

THE ROYAL MEWS.

By JAMES FORREST.

With Illustrations¹ by THOMAS RILEY.



VERY subject of Her Majesty, no matter in what part of the globe he may be found, cannot fail to feel interested in a matter which is so closely connected with the state pageantry of centuries as the Royal Mews. It is a curious fact that, so far as I am able to ascertain, no collected account of the state coaches and horses has yet been published; and it is only owing to the courtesy of the Duke of Portland and Sir George Maude, whose portraits are here engraved, that I am able to give this description.

The word "Mews" is derived from *Mew*, the cry of the young of the falcon, and it was originally applied to the place where the king's falcons were kept. So far back as the reign of King Richard the Second, at least, there were king's mews; for in that reign it is a matter of historical fact that Sir Simon Burley, Knight of the Garter, was created Keeper of the King's Falcons at the Royal Mews, and ever since that day the name has been handed down without intermission. The office of the Grand Falconer was thus of great antiquity, and for a considerable period was considered one of the most important in the gift of the Crown. In 1683 Charles II. created Charles Beauclerk, his son by Nell Gwynne, Duke of St. Albans and Hereditary Grand Falconer of England; a title which has remained in his descendants up to the present time, and which, though a mere sinecure, brought in a small annual income since commuted.

In the early days the Royal Mews were situated on the north side of Charing Cross, on the exact site that the National Gallery now occupies, and until the reign of Henry VIII. they were used exclusively for keeping the royal falcons. In 1537, however, the original royal stables, which were situated at Lomesbury (as Bloomsbury was then designated), were destroyed by fire, and Henry ordered the falcons to be removed from the Mews at Charing Cross, and having greatly enlarged the buildings, he established his stud of horses there. The Royal Mews were re-built in the reigns of Edward VI. and Queen Mary, but fell into such a state of dilapidation



STEREOSCOPIC CO., PHOTO.

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND, MASTER OF THE HORSE.

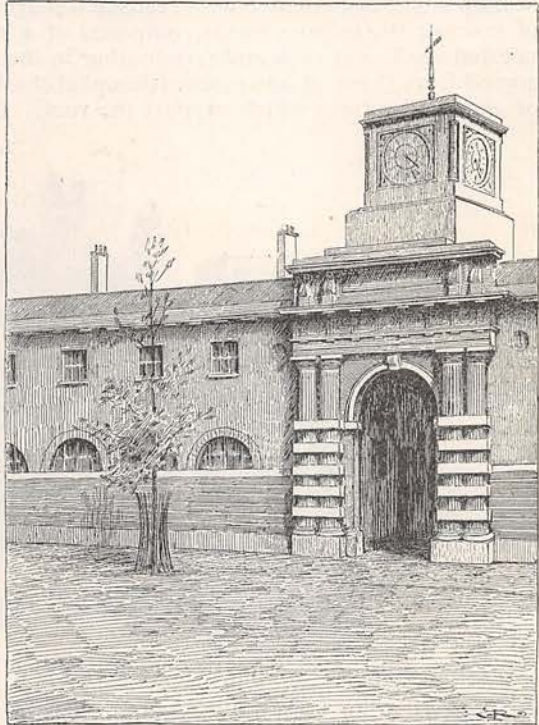
¹ Drawn from photographs by Viscount Glentworth and others.

that in 1732 George II. was compelled to pull down the old buildings and erect new stables.

According to engravings published by F. Maurer, in 1740 and 1749 the royal stables at Charing Cross were in severe classical style with central columns, cupolas and a pediment. They possessed a central entrance, and two side ones, with twelve coach-houses or stables opening on to the outer court. The buildings were entirely spoilt owing to the narrowness of the space in front, and they were surrounded by low, mean houses, which much detracted from their appearance. For nearly a century these buildings continued to be used as the royal stables until in 1825 George IV. erected the present buildings at Buckingham Palace on the north side of Buckingham Palace Road.

The present Royal Mews are not noticeable for any special architectural feature. Passing through an iron gateway surmounted by the lion and the unicorn, and again through a stone archway, we find ourselves in a large quadrangle about one hundred yards square, surrounded on all four sides by two storied brick buildings faced with stone. On either side of the archway through which we have entered are the stables where the small horses used for ordinary work are kept, ten horses in each of the two stables.

On the east side are the coach-houses, one special house is used for the great state coach itself, and others for the semi-state coach, the eleven ordinary dress coaches, the Jubilee Landau, and the other carriages. On the west side are stables for some sixteen more horses used for ordinary work, and also the state harness-room where the state harness is kept. At the north end of the quadrangle are to be found the stables for the state horses; on the left hand are the stables for the thirty-two bays, and on the right those for the eleven creams and the eleven blacks. Above the stables and coach-houses are the dwelling-houses of the various stablemen, a corridor running down the centre, and having houses on either side both back and front. There is also a reading room for the servants at the north-west corner of the buildings. There is further a riding school attached to the Mews, some fifty yards long by twenty yards wide, which every member of the Royal Family has passed. We will first visit the State Coaches.



