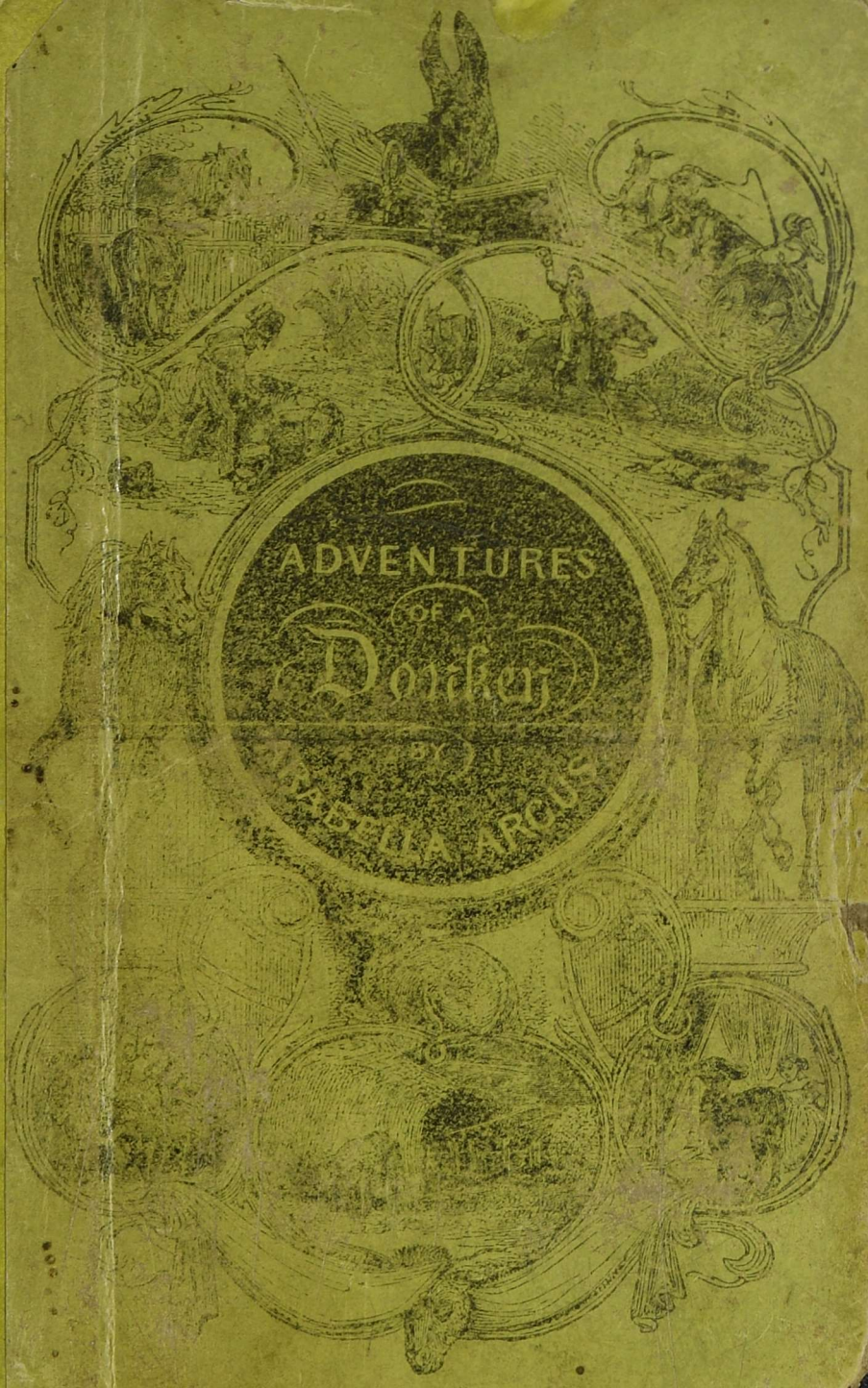


ADVENTURES  
OF A  
Dorchester  
BY  
MABELLA AROUS



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ADVENTURES OF A  
DONKEY  
[ca. 1835]



