MY YOUNG MASTERS:

OR

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF A PONY.

'It's a capital pony, Sir.'—PAGE 11.

LONDON:

GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS, PATERNOSTER

My Young Masters.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS born on a common. In what year or what day of the month I first saw the light I cannot tell, as my race was never famous for a knowledge of the calendar. All that I know about my birth is, that it was a fine spring morning when I first saw the light, and that every thing around me seemed strange to my pony imagination. There was a beautiful blue sky over my head, with here and there a white thin cloud making its way from one part of the heavens to another, and a brilliant sun poured its warm rays about me, which made me feel that it was a very pleasant world in which I was destined to breathe. Under my feet there was a beautiful carpet of green grass, in which wild flowers of various hues and shapes sprung up and looked like diamonds; and high in the air tall trees appeared, which gave variety to the scene. As I gazed on all around, I gave such a skip and bound, as ponies are accustomed to give, and thought I should be happy.

My parent and I were not the only ponies on the common. Some there were who reposed on the green grass, others were quietly feeding on the herbage, while many others were scampering over the common in most admired disorder. Every one seemed to do as they pleased, and as I looked at my pony race, I gave another skip and bound and thought I should be happy.

And for some time I *was* happy. Though my limbs were at first very feeble, they daily gained strength, and as my strength grew my happiness increased. For a period my parent was my only companion. She would not allow me to stray from her side, nor did I feel any inclination to wander from her affectionate care. For my race, though they have not the faculty of speech, have affection for their offspring, and pony colts have some kind of affection for their parents. As long, at least, as we have need of each other, instinct or affection, teaches us to wander side by side, as though we were inseparable.

I cannot relate how long it was that I remained under my parent's fostering care, as I am equally ignorant of the duration of time as of the calendar. In due time, however, my parent did not appear so anxious for my presence, and certainly I was by no means so anxious to cling to her as heretofore. I felt that I was as able to crop the grass as any other pony on the common, and frequently when my parent approached me, I gave my head a toss of independence, and galloped to the other side of the common. Once when

she approached me, I even had the gracelessness to turn round upon her and give her a most severe kick. So have I known some of my young masters in after life, although gifted with reason, which is denied to ponies, spurn the affection which their parents were ever disposed to lavish upon them; and if ponies are graceless for lifting up their heels at their parents, how much more graceless are such rash young gentlemen!

As the spirit of independence crept over me, I became desirous of having a gambol with other colts of about the same age. And rare games did we have together. At first I was by no means so fleet as my companions, but by degrees I felt my swiftness increase, and at length there was not a pony on the common that could outstrip me in our voluntary trials of speed. Sometimes I would leave them all far behind me, then stop on a sudden and wait for their approach, when I would again start forth, fleet as an arrow from the bow.

So passed my early life. But my happiness was not destined to be perpetual. I had often seen some strange looking creatures on the common, who as sure as they came, hunted us about until they had captured one of my race, which they seemed to take away in triumph. These strange looking creatures had only two legs, on which they stood erect, their heads shooting high up into the air. Every part of their form was covered with some kind of clothing: even their heads had something on them, which made them look taller than they really were. They did not move very fast,

and had they depended on their own speed, there was scarcely a pony which would have been captured by them. They, however, did *not* depend upon their own agility. With them they always brought a larger kind of pony, called a horse, and when they had selected the pony they wanted, they would leap on the backs of their horses, and chase their prey till they had caught it, by throwing a rope with a noose round its neck.

For some time I seemed to escape the notice of these strange looking creatures. Would that I had always been unnoticed by them; but one day, after they had been surveying our herd, I found that I was the object of their choice. Separating me from the rest, they one and all uttered a strange kind of cry and hastened after me. On finding this, I resolved to sell my liberty as dear as possible, and to baffle their designs. Many a time did I take them round the common, and many a time did I rush into the herd of my pony brethren, to escape from their hands. But the more I sought to elude their grasp, the more resolved they seemed to capture me. Again and again they separated me from my fellows, and at last worn out by my exertions, my pace slackened, and the noose was secured round my neck. Loud was their cry of triumph on succeeding, and every one crowded around me with delight.

It was a sad day for me when I left the common. My actions seemed to show that I felt it severely. Many a time did I struggle to get free from my captors, but the more I

struggled the tighter the noose was drawn round my neck. I saw, finally, there was no chance of escape, and I submitted to be led away quietly.

Far different was the life I was now destined to lead, to that which I had led on the common. There my movements were as free as air. I could stray where I pleased, and when I chose could lay me down to rest. But now, how strange was the change that came over me.

The first thing my captors did was to place me in some building, which I found was called a stable, and where I was tightly secured to an iron ring in an oaken post. Impatient of this restraint, I kicked and plunged till my very bones ached again. In vain did I try to free myself from my fetters, and if I had succeeded it would have been to no purpose, as my stable had a door which was securely locked. Besides this, it soon became so dark, that I could see nothing, not even the food which my captors had set before me. I had no choice, so I laid my wearied bones down to rest, and as I slept I seemed to dream that some dreadful calamity had overtaken me, and that all my freedom was at an end.

Thus passed my first night of captivity. It was scarcely light in the morning, when an ill-looking creature came into my stable and released me from the iron ring. Now, thought I to myself, as I was led out into the open air, I am about again to become free. Alas, my hope was vain! The man into whose hands I had now fallen, was what they call 'a trainer,

and I soon found what sort of treatment I was called upon to endure. A saddle was secured tightly on my back, and a bit having been put into my mouth, my trainer mounted. Oh what a crushing load did I seem to feel upon me! So keenly did I feel it that I determined to throw my rider. Onward I started at a furious rate, then suddenly stopping placed my head between my forelegs and endeavoured to lighten myself of my burden. But it was all in vain. My trainer was too skilful for me. His whip was applied freely to every part of my body, while his spurs pierced my flanks until the blood flowed freely. This was repeated day after day, and so convinced did I become that it was useless to resist, that in a short time I was what my trainer called 'a civilized pony, fit to carry any christian gentleman.' What he meant by a christian I did not then know, for it was many a long year before I met with a truly christian master. But now, having related my birth and early life, it is time that I began to tell my readers something of 'my young masters.