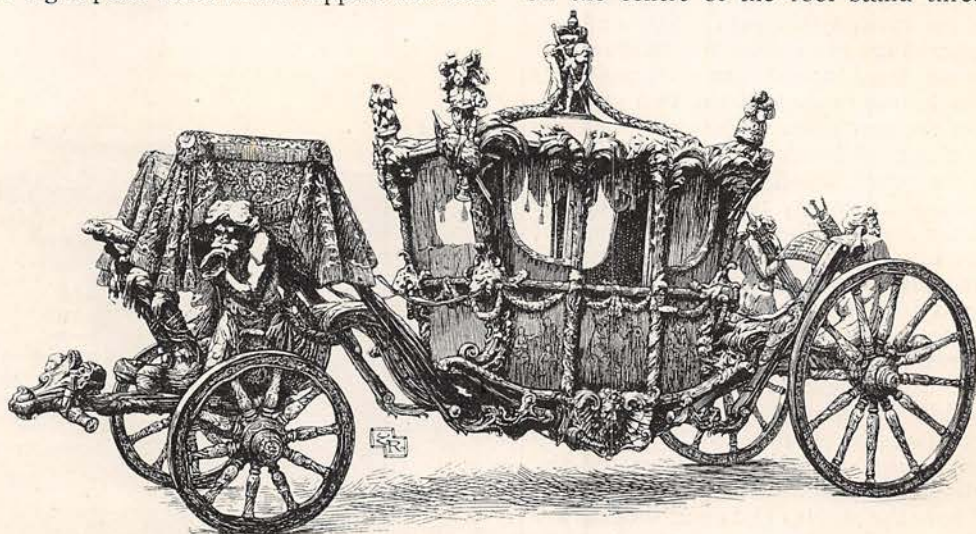
ENTRANCE TO QUADRANGLE.

THE COACHES.

The first of the coaches that we come upon is Her Majesty's State Coach, which, as it has taken part in almost every state ceremony for over a century demands a detailed description. It has been styled the most superb coach ever built, and was designed by Sir William Chambers, and executed under his directions; the work was done in sections, each separate branch of trade having its own work. The coach was finally completed in 1761, and the paintings on the panels are by Cipriani, one of the finest painters of his day.

On the front panel is to be seen Britannia seated on a throne, holding in her hand a Staff of Liberty, attended by Religion, Justice, Wisdom, Valour, Fortitude, Commerce, Plenty and Victory, presenting her with a garland of laurel; in the background a view of St. Paul's and the Thames. On the right door will be found Industry and Ingenuity

giving a cornucopia to the genius of England; while the panels on each side of the right door have History recording the reports of Fame, and Peace burning the implements of war. On the back panel Neptune and Amphitrite are depicted as issuing from their palace in a triumphal car drawn by seahorses, attended by winds, rivers, tritons, naiads, etc., bringing the tribute of the world to the British shore; while on the upper part is the royal arms, ornamented with the order of St. George, the rose, shamrock and thistle entwined. The left door has Mars, Minerva and Mercury, supporting the Imperial Crown of Great Britain, and on the panels on either side are the Liberal Arts and Sciences. The carriage of the coach is composed of four large tritons, who support the body by four braces covered with red morocco, and ornamented with gilt buckles. Figures in front bear the driver, and are depicted as sounding shells to announce the approach of the Monarch of the Ocean; and those at the back carry the Imperial fasces topped with tridents. The driver's footboard is a large scallop shell, ornamented with reeds and marine plants. The pole represents a bundle of lances; the splinter bar is composed of a rich moulding issuing from beneath a voluted shell, and each end terminating in the head of a dolphin; and the wheels are copied from those of an ancient triumphal chariot. The body of the coach is composed of eight palm trees which support the roof. On the centre of the roof stand three



THE STATE COACH.

boys representing England, Scotland, and Ireland supporting the Imperial Crown of Great Britain, and holding in their hands the sceptre, sword of state, and the ensigns of knighthood. The inside of the body is lined with scarlet embossed velvet, superbly laced and embroidered with gold—and in the centre of the roof is the Star, with the Collar of the Garter surmounted with the Imperial Crown. The hind lozenge and seat contain the badges of the order of St. Michael and St. George, of the Guelph on a Bath, of St. Andrew and of St. Patrick. The hammercloth is also of scarlet velvet. After the battle of Waterloo the coach was decorated with trophies of war, in reminiscence of the English victories. The original lining of the inside still remains though much worn away owing to the brushing it has received during one hundred and thirty years. The steps are built into the body, and open downwards with a spring; so that great care has to be taken in shutting the door when any one is inside. As was said above each part of the building of the coach was given over to each separate branch of the trade, and all had separate contracts. The sums paid to the various contractors were:—Coachmaker £1,673 15s. 6d., Carver £2,504 os. od., Gilder £933 14s. 6d., Painter £315 os. od., Lace £737 10s. 7d., Chaser £665 os. od., Harnessmaker £385 15s. od., Mercer £202 5s. 10d., Milliner £30 4s. od., Draper £4 3s. 6d., Cabinetmaker £3 9s. od., Saddler £107 13s. od., Bitmaker £99 6s. od.: in all £7,661 16s. 11d.

