

"Is he musical, father, because there's that lovely big room where we could have such charming musical evenings?"

Mr. Rendell shrugged his shoulders with an air of resignation.

"How like a woman, or rather, I should say, how like half-a-dozen women put together. My dears, I know absolutely nothing about the man, except that he has bought the place. He is in a hurry to get settled, so you will probably find out all about him for yourselves before many weeks are over. It's no use asking questions. He was willing to pay down the money, and that was all that Braithwaite cared about. He may be a bachelor or a second Bluebeard, for all I know; but I suppose in either case he will still be better than nobody."

"Of course he will. Blank windows are so dull. Curtains are much more interesting. There's so much character in curtains. I can tell the sort of woman who lives in a house merely by looking at her curtains.

It will be a new interest in life to have the Grange let again."

"And I have a Feeling that it will be an Epoch in our lives. I have a Feeling that our Fate and that of the new tenants will be inextricably woven together. It may be foolish, but these convictions are borne in upon me; I cannot help them!" cried Elsie, clasping her hands and opening her blue eyes to the fullest capacity as she turned a gaze of mysterious raptness upon the group by the fireplace. "Perhaps in years to come we may look back upon this evening as a milestone marking out the past from the future, and realise——"

A burst of laughter put a stop to further sentimentalising, and Elsie retired within her shell, aggrieved and dignified; but for once she was right in her surmises, for her own fate and that of her sisters was indeed destined to be permanently affected by the coming of the new tenant of the Grange.

(To be continued.)

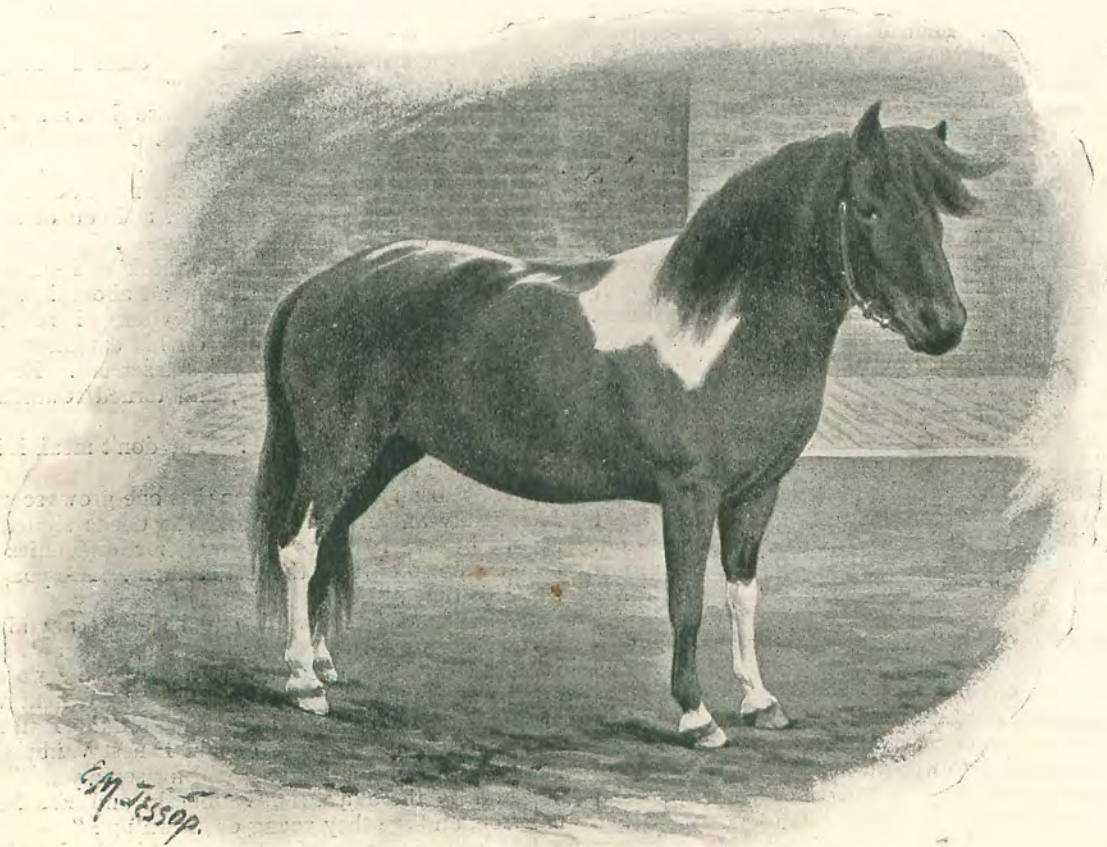
THE QUEEN'S HORSES AND DONKEYS.

ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS APPROVED BY HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

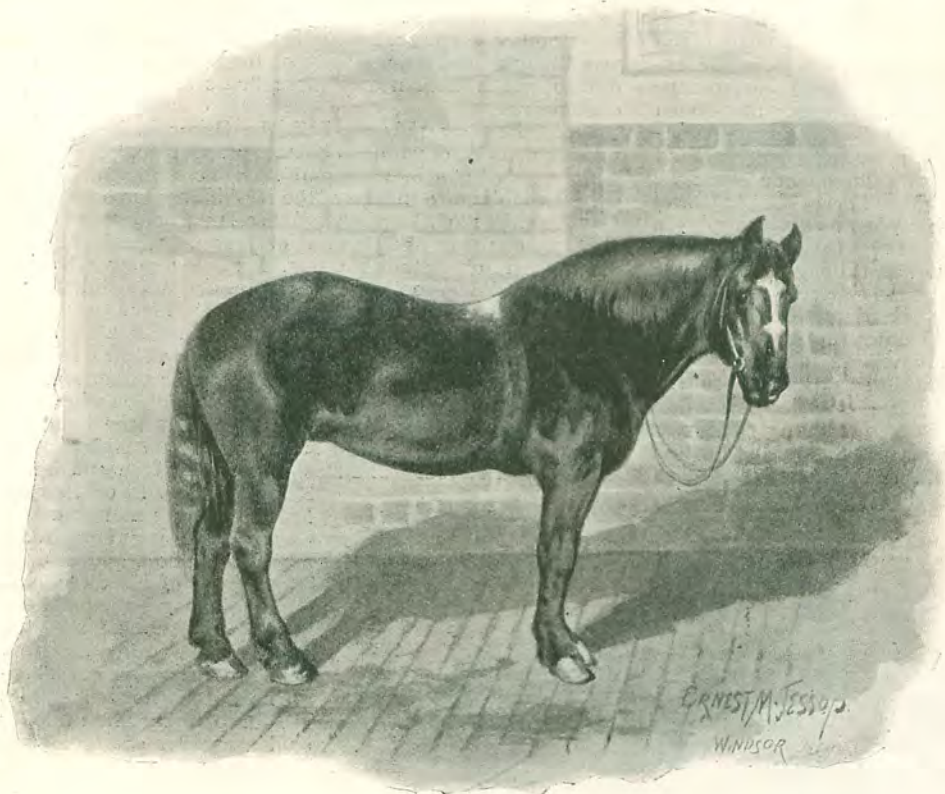
BY ERNEST M. JESSOP.

THROUGHOUT the homely, kindly, unpretentious book, *Our Life in the Highlands*, do we find references to Her Majesty's care and forethought for her favourite ponies; for example, "I rode back on 'Arghail Bean' for the last

time, and took a sad leave of him and of faithful Sandy McAra." A foot-note (date about 1868) is appended to the page on which this appears. "This pony was given to me by the Duke of Athole in 1847, and is now alive at Osborne."



THE SKEWBALD.



JESSIE.

The same kind thoughtfulness for the dumb friends is constantly appearing throughout the book. As a specimen, in 1861, during one of the Highland expeditions, we find it noted, "There were our ponies, which had passed the night at Bainoch or Beynoch (a shooting 'shiel' of Lord Fife's). They came over this morning, but, poor beasts, without having had any corn!"

But the Queen did not always ride these quiet Highland ponies, it being her custom for many years to attend reviews, sham fights, etc., on horseback. It is recorded by the newspapers of the day that at the great camp at Chobham in 1853, "The Queen rode to the ground on a superb black charger, accompanied by Prince Albert, the King of Hanover, and the Duke of Coburg." Among the many equestrian portraits of Her Majesty in existence, possibly the most curious is one painted by Count D'Orsay. In this she is represented wearing a large cavalier hat and feathers, an open Byronic collar, and the Star and Ribbon of the Garter over a habit the skirt of which is so long as to seemingly sweep the ground with each movement of her horse.

