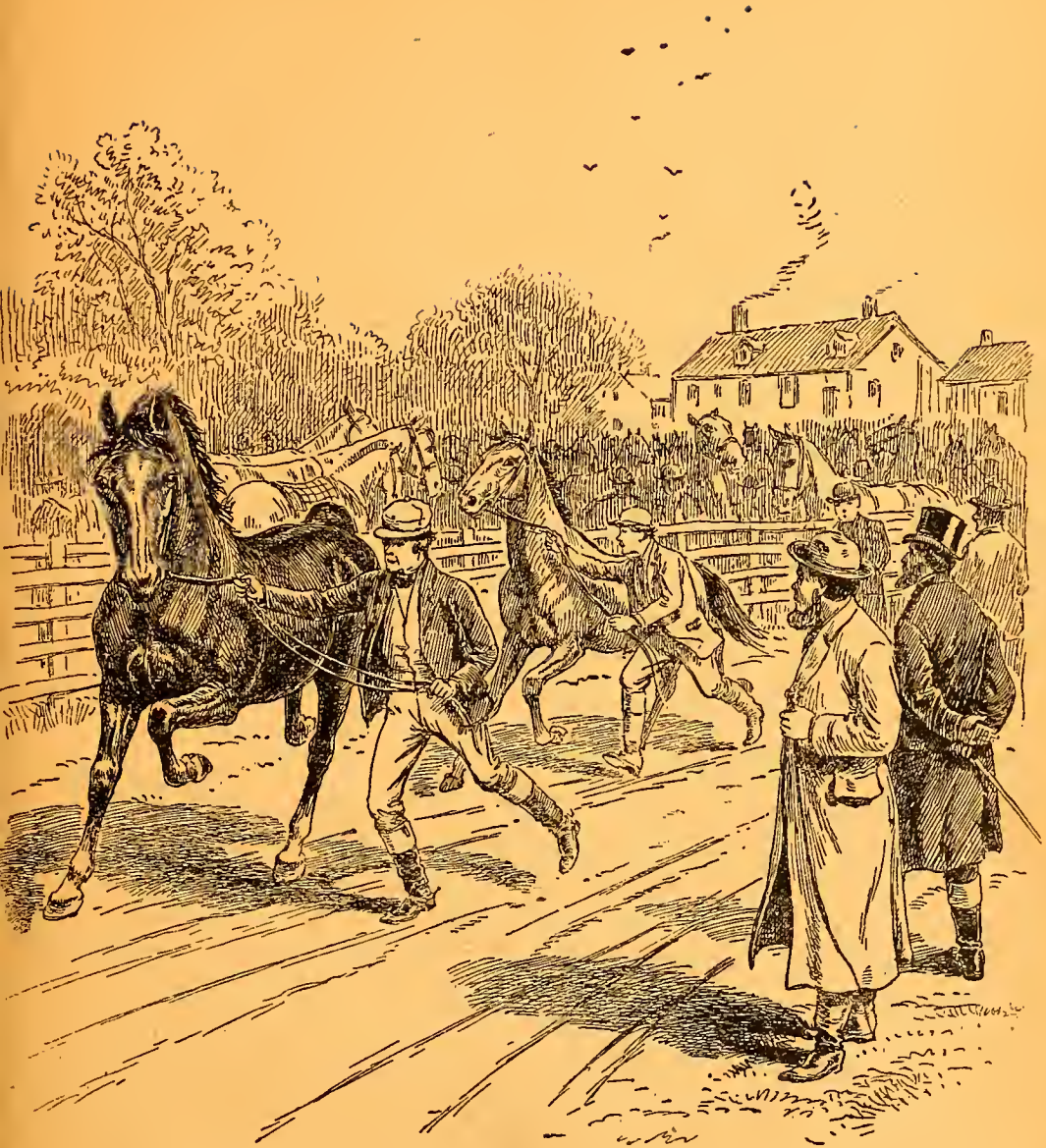
"Twenty-four," said my friend, in a very decided tone, "and not another sixpence—is it yes or no?"

"Done," said the salesman; "and you may depend upon it there's a monstrous deal of quality in that horse, and if you want him for cab work he's a bargain."

The money was paid on the spot, and my new master took my halter, and led me out of the fair to an inn, where he had a saddle and bridle ready. He gave me a good feed of oats, and stood by while I ate it, talking to himself and talking to me. Half an hour after, we were on our way to London, through pleasant lanes and country roads, until we came into the great thoroughfare, on which we traveled steadily, till in the twilight we reached the great city. The gas lamps were already lighted; there were streets and streets crossing each other, for mile upon mile. I thought we should never come to the end of them. At last, in passing through one, we came to a long cab stand, when my rider called out in a cheery voice, "Good night, Governor!"

"Hallo!" cried a voice. "Have you got a good one?"

"I think so," replied my owner.



“They were showing off their paces in high style.”—Page 41

“I wish you luck with him.”

“Thank you, Governor,” and he rode on. We soon turned up one of the side-streets, and about half-way up that we turned into a very narrow street, with rather poor-looking houses on one side, and what seemed to be coach-houses and stables on the other.

My owner pulled up at one of the houses and whistled. The door was opened, and a young woman, followed by a little girl and boy, ran out. There was a very lively greeting as my rider dismounted. “Now, then, Harry, my boy, open the gates, and mother will bring us the lantern.”

The next minute they were all around me in the stable yard. “Is he gentle, father?” “Yes, Dolly, as gentle as your own kitten; come and pat him.” At once the little hand was patting about all over my shoulder without fear. How good it felt!

“Let me get him a bran mash while you rub him down,” said the mother. “Do, Polly, it’s just what he wants; and I know you’ve got a beautiful mash ready for me.”

I was led into a comfortable, clean-smelling stall with plenty of dry straw, and after a capital supper, I lay down, thinking I was going to be happy.

CHAPTER XII

A LONDON CAB HORSE

My new master’s name was Jeremiah Barker, but as every one called him Jerry, I shall have to do the same. Polly, his wife, was just as good a match as a man could have. She was a plump, tidy little body, with smooth, dark hair, dark eyes, and a merry little mouth. The boy was nearly twelve years old, a tall, frank, good-tempered lad; and little Dorothy (Dolly they called her) was her mother over again, at eight years old. They were all wonderfully fond of one another. I never knew such a happy, merry family before or since. Jerry had a cab of his own, and two horses, which he drove and attended to himself. His other horse was a tall, white, rather large-boned animal, called Captain. He was old now, but when he was young he must have been splendid; he had still a proud way of holding his head and arching his neck; in fact he was a high-bred, fine mannered, noble old horse, every inch of him. He told me that in



“Half an hour after we were on our way to London”—Page 42

his early youth he went to the Crimean War; he belonged to an officer in the cavalry, and used to lead a regiment.

The next morning, when I was well groomed, Polly and Dolly came into the yard to see me and make friends. Harry had been helping his father since the early morning, and had stated his opinion that I should turn out “a regular brick.” Polly brought me a slice of apple, and Dolly a piece of bread, and made as much of me as if I had been the Black Beauty of olden time. It was a great treat to be petted again and talked

to in a gentle voice, and I let them see as well as I could that I wished to be friendly. Polly thought I was very handsome, and a great deal too good for a cab, if it was not for the broken knees.