CHAPTER II.

'It's a capital pony, sir. Can trot ten miles an hour. Easy to ride. Young and handsome. Only four years old, as you may see by his mouth. Never trained a better pony in my life. At first he was skittish, but I soon cured him of that. Jim Norden is the man for training ponies: let them be as wild as the wind in the month of March, he can tame them if any one can. He tried to throw me at first, but I soon let him know who was master. He is capitally trained: though swift as a deer on foot, he is as gentle as a lamb. In a word, he is a civilized pony, fit to carry any christian gentleman.'

Such was my trainer's recommendation of me to a gentleman and his son, as he one day brought me out of my stable. Having thus praised my qualifications, he mounted on my back, flourished his whip, and struck his spurs into my sides, and off I started at the top of my speed. Several times did he pass me to and fro in review before Mr. Colton—for that was the gentleman's name—and his son, and when he dismounted, he patted my neck with seeming affection, and again pronounced me to be a rare pony: as civilized as any pony in the world.

'I have no doubt,' replied Mr. Colton, 'that he is a capital goer. Indeed, I have rarely seen a better. I also admire his action, but I

fear he is too spirited for my son. For you must know, Norden,' he added familiarly, 'that Joseph has not had your experience, and although you might be able to keep on his back without fear of being thrown, he might not be so clever.'

'He throw me, father,' exclaimed Master Joseph with eagerness; 'I should like to see the pony that could throw me! Let me mount him at once; I will soon show that I can manage him as well as Norden.'

'No, no, my dear son,' replied Mr. Colton quietly, 'it must not be. He is a capital pony, but he is evidently too good for you.'

'Too good for me,' returned Master Joseph with a pouting lip, 'I thought you promised me the best pony you could get.'

'And so I did, Joseph, in one sense of the term,' rejoined his father,' but the best pony I could get for you would not be the fastest.'

'I should think it would though,' muttered Joseph sullenly. 'And to tell you the truth, father, if I don't have him I wont have a pony at all. It is just the pony for me, and I must have him.'

''Must' is a word that a son should never use to his father,' replied Mr. Colton, reprovingly; 'and I do not think that I can purchase him for you.'

At the words 'I do not think,' Joseph's eyes glistened again. He saw there was hope, and dropping his ill humours, he threw his arms round his father's neck, and intreated him to comply with his wish. 'He is a dear pony,' he added, and I am sure he will never throw me.'

'I much fear he will,' exclaimed Mr. Colton, as he shook his head mournfully.

All this time my trainer stood silently by, but now, seeing Master Joseph had nearly prevailed, he exclaimed, 'Why bless you, sir, I can assure you there is no fear. Them ponies as Jim Norden civilizes, are civilized for ever. Only let Master Colton have one trial, and you will soon see that the pony is as safe a creature as ever any christian gentleman mounted.'

'Do father,' chimed in Master Joseph, imploringly, his arms being still lovingly thrown round his parent's neck.

Joseph and Jim Norden prevailed. Mr. Colton consented and Joseph mounted, cracked his whip, and off we went. My burden was so light compared with the weight of my trainer, that I felt as though I had only the addition of a feather upon it, and I sped along faster than I had ever done since I had left the common. As I galloped away I could hear a cry of 'stop him, stop him,' but I only went the faster, and Joseph still cracked his whip unheedingly. It was some time before Joseph made any attempt to turn my head, but when he did I obeyed the motion of the rein, and hearing again the crack of the whip, I flew swiftly back again. As Master Joseph and I neared the point from whence we had started, we met Mr. Colton and my trainer running as fast as they could, and panting for breath, the former evidently alarmed for the safety of his son. Joseph must have seen them likewise, but taking no heed of them he

urged me on to the door of my stable, where he sat on my back in quiet triumph, until his father returned.

'Did I not tell you, father, he could not throw me?' exclaimed Joseph as he approached.

'Did I not tell you, sir, there was no danger?' inquired Jim Norden. 'Why bless you, the pony is as quiet as any lamb you ever seed. Them ponies, I repeat, as Jim Norden civilizes are civilized for ever. It is as safe a creature as any christian gentleman ever mounted.'

By this time Mr. Colton had recovered his breath, and the first words he uttered were those of thankfulness for the safety of his son. I must own, Joseph,' he added, 'that you are a better rider than I had given you credit for, and that the pony seems one of the gentlest and best I ever saw; but it does not follow, my dear, that though you have ridden him with safety once, that you will always be so successful.'

Joseph did not wait to hear more. Again his whip cracked, and again I started off, careering like the wind. This time Joseph thought proper to have a longer ride than before. It was some time before he felt inclined to turn the rein, and when he did I obeyed as quietly as could be wished, and flew as swiftly back again. On returning from our second excursion, Mr Colton was quietly waiting for us, and no sooner did we stop before him, than Joseph exclaimed exultingly, 'Now, Papa, I have ridden him in safety twice,' ad-

ding archly, that if his father pleased he would have a third excursion.

'No, no, Joseph,' replied Mr. Colton, 'that will do I think. You have shown yourself far more skilful in horsemanship than I had expected, and the pony has proved himself to be a docile and tractable creature.'

'Did I not tell you, sir,' ejaculated Jim Norden, 'that he was as quiet as a lamb? Why, sir, he is as civilized a pony as any you could meet with in the universal world; and them ponies as Jim Norden civilizes are civilized for ever. It is as safe a creature as any christian gentleman ever mounted.'

And now came the important question—my price.

'For such a pony as him,' replied Jim Norden, 'I cannot take less than thirty guineas. And' said he with assurance, 'he is worth even more, and broadly hinted that I was worth my weight in gold.

'Thirty guineas!' exclaimed Mr. Colton with astonishment. 'Thirty guineas did you say, Norden?'

'Thirty guineas is my price, sir, replied Norden.