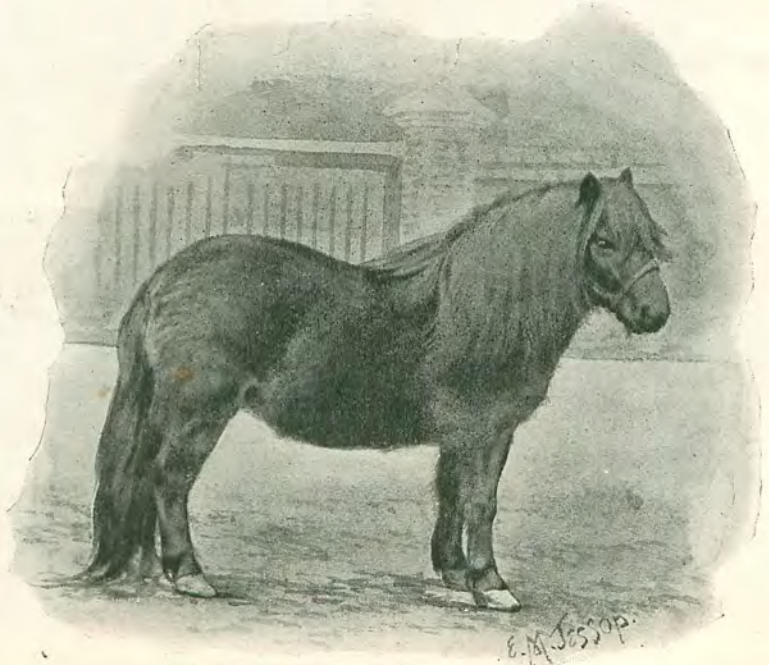
At the first distribution of the Victoria Crosses, which took place on June 26th, 1857, in Hyde Park, the decorations were presented to the heroes of the Crimean War by Her Majesty in person. "At 10 A.M. the Queen, the Prince Consort, Prince Frederick William of Prussia, and a brilliant suite rode into the Park. The Queen, mounted on a favourite grey roan, and wearing a scarlet jacket, black skirt and plumed hat, rode up to the table which bore the Crosses, but did not dismount. One by one each hero was summoned to her presence, and bending from her saddle Her Majesty pinned the Cross on his breast with

her own hands." By no means a light task from a horse's back, as the recipients were no fewer than sixty-two in number.

In Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort* are many allusions to the Queen as an equestrian, notably of her first occupation of the Royal pavilion at Aldershot Camp in 1856. He says, "On this occasion Her Majesty again appeared on horseback, wearing the uniform of a Field Marshal, with the Star and Ribbon of the Garter and a dark-blue riding-skirt."

In 1861 came the great sorrow which for many years changed the whole course of Her Majesty's life. In the following year one first finds mention of the since so widely-known pony-chair, and an indication of the reason for its adoption; the Queen in her journal *More Leaves* says, "(Balmoral, August 21, 1862). At eleven o'clock I started off in the little pony-chair (drawn by the Corrie-mulzie pony, and led by Brown), Bertie, who had come over from Birkhall,

on foot, the two girls on ponies, and the two little boys, who joined us later, for Craig Lowrigan; and I actually drove in the little carriage to the very top. Walked down to where the rough road is, and this first short attempt at walking in the heather shook me and tired me much." The occasion for this expedition was the