“Of course, there’s no one to tell us whose fault that was,” said Jerry, “and as long as I don’t know, I shall give him the benefit of the doubt; for a firmer, neater stepper I never rode. We’ll call him Jack, after the old one—shall we, Polly?”

“Do,” she said, “for I like to keep a good name going.”

Captain went out in the cab all the morning. Harry came in after school to feed me and give me water. In the afternoon I was put into the cab. Jerry took as much pains to see if the collar and bridle fitted comfortably as if he had been John Manly over again. When the crupper was let out a hole or two, it fitted well. There was no check rein, no curb rein, nothing but a plain ring snaffle. What a blessing that was!

After driving through the side-street we came to the large cab stand where Jerry had said “Good-night.” On one side of this wide street were high houses with wonderful shops, and on the other was an old church and churchyard, surrounded by iron palisades. Alongside these iron rails a number of cabs were drawn up, waiting for passengers. Bits of hay were lying about on the ground; some of the men were standing together talking; some were sitting on their boxes reading the newspaper; and one or two were feeding their horses with bits of hay, and giving them a drink of water. We pulled up in the rank at the back of the last cab. Two or three men came round and began to look at me and pass remarks.

“Very good for a funeral,” said one.

“Too smart looking,” said another, shaking his head in a very wise way. “You’ll find out something wrong one of these fine mornings, or my name isn’t Jones.”

“Well,” said Jerry, pleasantly, “I suppose I need not find it out till it finds me out, eh? And if so, I’ll keep up my spirits a little longer.”

Then there came up a broad-faced man, dressed in a great gray coat with great gray capes and great white buttons, a gray hat, and a blue muffler loosely tied around his neck. His hair was gray, too; but he was a jolly-looking fellow, and the other men made way for him. He looked me all over, as if he had been going to buy me; and then, straightening himself up with a grunt, he said, “He’s the right sort for you, Jerry; I don’t care what you gave for him, he’ll be worth it.” Thus my character

was established on the stand. This man's name was Grant, but he was called "Gray Grant," or "Governor Grant." He had been the longest on the stand of any of the men, and he took it upon himself to settle matters and stop disputes.

The first week of my life as a cab horse was very trying. I had never been used to London, and the noise and smoke, the crowds of horses, carts, and carriages that I had to make my way through, made me feel anxious and harassed; but I soon found that I could perfectly trust my driver, and then I made myself easy, and got used to it.

Jerry was as good a driver as I had ever known; and what was better, he took as much thought for his horses as he did for himself. He soon found out that I was willing to work and do my best, and he never laid the whip on me, unless it was gently drawing the end of it over my back, when I was to go on; but generally I knew this quite well by the way in which he took up the reins, and I believe his whip was more frequently stuck up by his side than in his hand.

In a short time my master and I understood each other, as well as horse and man can do. In the stable, too, he did all he could for our comfort. The stalls were the old-fashioned style, too much on the slope; but he had two movable bars fixed across the back of our stalls, so that at night, when we were resting, he just took off our halters and put up the bars, and thus we could turn about and stand whichever way we wished.

Jerry kept us very clean, and gave us as much change of food as he could, and always plenty of it; and not only that, but he always gave us plenty of clean fresh water, which he allowed to stand by us both day and night, except, of course, when we came in warm. Some people say a horse ought not to drink all he likes; but I know if we are allowed to drink when we want it, we drink only a little at a time, and it does us a great deal more good than swallowing down half a bucketful at a time, because we have been left without it till we are thirsty and miserable. Some grooms will go home to their beer and leave us for hours with our dry hay and oats and nothing to moisten them. Then, of course, we gulp down too much at once, which helps to spoil our breathing and sometimes chills our stomachs. But the best thing that we had here was our Sunday rest; for we worked so hard in the week that I do not think we could have kept up to it, but for that day; besides, we had then time to enjoy each other's company.

CHAPTER XIII

DOLLY AND A REAL GENTLEMAN

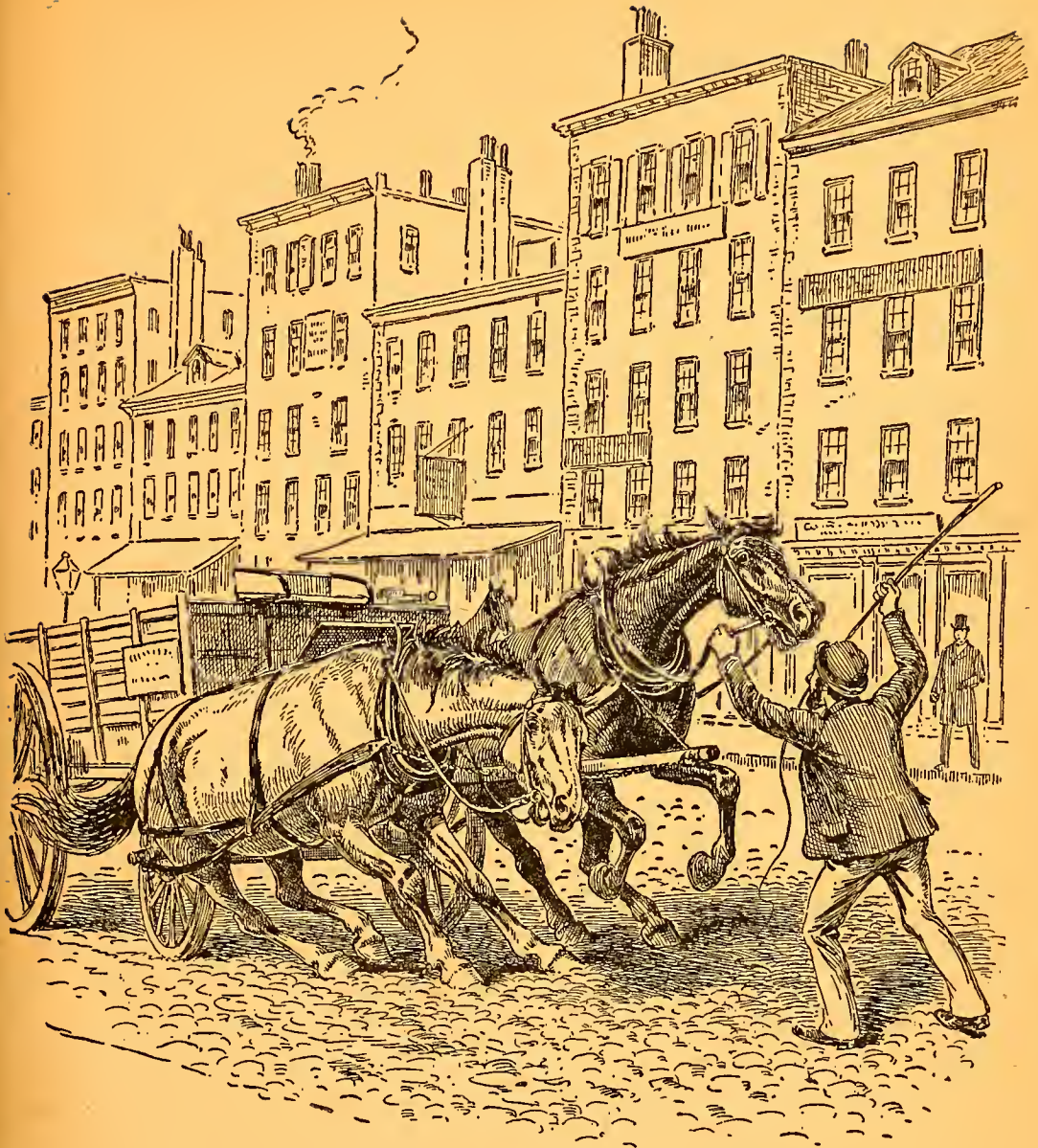
THE winter came early, with a great deal of cold and wet. There was snow, sleet, or rain, almost every day for weeks, changing only for keen, driving winds or sharp frosts. The horses all felt it very much. When it is a dry cold, a couple of good thick rugs will keep the warmth in us, but when it is a soaking rain, they soon get wet through and are no good. Some of the drivers had a waterproof cover to throw over, which was a fine thing; but some of the men were so poor that they could not protect either themselves or their horses, and many of them suffered very much that winter. When we horses had worked half a day we went to our dry stable and could rest; while they had to sit on their boxes, sometimes staying out as late as one or two o'clock in the morning, if they had a party to wait for.

