

Silvermere he insisted that his step-mother should remain there as its mistress, and this was another cause of offence to Mrs. Sinclair. She, being now a widow, thought that her own brother should prefer her and hers to his step-mother and her son's child.

"But Everard Cranswick was not to be moved from his purpose, and I am afraid the thought of his sister's annoyance rather intensified his resolution. Sharp words followed; the two so nearly related parted in anger, and all intercourse ceased between Mrs. Sinclair and her brother."

"What a pity!" exclaimed Hilda. "I think family quarrels, or even misunderstandings, are dreadful things, are they not, Uncle Edward?"

"They are indeed, my dear," replied Mr. Oakley; "and they almost invariably prove the truth of the words—'A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.' I know that Everard's step-mother tried every means in her power to reconcile him and his sister, but in vain. She could hardly have asked anything else and be refused, but in *this one matter* her step-son set his face like a flint, and merely laughed at her entreaties.

"Spare yourself the trouble," he said, when she pleaded again and again, telling him she would fain earn a peace-maker's blessing by bringing them together once more. "You think, perhaps, that my sister will give you credit for pure, unselfish motives in trying to reconcile her and me; you are mistaken. I believe in you, and wish I could grant what you ask; she does not, and if you brought her to Silvermere she would leave no stone unturned to oust you and Austin from it. Let well alone, if you are wise."

"Mrs. Cranswick could not think it well, but she was obliged to be silent, if unconvinced. She knew the impetuous unflinching character of her step-son. She had personally experienced the faithfulness of his friendship, but was well aware that, if he became embittered against an individual, he was equally unmovable in his dislike.

"He almost idolised his nephew, but with increasing age new infirmities of temper showed themselves, and Everard would sometimes over-indulge the youth and at others act in an arbitrary manner, exacting a blind obedience which was almost inconsistent with the possession of reason.

"While Mrs. Cranswick lived, however, she exerted an admirable influence over both Austin and his uncle, but she died when the young man was twenty-two years of age.

"Austin was a little like you in one respect, Hilda. In his early days he was much tied to Silvermere. You, Hilda, though a girl, found the quiet monotonous life intolerable; and yet you had many resources which Austin Cranswick never possessed, and which were not available in his early days.

"Old Everard Cranswick provided his nephew with excellent teachers, but, having never travelled much himself, he set his face against what he called the new-fangled ways of a later generation.

He had done very well without certain things and cared little for new sights or scenes. Why should Austin long for them?"

"Your father's mind had been enriched by observation and the society of men of culture, as well as by travel and study. He had endless stores of information for you to draw upon.

"Austin Cranswick had none of these, or any definite occupation, and was expected to yield implicit obedience to this warm-hearted but very obstinate old man. He wished to learn a profession, and expressed his willingness to let his uncle choose one for him.

"The old man was angry at the mention of such a thing for the heir of Silvermere. 'What could a man want with a profession who was to step into his shoes?' was the immediate reply. Perhaps within an hour he would be angry at some mere trifle and remind his nephew that the estate was his own to leave as he chose.

"Austin would wish to spend a few weeks in travelling, the answer would be, 'Why cannot you be contented here? If Silvermere is not home good enough for a man, he deserves to know what want means.'

"Whilst Mrs. Cranswick lived she did all in her power to smooth matters, but at her death Austin became possessed of a small competence, and began to ask himself whether even the prospect of inheriting Silvermere could make amends for the life he was leading in the meanwhile."

"Poor fellow! He was to be pitied," said Hilda. "Such a life must have been hard indeed for a high-spirited, intelligent man."

"No doubt it was, and yet Austin owed a deep debt of gratitude to his uncle, not merely on his own account, but for his mother's sake. During more than forty years, Everard Cranswick had been like son, brother, and friend combined to his father's wife and widow. Faithful from first to last, he had been a source of strength and protection to her, while at the same time acknowledging that he owed much of the brightness of his home life to her gentle presence and womanly influence. He meant to be kind to his nephew, and wished him to be happy. He spent money lavishly and ungrudgingly to gratify every wish of Austin's, provided that it fell in with his own views for him, but he could only imagine that a young man could be made happy in an old man's way."

"He wished to be kind to Austin and made him miserable by petty tyranny. He meant to secure his happiness and used the wrong means, and did not even satisfy himself, I suppose," said Hilda.

"Exactly so, my dear, and yet, hard as all this was upon Austin, I think he should have tried to bear with the old man, of whose affection he could not entertain a doubt. His uncle was becoming very infirm, and the trial was not likely to be a long one. We are not patient and forbearing by nature, but even irksome duties become light and toil becomes a pleasure when undertaken in the spirit of Him 'who pleased not

Himself.' You know something of this now, my child, and I am not going to preach, but to finish my story as quickly as possible.

"Mr. Cranswick told Austin that he wished him to marry, and the young man, with a smile, expressed his willingness to comply with this request, and owned that his affections were already engaged, but that he wished, if possible, to have the approbation of his uncle before taking any decisive step.

"This communication was evidently as unexpected as it was unwelcome to Mr. Cranswick, and he asked, very abruptly, the name of the lady in question.