'Then Joseph, you cannot have the pony,' said Mr. Colton. 'I am sorry for it but I cannot give so much.'

Joseph, however, was not disposed to give me up so easily. He clung to me and wept a shower of tears, declaring that he should never be happy unless he had me for his own. Mr. Colton was not proof against his son's tears. After a little hesitation he told him to wipe

them away, and bade Jim Norden bring me to Surley Hall at ten o'clock the next morning, and he should have the money.

'Thankee, sir,' exclaimed my trainer, and often during the remainder of that eventful day, did I hear him exult over the bargain he had made. His delight was so great, that I fear from his strange manner when he came to lock me up for the night, that he did not go to bed sober. As for myself, I slept unusually sound, for I was happy in the thought that I was destined to carry a lighter burden than heretofore.

CHAPTER III

JIM Norden was punctual to his engagement. Exactly as the church clock struck ten, the hall bell of Surley Hall made the house ring again with its merry sound, and when the footman appeared, he was requested to tell Mr. Colton that Jim Norden had brought the pony.

I should think that there never was such a bustle in Surley Hall as this announcement created. Every member of the family was seen hastening to the door, and every servant, down to the scullion boy, ran to have a look at me. All seemed pleased with my appearance, and Joseph was in an ecstacy of delight. He hung about my neck and caressed me, calling me his own dear pony. 'Is he not a sweet creature?' he inquired of his mother. 'Is he not a beautiful creature?'

'Yes, my love,' replied Mrs, Colton in gentle accents; 'he does appear to be a very sweet creature, indeed, and I hope that now your father has been so indulgent as to purchase him for you, that you will be kind to all around you, and that you will be, also, kind to your pony.'

'What does Mrs. Colton mean?' I thought to myself, as these words fell upon my ears. 'Surely a young gentleman who has such kind parents and brothers and sisters, as all this family seem to be, can never so far forget himself as to be unkind to them. And surely

young gentleman who can caress me with such seeming affection, can never ill treat me.'

While I was thus ruminating, Jim Norden had received my price, and as he departed, he again pronounced me to be 'a rare pony, as civilized a pony as any in the whole world, and fit to carry any christian gentleman.' I was not sorry to see the back of Jim Norden, and if the mouth of a pony had been framed for laughter, I have no doubt I should have thus expressed my delight at being freed from his severity.

And yet time showed that I had no great occasion for rejoicing. Boys as well as men, and gentlemen as well as trainers, too often prove tyrants to the animal creation.

At first I had no occasion to be dissatisfied with the change that had come over me. I had a capital stable to sleep in, plenty to eat, and generally speaking, kind treatment. As for Mr. and Mrs. Colton, they seemed as if they could not make too much of me. I carried their 'dear Joseph' out and brought him home safely, and that was sufficient to secure their kindness. But it soon became a puzzle to me that they should so much care for their 'dear Joseph.' I have known a great many young gentlemen since, but never did I meet with one so uniformly unkind to all around him as was Joseph Colton. Even I myself, who had been so fondly caressed by him, soon came in for my share of his pettish humours. Kind at first, indeed, he soon became cruel. He had been forbidden by his father to wear spurs, but it was not many days before he

managed to clap a pair on his heels, and they soon found their way into my aching sides. So freely did he use them on one occasion, that the blood which was pouring down, caught the sight of the humane Mr. Colton.

'How is this, Joseph,' he inquired, 'your pony's sides are bleeding? Surely you have not forgotten that I forbade you the use of spurs?'

'Spurs, father?' stammered Joseph.

'Spurs, Joseph, I said,' replied his father more sternly than ever I had heard him speak to his son before.

'You can see father that I have not any spurs on my boots,' rejoined Joseph, while a blush of shame spread over his face.

'I see you have not *now*, returned Mr. Colton quickly, 'but it is evident that you have had. It is no use your equivocating. Your pony's sides tell a tale, the truth of which you cannot deny. It is clear that you have been using him in a most cruel manner, and if I had known that you would have acted thus, I would not have placed him within your power. But it is not too late now to prevent this: if ever I know you to use spurs again, I shall most certainly sell your pony. Cruelty to animals is one of the worst vices to which the young can be addicted, and it would be wrong of me to allow a son of mine an opportunity of inflicting suffering on the animal creation.'

Joseph had evidently not been taken to task by his father so severely before. He hung down his head and pouted, at the same time

muttering to himself that he had not hurt me. For some time, however, he did not venture to put on his spurs again, and I was much more comfortable through Mr. Colton's admonition. My young master, indeed, used his heels pretty freely, but that I did not mind. Happy had it been for him if he had never again used me more cruelly; for then he might have ridden me fearless of accident, and I should have escaped disgrace. It is sad, indeed, when children disobey the commands of their parents; sooner or later they are sure to suffer for their sin.

It happened about six months after I was located at Surley Hall, that Mr. Colton was compelled to go to London for a few days on business. This was a rare opportunity for Joseph. He was pretty much his own master before, but now he had everything his own way.

'Groom,' said he, about an hour after Mr. Colton had left; 'saddle my pony and just brighten up my spurs a bit.'

'Your spurs, master Joseph?' replied the groom.

'My spurs, groom, I said,' rejoined Joseph, cannot you understand?'

'I understand perfectly well, Master Joseph, that you wish to wear your spurs,' replied the groom, 'but don't you recollect that your father forbade you to use them?'

'What is that to you?' inquired Master Joseph haughtily.

'Oh! it is nothing to me, Master Joseph,' replied the groom, 'only I think you ought

not to wear them, and thinking so, I shall certainly not clean them.'

'Then I will wear them rusty,' said Master Joseph, and the spurs were quickly on his heels again.

'I will pay him off,' he exclaimed as he mounted, 'for having got me into disgrace before. He shall feel it before I get home again.'

'Pardon me, Master Joseph, interposed the groom, 'but you had better not use those spurs too freely. He is a high-spirited pony, and wont put up with it I can tell you.'