When the streets were slippery with frost or snow, that was the worst of all for us horses. One mile of such traveling with a weight to draw and no firm footing, would take more out of us than four on a good road; every nerve and muscle of our bodies is on the strain to keep our balance; and, added to this, the fear of falling is more exhausting than anything else. If the roads are very bad indeed, our shoes are roughed, but that makes us feel nervous at first.

One cold windy day, Dolly brought Jerry a basin of something hot, and was standing by him while he ate it. He had scarcely begun, when a gentleman, walking toward us very fast, held up his umbrella. Jerry touched his hat in return, gave the basin to Dolly, and was taking off my cloth, when the gentleman, hastening up, cried out, "No, no, finish your soup, my friend: I have not much time to spare, but I can wait till you have done, and have set your little girl safe on the pavement."

So saying, he seated himself in the cab. Jerry thanked him kindly, and came back to Dolly. "There, Dolly, that's a gentleman; that's a real gentleman, Dolly; he has got time and thought for the comfort of a poor cabman and his little girl."

Jerry finished his soup, set the child across, and then took his orders to drive to Clapham Rise. Several times after that, the same gentleman



“With rein and whip he punished them brutally.”—Page 50

took our cab. I think he was very fond of dogs and horses, for whenever we took him to his own door, two or three dogs would come bounding out to meet him. Sometimes he came round and patted me, saying in his quiet, pleasant way: “This horse has got a good master and he

deserves it." It was a very rare thing for any one to notice the horse that had been working for him. I have known ladies to do so now and then, and this gentleman, and one or two others have given me a pat and a kind word; but ninety-nine out of a hundred would as soon think of patting the steam engine that drew the train.

One day, he and another gentleman took our cab. They stopped at a shop in R—Street, and while his friend went in, he stood at the door. A little ahead of us on the other side of the street, a cart with two very fine horses was standing before some wine vaults; the carter was not with them, and I can not tell how long they had been standing; but they seemed to think that they had waited long enough and began to move off.

Before they had gone many paces, the carter came running out and caught them. He seemed furious at their having moved, and with rein and whip punished them brutally, even beating them about the head. Our gentleman saw it all, and stepping quickly across the street, said in a decided voice: "If you don't stop that directly, I'll have you arrested for leaving your horses, and for brutal conduct."

The man, who had clearly been drinking, poured forth some abusive language, but he left off knocking the horses about, and taking the reins, got into his cart, while our friend, meantime, had taken a notebook from his pocket, and looking at the name and address painted on the cart, he wrote down something."

"What do you want with that?" growled the carter, as he was moving on. A nod and a grim smile was the only answer he got.

On returning to the cab, our friend was joined by his companion, who said laughingly, "I should have thought, Wright, you had enough business of your own to look after, without troubling yourself about other people's horses and servants."

Our friend stood still for a moment, and throwing his head a little back, said, "Do you know why this world is as bad as it is?"

"No," said the other.

"Then I'll tell you. It is because people think only about their own business, and won't trouble themselves to stand up for the oppressed, nor bring the wrong-doer to light. I never see a wicked thing like this without doing what I can, and many a master has thanked me for letting him know how his horses have been used."

"I wish there were more gentlemen like you, sir," said Jerry, "for they are wanted badly enough in this city."

CHAPTER XIV

POOR GINGER

ONE day, while our cab and many others were waiting outside one of the parks where music was playing, a shabby old cab drove up beside ours. The horse was an old worn-out chestnut, with an ill-kept coat, and bones that showed plainly through it, the knees knuckled over, and the fore legs were very unsteady. I had been eating some hay and the wind rolled a little lock of it that way, and the poor creature put out her long thin neck and picked it up, and then turned round and looked for more. There was a hopeless look in the dull eye that I could not help noticing, and then, as I was thinking where I had seen that horse before, she looked me full in the face, and said, "Black Beauty, is that you?"

It was Ginger, but how changed! The beautifully arched and glossy neck was now straight, and lank, and fallen in; the clean, straight legs and delicate fetlocks were swelled; the joints were grown out of shape with hard work; the face, that was once so full of spirit and life, was now full of suffering, and I could tell by the heaving of her sides and her frequent cough how bad her breath was.

Our drivers were standing together a little way off, so I sidled up to her a step or two that we might have a quiet little talk. It was a sad tale she had to tell.

After a twelve months' run off at Earlshall, she was considered to be fit for work again, and was sold to a gentleman. For a little while she got on very well, but after a longer gallop than usual, the old strain came back, and after being rested and doctored she was again sold. In this way she changed hands several times, but always getting lower down.

"And so, at last," said she, "I was bought by a man who keeps a lot of cabs and horses, and lets them out. You look well off, and I am glad of it, but I could not tell you what my life has been. When they found out my weakness, they said I was not worth what they gave for me, and that I must go into one of the low cabs, and just be used up; that is what they are doing, whipping and working with never a thought of what I suffer—they paid for me, and must get it out of me, they say. The man who hires me now pays a deal of money to my owner every day, and so

he has to get it out of me, too, and so it's all the week round and round, with never a Sunday to rest."

"I said, "You used to stand up for yourself if you were ill-used."

"Ah!" she said, "I did once, but it's no use; men are strongest, and if they are cruel and have no feeling, there is nothing that we can do but just bear it on and on to the end. I wish the end was come, I wish I was dead. I have seen dead horses, and I am sure they do not suffer pain."

I was very much troubled, and put my nose up to hers, but I could say nothing to comfort her. I think she was pleased to see me, for she said, "You are the only friend I ever had."

Just then her driver came up, and with a tug at her mouth, backed her out of the line and drove off, leaving me very sad indeed.

A short time after this, a cart with a dead horse in it passed our cab stand. The head hung out of the cart tail, the lifeless tongue was slowly dropping with blood; and the sunken eyes! but I can't speak of them, the sight was too dreadful! It was a chestnut horse, with a long, thin neck. I saw a white streak down the forehead. I believe it was Ginger; I hoped it was, for then her troubles would be over. Oh, if men were more merciful, they would shoot us before we came to such misery.