The state coach was in constant use on the occasion of all the great state ceremonies from 1761 till 1861—it was used at the coronations of George III., George IV.,

William IV., and Queen Victoria. Each of these sovereigns has, as a rule, employed this coach whenever they have opened Parliament in person. The Queen made use of this coach when she dined with the Lord Mayor immediately after her marriage; it was used at the opening of the Royal Exchange, and also at the opening of the Exhibition of 1851, and it was last used at the opening of Parliament in 1861, the coachman on that occasion being Mr. Charles Smith, who is now living at Slough and is occasionally visited by Her Majesty. The coach was drawn by eight cream-coloured horses decorated with red morocco harness and blue ribbons. When the Queen made use of the coach it was found necessary for her comfort and convenience to raise and thicken the seats, and to put footstools for her feet to rest upon. The great drawback, however, is the excessive strength of the springs, which causes an unpleasant motion that is apt to produce giddiness. Indeed, it is reported that the Queen never came back from driving in the state coach without suffering from a severe headache.

Next in importance to the State Coach is the Semi-State Coach. In 1852 the Queen and Prince Consort paid a visit to Dublin, and were most hospitably entertained



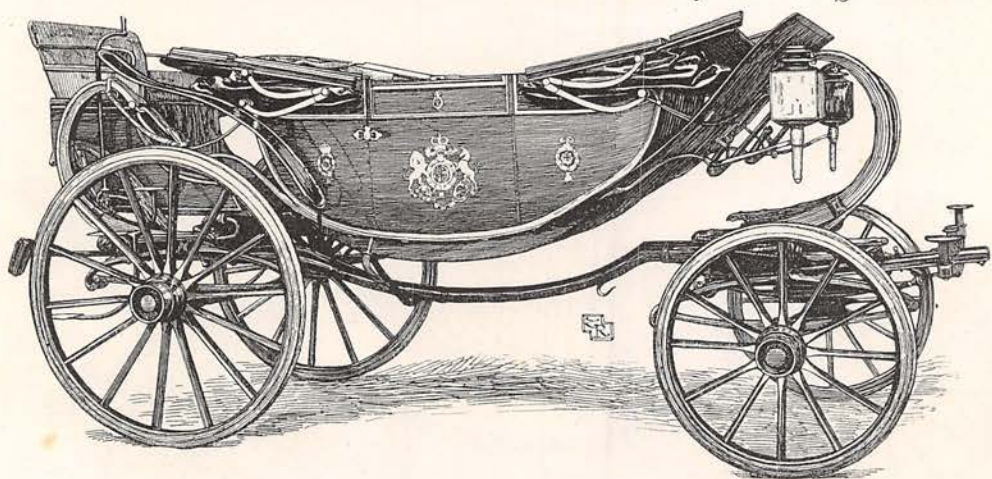
THE SEMI-STATE COACH.

by the Lord Mayor of the time, Mr. Hutton, who chanced to be a coach-builder. The result was, that the Prince, after leaving Dublin, ordered Mr. Hutton to build this carriage, and to furnish in addition a set of harness for a pair. The coach was therefore built, and after being exhibited at the Dublin Exhibition, transferred to the Royal Mews, Pimlico, where it still remains. This is a semi-dress coach, it is painted in lake and vermillion picked out with gold, and the wheels are red and gold. The doors on either side are decorated with the Royal Arms, and the panels on each side of the doors have been cut out, and plate glass windows inserted in their place. A scroll runs from each corner on the top of the roof to the centre, which is in the shape of a crown, and there are four small crowns at either corner. The edge of the roof of the carriage is adorned with the rose, shamrock, and thistle, and also with the pine, as the emblem of India. The hammercloth is purple and scarlet, ornamented with the Royal Arms, and the body of the coach is lined inside with blue figured repp. Since the Prince Consort's death, the semi-state coach has been used by the Queen in all the state ceremonies instead of the old coach—in fact it has been employed on every occasion when the Queen has visited Parliament during the last thirty years, when it was drawn by eight cream-coloured horses. The last occasion on which it

was used was at the marriage of the Princess Louise of Wales to the Duke of Fife; it was then drawn by two bays belonging to the Prince of Wales.

In addition to the semi-state coach, there are eleven more ordinary dress coaches. The only difference between them and the semi-state coach being that they are less decorated, and the panels have not been cut out or windows inserted. They are painted lake and vermilion with black quarters; they are decorated with the Royal Arms; the wheels, lining, &c., are identical with those of the semi-state coach. These dress coaches are employed for drawing-rooms and *levées*, and were made use of by the German Emperor and the Shah.