'You can tell me?' sneered Master Joseph, 'I can tell you what, groom, you had better give me your advice when I ask it and not before,' and so saying he smacked his whip, stuck his spurs deep into my sides, and off I started at full gallop. Still as I proceeded, the spurs were used unsparingly, until at length I became so maddened with the pain, that my young master lost all control over me. The reins dropped from his hands, and all on a sudden he was thrown from my back to a considerable distance. Freed from restraint I darted onwards, but my career was stopped by some of Mr. Colton's labourers, who from a distance had witnessed the accident, and had run across a field to secure me. I was led back by them to where my young master lay, and as I looked upon his seeming lifeless form, although he had been so cruel to me, I could not help pitying him. Yet I could not avoid thinking that he was justly punished for his cruelty towards me, and especially for his disobedience to his parent.

'He is dead; I am afraid our young master is killed,' said one of the labourers as he looked at him; 'yet, no, he is not,' he added after a pause, 'I can see he has a little breath left. We must make haste home with him, else he'll die though.' So Master Joseph was placed on my back again, and while one led me towards the hall, the others supported their young master.

It was a sad scene which I witnessed on our arrival at the hall. Mrs. Colton seemed inconsolable, and every member of the family were in tears. I could hear their sobs as I was led back to my stable, and I wished I had endured the cruelties my young master had inflicted upon me more patiently. I felt that I had disgraced myself, but I was somewhat

consoled by hearing the groom maintain that it was no fault of mine, as he had told Master Joseph what would happen if he used his spurs too freely. It was his own fault entirely, he added, and if he had been killed outright he should not have wondered.

Master Joseph, it afterwards appeared, had been stunned by the fall, and had had one of his legs broken. I dare say it was some time before he recovered, but I never saw him afterwards. A messenger was sent for Mr. Colton, and he had not been home long before he and my old trainer appeared at the door of my stable.

'I was always afraid of him, Norden,' said Mr. Colton, as I was led from my stall; 'and I wish I had never purchased him.'

'Not his fault, sir,' replied Jim Norden. 'It was them spurs as did it. Young gentlemen should never use spurs. Their arms are not strong enough to check the speed which they create. If I had used them that would have been another question; I should have known how to have reined him in had he run away. No! no! Them ponies as Jim Norden civilizes, if used properly, are civilized for ever; and this pony is as safe a creature as any christian gentleman ever mounted?

'I have no doubt, Norden,' replied Mr. Colton, 'that it was the spurs which made him run away, but as I cannot be certain that my son will not use them again, I must part with him. What will you give? Remember the price which I paid you for him.'

'Twenty guineas, I believe, was the price you gave me' said Norden.

'Thirty guineas was the price, if you recollect,' rejoined Mr. Colton.

'Thirty guineas was it?' said Norden, I had almost forgotten it, as I have sold many ponies since. Thirty guineas was a long price, but he was worth it then.'

'And is he not worth it now?' inquired Mr. Colton.

'Why bless you, sir,' exclaimed Norden with well-feigned surprise, 'how can you think of such a thing? When I sold you that pony he had the best of characters, and now look at him. Although he is a beautiful pony to look at, yet he has lost his character for ever. And character is everything to an animal as it is to a human being. If a man loses his character he is worth nothing, and if a pony loses *his* character, he is also worth nothing. I would venture to say he is a marked pony for scores of miles around. Every one has heard how Master Colton's pony ran away with him, but very few knows anything about the spurs, and I don't suppose I could find a customer for him at any price. Howsomever, as you behaved handsomely towards me, I will behave handsomely towards you. I will give you ten guineas and run all risk of getting another purchaser for him.'

It was in vain that Mr. Colton sought to draw more money from Jim Norden's pocket. Ten guineas was the price he would give for a pony without a character, and no more. So ten guineas was paid down, and Jim Norden rode me back to his stable, chuckling all the way he went at the second bargain he had

made with Mr. Colton. 'He without a character, indeed,' he muttered to himself. 'If he has lost one I will give him another, which will set him on his legs again as soundly as ever. No, no, pony, I will give you a character depend upon it, for you are almost as good as a fortune to me, and I will show my gratitude for it by giving you the best of characters in all the universal world. I have done so with the human race, and why should I not with a pony? When John Roe was starving for want of a character, I gave him one, and he has been a man ever since.' And so saying, Jim Norden actually stood up in his stirrups, and laughed outright, though not a soul was near to applaud his ingenuity.

Such was the end of my acquaintance with my first young master. But for his cruelty I might have carried him on my back for many a long year. It is a sad pity when a young gentleman acts as Joseph Colton did. But perhaps it was not altogether his fault. I have often thought that his parents were too indulgent to him. He had not a wish but what was readily gratified by them, and he presuming on their unceasing kindness, instead of being grateful, as he ought to have been, became proud and overbearing. Young gentlemen want proper training as well as ponies, and if Master Colton had had parents who would have curbed his temper, he would have been a very different boy to what he was. Just as if I had not had such a trainer as Jim Norden, I should have been one of the wildest ponies that ever roved about Ambleside common.

CHAPTER IV.

JIM Norden was true to his word. I had not been in his stable more than one night, before he gave me such a character as obtained for me another young master. I was the best pony in existence, he said, free from all vice, fleet as a deer, and gentle as a lamb. Not a word was said about my recent disgrace. On the contrary, he asserted that the gentlemen from whom he had purchased him would give me the best of characters for docility, and his word being taken for it, he pocketed another thirty guineas as my price.

If my new master had been informed of the accident which had befallen Master Colton, I do not imagine it would have lowered me in his estimation. It is highly probable, indeed, that he would have considered me better worth his money. At all events he would not have been afraid to mount on my back, for I soon found that he was what was called 'a crack rider.'

The name of my new master was Mr. Maurice, or as he was familiarly called by his companions, Charley Maurice. He was a young man who had just come of age, and whose parents being dead, had recently succeeded to a large fortune. He had so much money at his command, that he did not care what he paid for anything so long as it was what he considered a 'first-rate article.' In such a light did

he consider me. After a few trials he pronounced me to be the best pony he had ever ridden.