"Felicia Ormerod," replied Austin. "I do not think he in the least anticipated what followed, for Felicia was the daughter of a clergyman of high character and good family, with whom Mr. Cranswick was well acquainted, and of whom he always spoke in terms of respect. But he was comparatively poor. Felicia was his eldest child; he had boys to educate, and she, with a view of helping her parents, had for a couple of years past acted as daily governess to the children of a friend.

"She was a charming girl, beautiful, amiable, and accomplished, one for whom any man might well have thanked God as a good and precious gift, whether as wife or daughter. I firmly believe that had Austin spoken against Felicia Ormerod as an unsuitable person, old Everard would have taken the opposite. He told the truth, declared his affection for her, and the perverse old man broke out into a storm of passion; called her a beggarly governess, even alluded tauntingly to the fact that her costly education, finished abroad, had been paid for by her godmother, and ordered his nephew neither to think of nor speak to Felicia again.

(To be continued.)

OUR FOUR-FOOTED FRIENDS.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

DONKEYS AND GOATS.

"Man's cruel baseness to his beast!
—Poor uncomplaining brute,
Its wrongs are innocent at least,
And all its sorrows mute.
They cannot have deserved their woes,
As these bad masters can;
And evil is the lot of those
Who serve the tyrant, Man.

The cruel man—lament his fate,
For he can reach no bliss;—
The tortured beast—its future state
Shall recompense for this."

Tupper.

THE patient donkey is, in this country, put down as the emblem of gravity and stupidity. Well, generations after generations of human beings have used the poor beast in so heartless, cruel, and ignorant a fashion, that no wonder he is grave. Sadness and sorrow are born in him, but I doubt if, as a rule, he is so great a fool as he looks. I would far rather say—because I feel I shall be nearer to the truth—that in his worst form the donkey is a living monument to man's inhumanity to his beast!

When I think upon the amount of pain, misery, and discomfort this poor honest animal has to endure, then, instead of writing a plain practical article to my girl readers, I feel wholly inclined to pen a lecture against cruelty to animals, taking the domestic ass as my text. But I must refrain.

The donkey is an exceedingly hardy animal, and therefore people are apt to think that too much work cannot be got out of him. This is very unfair. He ought to have his regular times of work and rest, just as the horse has, and he should never be made to do too much work in one day.

It is cruel to overload the creature, or to drive him too fast.

We hear the donkey called an obstinate animal. That he at times is self-willed must be granted, but I maintain that this is entirely the result of bad usage. We should never, therefore, be unkind to him, or neglectful of his creature comforts.

I know hardly any other animal that makes a better pet for young folks and children than a donkey does, with the exception of the dog, and the donkey has this advantage over the dog, he can carry his little masters and mistresses on his back—two or three at a time, for that matter.

Donkeys, in my humble opinion—and I have studied the ways and habits of the animals both at home and abroad—are most kindly dispositioned, especially towards those who treat them well; they are exceedingly willing to work, very affectionate, and possessed—strange though this may read to some—of a playful temper. This playfulness, however, degenerates into a tendency to be downright mischievous if they are not well used.

Donkeys not only make capital pets, but they are very cheap; a good young one can be bought for a few pounds. It will do you no harm to know the points and general appearance of a really good donkey, in case at any time or other you make up your mind to purchase one.

In buying a donkey, then, get a very young one, so that you can train him to suit yourself, and look for the following properties:—1. He should be of good size, strong, and well built. 2. He should be pretty level on the back, not weak spined and hollow. 3. Smallish in the head. 4. High in the withers. 5. Long in the neck, and also shapely and strong in neck, with a broad crest (the crest is the part of the neck from which the mane grows). 6. The limbs sturdy and strong, and the knees good. 7. The skin must be thin, or, at least, not too lumpy and thick. 8. The coat should be good. 9. The nostrils full, and the eye bright and big, with a general appearance of sprightliness and intelligence.

Having told you his points and properties, let me now tell you how you are to treat him when purchased.

1. FEEDING.—Feed him with regularity in the same way as you do a horse, only the donkey is far less dainty, and whether he prefers coarse herbage and tough food or not, at all events, he eats it and says very little about the matter. But do not imagine, for all this, that he cannot appreciate an occasional feed of good oats, carrots, or mangolds. Try him and see.

2. WATER.—See that he has water given him three or four times a day.

3. GROOMING.—Some people never groom their donkeys at all. If you wish to have your favourite sleek, and fat, and happy, have him groomed every day.

If the donkey is meant to run in a trap, it may be as well to keep the coat short in summer. If he has only slow walking work to perform, then let him keep his ulster on.

Keep him always clean and tidy, and house him well, and do not forget that he must have plenty of exercise and fresh air.

The expense of keeping a donkey is very little, say about half-a-crown, or even less, a week.

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The goat may well be permitted to take rank as one of our four-footed friends. It is indeed the friend of many a frugal family in this country and of many a sickly child and invalid as well.

I believe that if more were known about goats, many more people would keep them, or keep one, at all events, for the sake of its milk. There are several prejudices against the animal; of this I am well aware, and I would fain remove one or two of them at least.