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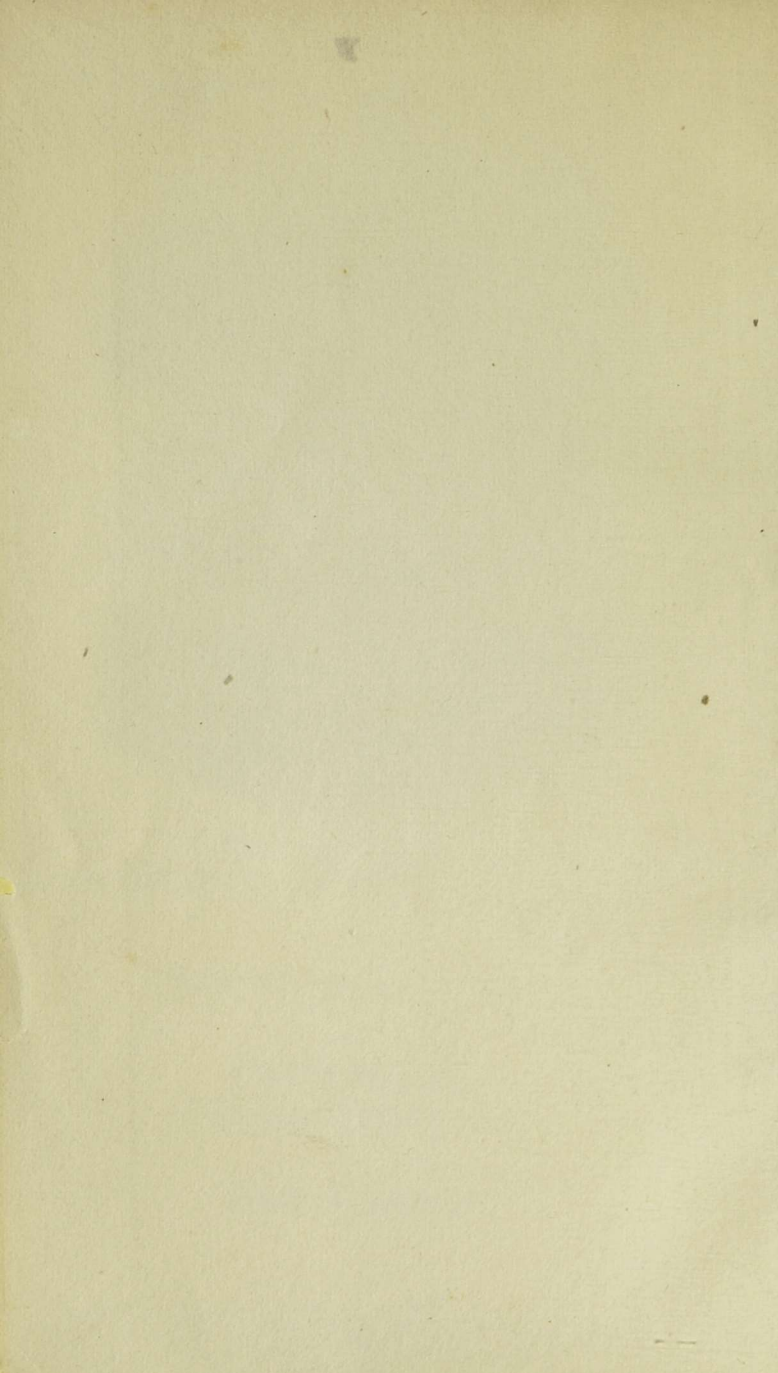
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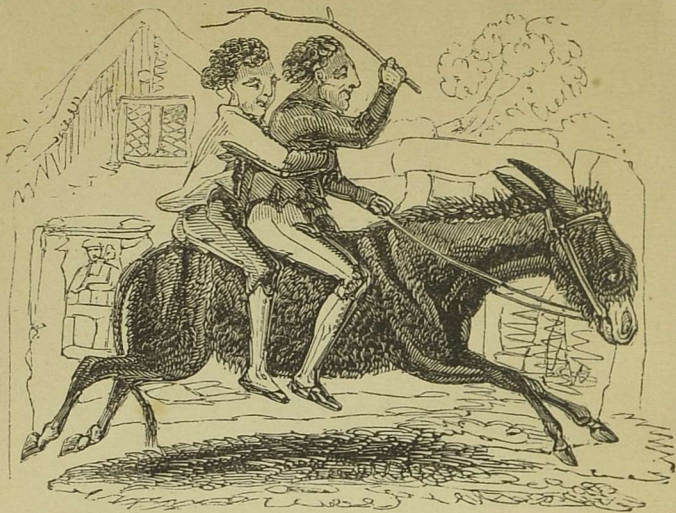
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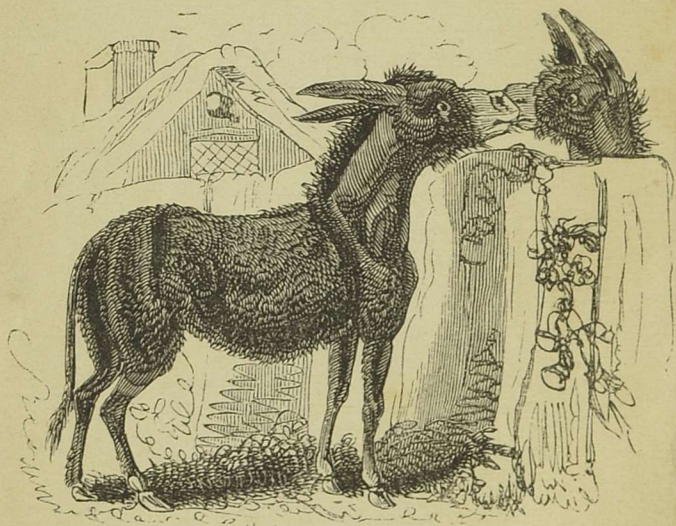
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“Two ragged children mounted my back, and, proud of having something on which they could exercise their authority, galloped me up and down the village.”—Page 135.