Would that Charley Maurice had never formed such a high opinion of my merits, for then I should have escaped much misery.

I soon found out the character of my new master. He was one of that numerous race of young men who delight in all kinds of amusements. Racing was his chief amusement, and often was I destined to afford him sport.

I remember well the first occasion. While drinking with some of his loose companions, he boasted that he had the best pony in all England. He would match me, he said, for a hundred pounds to fifty, against any pony his companions could produce.

Now it so happened that there was one in the company had as high an opinion of a pony he possessed as Charley Maurice had of me, and a day was soon fixed for our trial of speed. The day came, and Charley Maurice and his friend, in the presence of a host of spectators, mounted on the backs of their respective ponies. My competitor was, certainly to look at, much more likely to win than I was, for he possessed a stouter frame, and his master was of a much lighter weight than mine. Then again, the distance was so great, that it seemed likely I might break down before I reached the goal. Charles Maurice, however, was full of confidence in my powers. Before we started, indeed, he offered to double the stakes, which offer was readily taken. I was flattered, also,

by hearing many of the company offer to lay any money that I should prove the winner.

Well, all things being ready, the signal was given, and off we started. And never did I fly along faster than I did on that memorable day. Inspirited by the cheers of the spectators, and goaded by the spurs of my master, I went away like the wind. And to do my competitor justice, he also, seemed to fly as though he had wings. For the first two miles we kept side by side, but by degrees I passed him, and to make a long story short, I came in winner by about a hundred yards. But oh! how distressed I was when I reached the goal. My heart panted as though it would burst, and I thought how cruel it was of man, for a momentary pleasure, to give so much pain to a poor beast.

It was an unfortunate event for both Charley Maurice and myself, that I was the winner on this occasion, for it ended in our mutual ruin: he in purse and I in bodily vigour.

I have every reason to believe that my young master had never before been in the habit of betting, at least to so large an amount. It was far different, however, from this date. Elated with his success, no sooner had he reached the goal than he again offered to run me against any pony in the world. And this time he increased the sum of the wager: five hundred pounds to fifty. This was taken by a well-known sporting character, and in a few days I had to undergo the same ordeal. By that time, however, I had recovered from the exertions of my first trial, and, strange to say, I

was as eager for the trial as was Charley Maurice. I tossed my head with pride, and seemed by my actions to defy my new competitor. I felt as though I could beat him with ease, although it was evident that he was no mean antagonist. This time, indeed, I found a greater difficulty in winning than I did before: I won, but it was by a neck only.

This second success seemed to confirm Charley Maurice in a career of sporting. Again and again did he back me against others of my race, and though I was not always so successful, yet I managed to win frequently, and for some time to keep high in my master's favour. But these constant trials proved more than my strength could bear. By degrees my wind became broken, and I could no longer sustain such severe fatigues. The last time I run I could scarcely reach the goal, and my young master lost thereby one thousand pounds.

In the meantime Charley Maurice had not confined his betting to his pet pony. Imagining himself to be a skilful judge in the merits of horses, he had become a confirmed better on the race course. And singular to relate, he always waged the larger sum against the smaller. One thousand to five hundred or even less was his usual offer, and he must have been as rich as Crœsus could be, to have sustained this practice for any length of time. Thousand after thousand went in this way, and what was worse than all, he took to drinking to drown care. It was under the influence of drink that he bet for the last time,

and that was for a fearful stake: it was all he possessed against a paltry few hundred pounds, and the race was against him. I fancy I can see him now as he came for the last time into the stable where I was snugly stalled. Rage sat upon his countenance, and as he gnashed his teeth with rage, he reproached me on whom he had once so fondly doted, with being the cause of his ruin. But in this he did me an injustice; for how can a creature endowed only with common instinct, be justly charged with the ruin of a being gifted with god-like reason?

And now another change came over me. It was only a few days after Charley Maurice was ruined that I heard an unusual bustle outside my stable door. I could not make out what was the matter, for every now and then one or other of my companions was fetched out of their stalls, and I could hear the words 'going' and 'gone,' which sounded strangely among the din of human voices, no other word of which could be distinguished. At length it came to my turn to be called for, and then I found what all the hubbub was about: it was an auction of all my young master had possessed.

No sooner was I brought from my stable than every eye was turned upon me; attracted thither by the invitation of a man who held a little white hammer in his hand, and who was standing on a table—he was what was called the auctioneer.

'And now, gentlemen,' said he, 'I have the pleasure of offering you one of the best ponies

in the world. You have all heard of him no doubt, for this is the very pony which Mr. Maurice has so often ridden triumphantly.'

'And by which he lost a thousand pounds,' said one bystander.

'And which from being ridden so often has become broken-winded,' exclaimed another in a stentorian voice, and which I immediately recognised as the voice of Jim Norden.

'Let us see his action,' demanded a third.

This demand was complied with, and again and again was I passed in review before the motley crowd.

'Well, gentlemen,' continued the auctioneer, as at length I was motioned to halt, 'you see what a rare pony he is.—'

'Hark! how he pants for breath,' chimed in Jim Norden.

'I can assure you that he is one of the best ponies in the world.'

'Has been,' again chimed in Jim Norden.

'Has been, and is now,' continued the auctioneer. 'I can assure you he is still a rare pony; what shall I say for him?'

'Broken-winded as he is, I will give you five pounds for him,' said Jim Norden.

'Five pounds only offered for him,' rejoined the auctioneer, 'only five pounds for one of the best ponies that was ever ridden by any human being. Six, six pounds only offered for this rare pony—Seven, thank you, sir—but it is a shame to sell him at such a price. Norden, you know what a rare pony he is; do not let him go for such a trifle.'

'Trifle? why bless you, I think it's quite

enough for a broken-winded pony. Howsomever, as he is an old acquaintance, I will make it guineas. And so after a little more ado, I was knocked down to my old trainer, for the 'small sum of seven guineas.'