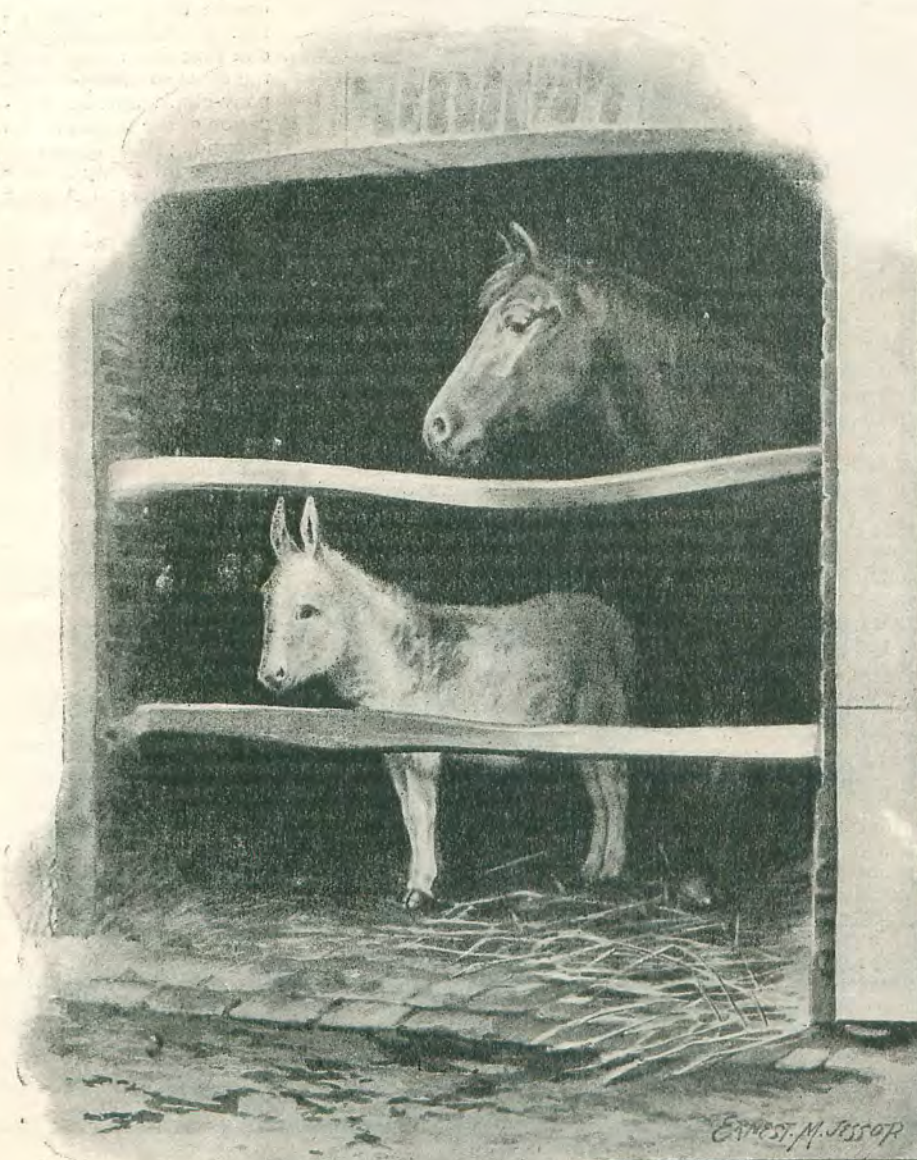
SHETLAND PONY AT THE SHAW FARM.

building of the cairn to the memory of the Prince Consort. It was in 1863 that the carriage accident occurred which might well have cost the Queen's life. It happened in the evening, about seven o'clock, on the return from the excursion in the neighbourhood of Balmoral, and seems to have been entirely the fault of the Royal coachman; the Queen thus describes it. "Suddenly, about two miles from Altna-giuthasach, and about twenty minutes after we had started, the carriage began to turn up on one side; we called out, 'What's the matter?' There was an awful pause, during which Alice said, 'We are upsetting.' In another moment—during which I had time to reflect whether we should be killed or not, and thought there were still things I had not settled and wanted to do—the carriage turned over on its side, and we were all precipitated to the ground! I came down very hard, with my face upon the ground, near the carriage, the horses both on the ground. I reassured them that I was not hurt, and urged that we should make the best of it, as it was an inevitable misfortune. By this time I felt that my face was a good deal bruised and swollen, and, above all, my right thumb was excessively painful and much swollen; indeed, I

thought at first it was broken, till we began to move it." In spite of her injuries, however, Her Majesty refused to get into another carriage, but gallantly mounted a pony which was brought and rode the rest of the way home, which she did not reach until nearly three hours after the accident occurred.

From the year 1867 we find the Queen in her Journal making mention of various ponies; for instance, "Sultan's" name first occurs in 1867, and a foot-note afterwards tells us, "I rode him to the top of the Righi (near Lucerne) 5,000 feet high, in 1868." "Fyvie" also is particularly praised. In 1879, one first finds record of Jessie. "And at eleven we started for Arthur's Cairn, I on my pony 'Jessie,' Beatrice walking to the top." "Jessie" was ridden from this year onward until Her Majesty discontinued equestrian exercise about the year 1890. When I made a sketch of her in 1893 at the Windsor stables she was still looking well and comely, and was trotted up to the quadrangle of the Castle every day for the Queen's inspection when Her Majesty was in residence. She was about fifteen hands in height, strongly built, and of a very dark seal-brown in colour, with curious white markings on her face and back.