“Dear Jem, is it you!” he exclaimed; and we rubbed our noses together with unrestrained affection.—Page 215.

THE ADVENTURES

OF

A DONKEY.

BY

ARABELLA ARGUS.

AUTHOR OF THE "JUVENILE SPECTATOR," &c.

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LONDON:

WILLIAM DARTON AND SON,

HOLBORN HILL.





THE  
ADVENTURES OF A DONKEY.

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“ Poor little foal of an oppressed race !  
I love the languid patience of thy face ;  
And oft, with gentle hand, I give thee bread,  
And clap thy ragged coat, and pat thy head.”

COLERIDGE.

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*Prefatory Address.*

THOUGH the services of my species are no longer of that character which distinguished them in former ages, I presume to think the biography of an Ass may yet be worthy of publication. Pride of ancestry, a usual weakness amongst bipeds, will, I trust, be forgiven in creatures doomed (even in their most fortunate estate) to bear the taunts and insults of the *rational* part of the creation. If we refer to antiquity, it must be allowed the record is every way consoling to our feelings as a class ; and though the comparative happiness of any

animal at distinct periods is of little moment to his present content, it cannot be denied that there is something satisfactory in reflecting on the respectability of our progenitors. Thus I, an Ass of the eighteenth century, obtrude my history on the public; and while I avoid the arrogance of claiming particular merit on the score of pedigree, I honestly confess there have been moments in my life when the memory of my descent has proved highly congenial to my feelings. Naturalists (as I believe those learned persons are called who describe the genus and character of animals) have done us justice as a species. Mine, as a domestic sketch, will bear none of those features of authorship which embrace deep research and elaborate disquisitions. I present for your patronage the life and adventures of a home-bred Donkey, and, trusting to the liberality of an enlightened juvenile public, remain their respectful and obedient Servant,

JEMMY DONKEY.

## CHAP. I.

“Sincerity” is my motto ; I am therefore compelled to begin, by declaring that the early seeds of vanity were sown in my breast by the praises of a doating mother. I was scarcely ten months old, when I overheard my mamma repeating to my papa all the handsome things farmer Howel had said of me. I now recollect her voice faltered as she closed her recital, and from this I conclude that she even then anticipated our separation. For myself, I was so elated with the words, “He is a remarkably handsome Donkey,” &c., &c., that I never thought of the price set upon my head, but gambolled from morn till night, and, while my parents pursued their accustomed labours, remained a stranger to the cares inseparable from servitude.