We next come to the "Jubilee" Landau, as it is styled owing to its having been used by Her Majesty on the occasion of her Jubilee. This is a posting landau, driven by postilions, and is drawn by six of the cream-coloured horses. Like the other carriages it is coloured lake and vermilion picked out with gold, and is also decorated on either side with the Royal Arms. The wheels are red and gold with springs. The Jubilee Landau was built by Barker of Chandos Street, and was first used at the laying of the foundation stone of St. Thomas's Hospital in 1866. It was employed in driving to St. Paul's on the occasion of the Thanksgiving Service for the recovery of the Prince of Wales. This landau has been all over the country when the Queen has laid



THE "JUBILEE" LANDAU.

foundation stones or opened Exhibitions. It was made use of when the Queen unveiled the monument to the Prince Consort in Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, and when she opened the exhibitions at Birmingham and Edinburgh. The last two occasions on which the landau was used were when the Queen presided at the launching of two ships at Portsmouth, and when she laid the foundation stone of the Infirmary at Derby.

In addition to these carriages there are no less than seventy carriages of all kinds for private use, such as when the Queen pays a visit to the Prince of Wales at Marlborough House. These are driven by postilions with four horses, and plain uniforms are worn.

THE STATE HARNESS.

On entering the room where the State Harness is kept, the visitor's attention is immediately directed to the red sets of harness, of which there are ten. These are used on state occasions when the cream-coloured horses are brought out, and it was in a red set that Occo was photographed. The red harness is made of red morocco, ornamented with ormolu; and each set bears the arms of the kingdom of Hanover in pretence. These sets were made in the early part of 1837 for William IV., but he never used them; so that they were first used by Queen Victoria, when Her Majesty dined with the Lord Mayor soon after her marriage. Eight are used with the state coach in opening Parliament; the other two are used for drawing-rooms. No collars are worn with this red harness; it is all breast harness.

Next we come upon a pair of purple harness made for George IV. when he was Prince Regent. These date from 1812, and bear the arms of George IV. with his label as Prince Regent, and the electoral bonnet. The leather is of such a splendid character that up till the present it has never required repairing. The weight of each set of harness is one hundred and twelve pounds, independent of the breast-collar and bridle. These sets of purple harness were exhibited at Liverpool and Newcastle-on-Tyne, and it is understood that they are to appear at the Exhibition soon to be held by the Saddlers' Company.

Further, there are six sets of black harness, used on the state occasions when the black horses are employed. These are made of black leather, richly decorated with ormolu; and are worn either with collars or with breast harness alone. They are called the Master of the Horse's harness. Zulu was caparisoned in a set of this harness when his photograph was taken.

An uninitiated stranger would imagine that the cream-coloured horses would be better set off if they wore the black harness, while the red harness would make a more splendid show upon the black horses; still this is not the practice on state occasions, and probably Her Majesty's successive Masters of the Horse have had good reason for keeping to the course invariably pursued.

THE HORSES.

We next come to the Horses, and it is superfluous to say that in the stalls we find the pick of the land as well as of other countries. Our English breeds are represented in fine form from the clean-boned thoroughbred to the powerful Cleveland, while the renowned creams of Hanover and the blacks of Holland hold no second place as conductors of Royalty.