'Capitally done! He broken-winded!' exclaimed Jim Norden, as he once more rode me to his stable. 'He may be a little touched, but that is nothing. He is a capital pony still, and if I don't get a few more pounds out of him, my name is not Jim Norden. He is as good as a fortune to me, and I will again show my gratitude by giving him the best of characters. He broken-winded indeed! he may be a little touched, but that is nothing. Hold your head up pony still, for you shall yet have another gentleman for a master.'

All that night as I lay in my old stable, I could not help ruminating on the strange manners of mankind. In particular I could not help reflecting upon those of Charley Maurice. He was a young man of good abilities, and some standing in society. Had he been careful of his wealth, indeed, he might have been one of the leading men in the county in which he resided. He might even have become an M.P., for he had a talent for speaking of no ordinary character. Often have I wished that I could speak as well as he could, for then I would have given my young masters an eloquent lesson on their conduct. I would have reasoned with Charley Maurice on his reckless habit of betting, which of other habits is the most certain to effect the ruin of the young and inexperienced. Men

called 'sharpers' are sure to mark them out for their prey. Indeed, I feel quite certain that some of these characters were the final ruin of my last young master; and it was a great pity that he did not see this before it was too late. *Now* I do not doubt that his eyes are wide open. If he were to ask any of those who had won large sums of money from him for the loan of a trifle he would be denied. It is a sad pity when young men are so blinded as not to see the error of their ways before ruin and disgrace fall upon them, as they have upon Charley Maurice. He who had friends in abundance when I first knew him, was deserted by all before I left. I saw him in his pride, and I saw him in his shame; and if a pony may be allowed to give advice to the young, he would say, 'Take care and shun the course of life which Charley Maurice pursued, for it is one full of danger to your peace of mind, your welfare, and your characters.'

CHAPTER V

It was not long before Jim Norden, according to promise, found me another gentleman for a master. In order to do this, however, he gave me a character utterly at variance with the truth.

'Is he sound in wind and limb?' asked an aged gentleman, who wished to purchase me for his son.

'As sound' was the reply, 'as when I first caught him on Ambleside common, which was no easy matter. I could ride him from morning to night, and he would then be as fresh as water. Yes, sir, I will warrant him for being as sound an animal as you can meet with anywhere.'

Jim Norden's word, though not worth a straw, was taken, and he actually took another thirty guineas as my price; asserting even then, that I was dirt cheap, being the best pony he had met with in all his life. As I looked upon him for the last time, I thought it was a great pity that such an ill-looking being as he was, should have the power of deceiving so many people, and I felt a sort of shame creep over me that I had so many times been made the medium of his deceit. However, it was no fault of mine, for had Squire Mello, who was my new purchaser, examined me minutely, as he ought to have done, I should have told a tale of broken-windedness,

which would have been indisputable. But instead of that he simply asked a question, and received a falsehood in return, which he took for truth.

Squire Mello, however, soon found out the truth. In order to reach his mansion I had to trot behind his carriage for many a long mile. My young master, Alfred Mello, rode me, and a very tender young gentleman he seemed to be. As I flagged for want of breath, he stroked my neck and coaxed me to urge me onwards at a faster rate. If I could have gone faster I would have done so, for a young gentleman so kind as he was, should not have his temper ruffled. And yet such was the case before I reached his residence. Finding that coaxing would not quicken my speed, he first gently touched me with his whip, and this failing likewise, he applied it more vigorously to my back, in order to keep in sight of his father's carriage. But it was all to no purpose: the more he flogged, the more I was behind, and we did not reach Grange House before the carriage horses were snug in their stalls.

'How is this, Alfred?' inquired Mr. Mello, as we arrived, 'how is this, Alfred, that you are so much behind? I should have thought with such a rare pony as I have purchased you that you would have been home *before* and not *after* me.'

Alfred was so tired with his exertions, and apparently so vexed at being obliged to flog me so much, that he could not reply for weeping.

'Why, what is the matter with you, Alfred, my love?' asked his father tenderly, 'Has anything happened on the road? Perhaps you are crying because I reached home first, but really I did not know that you were not close behind the carriage.'

'No, papa, it is not for that,' sobbed Alfred.

'What is it then for?' demanded his father.

'For my pony,' sobbed Alfred.

'For your pony, what do you mean, Alfred?' said Mr. Mello, as he lovingly wiped his son's tearful eyes.

'Oh I fear' rejoined Alfred, 'that that wicked man has deceived us. You don't know, papa, what a difficulty I have had to reach home with him. It has been such pain to me to flog him as I have been compelled to do. You know, papa, that I have always attended to your lessons on cruelty to animals, and I fear I have done wrong. But really, papa, I could not help using the whip. I coaxed him for some time to quicken his speed, but he took no heed of it, and then I was obliged to flog him. I fear he is an obstinate pony, and that that wicked man has deceived us.'

Mr. Mello's attention was now turned from Alfred to me. He examined me minutely, and after a long pause, exclaimed, 'I fear so too, Alfred, my love, but not in the way you imagine. I fear that his slowness of pace did not arise from want of will, but from want of power. But we shall soon know what it arose from; groom will soon tell us what is the matter with him.'

Groom was called, and was told to pass his

candid opinion on Alfred's new pony. And it was not long before it was given.

'Why, how could you buy such a pony as that, sir?' asked groom, with a knowing look.

'Why, what is the matter with him?' inquired Mr. Mello.

'Matter with him?' replied groom. 'Matter enough, I should think, for it can never be mended. He is as broken-winded as he can well be: don't you see how he pants for breath? How could you buy such a pony as him, sir, for Master Alfred? Why he will be worried out of his life to get him along.'

'And yet he was warranted sound,' exclaimed Mr. Mello.

'Warranted sound,' reiterated the groom, 'by whom was he warranted?'

'By Mr. Norden,' replied his master.

'I thought so,' rejoined the groom. 'I thought it was one of Master Norden's tricks. That fellow ought to be transported for a swindler. He is one of the greatest rogues in the world. And now I recollect this is the very pony that was sold at Squire Maurice's sale, and which you sent me to buy if I approved of it. I told you then what I tell you now, that it is broken-winded. And what might you have given for it, sir?'