CHAPTER XV

JERRY'S NEW YEAR

CHRISTMAS and the New Year are very merry times for some people; but for cabmen and cabmen's horses it is no holiday, though it may be a harvest. There are so many parties, balls, and places of amusement open that the work is hard and often late. Sometimes driver and horse have to wait for hours in the rain or frost, shivering with cold, while the merry people within are dancing away to the music.

On the evening of the New Year, Jerry and I were kept waiting in a sharp, driving sleet for two gentlemen, at a house in one of the West End squares, from eleven until a quarter past one.

It was late the next morning before any one came into the stable, and then it was only Harry. At noon he came again; this time Dolly was with him. She was crying, and I could gather from what they said that Jerry was dangerously ill.

Jerry got better, but the doctor said he must never go back to the cab work again if he wished to be an old man. It was settled that as soon as he was well enough, they should remove to the country, and that the cab and horses should be sold as soon as possible.

I was sold to a corn dealer and baker, whom Jerry knew, and with him he thought I should have good food and fair work. In the first he was quite right, and if my master had always been on the premises, I do not think I should have been overloaded, but there was a foreman who was always hurrying and driving every one, and frequently when I had quite a full load, he would order something else to be taken on. My carter, whose name was Jakes, like the other carters, always had the check-rein up, which prevented me from drawing easily, and by the time I had been there three or four months, I found the work telling very much on my strength.

One day, I was loaded more than usual, and part of the road was a steep uphill. I used all my strength, but I could not get on, and was obliged continually to stop. This did not please my driver, and he was flogging me cruelly when a lady stepped quickly up to him, and said in a sweet, earnest voice:

“Oh, pray do not whip your good horse any more; I am sure he is doing all he can, and the road is very steep. I am sure he is doing his best.”

“If doing his best won’t get this load up, he must do something more than his best; that’s all I know, ma’am, said Jakes.”

He was just raising his whip again, when the lady said:

“Pray, stop; I think I can help you if you will let me. You see you do not give him a fair chance; he cannot use all his power with his head held back as it is with that check-rein; if you would take it off, I am sure he would do better—do try it,” she said, persuasively.

“Well, well,” said Jakes, with a short laugh, “anything to please a lady, of course.”

The rein was taken off, and in a moment I put my head down to my very knees. What a comfort it was! Then I tossed it up and down several times to get the aching stiffness out of my neck.

“Poor fellow; that is what you wanted,” she said, patting and stroking me with her gentle hand; “and now if you will speak kindly to him and lead him on, I believe he will be able to do better.”

Jakes took the reins. “Come on, Blackie,” he said. I put down my

head, and threw my whole weight against the collar. I spared no strength; the load moved on, and I pulled it steadily up the hill, and then stopped to take breath.

The lady had walked along the footpath, and now came across into the road. She stroked and patted my neck, as I had not been patted for many a long day.

“You see he was quite willing when you gave him a chance; I am sure he is a fine-tempered creature, and I dare say has known better days. I thank you for trying my plan with your good horse, and I am sure you will find it far better than the whip. Good-day,” and with another soft pat on my neck she stepped lightly across the path, and I saw her no more.

“That was a real lady, I’ll be bound for it,” said Jakes to himself; “she spoke just as polite as if I was a gentleman, and I’ll try her plan, uphill, at any rate.” I must do him the justice to say, that he let my rein out several holes, and going uphill after that, he always gave me my head, but the heavy loads went on.

I may as well mention here what I suffered at this time from another cause. This was a badly lighted stable. There was only one very small window at the end, and the consequence was that the stalls were almost dark. Besides the depressing effect this had on my spirits, it very much weakened my sight, and when I was suddenly brought out of the darkness into the glare of daylight, it was very painful to my eyes. I believe, had I stayed there long, I should have become purblind, and that would have been a great misfortune, for I have heard men say that a stoneblind horse was safer to drive than one which had imperfect sight, as it generally makes them very timid. However, I escaped without any permanent injury to my sight, and was sold to a large cab owner.



CHAPTER XVI

HARD TIMES

I SHALL never forget my new master; he had black eyes and a hooked nose; his mouth was as full of teeth as a bull dog's, and his voice was as harsh as the grinding of cart wheels over gravel stones. His name was Nicholas Skinner.

Skinner had a low set of cabs and a low set of drivers; he was hard on the men, and the men were hard on the horses. In this place we had no Sunday rest, and it was in the heat of summer.

My life was now so utterly wretched that I wished I might, like Ginger, drop down dead at my work, and be out of my misery, and one day my wish very nearly came to pass.

I went on the stands at eight in the morning, and had done a good share of work, when we had to take a fare to the railway. A long train was just in. As all the cabs were soon engaged, ours was called for. There was a party of four; a noisy, blustering man with a lady, a little boy, a young girl, and a great deal of luggage. The lady and boy got into the cab, and while the man ordered about the luggage, the young girl came and looked at me.

"Papa," she said, "I am sure this poor horse can not take us and all our luggage so far, he is so very weak and worn out; do look at him."

"Nonsense, Grace, get in at once, and don't make all this fuss; a pretty thing it would be if a man of business had to examine every cab horse before he hired it. There get in and hold your tongue."

My gentle friend had to obey; and box after box was dragged up and lodged on the top of the cab, or settled by the side of the driver. At last all was ready and he drove out of the station.

I got along fairly well till we came to Ludgate Hill, but there the heavy load and my own exhaustion were too much. I was struggling to keep on, goaded by constant chucks of the rein and use of the whip, when, in a single moment—I can not tell how—my feet slipped from under me, and I fell heavily to the ground on my side; the suddenness and the force with which I fell seemed to beat all the breath out of my body. I heard a sort of confusion round me, loud, angry voices, and

the getting down of the luggage, but it was all a dream. I can not tell how long I lay there, but I found my life coming back, and after one or two attempts, I staggered to my feet, and was gently led to some stables which were close by. In the evening I was sufficiently recovered to be led back to Skinner's stables. In the morning Skinner came with a farrier to look at me. He examined me closely, and said:

"This is a case of overwork more than disease. If you rest him and feed him up, he may pick up, and you may get more than his skin is worth, at any rate."

Upon this advice, Skinner gave orders that I should be well fed and cared for. Ten days of perfect rest, plenty of good oats, hay, bran mashes with boiled linseed mixed in them, did more to get up my condition than anything else could have done. When the twelfth day after the accident came, I was taken to a sale, a few miles out of London.

At the sale I found myself in company with a lot of horses—some old, some lame, some broken-winded.

The buyers and sellers, too, many of them, looked not much better off than the poor beasts they were bargaining about. But there were others, and among them I noticed a man who looked like a gentleman farmer, with a young boy by his side; he had a kind ruddy face, and he wore a broad-brimmed hat. When he came up I saw his eye rest on me. I still had a good mane and tail, which did something for my appearance.

"There's a horse, Willie, that has known better days."

"Poor fellow!" said the boy. "Do you think, grandpa, he was ever a carriage horse?"

"Certainly, my boy," said the farmer, coming closer, "he might have been anything when he was young. Look at his nostrils and his ears, the shape of his neck and shoulder." He gave me a pat on the neck. I put out my nose in answer to his kindness; the boy stroked my face.

"See grandpa, how well he understands kindness. Could you not buy him and make him young again as you did Ladybird?"