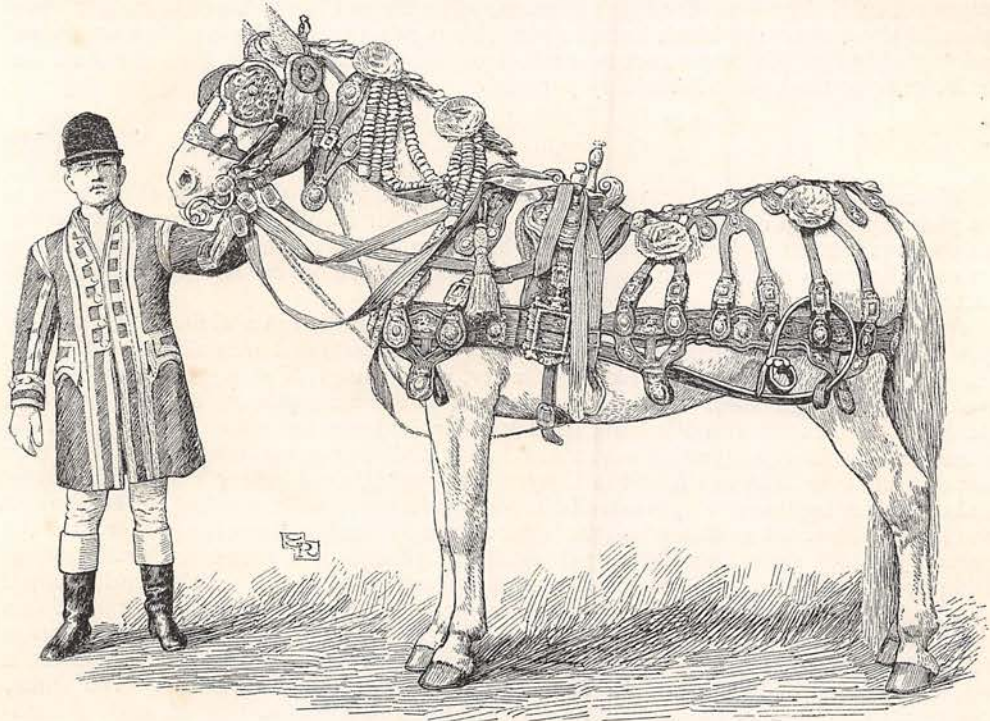
Among the English lot are a grand pair of browns in Burton and Senator, standing 17.2 and 17.3 hands respectively, the former a clean low-kneed animal of great power with a thoroughbred neck and face, the latter, if anything, of stronger build but not so showy about the head. We come then to a well-matched team of four, Crayfish, Blackman, Cockboat and Phalanx, used by Her Majesty on ordinary occasions, the former couple though standing seventeen hands showing great breeding. A lighter pair of great symmetry are found in Crayon and Sewell, used in Her Majesty's sociable landau and for lighter work; two well-shaped brown bays, both standing well up to sixteen hands, Florimel and Sunrise (the latter ridden by the late Emperor Frederick at the Queen's Jubilee), show us a lighter pair again, 15.3 hands or so, bred by Her Majesty at Hampton Court; bays well matched and fine steppers. Red Gauntlet and Modred are a well-shaped couple of outriders, the former a nearly clean thoroughbred of fine shape in neck and limb, the latter being by the celebrated sire Clan-ronald. Buckram and Columbus, bred also by Her Majesty, two powerful browns, and Sycophant, a bay, also deserve mention, the latter especially for his grand quarters. We come, however, to the pick of the lot in Blackrod, a bright bay, grand bodied, with a keen-eyed head and perfect limbs all round, with true black points—a horse that would be out of place in no cross-country work, much less in harness. These bays at Buckingham Palace are thirty-two in number, and, with the exception of those bred at Hampton Court, are purchased from various breeders, the average price paid being between £180 and £200 each.

The creams, with their characteristic Roman noses and bright pink eyes, might at first to an English eye, accustomed to shape of body and cleanness of leg, be looked upon as heavy, clumsy animals, until closer inspection brings our great draught qualities found both in this Hanoverian race, as well as in their fellows on the other side of the stables, the blacks of Holland, the latter if anything a more powerful breed. Among the creams Moltke stands at nineteen years as upright as a young one, the father of many of his stable companions, of great bone, with well-shaped shoulders. Occo, whose portrait we give, stands 16.2 hands, with a good head, Roman nose and bright pink eyes. Monarch, eleven years old, is of rather larger build, and has a cleaner neck and more shapely fore-end than some. Emperor has good quarters that point to a long stride and consequently to covering his ground, but Ameronyen, we are told, is the best goer of the lot. Two promising young four-year olds, as yet unnamed, are showing equally good draught power, though they are evidently growing up lighter in build than their forefathers. The creams are eleven in number, all

entire horses, and it is extraordinary how perfectly gentle and quiet they are, and the fact that a stranger can walk up to almost any one of them and examine them as closely as wished for speaks volumes for the discipline of the management, and the care and intelligence of the stablemen.

The cream-coloured horses were brought over from Hanover originally by George I., and from that time, with the exception of the period between 1803—1814, when Napoleon I. was in possession of Hanover, until 1837 they were regularly supplied from the Electoral stud at Hanover. Napoleon in 1803 stole the cream-coloured stud which belonged to the Elector of Hanover and made use of eight creams at his own coronation; so from then until his downfall in 1814 the black horses were used on state occasions in England. Since 1837 the creams have been bred at the stud farm at Hampton Court.

Among the blacks we find Burmah, a stiff-built, well-boned, strong-necked horse, eight years old, of fine shape for carriage work, while King Coffee, twenty years old,



"OCCO," CREAM-COLOURED STATE HORSE.

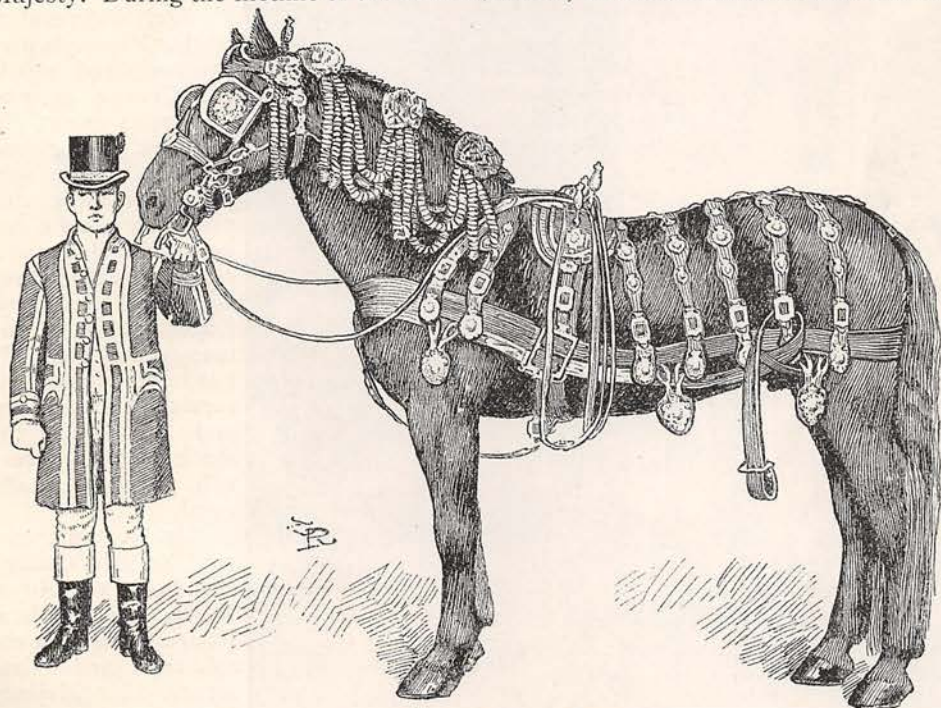
still holds his own, with a good straight back and clean shapely head and neck. Next we find two grand colts, standing 15.3 and 16 hands respectively, pointing like their youthful cream-coloured stable-mates to lighter build, and more blood-looking in the rising generation, as compared with their progenitors. In Dahomey will be noticed an upstanding, clean-limbed horse, though now numbered among the old ones, as bright of eye and face as ever. Berber, a good-looking saddle horse, is ridden on state occasions by Her Majesty's Master of the Horse; Zulu and Kassassin are appointed for the use of the Prince of Wales, the former, whose photograph depicts him fully equipped in his gala paint and trappings, stands seventeen hands and over; they are looked upon as as good a pair as can be found among the lot. Kassassin, perhaps the more shapely animal of the two, proves the old saw that "there never was a bad rat-tailed one;" so a false tail, to make him resemble his companion, forms an important addition to his equipment.

There are in this stud of state horses thirty-two English horses with eleven of Hanoverian and eleven of Dutch extraction properly speaking, though from the long residence of their progenitors in this country the creams and the blacks might now be looked upon as English bred. This the more so, as it is particularly noticeable that

the younger horses are gradually fining down in bone and sinew, seemingly growing in symmetry, and losing their native somewhat heavy carriage, though in no way losing their height, as they average well up to sixteen hands. Of the lot the Englishmen, with Blackrod, Red Gauntlet and Burton at the head of the list, hold their sway for quality, appearance and going powers; but this in no way deteriorates from the particular qualities and distinctive draught properties of the creams and the blacks.

THE ESTABLISHMENT.

The Duke of Portland, as Master of the Horse, has now absolute control over the Royal Mews. The Master of the Horse is a Government official, always of high rank, and his period of office depends on the existence of the Government. On great state occasions such as the opening of Parliament, the Master of the Horse is next to Her Majesty. During the lifetime of the Prince Consort, the Master of the Horse used to sit



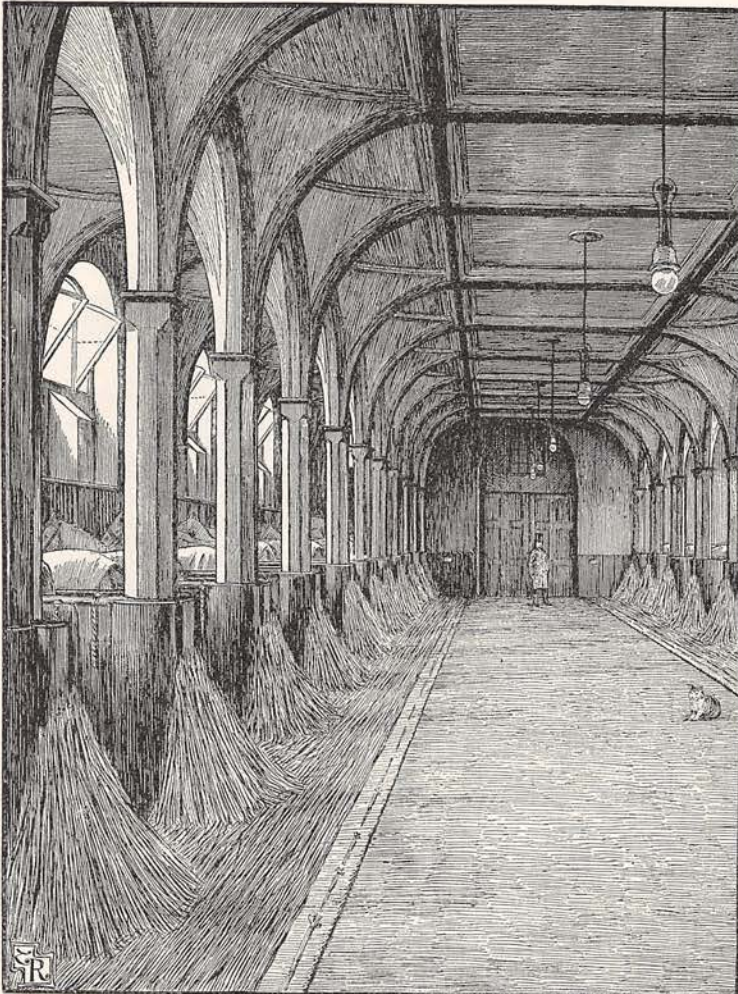
"ZULU," BLACK STATE HORSE.

in the old state carriage opposite to the Queen, while the Mistress of the Robes faced the Prince Consort. After 1861, however, as has been before noticed, the Queen has never used the state carriage; and the Master of the Horse, in consequence, has rarely ever accompanied Her Majesty even in the semi-state coach which she has used. As a rule on great state functions he is now driven in a dress carriage drawn by six black horses.

The order of a state procession to Parliament now is as follows:—First come five dress carriages each drawn by six bays, containing the officials in attendance. These are followed by the coach with six blacks, which conveys the Master of the Horse. Lastly comes the semi-state coach, or it may be dress coach, which carries Her Majesty, drawn by eight cream-coloured horses. Previous to the Queen's arrival at the Houses of Parliament, a dress carriage drawn by a pair of bays, with a small escort, goes to the Lord Chamberlain's Office for the Crown, which has been taken there from the Tower, and conveys it to the House of Lords. After the ceremony is over, the dress carriage again takes the Crown back to the Lord Chamberlain's Office. The Mistress of the Robes, too, is conveyed on such occasions from her residence to Buckingham Palace in a dress carriage drawn by a pair of bays; and she sits by the side of the Queen in these state processions to Parliament.

Lord Alfred Paget, as Clerk Marshal, used to ride by the side of the state carriage in these processions. Since his death, however, that appointment has not been filled up.

But the man who really superintends the working of the royal stables under the Master of the Horse for the time being is Sir George Ashley Maude, the Crown Equerry. Sir George was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Artillery, served in the Crimea for which he received the third class of the Medjidie, and was subsequently attached to Lord Granville's Special Mission to Russia in 1856. In 1859 he was made secretary to the Master of the Horse and superintendent of the Royal stables, a position which he still holds. Practically, Sir George Maude has the sole control of the establishment at Buckingham Palace, at Windsor, and at the royal stud farm at Hampton Court. There



STABLE FOR STATE HORSES.

are no less than three hundred and fifty horses now under his charge, independent of Her Majesty's own thoroughbred stock. Sir George is well known as one of the greatest living authorities on the subject of breeding, and of late years he has been exceedingly successful, having bred winners of the Derby, Leger and Oaks, and many other races. He has lately secured the services of Amphion, and no doubt the stock in the future will prove equally good.

Mr. Norton comes next to Sir George Maude at the Royal Mews, Buckingham Palace. He is an old soldier, and has served Her Majesty for many years. Mr. Norton joined the army in 1841, and was all through the Eastern Campaign of 1854-5, including the affairs of Bulganac and McKenzie's Farm. He was present at the Alma, Balaclava, Inkerman

and Sebastopol, and was with the Light Cavalry Brigade at Eupatoria. Mr. Norton possesses the Crimean War medal with four clasps, and the Turkish War medal, and is, in addition, a Knight of the Legion of Honour of France. In 1860 Mr. Norton was appointed Superintendent of the Royal Mews under Sir George Maude. He looks after the general details of the workings of the establishment. The establishment at Buckingham Palace consists of some seventy or eighty men in all. There are six coachmen, five established helpers, thirty-five livery men, and twenty-five out-livery men at least. In addition to these, there are two coachmen at Windsor, and a large number of livery men and out-livery men.

The oldest servant, now in the service of Her Majesty at the Royal Mews, is Mr. Lane, who has been nearly fifty-two years connected with the stables. It is an interesting fact that Mr. Lane's father was at the royal stables during no less than four reigns—under George III., George IV., William IV., and the Queen, from whose service he retired in 1860. Father and son, the Lanes have been nearly a century connected with the Royal Mews! The present Mr. Lane joined the royal service at Windsor in 1840, very soon after the Queen's marriage, and for twenty-one years and six months he was with the Prince Consort, after whose death he was transferred to the Queen's service. For thirty years Mr. Lane was one of the coachmen, and on ceasing driving in 1874, he was appointed superintendent of all the state carriages, a position which we hope he will long live to enjoy.

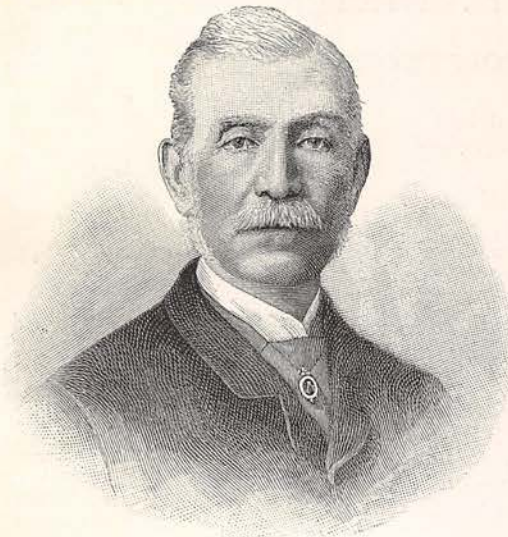
Mr. Miller, the Queen's coachman, joined the Royal service at Christmas, 1859, being strongly recommended by Lord Bridport. His special duty, in the early days of his employment, was to look after the thirty-five saddle-horses then kept for the use of the Royal family for riding. After the death of the Prince

Consort, he was transferred from Windsor to Buckingham Palace, and on his arrival in London was appointed to drive Sir George Maude and his family, which he did for a period of nearly twelve years. Then he was made coachman to the Master of



COLONEL SIR GEORGE MAUDE, K.C.B., R.A., THE CROWN EQUERRY.

the Horse, until the Duke of Portland promoted him some two years ago to be Her Majesty's coachman. For the last eighteen years Mr. Miller has been entrusted with the charge of breaking in all the young horses for Her Majesty's use, and it is in a great measure owing to his marvellous treatment of them that they are all so quiet and docile in behaviour. It is the maxim at the Royal Mews that every horse should be treated with kindness as well as firmness. The young ones are brought up to look upon the stablemen as their friends; the result is that while they retain their spirited nature, at the same time they acquire wonderful docility. No bearing reins of any degree of tightness are used in connection with the Buckingham Palace stables. It is interesting, in visiting the state horses in company with Mr. Miller, to see how every one of the horses seems to know him and like him. Immediately he enters the stables they seem to perceive he is there, and they turn round their heads, as



TADMAN, PHOTO.

MR. NORTON, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ROYAL MEWS.

if asking for some recognition. If he goes up to Senator first, Burton will look round as if jealous, and will expect to be spoken to in turn. It need hardly be said that the stables are the perfection of neatness and cleanliness; everything is in splendid order befitting the Royalty of England. 30 quarters of corn, 3½ loads of hay, and 3½ loads of straw are consumed per week. One important point in training the state

horses consists in making them accustomed to the sound of drums and bands. It is the practice at the Mews for the children belonging to the various stable officials to be sent into the stables frequently with their tiny drums; and in order that the horses may get accustomed to bands, Mr. Miller says that whenever he meets a band while he is exercising the horse, he makes a point of always following it closely.

A large number of cats are kept about the Mews, one of which, called Jack, is supposed to be the state cat *par excellence*. He is a magnificent Persian, of an extremely aristocratic nature, as he refuses to acknowledge a helper or liveryman, or, in fact, any one beneath the dignity of the state coachman. It was noticed, however, on the occasion of the visit paid by the Prince of Naples to the stables, that Jack at once recognized the presence of Royalty, and immediately paid his grateful respects to the Prince. During the early part of her reign, Her Majesty and the Prince Consort took the greatest interest in the Royal horses and the establishment; in fact, every morning before breakfast they used to pay a visit to the stables and see their favourites. Formerly there used to be a number of what might be called "performing" cats kept about the Mews, and these, on the occasion of Her Majesty's visits, were always made to go through their performances, one of which consisted in their jumping from the back of a horse on to the stall post, and so on throughout the whole ten stall stables.

The above facts have been collected through the kind assistance of all the officials connected with the Royal Mews, who have given every information in their power; and in conclusion it may be said that the stables are certainly well worth a visit, and any member of the public can obtain cards of admission to view them between two and four in the afternoon, from Mr. Norton, either on personal application or by letter.

MIDNIGHT IN WINTER.

By OLIVE MOLESWORTH.

IN frost-bound bed
Lies Nature sleeping,
Lies as dead
In a shroud of snow.
And overhead,
Cold stars are keeping
Their silent watch
O'er all below.
Through the pine-tree tops
A low wind sighs,
And the star-light glances
On swaying boughs;
A moment's quiver
Of silver air,
Then stillness—and midnight
Reigns everywhere.