'Thirty guineas,' replied Mr. Mello.

'I thought so,' continued the groom; 'that is just like Master Norden. Buy for seven, and sell for thirty. That shows what his character is to a certainty. Pity but that fellow was transported.'

'I think so too.' exclaimed Mr. Mello in a

rage,' but if I cannot thus punish him, I will make him take the pony back, and return me the thirty guineas.'

'Wish you may be able to do so, sir,' rejoined the groom respectfully, 'but I fear that would be a difficult matter. No, no, sir, I am afraid you must put up with a bad bargain, for Master Norden is not the man to give money back, unless you go to law with him, and that you know is not pleasant for a gentleman.'

'You are right, groom,' said Mr. Mello, 'I can see that it would be better for me to put up with the loss, than go to law with such a fellow. It may be better for the pony,' he added humanely; 'what do you say, Alfred? Will you keep the pony, or shall I get rid of him and buy another?

'My dear papa,' replied Alfred, as he kissed his father,' 'If you please I will keep him for the present. You have been kind enough to give a great deal of money for him, and although he may not be so good as was supposed, yet, with kind treatment, he may do very well for me to ride about after my lessons are over. And depend upon it, my dear papa, that I will treat him very kindly, and I am sorry that I whipped him so to-day. If I had known what had been the matter with him, I am sure I would not have done it, if I had not reached home for a full hour longer.'

What pony ever had brighter prospects before him than I now had? I felt that I should be almost as happy as I was on Ambleside common. And so I was; for Alfred Mello

was as good as his word. There never was a kinder young gentleman in the world than Alfred Mello. How patiently did he bear with me whenever he found that I could not trave. at the pace he desired! He stroked my neck and coaxed me to move faster, but if I could not, he never again applied his whip to my back; he carried one, and every now and then would give it a switch in the air, but that was all he did. He seemed to know, what few young people ever think of, that beasts can feel pain as well as mankind. Alfred Mello, was, indeed, a christian gentleman: the only one I had ever met with, and if it had been possible, I would have trotted and galloped faster for him than ever I did for any one of my former masters. Men and boys may think what they please, but ponies know when they are well treated, and can even become fond of those who use them kindly. I am sure I was fond of Alfred Mello. Every time he entered my stable I used to prance about with delight, and when he spoke to me I answered with a neigh to show my pleasure.

It was, indeed, a very pleasant life that I led while under the care of Alfred Mello. But alas! that came to an end. In course of time Alfred grew much taller than he was when I first came into his possession; and one day I heard his father say to him, 'Alfred, my dear, you have been such a good and affectionate child, that I think I must treat you with a better pony. Would you object to one that would go faster?'

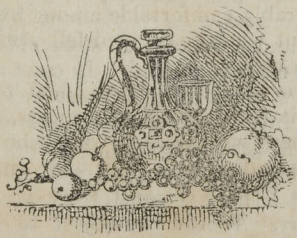
'I should like it above all things, my dear

papa, returned Alfred, 'but somehow or other I should not like to part with my old pony. He really seems to know and to love me, papa.' Then turning to me and patting my neck, he asked in a gentle tone, 'Don't you pony?'

A loud neigh was the only response I could give, but it was well understood by both Mr. Mello and Alfred.

'But, however you may love your pony, and your pony may love you,' continued Mr. Mello, 'I think you now ought to have one, my dear Alfred, which can go much faster. And I tell you what I have been thinking of. You know your cousin Arthur is going to school in a week or two, and that he is to take a pony with him to ride out in his play hours. Now suppose you were to give your old pony to Arthur. I should think that, for your sake, he would treat him well. What do you say, Alfred: can you part with him on these terms?'

Alfred gave consent, and I was destined to become the slave of a race of school-boys.



CHAPTER VI.

BE sure you use him well Arthur,' were the last words I heard my good young master, Alfred Mello, utter, as I was delivered up to his cousin.

Arthur promised to obey the injunction, and on the whole he did as he had promised. Although a pettish and capricious boy, yet for his cousin Alfred's sake he treated me with considerable kindness.

But Arthur was not the only master I had at Grove House Academy. There was not a boy in the school who did not learn to consider me as in part his pony; for Arthur being the youngest boy in the school was glad to escape the tyranny of his seniors by letting them tyrannize over me. Every one was to ride out in turn; Arthur simply reserving the right of riding out once a week. By this arrangement my young master was made tolerably comfortable among his schoolfellows, but what he escaped fell with double weight on me.

I shall never forget what I had to endure among this little world of tyrants. Except Arthur there was scarcely one who did not seem to consider that I was made on purpose to receive his kicks and blows. In the stable and on the high road I was continually tormented. Sometimes two of them would be allowed to take me 'out for an airing,' and

then what I had to endure I cannot describe. Armed with large whips as both were, seated on my back, one would ply the whip before and the other behind, in order as they observed 'to put life into me,' until my bones were weary with pain.

One day as I was treated thus by the Grove House tyrants, I observed an elderly gentleman dressed in black watching their movements. As I looked at him I thought that I could observe a mingled feeling of anger and compassion in his countenance. He called to my riders to stop, but his demand had the effect of making them use their whips more freely, and though almost gasping for breath, I soon carried them out of the reach of hear-

ing. On my return, however, I was surprised to see this same gentleman walking in the playground with Mr. Rose the master of Grove House Establishment. Both seemed very thoughtful, and as they approached, the stranger asked permission of Mr. Rose to put a question or two to my riders.

'Most gladly' was the reply.

'I would begin,' said the stranger, with a grave countenance, 'by asking these young gentlemen if they know who it is that made them?'

After a pause the answer was 'God.'

'Very well answered,' replied the stranger, 'and now can you tell me who made this poor pony?'

My tormentors held down their heads and were silent.

'I suppose you do not know,' continued the stranger, 'but perhaps you can tell me who made all things whether in heaven or in earth.'

Another pause and the answer was 'God.'