"My dear boy, I can't make all old horses young; besides Ladybird was not so very old, as she was run down and badly used."

"Well, grandpa, I don't believe that this one is old; I want you to look at his mane and tail, and I wish you would look into his mouth." The old gentleman laughed. "Bless the boy! he is as horsey as his old grandfather."

"But do look at his mouth, grandpa, and ask the price."



"I was gently led to some stables which were close by."—Page 56

The man who had brought me for sale now put in his word. "The young gentleman's a real knowing one, sir. Now, the fact is, this 'ere horse is just pulled down with over-work in the cabs; and I heard as how the vetenary said that a six months' run off would set him right up. I've had the tending of him the past ten days, and a gratefuller, pleasanter animal I never met with, and 'twould be worth a gentleman's while to give a five-pound note for him, and let him have a chance."

The farmer slowly felt my legs, which were much swollen and strained; then he looked at my mouth. "What is the lowest you will take for him?" he asked. "Five pounds, sir; that was the lowest my master told me to take."

"'Tis a speculation," said the old man, shaking his head, but at the same time slowly drawing out his purse, "quite a speculation! Have you any more business here?" he said, counting the money into his hand.

"No, sir, I can take him to the inn for you, if you wish."

"Do so, I am going there now."

They walked forward and I was led behind. I had a good feed at the inn, and was then ridden home by one of my new master's servants.

Mr. Thoroughgood, for that was the name of my benefactor, gave orders that I should have hay and oats every night and morning, and the run of the meadow during the day, and "you, Willie," said he, "must take the oversight of him; I give him in charge to you."

The boy was proud of his charge and undertook it in all seriousness.

There was not a day when he did not pay me a visit, often giving me a bit of carrot, or something good. Sometimes he brought his grandfather, who always looked closely at my legs.

"This is our point, Willie," he would say; "but he is improving so steadily that I think we shall see a change for the better in the spring."

The perfect rest, the good food, and the gentle exercise soon began to tell on my condition. During the winter my legs improved so much that I began to feel quite young again. The spring came, and one day Mr. Thoroughgood determined that he would try me in the phaeton, and he and Willie drove me a few miles. I did my work with perfect ease.

"He's growing young, Willie; we must give him a little exercise and light work now, and by midsummer he will be as good as Ladybird."

"O, grandpa, how glad I am that you bought him."

"So am I, my boy, but he has to thank you more than me; we must now be looking for a quiet, genteel place for him, where he will be valued."

CHAPTER XVII

MY LAST HOME

ONE day, during this summer, the groom cleaned and dressed me with such extraordinary care that I thought some new change must be at hand. Willie seemed half-anxious, half-merry, as he got into the chaise with his grandfather. "If the ladies take to him," said the old gentleman, "they'll be suited and he'll be suited; we can but try."

At the distance of a mile or two from the village, we came to a pretty, low house, with a lawn and shrubbery at the front, and a drive up to the door. Willie rang the bell and asked if Miss Bloomfield or Miss Ellen was at home. Yes, they were. So, while Willie stayed with me, Mr. Thoroughgood went into the house. In about ten minutes he returned, followed by three ladies; one tall, pale lady wrapped in a white shawl, leaned on a younger lady, with dark eyes and a merry face; the other, a very stately looking person, was Miss Bloomfield. They all came and looked at me and asked questions. The youngest lady—that was Miss Ellen—took to me very much. The tall lady said she should always be nervous riding behind a horse that had been down once, as I might fall down again, and if I did she should never get over the fright."

"You see, ladies," said Mr. Thoroughgood, "many first-rate-horses have had their knees broken through the carelessness of their drivers, without any fault of their own, and from what I see of this horse, I am quite sure this was so in his case; but, of course, I do not wish to influence you. If you incline, you can have him on trial, and then your coachman can see what he thinks of him."

"You have always been such a good adviser to us about our horses," said the stately lady, "that your recommendation would go a long way with me, and if my sister Lavinia sees no objection, we will accept your offer of a trial with thanks."

It was then arranged that I should be sent for the next day. In the morning a smart-looking young man came for me. At first he looked pleased, but when he saw my knees, he said: "I didn't think, sir, you would have recommended a blemished horse like that."

"Handsome is that handsome does," said my master, "you are only

taking him on trial, and I am sure you will do fairly by him, young man; if he is not as safe a horse as any you ever drove, send him back."

I was led to my new home, placed in a comfortable stall, fed, and left to myself. The next day, when my groom was cleaning my face, he said: "That is just like the star that Black Beauty had, he is much the same height, too; I wonder where he is now."

A little further on, he came to the place in my neck where I was bled, and where a little knot was left in the skin. He almost started, and began to look me over carefully, talking to himself. "White star in the forehead, one white foot on the off side, this little knot just in that place." Then, looking at the middle of my back—"and, as I am alive, there is that little patch of white hair that John used to call 'Beauty's threepenny bit.' It must be Black Beauty! Why, Beauty! Beauty! do you know me? little Joe Green?" And he began patting and patting me as if he was quite overjoyed.

I could not say that I remembered him, but I put my nose up to him and tried to say that we were friends. I never saw a man so pleased.

"Give you a fair trial! I should think so, indeed! I wonder who the rascal was that broke your knees, my old Beauty! You must have been badly served out somewhere; well, well, it won't be my fault if you don't have good times now. I wish John Manly was here to see you."

In the afternoon I was put into a low Park chair, and brought to the door. Miss Ellen was going to try me, and Green went with her. I soon found that she was a good driver and she seemed pleased with my paces. I heard Joe telling her about me, and that he was sure I was Squire Gordon's old "Black Beauty."

When we returned, the other sisters came out to hear how I had behaved myself. She told them what she had just heard, and said: "I shall certainly write to Mrs. Gordon, and tell her that her favorite horse has come to us. How pleased she will be!"

After this I was driven every day for a week or so, and as I appeared to be quite safe, Miss Lavinia at last ventured out in the small close carriage. After this it was quite decided to keep me, and call me by my old name of Black Beauty.

I have now lived happily in this place a whole year."

A DESPERATE ERRAND

THE ADVENTURE OF GRIZEL COCHRANE.



AT Edinburgh, almost under the shadow of the spire of St. Giles's, in the pavement between that old cathedral church and the County Hall, the passer-by will mark the figure of a heart let into the causeway, and know that he is standing on the "Heart of Midlothian," the site of the old Tolbooth. That gloomy pile vanished in the autumn of 1817; as Mr. Stevenson says, "the walls are now down in the dust; there is no more *squalor carceris* for merry debtors, no more cage for the old acknowledged prison-breaker; but the sun and the wind play freely over the foundations of the gaol;" this place, "old in story and name-father to a noble book." The author of that same "noble book" possessed himself of some memorials of the keep he had rendered so famous, securing the stones of the gateway, and the door with its ponderous fastenings to decorate the entrance of his kitchen-court at Abbotsford. And this is all that is left.

But in the summer and autumn of 1685 the Tolbooth held prisoners enough, notwithstanding the many gloomy processions that were from time to time walking to the axe and halter in the Grassmarket; and in a narrow cell, late one August evening, two persons were sitting of whom this story shall treat. These two were Sir John Cochrane, of Ochiltree, and his daughter Grizel—here on the saddest of errands, to visit her father in prison and help in his preparations for death.

