

# The Champion Horse-Breaker.

BY ALBERT H. BROADWELL.

**I**T is not every teacher who takes a pride in the kicks and bruises which he has received from refractory pupils. Yet here we have a man who says with truth that there is scarcely a square inch on his body that has not at some time of his life received the impression of a bite or a kick. Professor

of Professor Smith's methods in the training of kickers, biters, shiers, jibbers, and every other variety of vicious horses, the accompanying remarkable series of actual photographs has been taken in the arena itself, in which, through the courteous arrangements made by Mr. H. J. P. Wells (Professor Smith's able assistant manager), a special performance took place.

In our first illustration a horse that will not be approached is taught to walk to the trainer whether he will or not. After a few attempts to break away, gentleness and persuasion succeed in teaching him that an umbrella is, after all, a very harmless



THE UMBRELLA CURE.

Norton B. Smith, the teacher in question, is a stalwart Canadian, of youthful yet striking appearance. From his early years his passion for horses has driven him into many a tight place. In the course of his tours round the world, under the care of that veteran showman, Mr. Nat Behrens, Professor Smith has tackled no fewer than *twenty thousand* vicious and intractable horses. The Agricultural Hall, Islington, has recently been the scene of many exciting struggles between man and beast; perhaps not so much from a physical point of view, though nerve and muscle are indispensable in a calling so perilous, but as regards sense and science *versus* brute force.

In order to give STRAND readers an idea

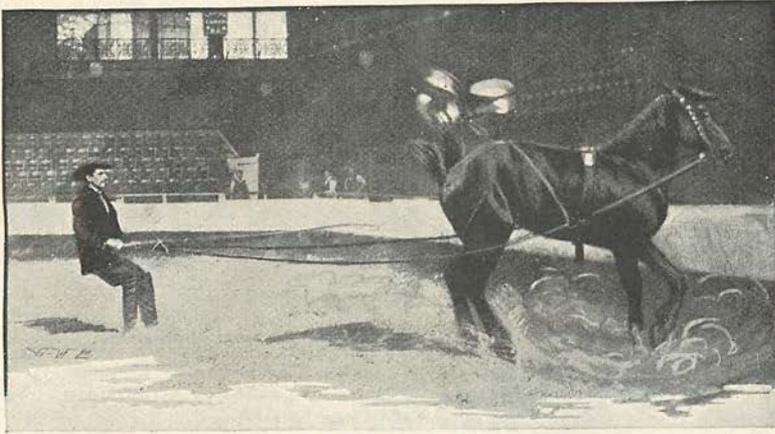
thing. Then a big drum and a quantity of rattling tin pans are shaken before him. Before long that same horse will stand perfectly quiet amid the most deafening noises and awe-inspiring gesticulations with flags, umbrellas, and sticks. In this, the first lesson, Professor Smith's patent training-bridle plays an important part. It is made of three pieces of rope connected by rings. The shortest piece, or bit, is 6in. long, attached to which is a piece 18in. long with rings at the outer end. On the opposite side of the bit is another piece of rope 8ft. long, used as a leading line. When properly adjusted this bridle gives the



THE DRUM CURE.

power to handle the most vicious horse. A glance at the next illustration shows another part of the first lesson, called the drum cure. An ordinary big drum is placed on the horse's back and head alternately, and beaten first gently and then louder, until the horse stands perfectly still.

The training of kickers is one of Professor Smith's strong points, and the process causes much merriment among the audience.



THE TIN-PAN CURE.

A number of noisy tin pans, strongly fixed together, are tied to the horse's hind-quarters, a little above the tail, and then the fun begins fast and furious. The horse lashes out for all he is worth. The Professor walks behind, generally at a safe distance, but sometimes almost too near to seem pleasant. Soon the kicking loses much of its vigour, energy gives way to fatigue, foolishness succumbs to common sense. The horse begins to realize that the pans are very commonplace things, and hardly worth so much attention. It is then that the wonderful intelligence of a horse is seen to the best advantage. He will give a little hop or two, look behind, see that all is quiet and snug—and give in. That is the

first part of the kicking cure. The second, the paper cure, is no less amusing and effective. A couple of large bundles of papers are hung on in the same way as the pans, and the fun begins anew. But the previous lesson has done much towards the kicker's education. He soon realizes that his efforts are futile, and the kicking cure is complete. In cases of great viciousness and obstinacy, the "foot-strap" is used. This is

a very simple contrivance, also of the Professor's invention, and consists of a foot-strap and rope whereby one of the front legs is drawn up at will by the trainer. The horse standing on one fore-leg only is practically unable to kick, and after a time he becomes so anxious that his leg should be left him for use, that he fears to kick lest it

should be drawn up again.

The kicking cure, however, is not without its dangers, as the following anecdote will show. It was in Johannesburg that Professor



THE PAPER CURE.

Smith met with one of the most serious accidents that has, as yet, befallen him. He was engaged in handling a vicious, kicking

mare, when she lashed out; he stepped back to avoid the blow, but, unfortunately, one of the ring assistants impeded him, and the kick took effect on the Professor's groin. A cry of alarm echoed through the house, for many thought the Professor was killed. With the indomitable pluck which has always been his chief characteristic, he refused to leave the ring, although advised to do so by a doctor who was present, and persisted in dealing with his subject until the ring assistants could handle him. He then left the arena for some fifteen minutes, when he again made his appearance, against the distinct instructions of his medical attendant. The animal was once more taken in hand, and the Professor completed the cure amid a scene of the wildest enthusiasm.

"When training a horse with or without any particular vice," says Professor Smith, "I always remember that it is necessary from the very first that the horse should feel that I am really his superior and his master. Now, there are many horses who will not stand to be harnessed or groomed, a habit which causes daily trouble and inconvenience. If you have a horse bad to harness, or who will not stand to be bridled or saddled, take the halter-strap in your left hand, take hold of the horse's tail with your right hand, and whirl him round eight or ten times. He will become dizzy, and the moment you let go he will stagger or even fall. Then say 'Whoa!' pick up your saddle, harness, or bridle, or whatever you want to put on him, and you will find that he will stand perfectly quiet. Never tie your horse's head and tail together, but follow these instructions."

"Whirl him round eight or ten times" sounds delightful, though well-nigh incredible; but it can be done. We have seen the Professor do it, and the accompanying snap-shot is further evidence of the absolute genuineness of the feat.

Another very popular item in the pro-

gramme is no less startling. It consists in throwing a horse single-handed. Professor Smith is a strong advocate for the throwing of horses. He contends that "it effectually takes the conceit out of them." The idea seems sound enough in theory, but whether it is often applicable in practice is a different matter. It requires a great deal of pluck and determination to throw a horse against his will. It is a feat of which any man may be justly proud. We have witnessed a struggle of the kind, and we decided then and there that we would not start a rival show in the horse training business just yet. Let us listen to Professor Smith's directions. "Put a good strong halter on your horse; take a strap with a ring in it, and buckle it round



"WHIRLING HIM ROUND."

the horse's off front limb, below the fetlock joint; take a rope 8ft. long and tie it to this strap; place a surcingle around the horse's body; take your position on the nigh side of the horse, bring the rope over the horse's back from the off side, taking hold of the rope, and pull his foot to his body; take a firm hold of this foot, holding it in that position; then take hold of the horse's halter with your left hand, pull his head to you and

press against his body with your elbow, using the words 'Lie down.' The majority of horses you can throw in this manner in a minute, while others may fight you for three or four minutes. As soon as the animal has been thrown, take the rope that is underneath him, bring it under the surcingle and pass it through the ring of the halter, and back under the surcingle again; and thus you have the rope in position to bring his head over the shoulder. Make him put his head down to the ground, and then if you want to rattle pans or beat drums around him, and he makes any attempt to get up, pull his head up immediately, which will prevent him from rising--then take a whip and crack it round him. Give him to thoroughly understand that you are his master. Once a horse

realizes your power over him, he will do almost anything that a horse could do."

Our illustrations will give a very good idea of the wrestling and throwing feat. In the first place, the horse's front leg is being pulled up and the elbow pressure is begun; then we have a snap-shot of the actual throwing, when both

horse and trainer fall together; while the third picture shows the horse on the ground, being educated to stand the various startling sounds and acts, such as the cracking of the whip, the beating of the drum, the waving of the flag, and the rattling of tin pans. The horse shown here is a powerful creature; a huge van-horse, very vicious and heavy. The process of throwing, however, only took a little under two minutes, and those who were fortunate enough to witness the struggle were unanimous in their admiration of the plucky feat.

When people first hear of the marvellous changes Mr. Smith can effect in the temper, behaviour, and even character of horses, they are more or less sceptical. But seeing is believing, and after a visit to the exhibition they come away quite convinced of the power possessed by the wonderful horse-tamer. "There was an old lady in Manchester," remarked the Professor, "a genial old soul, who told me after the show that she did not think it possible for a man to have such power over vicious beasts. She was talking in this strain for a good while, about horses and their tempers, the way to manage them and so on, and I was



THROWN.



WRESTLING.



AFTER THE WRESTLING.

feeling just a little bit the need of a change of scenery, although, of course, it was a hard thing to get the dear old lady to see this, when off she went at a run into the differences and coincidences, likes and dislikes, between herself and her husband and the rest of the members of her own and his family. I did not find the elocution or the story very enchanting, but presently the old lady made a queer suggestion. She described the character of her husband, and it was pretty much the same temperament as that of a certain horse I had been training that evening. Perhaps he did not kick or bite like the animal, but he did equally nasty things. He would get a little drink in him, and then come home and make things pretty uncomfortable for the rest of the family for a few hours. What the old lady wanted, and was all this time driving at, was for me just to put a bridle and a kicking-strap on her

to move forward at the word of command, one of the attendants drags at the rope tied in the traces. The horse at first resents the slight check, but generally makes up his mind to proceed; then a second man is added to the weight, and a third, until the five or six attendants who assist the Professor in the arena have their hands full in a tug-of-war between man and beast. The scene becomes one of indescribable confusion, much to the amusement of the audience.

To watch the breaking-in of a halter-puller is an exciting entertainment. Questioned as to his method, the Professor said: "Take a rope 15ft. long, and throw it over the horse's back; reach under his body, and take hold of the end of the rope and tie an ordinary slip-knot; make this slip-knot come directly under the horse's body; pass the rope between his front legs up through the



A TUG-OF-WAR.

husband, a heavy bit in his mouth, curb his temper somewhat, and make him go quietly in the domestic harness. I just told the old lady that I was nearly falling off the seat with the honour she was showing me by crediting me with such powers, but that I made a rule when starting out on the horse-taming business never to tame a human being on the same lines; but perhaps at some future date, when all the horses were pretty quiet in harness, I might seriously think of taking up the promising business of husband-breaking."

This little story shows that there is no lack of humour in the horse-breaking business, and our next illustration goes further to show that the performance in the ring leads up to many amusing incidents. The horse at present under observation is a confirmed "jibber," in other words, a horse that will not pull. To reform a thorough jibber is a very difficult operation, and requires a great deal of patience. When, after a few turns, the horse is made

halter, and hitch it to a post or the ring in the manger, but do not hitch the halter-rope. Then step in front with a tin pan, umbrella, or anything handy, and frighten the horse, and make him pull if possible. After pulling back upon this rope he will not make more than a second or third attempt. A few lessons of this kind will break the horse of this habit entirely."

The photograph next given shows the first attempt at curing a halter-puller; in less than five minutes the same horse stood perfectly still under precisely similar conditions.

When handling a "biter," *i.e.*, a man-eating stallion, the Professor uses a very effective, if somewhat novel, method. He says, "I've cured a good many biters by the use of gun-powder. When they are thrown I go towards them, and every time the horse attempts to bite me I fire my revolver—with a blank cartridge, of course. I take good care that the horse is not burnt in any way. The explosion frightens the horse, and he stops



A HALTER-PULLER.

biting. If he tries again, I fire the revolver again. He soon learns that the explosion is caused by his biting, and so he gives up the practice."

Some horses are like statesmen and politicians: they positively hate newspapers; but,

alas, no horse's education is complete without a liberal acquaintance with the Press. Here is a portrait of two horses almost blinded by the flapping sheets about their heads, yet standing erect amongst a scattered mass of paper that once would have roused terror in their hearts.



"A LIBERAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE PRESS."



SHYING.



A FEW MINUTES LATER.

What a marvellous result, but what a sacrifice of the best thoughts of budding authors, reporters, and poets of "the largest circulations"!

It does seem, indeed, as if the path of the stubborn horse were strewn with all the annoyances which wily man can invent. If he is afraid of escaping steam, then he must listen to escaping steam. If he does not like the flash and hiss of rockets and fireworks generally, then he must listen to rockets and other fireworks, until little short of a complete explosion of a pyrotechnic factory would scare him. Our illustrations show this theory carried out in practice. We see the horse shying violently at the escaping steam; a few minutes later he stands under a perfect steam bath without moving a muscle!

Then we see a pair of three-year-olds standing under an artificial railway-arch, from the top and sides of which fall showers of steam and pyrotechnic stars. It must not be imagined that this pair stood thus on their first entrance in the



THE STEAM, FIREWORKS, AND ARCHWAY CURÉ.

ring. No, they were perfect demons then; fifteen minutes later they stood the test without flinching, and were successfully photographed.

The stories that have reached us of the wonderful feats performed by cowboys of the West in conquering their tricky bronchos are daily verified by Professor Smith in his exhibitions. When a broncho once takes it into his head to "buck," he bucks so hard that his rider really does not know where he is. The twisting, twirling, and topsyturvy tricks of the animal are marvellous to behold. The coloured gentleman in the saddle (most of the time he is half out of it) gets his salary for sticking on the horse; and it almost looks as though the horse were especially engaged at a double salary to get him off.

The modern horse's most modern bogey is the steam-roller—to him a most terrible engine of destruction and lumbering obnox-

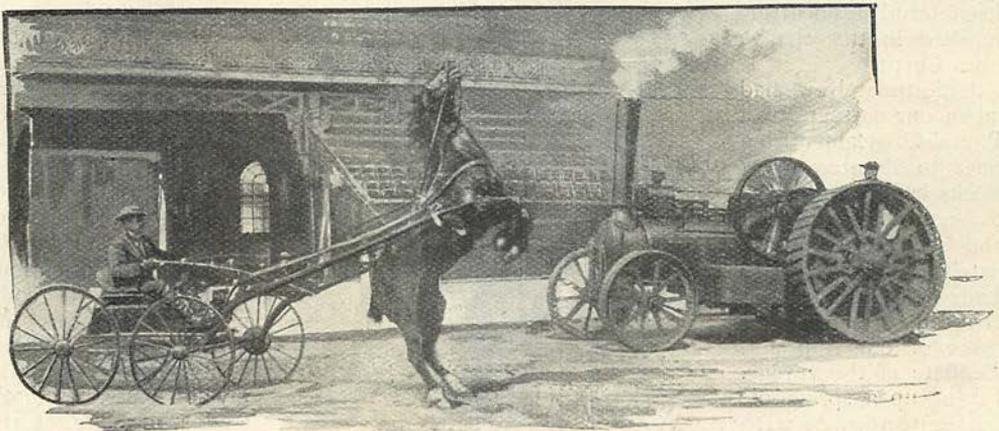
iousness. Round goes the roller, and up goes the horse—that is the sad, complete story of a thousand and one horses of the present day. Hence it is not surprising that the steam-roller should be one of Professor Smith's most modern appliances for curing a "shier." In our last illustration we may note one of the difficulties experienced in meeting a steam-roller.

It is wonderful to note what a lot of paraphernalia a horse-tamer carries with him. Drums, flags, bells, rockets, steam-whistles and sirens, archways, newspapers, tin pans, harnesses, buggies (and emergency buggies!),

miles of rope, umbrellas, and hay. All these are part of his stock in trade; and we know that when the twentieth century comes in with its navigable balloons and flying machines, the Professor will be among the first to add these wonders to his stock for the edification of his nervous pupils.



THE "BUCK-JUMPER."



"ROUND GOES THE ROLLER, AND UP GOES THE HORSE."