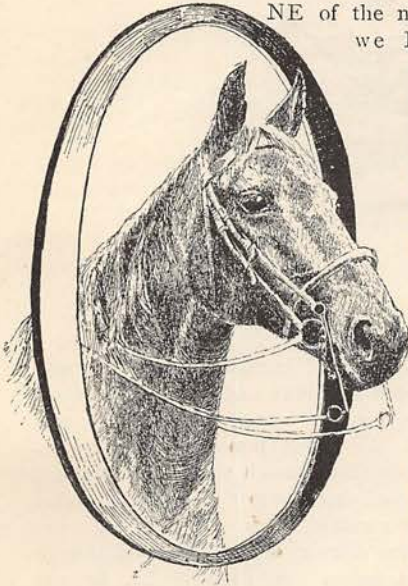


OUR FRIENDS THE HORSES.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.



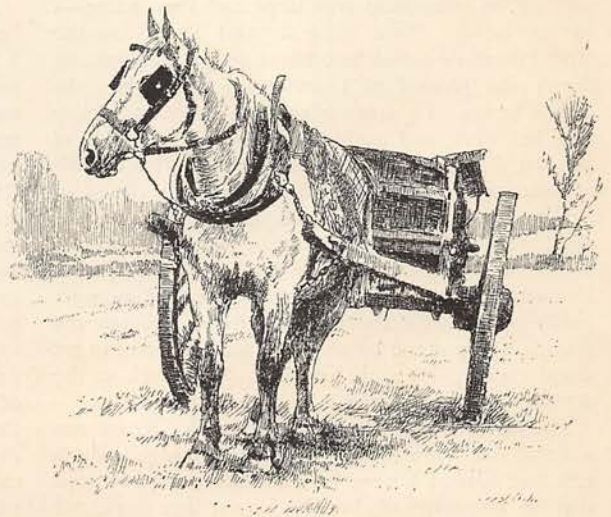
NE of the natural gifts that we Englishmen—and women, I suppose—most pride ourselves upon is our power to understand and manage horses. English-speaking races, we complacently say, are the finest riders and drivers on the face of the globe; and we confidently point to the feats of Australian rough-riders and American coach-drivers in

confirmation of this statement, not omitting to couple with them the well-established reputation of our jockeys and cross-country riders at home. Our Continental neighbours, especially Frenchmen and Austrians, however, contemptuously refute the assertion. Englishmen, they allow, know how to gallop over hedges and ditches well enough, but of any real scientific management of horses by means of bit, bridle, whip, and spur, they are childishly ignorant; the all-important science of *manège* riding is a dead letter to them.

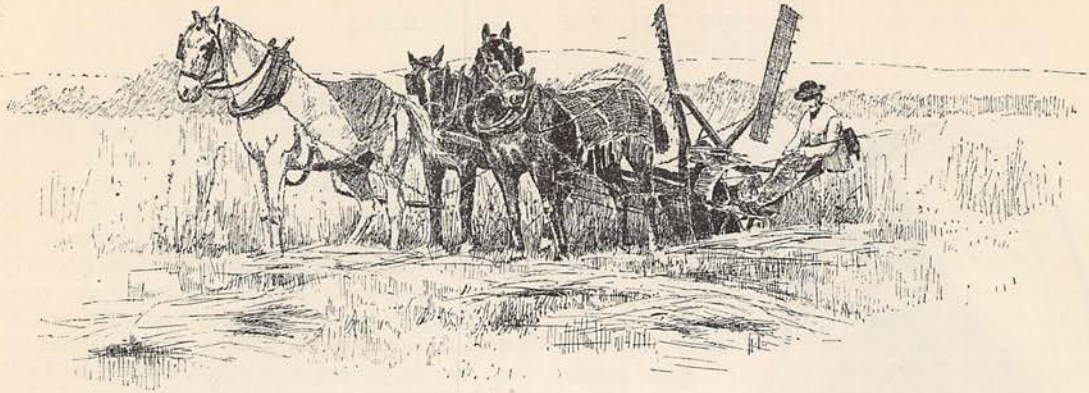
Into these vexed questions I will not venture to enter. The English may or may not be the finest horsemen in the world, but I doubt whether any other nation—with the exception, perhaps, of the Arabs—are on such thoroughly confidential, friendly terms with their horses as the English. The mutual good understanding is most complete, I think, where but one or two horses comprise the stud: then horse and man are most dependent on each other for their enjoyment and comfort, and observe most closely each other's habits and idiosyncrasies. Most strikingly is this the case when a man or woman has but one hunter; if either the human being or the horse is worth anything, they must become attached under these circumstances. I remember seeing this quite pathetically illustrated some years ago. We were hunting at the time constantly in Devonshire, in a wild rough part of the country, where foxes were plentiful and farmers friendly, and where we thought nothing of riding twelve or fifteen