Description would fail me, were I to attempt to portray the attachment *our* mothers feel for their offspring. I well remember exciting the alarm of my mamma one evening.

I had pursued some ducks into a barn, and was enjoying the fright I occasioned, when her well-known voice echoed through the meadow. I fled at the summons, and to this day have not forgotten the tender chidings and affectionate caresses she bestowed upon

me as her fears subsided. Farmer Howel, though a humane man, was sedulously attentive to his own interest; thus, in the absence of my parents, I found myself an object of some moment to his visitors. Modesty induces me to omit the flattering comments which occasionally reached my ears. Whether this organ in our species, from its size, is more exposed to the admission of vanity, I presume not to decide; it is sufficient to say, *I* listened with delight, and retained *all* I heard.

Various opinions were passed upon my capacity. One thought it would be a pity to harness me—another recommended taking me to Tunbridge, where there could be no doubt of my selling well—a third declared a private family where there were children would be the most profitable plan.

The farmer seemed pleased with this last suggestion, and I suppose believed he knew a likely purchaser, for I was released from further scrutiny, and again scampered at liberty. I ought to blush while I add, that I buried these consultations in my own bosom, and, if this concealment ultimately spared my parents some necessary pangs, it must be confessed that my *motives* were highly reprehensible.

Ambition, however, had pervaded my every feeling; I had thrust my head through an

aperture in some old palings one day, and was snuffing the air in listless vacancy, when a Donkey smartly caparisoned (on which sat a beautiful young lady) came trotting down the road. "O happy Ass!" sighed I, "shall I ever be so blessed?" To add to my delight, a footman on horseback followed. "Here," said I exultingly, "here is a triumph for us!—the horse, our imperious enemy, in attendance on an Ass!" Sleep fled my eyes that night; white leather bridles, stuffed saddles, and handsome young ladies, haunted my imagination. I dare say I was very troublesome; for my father complained that I kicked the straw about, and was remarkably restless.

All that the farmer and his friends had said recurred to my memory, and, though I could not decide which proposition best pleased me, the idea of change was in itself enchanting, and I longed for the moment that was to effect this wish of my heart. Alas! it arrived too soon, though I did not immediately discern my misfortune.

My readers may have felt the inconvenience of a tight shoe, but they can have no conception of what *we* suffer under the hands of *our* shoemakers: suffice it to say, I was shoed according to the usage of our genus, and, like other thoughtless animals, soon forgot my pain in the novelty of these

new appendages. I have since learned that pride is, in most instances, attended with pain. I dare not contradict the remark, having some reason in my person for believing it true. Yet I know you will all smile at the little airs I assumed on this important epoch in my life.

In the first place, the addition to my height seemed immense; I actually lowered my head as I entered or issued from our stable: my poor mother laughed at me sometimes, and at others would sigh prophetically; but my chief pleasure consisted in kicking up the dust, and making all the noise I could with my shoes. The farmer and his wife were highly amused with my freaks. I had received two or three handfuls of hay from them upon different occasions, and, attributing these kindnesses to my powers of entertainment, I ventured to intrude on forbidden ground, scampered into the paved court, and finding a pail of warm milk standing invitingly in my way, had nearly drunk the whole when the dairy-maid approached. Conceive my amazement when this virago fell upon me, and, not content with the stripes she inflicted with a clothes-prop, threw a large stone after me; fortunately I escaped from her cruelty, but not without adding to my crime by kicking over the pail in my flight. I hope I am not

injudicious in expressing my gratitude for that texture of skin which makes us less susceptible to pain.

I persuade myself, *rational* animals will not take advantage of a confession of this sort, nor indeed does my present experience lead me to question their knowledge of what we *can* bear.

But to proceed: whether the indignity I had suffered being the first of the kind, or that the spite of a female was more particularly wounding, I know not. I looked anxiously for the return of my parents, and no sooner did they arrive than I hastened to unburthen my grief. My mamma listened dispassionately.

“You did wrong, Jemmy,” said she; “the milk was the property of our master, and intended for the use of his family.”