For Sir John, a stout Whig, had been one of the leaders of Argyle's insurrection; had been beaten with his troops by Lord Ross at Muirdykes; had disbanded his handful of men, and fled for hiding to the house of his uncle, Mr. Gavin Cochrane, of Craigmuir; had been informed against by his uncle's wife, seized, taken to Edinburgh; had been paraded, bound and bare-headed, through the streets by the common executioner; and then on the 3d of July flung into the Tolbooth to await his trial for high treason. And now the trial, too, was over, and Sir John was condemned to die.

As he now sat, with bowed head, on the bench of his cell, it was not the stroke of death that terrified him—for Sir John was a brave man—but the parting with his children, who would through his rashness be left both orphaned and penniless (for the Crown would seize his goods), and chiefly the parting with his daughter, who had been his one comfort in the dark days of waiting for the King's warrant of execution to arrive.

Between his apprehension and his trial no friend or kinsman had been

allowed to visit him ; but now that his death was assured, greater license had been granted. But, anxious to deprive his enemies of a chance to accuse his sons, he had sent them his earnest entreaties and commands that they should abstain from using this permission until the night before his execution. They had obeyed ; but obedience of this sort did not satisfy the conscience of his daughter Grizel. On the very night of his condemnation he heard the key turn in his door ; thinking it could only be the gaoler, he scarcely lifted his eyes. But next moment a pair of soft arms were flung round his neck, and his daughter weeping on his breast. From that day she had continued to visit him ; and now as she sat beside him, staring at the light already fading in the narrow pane, both father and daughter knew that it was almost the last time.

Presently she spoke —

“ And this message — tell me truly, have you any hope from it ? ”

It was an appeal made by Sir John's father, the Earl of Dundonald, to Father Peters, the King's confessor, who often dictated to him, as was well known, on matters of State. But in the short time left, would there be time to press this appeal, and exert that influence in London which alone could stay the death-warrant ?

“ There is no hope in that quarter,” said Sir John.

Grizel knew that he spoke only what was her own conviction, and her despair.

“ Argyle is dead these three days,” pursued her father, “ and with him men of less consequence than I. Are they likely to spare me—a head of the rising ? Would they spare any man now, in the heat of their revenge ? ”

“ Father,” said Grizel suddenly, “ could you spare me from your side for a few days ? ”

Sir John looked up. He knew by her manner that she had formed some plan in her mind ; he knew, too, from her heart, that nothing but a chance of winning his safety could take her from him now, of all times.

“ My child,” he said, “ you are going to attempt something.”

She nodded, with a brighter face than she had worn for many days.

“ And what you would attempt,” he went on, “ is an impossibility.”

“ Nothing is impossible to a true heart,” she said.

“ And who will help you ? ”

“ No one.” She was standing before him now, and in the twilight he could see her eyes lit up with hope, her figure upright, and as if full of a man's strength.

“ My girl, you will run into danger — into blame. They will not spare you, and—do you know the characters of those men whom you would have to sue ? ”

She bent and kissed him.

“ I am a Cochrane, my father.”

Early next morning, before the world was up, Grizel Cochrane was mounted

on horseback and riding towards the border. She had dressed herself—this girl of eighteen—as a young serving-woman, and when she drew rein at a wayside cottage, for food and drink, professed herself journeying on a borrowed horse to visit her mother's house, across the Tweed.

By noon Edinburgh was some leagues behind, but she pressed on through that day and most of the following night. On the second day after leaving Edinburgh she crossed the Tweed, and came in safety to the home of an old nurse, on the English side, four miles beyond the town of Berwick.



“SHE PULLED OUT THE PISTOLS” (p. 120).

“Gude sakes!” cried the old woman, who was standing at her cottage door and was rather astonished to find the horsewoman draw rein, leap to the ground, and plant a kiss on either cheek—“Gude sakes! if it isna Miss Grizel!”

“Quickly, into the house!” commanded her young mistress; “I have somewhat to tell that will not wait an hour.”

She knew the old nurse was to be trusted, and therefore told her story and her secret. “Even now,” she said at the end of her story, “the postman is riding from London with the warrant in his bag. I must stop him and make him give it up to me, or my father's head is the penalty.”

“But what use to talk o' this, when the postman is a stout rider, and armed to boot? How is a mere girl, saving your presence, to do this at all?”

“Look here.”

Grizel unrolled a bundle which she had brought on her saddle-crutch from Edinburgh; it held a horseman's cloak and a brace of pistols.

“Now,” said she, “where are the clothes of Donald, my foster-brother? He was a slight lad in times syne, and little doubt they'll fit me.”

For this was indeed the brave girl's plan:—In those times the mail from London took eight days on its journey to Edinburgh; by possessing herself of the warrant for her father's death and detaining it, she could count on the

delay of sixteen or seventeen days at least before application could be made for a second, and that signed and sent to the Scotch capital. By this delay, time enough would be won for her friends in London to use all their influence to quash the sentence.

It was a mad scheme ; but, as she had said, nothing is impossible to a true heart. She had possessed herself, too, of the minutest information with regard to the places where the postmen rested on their journey. One of these places, she knew, was a small inn kept by a widow on the outskirts of the little town of Belford. There the man who received the bag at Durham was accustomed to arrive at about six in the morning, and take a few hours' sleep before going on with his journey. And at Belford, Grizel Cochrane had determined to meet him.

Taking leave of her faithful nurse, she rode southwards again, and, timing her pace, drew up before the inn at Belford just an hour after the postman had come in from the south and disposed himself to sleep.

The mistress of the inn had no ostler, so Grizel stabled her horse with her own hands, and striding into the inn-parlor, demanded food and drink.

"Sit ye down, then," answered the old woman, "at the end of yon table, for the best I have to give you is there already. And be pleased, my bonny man, to make as little noise as may be ; for there's one asleep in that bed that I like ill to disturb."

She pointed to the victuals on the board, which were indeed the remains of the sleeping man's meal. Grizel sat down before them, considered to herself while she played with a-mouthful or two, and then asked —

"Can I have a drink of water?"

"'Deed," answered the hostess, "and are ye a water-drinker? 'Tis but an ill-custom for a change-house."

"Why, that I know ; and so, when I put up at an inn, 'tis my custom always to pay for it the price of stronger drink, which I cannot take."

"Indeed — well, that's fairly spoken ; and, come to think of it, 'tis but just.' The landlady brought a jug of water and set it on the board.

"Is the well where you got this water near at hand?" said Grizel, pouring out a glass and sipping at it ; "for if 'tis no trouble to fetch some fresh for me, I will tell you this is rather over-warm and flat. Your trouble shall be considered in the lawing," added she.

"'Tis a good step off," answered the dame ; "but I cannot refuse to fetch for so civil, discreet a lad — and a well-favored one, besides. So bide ye here, and I'll be as quick as I maun. But for any sake take care and don't meddle with the man's pistols there, for they are loaded, the both ; and every time I set eyes on them they scare me out of my senses, almost."

She took up a pitcher and went out to draw the water. No sooner was Grizel left alone than, starting up, she waited for a moment, listening to the footsteps as they died away in the distance, and then crept swiftly across the

floor to the place where the postman lay asleep. He lay in one of those close wooden bedsteads, like cupboards, which were then common in the houses of the poor, and to this day may be seen in many a house in Brittany. The door of it was left half-open, to give the sleeper air, and from this aperture the noise of his snoring issued in a way that shook the house.

Nevertheless, it seemed to the girl that he must be awakened by the creaking of the floor under her light footfall. With heart in mouth she stole up to the bedstead, and gently pulling the door still wider ajar, peeped in, in the hope of seeing the mail-bag and being able to pounce upon it.

She saw it, indeed ; but to her dismay, it lay beneath the shaggy head of its guardian — a giant in size. The postman used his charge as a pillow, and had flung himself so heavily across it as to give not the faintest hope that any one could pull it away without disturbing its keeper from his nap. Nothing could be done now. In those few bitter moments, during which she stood helplessly looking from the bag which contained the fatal warrant to the unconscious face of the man before her, Grizel made up her mind to another plan.

She turned to the table, caught up the postman's holsters, and pulled out the pistols of which the old woman had professed herself in such terror. Quickly drawing and secreting the charges, she returned them to their cases, with many an anxious look over her shoulder towards the bedstead, and took her seat again at the foot of the table.

Hardly had she done so when she heard the old woman returning with the pitcher. Grizel took a draught, for her throat felt like a lime-kiln, and having settled her bill, much to the landlady's satisfaction, by paying for the water the price of a pot of beer, prepared to set off. She carelessly asked and ascertained how much longer the other guest was likely to sleep.

"By the noise he makes he intends sleeping till Doomsday," she said, laughing.

"Ay, poor man ! his is a hard life," said the hostess ; "and little more than half an hour more before he must be on the highway again,"

Grizel laughed once more, and, mounting her horse, set off at a trot along the road southward, as if continuing her journey in that direction.

Hardly had she got beyond the town, however, when turning the horse's head she galloped back, making a circuit around Belford and striking into the high road again between that place and Berwick. Having gained it, she walked the horse gently on, awaiting the coming up of the postman.

Though all her mind was now set on the enterprise before her, she could not help a shiver of terror as she thought on the chance of her tampering with the pistols being discovered, and their loading replaced. But she had chosen her course, and now she must go through with it. She was a woman, after all ; and it cannot be wondered that her heart began to beat quickly as her ear caught the sound of hoofs on the road behind her, and, turning, she saw

the man on whose face she had been gazing not an hour before, trotting briskly towards her—the mail-bags (there were two — one containing the letters direct



“‘THAT MAIL I MUST AND WILL HAVE. CHOOSE, THEN’” (p. 122).

from London, the other those taken up at the different post-offices on the road) strapped one on each side of his saddle in front, close to the holsters.

At the last moment her nerve came back, and as he drew near she saluted

him civilly and with perfect calmness, put her horse into the same pace with his, and rode on for some way in his company.

The postman was a burly, thick-set man, with a good-humored face. You may be sure that Miss Cochrane inspected it anxiously enough, and was relieved to find that it did not contain any vast amount of hardy courage.

The man was well enough inclined for conversation, too, and as they rode had a heap of chat, which it seemed a pity to interrupt. At length, however, when they were about half-way between Belford and Berwick, Grizel judged now or never was the time. Pulling her horse's rein gently so as to bring her close to her company, she said in a low but perfectly determined voice—

“Friend, I have taken a fancy for those mail-bags of yours, and I must have them; therefore take my advice, and deliver them up quietly, for I am provided for all hazards. I am mounted, as you see, on a fleet horse; I carry fire-arms; and, moreover, I am allied with those who are stronger, though not bolder, than I. You see that wood, yonder?” she continued, pointing to one about a mile off, with an accent and air meant to corroborate her bold words. “Then take my advice: give me up your bags, and speed back the road you came for the present, nor dare to approach that wood for at least two or three hours to come.”

The postman, whose eyes had been growing rounder and rounder during this speech from the stripling beside him, pulled up and looked at her in dumb amazement for some moments.

“If,” said he, as soon as he found his tongue, “you mean, young master, to make yourself merry at my expense, you are heartily welcome. I can see a joke, I trust, as well as another man; so have your laugh out, and don't think I'm one to take offence at the words of a foolish boy. But if,” and here he whipped a pistol from his holster and turned the muzzle on her face—“if y'are mad enough to think seriously of such a business, then I am ready for you.”

They had come to a stand now, in the middle of the road; and Grizel felt an ugly sinking at the heart as she looked at the mouth of the pistol, now not a yard from her cheek. Nevertheless she answered, very quietly and coolly—

“If you have a doubt, dismiss it; I am quite in earnest.”

The postman, with his hand on the trigger, hesitated.

“Methinks, my lad, you seem of an age when robbing a garden or an old woman's fruit-stall would befit you better, if so be you *must* turn thief, than taking His Majesty's mails upon his highway from a stout and grown man. So be thankful, then, you have met with one who will not shed blood if he can help it, and go your way before I am provoked to fire.”

“Sir,” said Grizel, “you are a worthy man; nor am I fonder of bloodshed than you; but if you will not be persuaded, what shall I do? For I have said—and it is truth—that mail I must and will have. Choose, then;” and

with this she pulled out a pistol from under her cloak, and, cocking it, presented it in his face.

"Nay, then, your blood be on your own head," cried the postman, and raising his pistol again he pulled the trigger; it flashed in the pan. Dashing the weapon to the ground, he pulled out the other in a moment, and aiming it in Grizel's face, fired—with the same result. In a furious passion he flung down this pistol, too, sprang from his horse, and dashed forward to seize her. She dug her spurs into her horse's flank and just eluded his grasp. Meanwhile the postman's horse, frightened at the noise and the struggle, had moved forward a pace or two. The girl saw her opportunity, and seized it in the same instant. Another dig with the spurs, and her own horse was level with the other; leaning forward she caught at the bridle, and calling to the pair, in an instant was galloping off along the highway, leaving the postman helplessly staring.

She had gone about a hundred yards with her prize, when she pulled up to look back. Her discomfited antagonist was still standing in the middle of the road, apparently stupefied with amazement at the unlooked-for turn which affairs had taken. Shouting to him to remember her advice about the wood, she put both the horses to their speed, and on looking back once more was gratified to find that the postman, impressed with the truth of her mysterious threat, had turned and was making the best of his way back to Belford.

On gaining the wood to which she had pointed, Grizel tied the postman's horse to a tree, at a safe distance from the road, and set about unfastening the straps of the mail-bags. With a sharp penknife she ripped them open, and searched for the Government despatches among their contents. To find these was not difficult, owing to their address to the Council in Edinburgh, and of the imposing weight of their seals. Here she discovered, not only the warrant for her father's death but also many other sentences inflicting punishment in varying degrees on the unhappy men who had been taken in the late rising. Time was pressing; she could not stop to examine the warrants, but, quickly tearing them in small pieces, placed them carefully in her bosom.

This done, and having arranged all the private papers as far as possible as she had found them, Grizel mounted her horse again and rode off. The postman's horse and the mail-bags, she imagined, would soon be found, from the hints which she had given to the man about the wood—and this afterwards proved to be the case. She now set her horse at a gallop again, and did not spare whip or spur until she reached the cottage of her nurse, where her first care was to burn, not only the warrant for her father's death, but the remainder of the sentences on his fellow-prisoners. Having satisfied herself that all trace of the obnoxious papers was now consumed, she put on again her female garments, and was once more the gentle and unassuming Miss Grizel Cochrane.

It was high time, however, to be making her way northwards again; ac-

cordingly she left her pistols and cloak to be concealed by the nurse, and again set forward on her journey. By avoiding the high-road, resting only at the most sequestered cottages—and then but for an hour or so—and riding all the while as hard as she might, she reached Edinburgh in safety early next morning.

It remains only to say that the time thus won by this devoted girl was enough to gain the end for which she strove. Instigated by a bribe of £5,000 from Lord Dundonald, Father Peters plied the ear of King James so importunately that at length the order was signed for Sir John Cochrane's pardon.

The state of public affairs rendered it prudent for many years that this action of Grizel Cochrane's should be kept secret; but after the Revolution, when men could speak more freely, her heroism was known and applauded. She lived to marry Mr. Ker, of Morriston, in Berwickshire, and doubtless was as good a wife as she had proved herself a daughter.



A TIGER HUNT IN INDIA

“GOOTUL, *April 31st.*



NOTORIOUS old man-eating tigress, with four cubs, that has been the terror of the neighbourhood for some months back, was marked down this morning, and almost the whole population of the village turned out to assist in her destruction. As she had the character of extreme ferocity, unusual precautions were taken in beating her up, and volleys of blank cartridge, with flights of rockets, were thrown into every thick place, far in advance of the beaters.

“The tigress was soon afoot, and our assistant *mahout*, who was posted on a tree to look out, held up five fingers to telegraph, while he shook with agitation on beholding the whole family passing close under him. On reaching the edge of the cover where we were posted, the tigress left her cubs behind, walked out into the plain, and boldly looked the elephant in the face, laying her ears back, growling savagely, and curling up her whiskered lips with a look of indescribable ferocity. Every hair on her back stood erect, her long tail switched from side to side like that of an enraged cat, and her glowing eyes were fixed upon us with a look of fiendish malignity. I never saw a more perfect representation of an incarnate fiend; and I remained for some seconds, with my rifle poised, studying the magnificent picture which the scene presented, and feeling a sort of reluctance to put an end to it by firing the first shot.

“Every tree and rock was crowded with spectators, watching with anxious looks and beating hearts the issue of our contest with their deadly foe. The wild yells of the beaters, the hissing of the rockets, and the rattle of fire-arms, had given place to an ominous silence, like that which precedes the outbreak of a hurricane; and no sound was heard save an occasional low, deep growl, which might well be compared to distant thunder that heralds the approaching tempest. The tigress, in the attitude I have described, and our noble elephant with his trunk carefully coiled up between his tusks, stood face to face, like two combatants who have just entered the lists and scan each other with jealous looks before venturing to engage in mortal combat.

“The elephant took one step forward, and the tigress, uttering a hoarse growl, drew herself together as if about to spring. It was now time to act, and the report of our rifles was answered by an exulting shout from the spectators, as the tigress, hit in the point of the shoulder, rolled over, tearing up the earth with her claws in many a fruitless effort to regain her footing. She at last succeeded in doing so, and slunk back into cover. This shot decided her fate; and to prevent any accident occurring to mar the sport

we anticipated when she was brought to close quarters, we ordered the spectators and beaters to betake themselves to trees, where they would be fairly out of reach.

“ ‘Anak’ was now walked into the thicket, but we had hardly proceeded twenty yards, when that harsh grating roar that makes the blood curdle, followed by a despairing shriek, gave us dread warning that some unfortunate beater had disregarded our caution, and fallen a victim to his temerity. A wild cry of rage and execration arose from the assembled multitude, many of whom, from their elevated positions, were enabled to witness the tragedy. But so far from being awed by the fate of their companion, it was with some difficulty that we prevented them from rushing in, sword in hand, and hewing the tigress in pieces, although they well knew in so doing many lives must have been sacrificed.

“ Every exertion was now made to hurry the elephant to the spot. The *mahout* plied his iron goad, and the sagacious brute crashed his way through the tangled brushwood to the scene of blood. The tigress, enraged by the pain of her wounds, and roused to madness by the taste of blood, rushed out and charged the elephant with determined bravery. Our large friend with the trunk did not like it, and wheeling round with a scream of alarm, he shuffled off at his best trot, jolting the howdah to such a degree that we found it impossible to fire, although the tigress was giving chase, open-mouthed, and close at his haunches.

“ The *mahout* at last succeeded in checking his pace to a certain degree, and just as the tigress was about to spring on his croup, I took a snap shot, and hit her. This made the savage old beast rather faint, and she lay down to recover her breath. After some trouble, we succeeded in stopping the elephant, and coaxed him into returning to stand another charge.

“ The tigress lay perfectly still till we were within ten yards, when she started up with a loud roar and made at us more savagely than ever. She had hardly got upon her legs, however, when she was knocked over by a volley from four barrels and completely doubled up.

“ The elephant, whose nerves appeared to have been shaken by the first charge, again turned tail. On returning, after having reloaded, we found the tigress lying with her head between her paws, ready to receive us. We fired at her as she was in the act of springing on the elephant’s trunk, and a lucky shot between the eyes rolled her over, dead.

“ The fall of this noted tigress was hailed with shouts of triumph by the amateurs who had watched the whole proceeding from their perches ; and a poor little herd-boy, whose brother had been devoured a few days before by the tigress and her cubs, was the first to descend and exult over the prostrate man-eater.

“ As the cubs were described as not being larger than a pointer dog, we commenced a hunt for them on foot, armed with swords ; but the little brutes had concealed themselves so effectually that we could not find them.

“The poor little herd-boy whose brother had been killed was twice before attacked by this same tigress; but a herd of fine large buffaloes which he tended, headed by a sagacious old bull, came at his call and drove her off. He was close to his brother when she seized him, and actually saw the tigress with her four cubs feeding off the body. Unfortunately, on this occasion, the buffaloes were grazing at some distance; had they heard the boy's cries, or seen the tigress, they would probably have charged, and beaten her back, for they had been seen to attack her in a body several times when she ventured into the open plain; and the boy said he never feared a tiger so long as his cattle were near him.

“The natives begged to be allowed to carry home the tigress after their own fashion, and she was accordingly handed over to them to be dealt with as they saw fit.

“Having carefully singed off the whiskers, with various superstitious ceremonies, they placed the body of the tigress, ornamented with garlands of flowers, upright on a cart, drawn by eight bullocks, and in this state dragged her in procession through the village, preceded by a band of native musicians and followed by a crowd of men, women, and children, exulting over the remains of a deadly foe, and invoking blessings on our heads for having rid them of her dreaded presence.

“Killing a tiger is at all times a satisfactory exploit. But the death of a brute like this, such a pest while living, so game in her last moments, is indeed a glorious victory. Were it not for the melancholy fate of the unfortunate beater, I should say this is the most satisfactory day's sport I have yet seen in India. An accident of this sort is always a sad damper to one's feelings of triumph; but we have at least the satisfaction of thinking that it was occasioned entirely by the poor fellow's own imprudence; and that by ridding the country of this dreadful scourge, we have probably been the means of saving many human lives at the expense of one.”