miles to the meet. Amongst the *habitués* of our hunt was an old gentleman, whom I will call Mr. Brown. He had a horse who had been a first-rate hunter in his day, but was now sadly decrepit, yet as keen and fond of sport as his master. Both horse and rider had known better days, yet neither was afraid to face a narrower and harder life. The two used constantly to turn up during the course of the day's hunting, but seldom or never was Mr. Brown to be seen in the saddle. He used mostly to run along by the old horse's side, holding the bridle, and keeping pace with his shambling trot. When asked why he did not ride more, he would say, "No, no; better spare the old horse; we're a long way from home, and we get along very well, don't we, Jock?" and the two would then exchange a glance of mutual sympathy and encouragement. We used to call them "the pilgrims" in the field, for both seemed inspired by the same unwearied impulse in a good cause. At last a day came when old Mr. Brown appeared alone. "The old horse had a bit of a cold," he admitted, and presently after we heard that he was dead. A little fund was soon raised amongst the members of the hunt to procure the old gentleman another mount, but we could not get him to accept it. He felt our kindness, he said, but he was "too old to make another friend like dear old Jock."

Circumstances, of course, are more favourable to friendship between hunters and their riders than almost any other class of horse; but draught-horses, too, are not to be despised as acquaintances, and even the slow matter-of-fact cart-horse will often be found affectionate and responsive. In most cases cart-horses are very gentle and reliable, if somewhat slow



OLD BERRY THINKS SHE HEARS THE HOUNDS.



“THE NOB” AND HIS COMPANIONS.

of comprehension, and they are particularly kindly and considerate to small children. In my youth I was on visiting terms with several, for my grandfather was a country parson in the Midlands, and in those simple Arcadian days of the past, when steam was in its infancy, and American competition unheard of, a clergyman found he could make a pleasant and profitable occupation out of farming his glebe. So there was a large, old-fashioned, delightfully dirty farm-yard, and some four or five cart-horses, with whom I spent many happy hours. One or two of these had known better days, and could have told of rattling runs with a famous pack before advancing years and infirmities obliged them to subside into the peaceful obscurity of the plough or cart-shafts. An old white mare, named Snowberry, was an especial favourite of mine. She had had a distinguished past as a huntress, and had negotiated a park wall on one occasion with singular address. My first ride was taken on her back—a solemn progress of about ten yards, of which my only recollection is of being perched on something very large and very white—a sort of moving Mont Blanc. “Old Berry,” as the farm labourers called her, never forgot her hunting days; she seemed to know every year when the season began. In summer she was quiet and sleepy over her work, and could be left alone in charge of her cart during hay-making or harvesting for a while without any apprehension. But as soon as the short autumn days came round she was for ever on the alert, listening for and thinking she heard the hounds; and one day, while engaged in the humble occupation of carting manure, her constant anticipations were finally realised, for she not only heard but saw the hounds, and profited by an unguarded moment to get a real good gallop with her old friends, much to the detriment of her cart and its prosaic contents.

Another of my friends amongst the cart-horses was a handsome dark brown gelding. Though only a half-bred animal, his manners and paces were so good that he was originally bought for carriage work, and his fast swinging trot made him a capital hack, too. I often drove and rode him, and he liked much being

talked to and petted, and learned to utter an odd little sound, between a whinny and a grunt, to imply that he wanted a piece of sugar, of which he was extremely fond. We called him “Nature’s Nobleman”—a cumbrous title, though an appropriate one, which soon resolved itself into “The Nob.” After a very few years’ carriage work, the poor Nob developed a hopeless disease of the feet, and though careful treatment pulled him round a bit, he was never fit for the road any more, but was relegated to slow easy work on the farm. It was curious and sad to note how his altered circumstances affected him; he lost all spirit and interest in his work, and regarded his new companions—good commonplace cart-horses—with evident disdain. Yet his old friendship for me never changed, and if I came into the field where he was at work, he would prick up his ears directly he heard my voice, and when I said, “Well, Nob?” would at once utter his odd little sound of greeting, and look for his *gage d’amour* of happier days, the unfailling piece of sugar.

Amongst hunters and hacks my friendships have been many and affectionate—indeed, the only horses I have constantly ridden, with whom I have been on distant terms, were those whose acquaintance I made on a visit to Australia. During a two years’ stay in that continent nearly every variety of colonial horse came under my notice: Victorian, New South Welshman, Tasmanian, Queenslander, bush horses, and town horses. All passed under review, but I can’t say I found any of them really friendly. Colonial horses are roughly broken and handled, and consequently learn to regard all human beings with more or less suspicion. They are far more mischievous, too, than English horses, and the latent talent for practical joking, which exists in almost every member of the equine species, is much more developed with them. If they don’t all buck, they all know how, and the best-trained animals amongst them will what the colonials call “pig-jump” in a most unseating fashion when they are in good heart and condition. Now, one can’t feel real affection and esteem for a horse who is capable of launching one, together with bridle

and saddle, into the unknown in a mere impulse of what a departed statesman would have aptly termed "irresponsible frivolity."

But to go back to my English friends: I once owned the rare combination of a good hack and hunter, in the person of a charming little Cornish horse—"Pen Dragon" by name—whom I rode for several years, and who ended his career, full of years and honour, in his eighteenth season. His only fault was self-assertion: he would be first at every fence, if he pulled one's arms off to get there. It became a recognised fact amongst my hunting friends that when he was in the field he was to give every one the lead—which I must say he did in very good style, rarely making a mistake. "Little Drag," as we affectionately called him, was certainly a very remarkable jumper, for on one occasion he undoubtedly cleared a turnpike gate with a two-wheeled basket carriage behind him. He performed this feat under the following circumstances:—He was being driven home by a stable-lad one winter's evening just as it was growing dark. Before long he overtook another horse trotting in front of him; this irritated him, and speedily roused his habitual determination to be first. He accordingly shot forward at a sharp gallop, which presently became a bolt. The turnpike-gate, closed and bolted for the night, then came into view. He saw in it only an ordinary fence, at which he must, of course, be first, so he merely redoubled his pace. The terrified stable-boy shouted loudly; the bewildered gate-keeper, seeing the state of affairs, and hoping to prevent an accident, made an attempt to open the gate, but it was too late, so the unfortunate boy shut his eyes, no doubt mentally "wrote to his friends," and hung on to the reins like grim death. An upward bound, a horrible jolt, a jarring crash, and he found himself neither killed nor insensible, but still in the

cart, and safely in the road again, with the gate behind him, and little Dragon sobering into a walk. It seems scarcely conceivable, but horse, cart, and occupant had got over the gate with but little damage to it or themselves. That they had so passed there is no doubt, for though the boy could give no account of himself, the wheel-marks and the splintering of the wood on the top bar of the gate showed that the cart had really gone over it. The startled old gate-keeper, too, added his testimony in the most convincing fashion. "When I saw that horse and them two red lights a-flyin' over me," he said, "why, I knew it must be t'ould gentleman hisself."

The behaviour of horses in the pursuit of their profession as hunters is very varied. Some do their duty in the most steady business-like fashion, and, if sound in wind and limb, are invaluable to dealers, as they can be confidently advertised, in the jargon of the trade, as "first-rate animals for any timid lady or gentleman to learn to ride hunting on." Others, again, but few in number, are as keen and knowing about sport as their masters, or a good deal more so. These are delightful mounts when they and their riders happen to entertain the same theories about the noble art of being with the hounds, but most exasperating when there is not this mutual understanding, for not only do they insist on choosing as much as possible their own line and pace, but if they and their rider should at any time in the day part company, the chances of their meeting again are very problematical, for such horses always cheerfully pursue the sport on their own account. Then there is another class of hunters—a most disagreeable one—who never settle down, and to whom the presence of hounds and other horses is a perpetual source of excitement and irritation: their heads are always in the air, and as to the ultimate destination of their feet, they seem to



PEN DRAGON TAKES THE LEAD.

have neither thought nor care. Such horses either speedily break down or come to grief with their riders. It was my bad luck at one time to own such a one in the person of a very handsome chestnut mare, who, after being successively named the "Red Princess," "Rowena," and "Firebrand," finally became known as "Fidget," and nothing else, being recognisable under no other title. As a hack, when ridden alone she was pleasant enough, having easy paces and being very free; but the presence of other horses speedily made her foolishly excited, and in the hunting-field she was quite unmanageable. She was not loved in the stable, for she was difficult to clean, would never stand, and when about to be ridden had to be led about at some distance from the house, and only brought round just at the moment when her rider was ready to jump into the saddle.

But she was so handsome and taking in appearance, that among the inexperienced she had many admirers. One of the latter, a somewhat complacent young man, named Grey, who fancied himself greatly as a horseman, came to stay with us one season when we were hunting in the New Forest. My husband offered him a mount for the day, giving him his choice amongst two or three horses, and he agreed to "run his eye over our cattle" and make his selection. Some conversation soon after took place about "Fidget" and her idiosyncrasies, and, finally, nothing would satisfy young Grey but to be allowed to ride the mare, and to show us how he, at all events, could make her a steady, clever huntress. Remonstrance was useless—he knew all about the mare: we did not; besides, was he not the youngest, and therefore, necessarily, the most infallible of us? Well, he had his way, and I hope he enjoyed himself. We drove to the meet, he riding on first, alone. When we reached the tryst, nothing was to be seen of him, so we mounted and moved off to cover. About lunch-

time, while we were drawing a large fir plantation, a dusky mounted form appeared on the sky-line. It could not be young Grey: he had started in irreplaceable pink, and white leathers; and "Fidget" was bright chestnut. Nevertheless, as the figure came closer there was no doubt that it was he, for he feebly hailed us, but both horse and rider were so thickly coated with good rich bog soil and water as to be quite unrecognisable.

And then came a piteous tale, for poor young Grey was so tired and depressed as to be for once absolutely truthful. He had arrived, it seemed, all right at the meet, but the appearance of the other horses and the hounds had, as usual, quite upset "Fidget." She reared, plunged, and finally bolted madly off across the Forest. A long chain of bogs loomed in the distance, and into these she wildly plunged. Happily, none were very deep; but she speedily unseated young Grey, and they floundered after one another for some time before they reached sound ground. When they did, she allowed herself to be caught, but not mounted, and then followed a dreary scramble over the heath-lands, during which Grey kept making vain efforts to get on her back. At last, when he was going to let go of the bridle altogether in despair, she got into another bog, and while she was once more floundering, he succeeded in regaining the saddle, and presently got her on to sound heather again. Then, finding her at last somewhat manageable once more, he endeavoured to make his way home, determining at all costs to avoid the humiliation of displaying himself before the field. But it was in vain; he kept seeing us everywhere in the distance, but met no one else of whom to ask his way. The flask and sandwich-case had been lost in one of the bogs; he was wearied out, his pride temporarily quite invalidated; so he humbly surrendered at discretion, and begged us to tell him his nearest way home.

ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED.

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

By L. T. MEADE.

"'Tis love that makes the world go round."

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.



TEA was served on a brass tray; it was a somewhat unsubstantial meal, the bread-and-butter being of the thinnest, and the somewhat stale cake cut to the most fairy dimensions; but the cups were artistic in shape and colour, and although the tea was weak, it was poured out of a Japanese teapot of quaint pattern, and the very blue-looking substitute for cream was in a jug which was apt to call forth exclamations on its quaintness and beauty.

As Nelly was a prisoner to the sofa, Marston himself presided over the tea equipage. In a fit of absence he helped Dorothea first, and then was inclined to be too apologetic over this trifling mistake. To both Dorothea and Marston the unsubstantial and poor meal was as nectar and ambrosia, but Emmy felt tired, and hot, and uncomfortable; she was depressed, and her head seemed in a whirl. For some time she had feared that things were not going quite right with Dorothea, but she had little guessed that affairs had made the progress they had. As she sipped her weak tea, and munched her dry bread-and-butter, and

OUR FRIENDS THE HORSES.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.



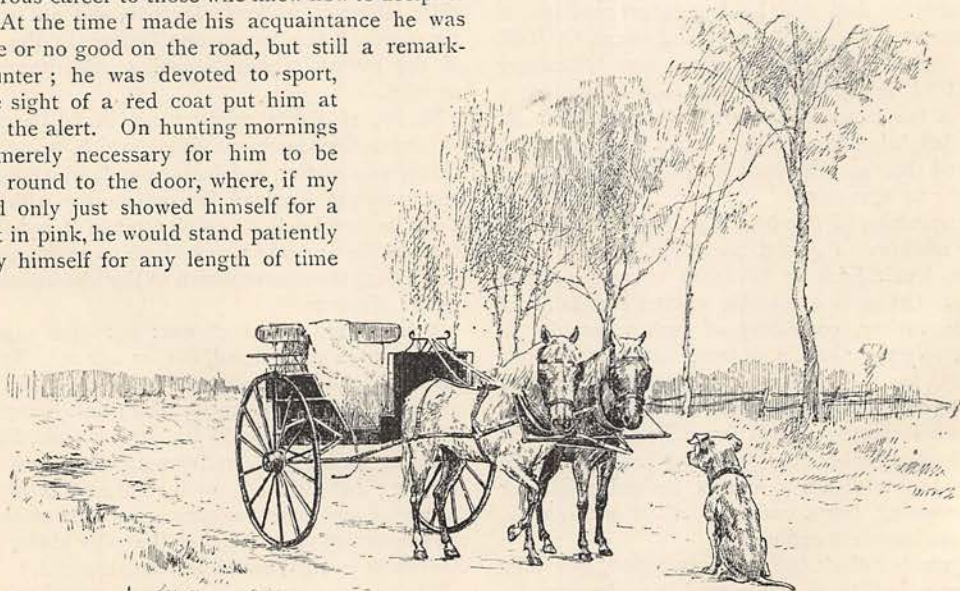
"TO THINK OF LOVING 'EE!"

A HORSE of quite a different stamp was my husband's hunter, old "Axeine." When I first made his acquaintance he was quite a veteran, for he had been my husband's first real hunter, acquired at a time when a boyish enthusiasm for "Guy Livingstone" had suggested his rather foolish name. He was a remarkably plain horse, and, moreover, carried enough scars upon him to establish his reputation for audacity and a good constitution to the end of time. One of

his nostrils was curiously deformed from an accident over some wire fencing, and this gave him an odd roguish expression; his hind-legs were ornamented with fluted spiral lines from too close acquaintance with the same wire; his fore-legs were covered with singular nobs and bosses, which, however, never prevented his going; and odd scars and marks on his whole body presented an interesting synopsis of his adventurous career to those who knew how to decipher them. At the time I made his acquaintance he was but little or no good on the road, but still a remarkable hunter; he was devoted to sport, and the sight of a red coat put him at once on the alert. On hunting mornings it was merely necessary for him to be brought round to the door, where, if my husband only just showed himself for a moment in pink, he would stand patiently quite by himself for any length of time

until we were ready to start, in a state of animated expectancy very amusing to watch. On these occasions nothing could disturb him; other horses might trot up, carriages stop under his nose, dogs bark at him, it was all the same: his whole mind was set upon his rider, whom he fully depended on to give him what he most enjoyed—a good day's sport with the hounds.

Lubin, a young bull-dog, was our constant companion on many a pleasant driving tour; sometimes he trotted behind the carriage, but he liked best to sit up between us, comfortably ensconced in rugs. He had a remarkable, and, in the opinion of connoisseurs, a very beautiful face. In the towns we passed through on our journeys he was always admired, butchers invariably appreciated his points, and innkeepers made us substantial offers for him; but in the country a more stunted sense of beauty prevailed, and he was generally looked upon with contempt, mingled with fear and aversion. I shall not forget the consternation with which he was regarded by an old turnpike-woman in the wilds of Dorsetshire. The dog was sitting up, as usual, comfortably between us when we stopped at the gate, and the good lady forgot for a moment to take the toll or ask for a ticket, or do anything, in her amazement at his strange appearance. "To think of loving 'ee!" she said at last, with a snort of contempt, and as we drove off she stood watching us with a

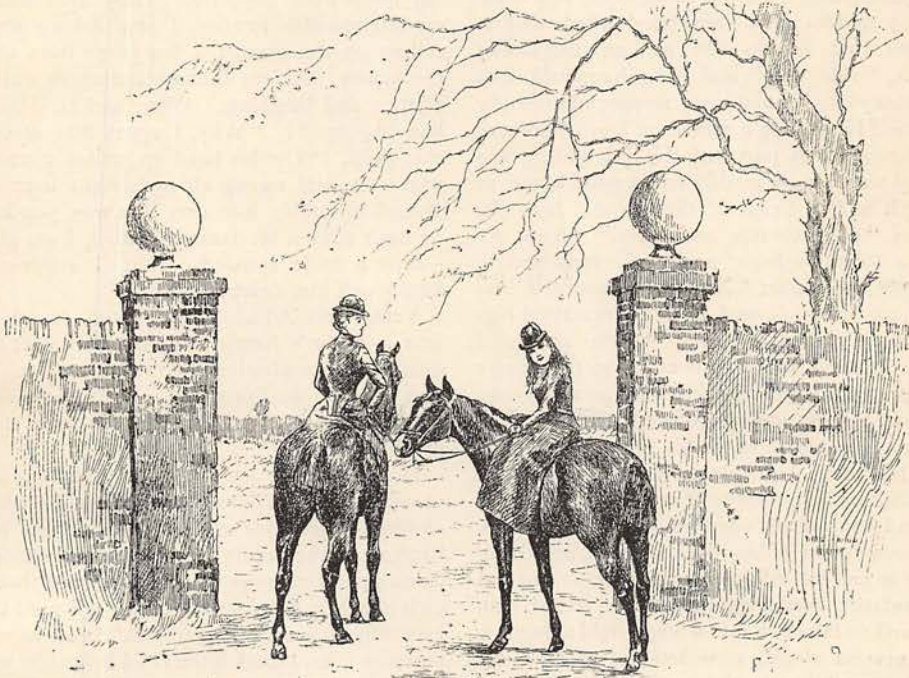


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grin of mingled surprise and pity at "some folks' taste."

The mention of driving tours reminds me of several friends among ponies, for our journeys were generally made with these "little people" of the horse world. Next to riding, there is no more delightful pursuit than driving a pair of fast, spirited ponies, and a curricle is

attended for any length of time; but her son, Ramsay, was not so dependable. We used sometimes to leave them in charge of a clever half-bred dog we had, distantly related to the mastiff breed, who hailed from the Dogs' Home, and was always known as "the hound." "The hound" was very obedient, and would sit patiently for an hour or more in front of the ponies'



"GOING FOR A REAL RIDE WITH MOTHER."

certainly the best vehicle to drive them from: it is so admirably light and easy, and its management requires just enough care and judgment to make it a matter of interest to the occupants. Many a mile of the pleasant country of our Southern counties did we traverse in this fashion with a pair of Irish ponies. These ponies were chestnut, with cream manes and tails, about thirteen hands high, and a very good match. They came originally from the wild west coast of Ireland, in the neighbourhood of Achill Island, and were bought after a pleasant three months' stay in that district. They were united by very tender ties of relationship, being mother and son. Both were fast and gentle and devoted to each other; but Jessie, the mother, was the most perfect little pony I ever knew. Such a confiding, lovable little mare she was! So fond of being coaxed and talked to in the stable, welcoming you as warmly without the carrot as with it, and looking so wistfully after you with tender brown eyes when you went away. In harness she never needed a whip, and it is my belief she would have gone as well without reins—she seemed to understand and be guided so completely by the voice. She would stand, too, un-

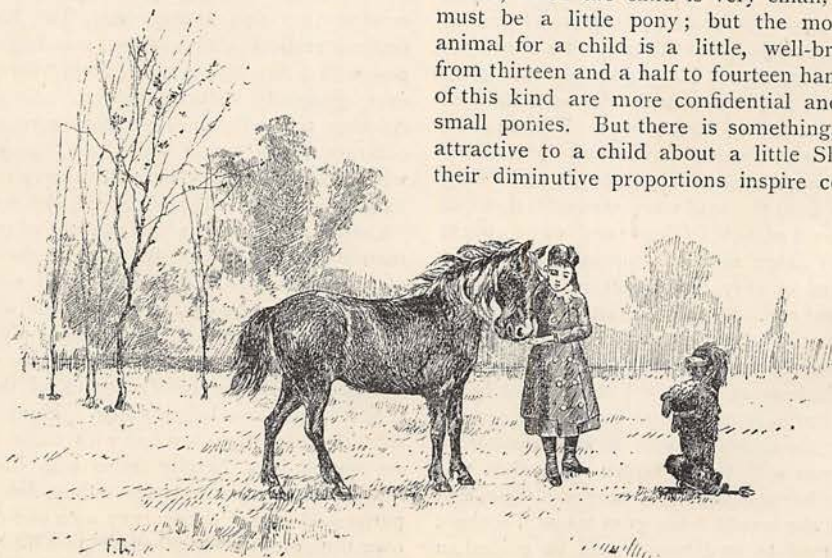
noses if told to do so. Jessie quite understood and entered into this arrangement, but Ramsay would become restless after a time, and begin furtively to paw with a fore-leg; a growl from "the hound," however, generally reduced him to submission again. Another pair of ponies we had were as complete a contrast to the gentle little Irish "people" as could well be found. They were strawberry roans, fourteen hands high, nearly thoroughbred, and we called them "Venus" and "Adonis" on account of their really remarkable good looks. In spite of their beauty and close resemblance to each other, they were not a good match; both were fast and free, but whereas Venus had a mouth like iron, and could only be driven in safety with the sharpest of bits, Adonis was so sensitive in the jaw that the least touch of the curb made him rear up like a begging dog. Many and startling were the adventures we had with these ponies before we settled into friendly terms with them. For the first half-dozen times we drove them Adonis invariably performed part of the journey with one of his fore-legs over the pole—the usual sequel to a little fit of rearing—and Venus generally contrived that they should both

bolt as soon as he was freed from the obstacle. They jibbed up-hill, they galloped down, they shied at the most homely objects at the most inopportune moments, and under their erratic guidance we formed intimate acquaintance with the bottoms of many a hitherto unexplored duck-pond and muddy ditch. Nevertheless, no serious casualty luckily ever befell us when driving them, and the only occasion on which Adonis' peculiar disposition threatened a serious catastrophe was when he was being ridden. We understood when we first bought them that Adonis did not, as the dealer expressed it, "ride well," and it so happened that during the two years we had them no special necessity presented itself for putting a saddle on him. A sojourn abroad obliging us to part with the little pair, it was thought they would more readily find a good home, as well as fetch a fair price, if they could both be described as "quiet to ride and drive." Venus we knew was a tolerable hack, so it only remained to make Adonis the same. A groom mounted him first. A sharp rear, followed by some practised pig-jumping, soon disposed of this rider, who professed himself too bruised to care to continue the pony's education for the saddle—for that day, at all events. An experienced rider amongst our friends then took him in hand. Adonis repeated his previous attempts to unseat his rider, but this time without success. Our friend had had experience of real buck-jumpers in far lands, and the pony's vagaries only amused him. After a tedious round of rearing, plunging, and kicking, Adonis at last settled down, and consented to trot quietly round the exercising field. Our friend then thought it well to take him into a larger field adjoining, where the ground sloped considerably, so as to try him up and down hill. In the centre of this field was a deep stone quarry. The pony made his first circuit of the field well enough, but when it came to going round the second time, his obstinacy was roused again. He stopped short, gave vent to his ruffled feelings in a

fresh bout of rearing and plunging, and then suddenly, without any warning, made a violent bolt forwards down the hill, his head between his legs, making straight for the edge of the stone quarry. His rider made every effort to turn or stop him, but in vain—the pony seemed maddened, and only increased his pace. The next few moments were a horrible experience to the spectators, and I frankly confess to not knowing quite what happened. Only after what seemed an interminable interval I saw Adonis on his back rolling on the ground, a few yards from the edge of the quarry, and our friend standing up with very torn clothes, and laughing. What had he done? What had happened? "Why, I upset him, of course," he said gaily. "Got his head up, pulled it round to the near side, and swung all my weight over to the off. Bound to tumble him over that way, you know; and he don't seem a bit damaged either, I am glad to say—only a trifle startled. Still, I suppose you can hardly call him quiet to ride."

Venus and Adonis shortly after found their way into a dealer's hands, and though he set forth their qualities in a glowing advertisement, we took care that Adonis' qualifications as a hack should be confined to the single statement "has been ridden by a gentleman."

How far ponies are suitable mounts for children is a vexed question—as vexed as the question whether little children should ride at all. The dangers incident to "infants in the saddle" are constantly being brought forward, and many good riders contend that boys and girls should not be put on horseback until they are at least fifteen or sixteen years old. As far as my own experience goes, I think if the child is healthy and plucky he or she may begin to ride when he likes. Those who learn to ride early are able to enjoy the exercise into quite advanced life; those who only take it up when fully grown-up are apt to find riding a trouble, rather than a pleasure, when youth has passed. Of course, when the child is very small, his first mount must be a little pony; but the most satisfactory animal for a child is a little, well-bred, quiet cob, from thirteen and a half to fourteen hands high. Cobs of this kind are more confidential and reliable than small ponies. But there is something, I admit, very attractive to a child about a little Shetland pony—their diminutive proportions inspire confidence, and



TOPSY AND HER MISTRESS.

they seem to belong naturally to the child's world. One of these fascinating creatures was the first mount of a little girl, a friend of mine. "Topsy," as they called her, had the sweetest and most engaging manners in the stable or the field, would allow herself to be coaxed and fondled like a doll, and would wander all over the enclosure for a piece of sugar from her little mistress, who devoted herself to her entirely, thereby arousing the lasting jealousy of her poodle dog, who begged in vain for notice on these occasions. But when it came to riding her, Topsy did not prove by any means such a treasure. She played a hundred mischievous little tricks with the child, shying, twisting, and jumping in all directions, and giving her in all nine tumbles, happily none of them the least serious, but enough to prove that the pony had too keen a spirit for practical joking to be suitable for so young a rider. Topsy accordingly was wisely relegated to a little two-wheeled cart, which she conducted with gravity and decorum, and my young friend became possessed of one of those charming confidential little cobs which seem to me so suitable for children. I made a sketch of her on this pretty

little animal as she said good-bye to us one day, starting on her first "*real* ride with mother," as she called it. The ride was a *real* one, she explained, because the leading rein had been finally and entirely abolished.

As my little friend said good-bye to me, so must I now say good-bye to my readers, whom I have already detained too long with these every-day reminiscences of our friends the horses. Still, those who are riders themselves will, I hope, pardon my prolixity. They will know how gladly one lingers over the happy memories of days spent in the hunting-field, or of wanderings through pleasant lanes with two little ponies showing us the way, or of solitary rides through forest glades and over wide downs and moors—especially when these days belong to a past beyond recall: memories of "glimpses which have made us less forlorn," memories of days when the complexity, the weariness, the worry of life still seemed strange and far away, when existence was simple and comprehensible, and enjoyment centred itself in a free bounding gallop over grassy slopes under sunny skies.

A LUXURIOUS SNUGGERY.



A COSY CORNER.

A LIBRARY such as would be considered worthy of the name by scientific and literary men, and by noblemen who possess collections of volumes handed down from father to son for generations, is probably far out of the reach of many of my readers. The morning-room or breakfast-room, whichever name it may go by, usually answers for library as well in moderate-sized houses—and, somehow,

for luncheon or dinner; then away through empty space goes careering the supremely fascinating idea which has been a veritable will-o'-the-wisp all the morning, but was just taking shape, and would have gone far towards winning us fame—so we flatter ourselves—if that unlucky domestic had not recalled us to every-day life, and caused us to scramble up our written pages into a heap and ignominiously retire. In spite of its usefulness, I find that the morning-room is often extremely ugly. A discarded suite of furniture from some other apartment "does well enough," the table-cloth is far from innocent of ink-stains, the sewing-machine, never a lovely object, stands in the bay window, and the ornaments are second-rate. By far the best of the bunch is the book-case, with its rows of dear old friends, any one of which we could lay hands on in the dark. Sometimes, though, even these are kept in disorder.

Now I am going to describe a room I am modernising. Why any one should have things ugly about when he could with no trouble but only pleasure have them pretty, I never could understand. Taking a look round, I feel a thorough aversion rising towards that horrible round table; it encroaches on space, and is the stamp of formality: therefore I issue an ukase for its immediate banishment anywhere out of my sight.

Now that Man of the Mountains is no more seen, we set to work with a will. The Brussels carpet is in good condition, and the colouring and design are Eastern in style, so they will fall in with my scheme. The walls are neither good nor bad, they are simply

it often becomes the favourite retreat of the family. We are apt to be disturbed by callers if we set to work in the drawing-room, and when we have our papers about in glorious confusion on the dining-table, Jane is certain to enter with the paraphernalia