Goats are said to be very mischievous. It must be confessed that some of them are, but without interfering too much with the liberty of the subject, the goat can easily be kept within due bounds. If you tether Nanny in the orchard, close to the plum or pear tree, she will undoubtedly amuse herself and whet her teeth by stripping off the bark; but then there is no occasion to tether her there. Indeed, goats do very well kept in their shed almost constantly, not, mind you, that I advocate this plan, as I think it cruel to deprive any animal of its liberty. But anyone with even a back yard can keep a goat.

There is a prejudice against the flesh, but kid's flesh is not only tender, but, when carefully and well cooked, most delicious and wholesome. Nevertheless, if you have kids and do not care to have them killed, then by all means sell them; you will always find a ready market for goats.

There is a prejudice, possessed only by few, against the use of goat's milk. It is a very foolish one, for goat's milk is not only very nutritious, but it is more easily digested than that of the cow; it is therefore eminently suited for invalids and for delicate children. But in families where goat's milk is not appreciated, and where, perhaps, Nanny is kept merely as a young folks' pet, the milk can be sold. Near towns it can always be disposed of, and when I mention the fact that it often fetches five shillings a quart and more, I need not add that the keeping of goats may very easily be made a source of great profit.

But, say some of my readers, "Goats are such a bother to milk; I know I should never learn to milk one."

I do not think that there is, as a rule, either much trouble or skill required in milking a goat. One wants a lesson or two, that is all. One wants a lesson or two if one wants to learn to do anything well in this world. But, between me and you, reader, I have seen many a girl mounted on a piano-stool, who, I am sure, would have looked infinitely more charming seated on a natty wee milking-stool, to say nothing of the greater utility of the latter employment.

Goats must be milked regularly; if you delay relieving the animal at the proper time, she is much more likely to be cross, to say nothing of the influence brought to bear on the subsequent amount of milk by such delay.

A friend of mine, who is secretary of the British Goat Society, recommends that Nannies be milked three times a day for the first three months after the kids are born, namely, at seven in the morning (or sooner), at one in the day, and nine in the evening. After three months they need only to be milked twice a day, namely at seven in the morning and seven in the evening.

Always give something to eat when milking; the Nanny will then stand quietly.

For dairy use you will require one or two utensils, such as a pretty little wooden milk-pail, a milking stool—the piano-stool will not do—a tin skimming saucer, a strainer, and a flat dish or two of earthenware to put the milk in.

The quantity of milk a good goat will give varies, say from four to seven pints, but some give much more than this.

It is a well-known fact that two goats may be very profitably kept instead of one. The labour of feeding is not much increased, and the food itself goes very nearly as far.

People must not expect to buy really good goats for almost nothing, but a good animal is cheap at what may seem to some a long price. My advice to those who want to procure a fair specimen, is not to purchase without seeing, and to take the advice of some practical farmer or dairyman. Such advice can always be had. We must remember, too, to get a young Nanny, and one that is healthy, lively-looking, and of a good breed.

THE GOAT HOUSE.—Accommodation of some kind is needed even for a goat, and those who cannot keep it comfortably should never think of keeping such an animal. It is surely a small return for the creature from whom we receive benefits to house and feed it well.

The goat may be kept in an out-house, but the place should be clean and well ventilated. Some people build regular sheds for the goat, and this is a good plan. The shed need be neither very large nor a very expensive affair. Simply a lean-to against a sheltering wall or in a corner, about six or eight feet square, made of rough wood with a sloping roof covered with zinc, or with boards or felt.

There should be a good strong door, with bolt and lock; the floor ought to be sloping, slightly only, else it will be uncomfortable, and made of hard concrete. There should be a rack and manger; on the latter is a short chain with a collar to go round the Nanny's neck.

Straw or dry litter of any kind will do for bedding, and if sawdust is thrown down under the straw, so much the better.

Now about feeding this useful four-footed favourite. The donkey, we know, is not a dainty animal. The goat is even more easily contented in the matter of diet. If you live in the country and have a paddock or field, then for nine months in the year your goat may be kept in that, and will need but little in addition. She must be tethered, however, beyond the reach of trees, but I do not approve of the plan of tying the legs together. If the goat can possibly have the full range of the field then all the better. There is a kind of triangular collar made for free-ranging goats, which, while very light and by no means cruel, effectually prevents them from breaking through hedges.

Take your Nanny home pretty early, and let her then have a feed of chaff, with which a handful or two of grain of some kind, crushed oats, beans, peas, or Indian corn has been mixed. If fed in the house, as in towns they must be, give them all kinds of garden refuse and leaves, even the cuttings of hedges and rose trees—in fact, everything green, with now and then some hay and grain.

When in milk it will be found advisable to give grain mixed with chaff, as well as roots of various kinds.

On the whole, it would be more easy to say what kind of vegetable food was unsuitable to the goat than what is proper and edible. A goat is the most easily and most cheaply kept animal of any we possess. In summer, when there is plenty of green stuff, she will not need so much water, but at any time she ought to have as much as she cares for, and morning, noon, and evening.

The food should be cleanly, and in all cases a large lump of rock salt should be left in a place where they can lick at it when so inclined.