She seemed to be of a singularly intelligent and tractable nature, following her groom about like a dog, and at once obeying any of his directions. Although long past the usual span of a horse's life, she was, I believe, still alive and well (at Osborne) last year. There are kept at the Windsor stables in addition to the large regular stud a number of special pet horses, ponies and donkeys belonging to the Queen. Among these, quartered close to "Jessie," I saw a particularly dainty little Shetland pony, which did not seem to possess any other name than "The Skewbald," and was only some three and a half feet in height, and very frolicsome, romping about and playing like a St. Bernard puppy. At the stables she was a universal pet, and if required to do any work was put to draw a miniature cart for Her Majesty's grandchildren. She was very strong for her size and exceedingly amiable, the first time she was harnessed walking calmly along with her load as though she had been used to it all her life. "The Skewbald" was, I believe, bred by the Marquis of Londonderry at Seaham. At the Prince Consort's Shaw Farm I also saw another beautiful little brown Shetland pony exactly the shape of a miniature dray-horse, with a most magnificent tail, which, at the time of my visit, was trailing for some foot or so on the ground. For a long time we could not persuade her to stand quietly enough to have her portrait taken, but inquiry revealed the fact that she was the inseparable companion of a handsome grey donkey much larger than herself, and, when he was introduced as a spectator, the sketching went on quietly enough. This donkey,



CHARGER OF THE LATE EMPEROR FREDERICK OF GERMANY, AND WHITE DONKEY "NINETTE."



JENNY.

I may say, was purchased by Her Majesty on one of her Continental journeys, his colour is dark grey, and he is very much larger than the average British kind; he and the little Shetland seemed to have glorious romps in the roomy paddock which they occupied together.

Many of the pets which wander in happy idleness about the grassy paddocks of the Windsor farms are reminiscent of departed friends of Her Majesty. For instance, I was on one of my visits to the "Shaw Farm," as it is familiarly called, introduced to two handsome old grey carriage horses which had been a present from the late King Victor Emanuel of Italy to the Queen. When I saw them they were past work, but still very playful, one even trying to steal the red handkerchief from his groom's pocket while he (the groom) was engaged in relating their history.

A loose box near to the old greys was occupied by a splendid great chesnut charger over seventeen hands in height, which was once the property of the late Emperor Frederick of Germany. It was given by the Emperor to Prince Christian, who rode him for several years. The charger was, when I saw it, however, released from all future work and enjoying an honoured old age in company with a most charming and sprightly little white donkey named "Ninette," purchased some years since by the Queen at Grasse, and presented to the Princess Victoria of Connaught. It was curious to observe the affection of the big horse for the little donkey, who was continually bobbing down her head and running beneath him, only to reappear on his opposite side. On a lower bar being removed so that Ninette might come out to be sketched, she slipped through our hands, raced down the stableyard, and, rejoicing in her liberty, began gambolling about the neighbouring paddock. But her absence by no means suited the big charger, who, with loud neighs and snorts of rage, fiercely endeavoured to break down the bars

which kept him from his little friend, it taking all the powers of the five or six attendants present to restrain him. However, on the capture and return to the box of Ninette, all was rapidly made peaceful once more, the little donkey running round and round aiming shy kicks at her tall companion, while he tried to affectionately nibble her long ears, at the same time neighing his pleasure at her return. The appearance of one man with a camera and another with a sketch-book rapidly attracted the oddly-matched couple's attention, and they eventually stood most beautifully for their portraits to be taken, the only drawback being that the donkey's long white ears moved far too quickly for the photographer's most rapid shutter.

The next donkey I was introduced to was an animal of a very different description; this was "Jenny," a pure white donkey who, at the time of my visit, had attained the patriarchal age of twenty-five years. With "Jenny" there was no frivolity; in fact she assumed a look of concentrated patience and wisdom which would have well become a great philosopher. As became her years and her ownership, she was somewhat reserved at first, but through the medium of sweet biscuits a friendship was instituted between us which led to an excellent likeness being obtained. "Jenny" was bred at Virginia Water, where she was seen as a foal by Her Majesty, who had her brought to Windsor to be trained, since which time she has remained one of the favourite denizens of the Royal farm. Her colour is pure cream white, with beautiful large grey eyes. Good living and much leisure had to a certain extent told its tale on her figure, her enormous flat back being as soft and almost as wide as an ordinary feather-bed. Her attendant also points with pride to the great masses of fat which (to his mind) adorn her capacious sides.

(To be concluded)

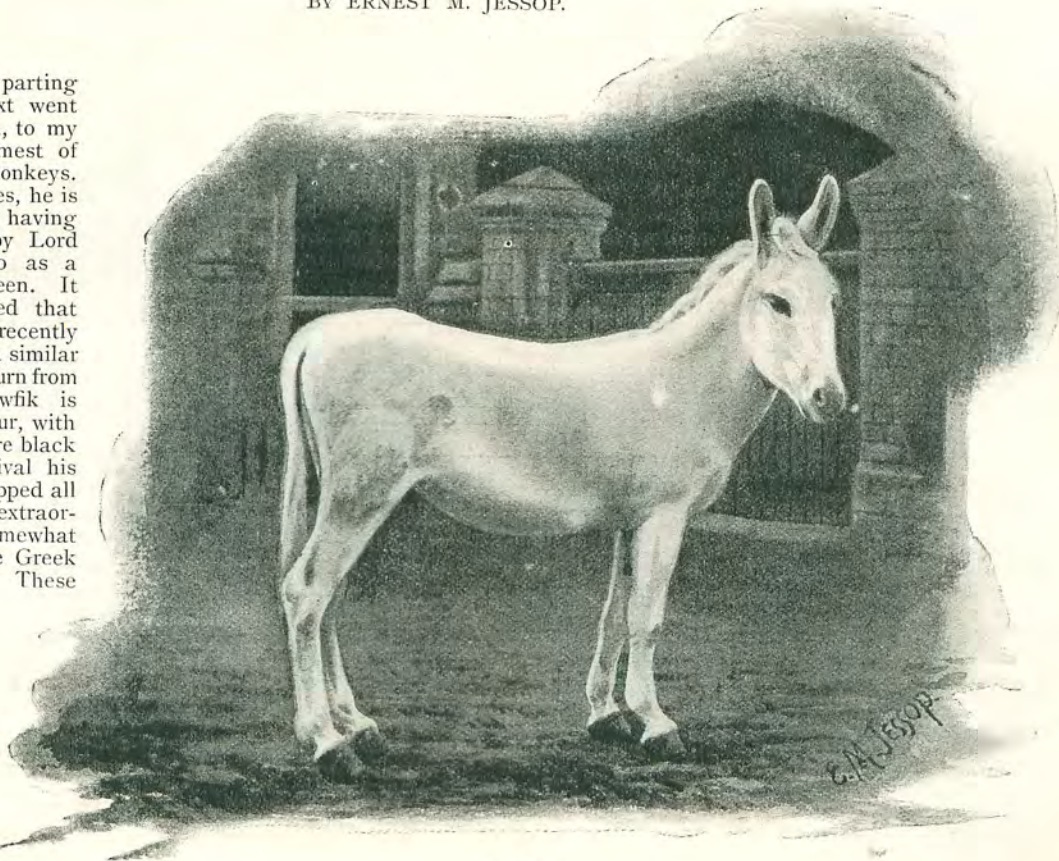
THE QUEEN'S HORSES AND DONKEYS.

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BY ERNEST M. JESSOP.

PART II.

AFTER a friendly parting with Jenny, I next went to interview Tewfik, to my mind the handsomest of all the Queen's donkeys. As his name implies, he is of Egyptian origin, having been purchased by Lord Wolseley in Cairo as a present for the Queen. It will be remembered that Lord Kitchener recently sent Her Majesty a similar animal after his return from the Soudan. Tewfik is pure white in colour, with most beautiful large black eyes. On his arrival his lovely coat was clipped all over in the most extraordinary patterns, somewhat resembling antique Greek architectural work. These patterns in the ordinary course of growth commenced to fill up and get blurred, so it was decided to have him evenly clipped, as the Royal stables did not possess an artist of sufficient skill with the shears to perpetuate his somewhat bizarre decorations. As part of his original equipment he possesses a magnificent set of Eastern harness and trappings, and when in gala dress presents a beautiful



TEWFIK.

appearance. His size is very much greater than any European donkey, the breed from which he is descended being greatly esteemed in the East for their strength and endurance. In fact, they will carry or draw as great a burden as a horse and travel twice the distance of which that animal is capable without breaking down.

In reference to Her Majesty's custom of bestowing names of her own choice on her horses, I may mention that one of the latest arrivals at the Windsor stables, a very handsome grey carriage horse, has, by her desire, received the most appropriate and up-to-date name of Mafeking. He usually forms one of the special team which draws the Queen's carriage in her daily drives through Windsor Park. Needless to say, his name alone makes him a prime favourite with all the stable employees, a position he shares with Dul Dul, the Egyptian donkey (presented by Lord Kitchener), who is now the appropriately inseparable stable companion of Tewfik, her own countryman, who was, as I have before said, presented by Sir Garnet Wolseley. A more beautiful couple than these two pure white donkeys, with their fine black eyes, intelligent appearance and gentle manners, cannot be found among all the handsome creatures whose fine condition speaks so well for the fostering care of Lieutenant Hickey, the able superintendent of the Royal Mews at Windsor, and his subordinates.

The next animal to be noticed at the Farm is distinctly a curiosity. This is Sanger, a pony presented to Her Majesty by a well-known circus-proprietor. The odd-looking little animal's breed and nationality was at first unknown, but I have seen a photograph of a sacred pony kept at a native temple in Japan which bears so strong a likeness to him that I suppose one may consider the



SANGER.

mystery solved. His appearance, although distinctly uncommon, is certainly not prepossessing, each of his legs showing a desire to stretch out to a different point of the compass. His coat looks like cream-coloured wool, his eyes are grey, his eyelids pink and their lashes white like those of an albino. He is very tractable but certainly does not look a miracle of intelligence, although well understanding the meaning of the apple presented to him as a peace-offering.

It may be mentioned here that Her Majesty still takes very frequent drives in her lovely demesne, and during the fine weather when the animals are in the open, her carriage is constantly stopped that she may inspect and note the condition of her favourites, in all of which she takes an interest, and nearly all of which she has herself named.

And now let us wander down Herne's Walk to inspect the Castle stables, noting by the way a flourishing young tree which bears the inscription—

THIS TREE WAS PLANTED BY
HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA,
TO MARK THE SPOT WHERE HERNE'S OAK STOOD.
THE OLD TREE WAS BLOWN DOWN
AUGUST 31st, 1863.

There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter, Some time a keeper here in Windsor Forest, Doth all the winter time at still midnight Walk round about an oak.—*Shakespeare*.

The Royal Mews (at Windsor Castle) as the stables, etc., are called, cover no less than four acres of ground, and were built, as recorded by an inscription, in 1841. They contain accommodation for over one hundred horses, and every stall is frequently occupied. The stables are kept in most beautiful order, even the edges of the straw bedding being finished off with an artistically plaited fringe of the same material. Each groom has two horses under his particular charge, which enables Her Majesty's animals to be kept in the finest possible



GREY ARAB HORSE PRESENTED BY THE THAKORE OF MORVI.

condition. Of the ordinary horses there is but little to note save that they are the best of their class, but here and there one meets with a rarity; for instance, I was introduced to a beautiful grey Arab, presented to the Queen some years since by the Thakore of Morvi. He is a most distinguished-looking animal, with an almost white body, dark grey legs, pink nose, and a beautifully silky black mane, which, by the way, hangs on the left side of his neck. On his official presentation to Her Majesty, which took place in the Grand Quadrangle at Windsor Castle with appropriate ceremony, he wore a gorgeous set of trappings consisting, according to the stables inventory, of a saddle of red and green cloth, under felt, pad for saddle, embroidered saddle-cloth, embroidered bridle, plume, hood in cloth of gold, leg-ring and pad, embroidered



JACQUOT.

neck-piece, embroidered quarter-piece, four bunches of woollen tassels, and a silk scarf. He was ridden by his own native attendant, who was attired on a similarly sumptuous scale.

A strong contrast in appearance to the Arab was a near neighbour in the shape of a large pleasant-looking grey donkey, who sometimes had the honour of drawing the Queen's garden-chair. He is a son of the Egyptian Tewfik, and is on account of his irreproachable manners a great favourite, having been a playfellow of many of Her Majesty's grandchildren. Near him (formerly, alas) lodged possibly the most distinguished donkey ever known; this was "Jacquot," who for many years drew the Queen's chair and accompanied her on all her journeys. He was large for his species, beautifully shaped, of a dark brown colour with a cream-white nose and a tail of a curiously knotted appearance. His manners were perfection, and he was of great intelligence, his slow and stately stride seeming to be purposely assumed in deference to the rank of his Royal mistress. In his own specially pretty harness and attached to the neat little garden chair he made a most charming picture. He died and was buried at Osborne some eighteen months since. May the grass grow green over his pretty head! The so often mentioned "Queen's chair" is a kind of miniature phaeton, running on four rubber-tyred wheels, and having a very low step. It is painted in dark colours and lined with plain dark blue cloth with cushions to match.

And now passing through stable after stable, filled with long rows of silken-coated bays and handsome dappled greys, which are the predominant colours of the Windsor harness horses, we come to the great harness-room, a large light building with well-sanded floor. All around the walls, symmetrically arranged, hang harness and saddles innumerable, almost dazzling the eyes with their speckless sheen. Some among them are veritable works of art; for instance, the set of double harness, made of black leather, embroidered with rich designs including the Royal Arms, etc., worked in split porcupine quills, which was made by some Tyrolese artists for Her Majesty many years ago, also a set of Russian leather sledge harness, soft as glove kid, and with most beautiful silver mounts. Over the saddles, each one of which hangs on its own particular "crutch," are, in serried ranks, the collars of the carriage-horses, each one with the name of the horse it belongs to legibly painted on the wall above it. One may read

"True," "Ronald," "Sheridan," "Beau," "Force," "Belfast," and so on.

Next door to the harness-room is a great coach-house, where may be seen the Queen's special carriages, notably a landau, a sociable, a driving-landau, a waggonette, and a driving phaeton with curtains, which was much used by the late Prince Consort. Here too is kept the before-mentioned "Queen's chair," which must not be confused with the small hand-drawn wheel-chair which is used by Her Majesty within the Castle.

In another carriage-house stands an elaborate *char-à-banc* presented to the Queen by Louis Philippe, also some curious-looking Russian droschkies which are drawn by three horses abreast, and the large carriages for use by the household and "dine and sleep" visitors. These are of somewhat antique appearance, as, although they are renewed from time to time, Her Majesty does not allow the build to be altered. In yet another carriage-house one may see the post-chaise in which the Queen and the late Prince Consort travelled through Germany about seven years after their marriage. It hangs on C springs and is fitted with a writing-table and many other little conveniences.

Last of all comes the great riding-school, a well-proportioned building, measuring sixty-three yards by eighteen. At one end is a balcony where the Queen and the late Prince Consort formerly sat to see the horses exercised. In this balcony are still to be seen medallion portraits of favourite horses, with locks of their hair enclosed in recesses in the frames. The lower part of the wall of the riding-school is covered with kamptulicon, so that a horse rarely injures itself even if it falls or runs against the wall. The floor is covered with tan and a mounting-block occupies the centre. The riding-school has been many times used for various entertainments, ranging from circus performances to the last and most memorable—the luncheon given by Her Majesty to the sailors of the *Powerful* on their return from South Africa. On leaving the riding-school a cheerful tapping causes us to enter a neat little smithy where the Royal farrier is at work, and we are told with pardonable pride by the able and courteous superintendent of the Royal Mews that in consequence of the care taken of the Queen's horses the yearly account of the veterinary surgeon is of the most insignificant proportions. And so with the best of all wishes for the continued long life and health of his Royal mistress and himself, as well as his charges, we take our leave.

MARGARET HETHERTON.

CHAPTER IV.

It was Sunday afternoon, not yet five o'clock. Margaret and the two boys were preparing to go to Dr. Milworth's in glad obedience to his invitation. Margaret stood in the passage pulling on her thick woollen gloves; Harold beside her was humming a tune. Presently Rob came down the stairs in his accustomed break-neck fashion.

"Sh!" said Margaret, pointing with a warning finger to the parlour door to indicate that Mr. Hetherton had not finished his afternoon nap.

"Old fellow, you come downstairs with all the grace of a hippopotamus," she remarked, as Rob joined them.

"Thank you," Rob answered gravely, as he buttoned up his great coat. "I've followed your example from my youth up, you see; that's why I am such a credit to you now."

"Now, boys, be good," Margaret said in her most maternal tone as they set out. "And remember it's Sunday, and don't make a row, and don't consume such alarming quantities of jam-cake."

"I'll subscribe to all the articles but the last, Maggie," Rob replied cheerfully. "It's too hard on a fellow if he

can't be allowed to eat as much jam-cake as he likes when he goes out to tea."

"Boys are such greedy beings," Margaret answered loftily, with her nose in the air.

"What's young Beethoven thinking about?" Rob went on, looking over to his brother walking along sedately at Margaret's other side. "Jam-cake?"

"Jam-cake," Harold repeated disdainfully. "I was thinking I should like to compose a sonata—there has been such a beautiful *adagio* movement running in my head since yesterday, it just wants working out."

The little lad's dreamy blue eyes wandered skywards; he was not accustomed to receive much sympathy for his musical enthusiasm from anyone excepting from his father, nor did he expect any now.

"Didn't I tell you?" Rob said disgustedly. "It'll have to be put a stop to, Maggie, it will indeed, or he'll get music on the brain and have to be locked up. Just imagine anyone going mooning about thinking of sonatas and adarjer movements!"

Privately Margaret agreed that Harold would be a better companion if he were not always so wrapped up in his musical dreams, and no doubt she would have