“How was I to guess that?” said I. “Besides, it looked so nice and tasted so sweet. And pray, did not the farmer sell your milk? How many shillings have I seen paid for it! Nay, I heard Mrs. Howel say her little boy’s life was saved by drinking Asses’ milk.”

“All this may be true, Jemmy,” replied my mother, “but it does not lessen your fault. In the first place, nature has kindly bestowed upon us a palate suited to our stations in life; delicacy of appetite would

be a grievous misfortune to animals invariably left to provide for themselves. This freedom, however, by no means authorizes indiscriminate depredations on our part; happiness consists in being contented with our lot; and while the Ass can browse in the fertile meadow, and slake her thirst from the neighbouring stream, rest assured she enjoys more real comforts than thousands of her species."

"Grass and water!" said I, tossing my head disdainfully. "Why, every Donkey gets these. Why, my dear mamma, I saw a beautiful Ass the other day, with a smart saddle and a white leather bridle; do you think he lives upon such mean fare?"

"Ah! Jemmy, Jemmy," sighed my mother, "you are a stranger to the Donkey world: that well-dressed beau, who has excited your childish envy, would most probably claim our compassion did we know his private history. 'All is not gold that glitters,' child; fine trappings dazzle the ignorant and inexperienced. I am afraid you will too soon be placed in a situation to judge for yourself. May honesty actuate you on all occasions; endeavour to please your employers, and recollect that docility is not only valuable in itself, but highly conducive to your happiness as an Ass."

There must be something intoxicating in



the feelings of youth; though I listened to my mamma with all possible deference, and thought her sentiments wise and just, it is certain they made no lasting impression on my mind. The very next day saw me guilty of a trespass. A can of ale was placed within a hedge for the farmer's men, who were then getting in the hay; my quick scent drew me thither; I cannot say the smell was fragrant, but I thought there could be no hazard in tasting it—I did so and shuddered, took a second taste and liked it better: again I turned to the can and drank heartily, when a voice vociferated from a distance, and the next moment a stick was hurled at me. Less fortunate than formerly, I sustained an injury in my leg, and under the influence of pain began capering about. This agitation produced a confusion in my head, resembling, as I should imagine, the feelings of an intoxicated *rational* animal: if my conjecture is right, this vice is every way degrading, for I remember, I became an object of ridicule to the farmer's men, who stood laughing at my antics, while two or three Donkeys of my acquaintance actually shunned me for some days. Nor dared I complain of my broken shin, lest my parents should interrogate me respecting the accident which had caused it. I am afraid I shall appear a

very faulty Donkey in the eyes of my readers—an anticipation that would deeply wound my sensibility, did I not firmly believe, that many frolics of the enlightened and educated biped, which excite a smile during their “acting time,” if delineated fairly would appear equally unjustifiable. In truth, I shall have occasion to contrast our errors ere I close my history.

Months rolled on, during which I was doomed to hear myself reviled as a most mischievous animal, an arrant thief, &c., &c. I hung my head and looked silly at first; chance, however, initiated me into the art of expressing my indignation. Balaam, a very sagacious old friend of my father’s, being compelled to resist the brutality of some boys one evening, I observed that his countenance acquired considerable fierceness as he exhibited his teeth and brayed loudly. Thinks I to myself, “This shall be my plan; I will no longer bear insult tamely.” Alas! the presumption of ignorance! An opportunity soon presented itself—“Here comes thieving Jemmy,” said the dairy-maid of farmer Howel, calling the carter to drive me into the meadow. I felt indignant, and facing them boldly, grinned (as I thought) most formidably, braying at the same time with all my might. Instead of alarming my enemies, my efforts excited their derision,

calling forth peals of laughter at my expense. If all imitators were thus humbled in their first attempts, I am persuaded mimicry would cease to be a prevalent foible amongst Asses. Observe, I do not deny the propriety, the almost necessity, that a Donkey, like a man, should entertain a just sense of his prerogatives; it is the folly of assuming these privileges prematurely that I condemn. Politeness may induce *some* animals to overlook this precocity in *their* species; with us it is quite otherwise; the natural simplicity of our characters is such, that though man should omit to wound us, our own class are vigilant in reproofing the most trivial affectation in the young.