'If then,' resumed the stranger, 'God made all things, this pony must be one of his creatures. And now can you tell me for what purpose this pony, in common with all the rest of the brute creation, was created by God?'

'For the use of man,' was the reply.

'You say very right young gentlemen,' rejoined the stranger, 'it was for the use of man that the brute creation was created. But let me add, it was not for their abuse. God never intended that the animal creation should be abused by mankind. This pony for instance was never intended to be so cruelly treated as

I have seen it treated within the last two hours. I have seen two young gentlemen who acknowledge that God made both it and them, flogging it with heavy whips, the blows from which I still seem to hear. I see you stand self-convicted. It is a sad pity, indeed, when young people give themselves up to cruelty; for in after life their hearts may become hardened to all the dictates of humanity. I had a companion once who like you practised cruelty to animals in early years, and who has since become cruel to all around him. Depend upon it, young gentlemen, this act of yours is a very sinful one. God takes account of such acts, and will assuredly bring you to judgment for them. Be sure your sin will, sooner or later, find you out.'

'It shall find them out at once' said Mr. Rose sternly. 'You will please to walk into my study, and in half an hour I will join you to inflict upon you the punishment you richly deserve.'

I have every reason to believe that Mr. Rose inflicted severe punishment on my tormentors, for not long after I had been led to my stable I heard cries for mercy proceeding from two voices in the study. 'Mercy,' thought I, 'what right have those who show me no mercy to expect that it will be shown to them? It is right that those who inflict pain should feel pain in return. Had I possessed the power, I would have revenged myself on them as I did on Master Colton, and I am glad that some one has taken up my quarrel. I hope Mr. Rose will make them feel as I

have felt, and then perhaps my life may not be so embittered as it has been by these tyrant boys.'

I pleased myself with the idea, indeed, that the punishment inflicted would have a good effect on the whole school: that for the future I should not have to endure such kicks and blows as I had hitherto done at Grove House Academy. But this idea was visionary. Of all creatures under the sun, mankind seem to be the slowest to learn the lesson of mercy. I never could have thought, if I had not proved it true, that they were so perverse. So far from teaching the pupils of Grove House Academy a lesson of mercy, the punishment which was inflicted on my tormentors had the effect of making them still more cruel. For a time they were forbidden to use me for their pleasure, but they often stole into my stable to have what they called their revenge on me for being the cause of their severe chastisement. Many a sly kick did they give me in the stall in which I was enclosed, and when they were again permitted to ride me out they took me into a bye-lane, and when they were satisfied that no one was near they used their huge sticks more vigorously than they had ever done before. So cruelly was I used that before the close of the half-year I was nearly worn out, and when Arthur rode me home I was but the shadow of what I was six months before.

From this time, however, I have no further complaints to make of cruel treatment. It so happened that when Master Arthur returned

home his cousin Alfred who had presented me to him, was on a visit to his father. Of this I was soon made aware, by hearing his footsteps approach the stable door. As he entered he started back and enquired of Arthur whether that was his old pony.

'Certainly Alfred,' was the reply, which I confirmed by a faint neigh of recognition.

'It certainly is' continued Alfred, 'for he still knows me, but how is it, Arthur, that he is in such a miserable condition? surely he has either not been well fed, or he has been very cruelly treated. I hope Arthur that you have not been the cause of his sad condition.'

'No indeed, dear Alfred, I have not,' replied Arthur, 'but you must know that I am the youngest boy at Grove House, and to escape the tyranny of the older pupils I have been obliged to allow them to use my pony. I was often grieved to see how cruelly he was used by them, but if I had said any thing about it I should have been ill-treated myself. You don't know what a life I should have led if I had not allowed them the privilege of riding out; every one would have been mine enemy. I hope, therefore, Alfred, that you will not think I have been ungrateful for your kind gift.'

'Poor pony,' resumed Alfred, addressing himself to me, and gently patting me, 'yours has been a hard life indeed. You have had many cruel masters. But we must see if we cannot make your life easier.' 'Arthur,' he added, 'I am satisfied you have not acted cruelly towards my poor pony, but I must

speak to your papa about what you have told me. I am sure he will neither let you nor your pony be unkindly treated.' Then giving me another gentle pat, Alfred left my stable.

What this best of my young masters said to Arthur's father I cannot relate, but certain it is that to him I owe a life of comparative ease and pleasure. While Arthur remained at home, he was allowed to ride out on my back when he pleased, but in the course of a few weeks I missed him, and I found that he was again sent off to school, and that I was to be reserved for his use when he returned.

It was in this interval of leisure, that I thought of recording my life and adventures. They are not recorded, indeed, by me personally, for a pony's hoof is not formed for holding a pen. One kind friend, however, who is acquainted with me undertook to tell my story and I have no doubt that he has done it much better than I could have done it myself. I hope that those young people who may read it will learn from it a lesson which they will never forget; namely, to shew kindness to the brute creation. Oh! what a tale of woe would the beasts of the earth have to relate could they open their mouths to tell what they have endured at the hands of man! Mine has been a hard lot, but I fear there are ponies in the world, whose lot has been much harder. Happy shall I be, therefore, if by relating my experience I shall prove myself instrumental in lessening their woes. That alone is the intent of my narrative.

So ends the life and adventures of a pony. And now let the friend who has recorded it ask the young reader, whether he has not made out a claim for his race to be kindly treated? Is his not a useful race? Do they not administer to the pleasures of young gentlemen? Many a weary step would they have to take, if they had not ponies to ride upon! Then why should they be cruelly treated? Should they not rather be always treated as Alfred Mello treated his pony? It is a more serious thing than young people generally imagine to trifle with the pains, or to make sport with the miseries of the animal creation. Scripture says that the meanest of such creatures is the care of heaven. I should advise my young readers, therefore, to use them very kindly. A poet justly says:—

The spring time of our years
Is soon dishonoured and defiled in most,
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But alas! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrained, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
Mercy to him that shows it is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;
And he that shows none, being ripe in years
And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn.

BROOMBRIDGE AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW.