



## THE ZEBRA.



THE Zebra is a native of the mountainous districts of Africa, where it lives in troops remote from the abodes of man. There is another species that inhabits the plains, which is shorter in the ears, and has no stripes on the limbs and under parts of the body. The Quagga is an

inhabitant of the same regions. Although it is the least brilliantly marked of the three species of zebrine animals which are found in South Africa, it is probably the strongest, and certainly the most tractable. Its northern limit, according to Captain Sir Cornwallis Harris, is the river Vaal. He says:—"The animal was formerly extremely common within the colony; but, vanish-



ing before the strides of civilization, is now to be found in very limited numbers, and on the borders only. Beyond, and on those sultry plains which are completely taken possession of by wild beasts, and may with strict propriety be termed the domains of savage nature, it occurs in interminable herds; and, although never intermixing with its own more elegant congeners, it is almost invariably to be found ranging with the white-tailed gnu and with the ostrich, for the society of which bird especially it evinces the most singular predilection. Moving slowly across the profile of the ocean-like horizon, uttering a shrill barking neigh, of which its name forms a correct imitation, long files of quaggas continually remind the early traveller of a rival caravan on its march. Bands of many hundreds are frequently seen during their migration from the dreary and desolate plains of some portion of the interior which has formed their secluded abode, seeking for those more luxuriant pastures where during the summer months various herbs thrust forth their leaves and flowers to form a green carpet, spangled with hues the most brilliant and diversified.

It is singular enough that the members of two families, so perfectly foreign to each other, should display so great a predilection for each other's society, uniformly intermixing as they do, and herding in bonds of the closest friendship. Fierce, strong, and fleet, and surpassingly beautiful, there is, perhaps, no quadruped in the creation, not even excepting the mountain zebra, more splendidly attired, or presenting a picture of more singularly attractive beauty than the free-born son of the desert."

Burchell's zebra is strong and muscular, with sinewy limbs, and might, perhaps, be made serviceable to man.

It is an animal that admits of being tamed, to a certain extent, with facility; and occasionally a half-domesticated specimen is exposed for sale at Cape Town, with a rider on its back. The persons, however, who have had most opportunities of becoming acquainted with its character, regard it, tractable as it may sometimes appear, as treacherous, fickle, vicious, and obstinate.

This species may be distinguished from its mountain relative by the shortness of its ears, by the absence of stripes on the limbs and under-surface of the body, and by the stripes of the upper parts being brown.

These animals present a brilliant appearance when flying in troops before the hunter. Their flesh (with that of the zebra and quagga) is relished by the natives, but Mr. Burchell thought it not much superior to horseflesh, and he would, with most Europeans, think the same respecting the flesh of the wild ass, which in Persia is in the highest estimation, and served at royal banquets.

The Boers, who call themselves by the title of "baptized men," think they would be derogating from their dignity to partake of the flesh of the zebra, and generously leave the animal to be consumed by their Hottentot servants. When wounded, the zebra gives a kind of groan, which is said to resemble that of a dying man.

In disposition the zebra is fierce, obstinate, and nearly untameable. The efforts used by Mr. Rarey, in reducing to obedience the zebra of the Zoological Gardens, are now matter of history. The little brindled animal gave him more trouble than the huge savages on whom he had so successfully operated; and it upset some of his calculations by the fact that it was able to kick as fiercely from three legs as a horse from four.