“Poor giddy thing!” said old Balaam, as I retreated from the scene of my disgrace. “Come here, child! So you were really so weak as to imagine you could frighten those people by your puerile braying!”

“Why,” said I poutingly, “I have seen you do the same.”

“True, but I am of an age to claim respect,” replied Balaam; “added to which, my services entitle me to some consideration. You should endeavour to conciliate esteem; let me tell you, Jemmy, you will lead a sad life, if you set out with these false notions of your own consequence; you must learn to bear and forbear, and above

all things avoid the folly of aping your elders."

Though Balaam's wisdom was proverbial in our family, there was a sternness in his manner which frightened rather than convinced his auditors; nay, I am tempted to add, that to his mistaken asperity on numberless occasions, I attribute some of my subsequent indiscretions.

"What if we are born to labour," would I exclaim mentally—"I see men and women return from their daily toil cheerful and happy, and may not an Ass perform his appointed task and retain his natural vivacity? When *I* get a place, he shall see I know how to conduct myself."

As these soliloquies occurred, I always found my thoughts reverting to the smart saddle and bridle of a certain Donkey. "And when *I* am so dressed," would I say, "old Balaam shall see me; I will trot down the green lane and shew him my finery."

Now nothing could be more like an Ass than this resolution of mine; but I must not anticipate. I was surprised one morning, by farmer Howel's presenting a sieve of corn for my acceptance, and, hastening to avail myself of this luxurious treat, was for some minutes unconscious of the snare into which I had fallen. A rope, a common rope, was passed round my neck, the sieve with-

drawn, and in a few minutes I was led out of the meadow. It was in vain I brayed and called upon my mother; she was from home, and the carter, my old enemy, was little disposed to attend to my sorrow. I recollected my mother's advice, "that docility was an amiable trait in a Donkey," and endeavoured to accommodate my feelings to my situation. The journey seemed tedious to my companion, who frequently lashed me with the rope in order to quicken my pace. At length we stopped at a noble-looking mansion; I was ushered into an extensive field of well-grown grass, and, being released from my ignoble bondage, for a moment forgot that I was far distant from my parents.

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## CHAP. II.

### *First Impressions.*

THIS memorable event took place in the eighteenth month of my existence: the promptness with which my removal was accomplished, left me totally ignorant of my future destiny; yet, ere the evening closed, I experienced an attention which bore some promise of kindness. A fat, red-faced woman (whom my gratitude transformed into a goddess) threw an apron full of cabbage

leaves before me ; I ate a hearty supper, and, fatigued with my journey, looked around for a shelter for the night. A building almost equal to farmer Howel's house had already received two or three horses ; I tried the door ; it was locked ; nor would my prejudices or courage have led me voluntarily to expose myself to insult and contempt, could I have found access. No ! it was one of those efforts suggested by despair, in which reason yields to circumstances. Old Balaam's sombre warnings glanced across my mind. " Alas !" thought I, " to conciliate esteem where no consideration is awarded, appears enigmatical to me ;" and my eyes were suffused with tears, as I recollected the half-tiled home of my parents. " They will think of their poor Jemmy to-night ; would I were again in their stable, though I never more tasted a cabbage leaf." It was not easy to my Donkey capacity to reconcile the contradiction of providing a good supper for an animal, and leaving it without a shelter for the night. The neglect of my owners roused me to exertion ; forcing my way through a hedge, I wandered near the house, till espying a door open I ventured in ; it was a small building, and by the light of the moon I discovered it to be a brew-house. Our olfactory nerves are very delicate : thus, though one of my senses was

somewhat offended by the smell of the place, necessity compelled me to submit to the inconvenience. You may smile at the idea of a Donkey's dream, and would perhaps call me a downright Ass if I related mine on the night in question; to avoid the imputation of weakness I desist, though I am convinced a two-legged author would mould my dream into a most interesting episode. Well, morning arrived, and with it a full sense of my situation. On first opening my eyes, I stood in profound amazement, not exactly recollecting where I was: no sooner had memory recalled the incidents of the preceding day, than that sagacity which even Donkeys partially share, told me, I was not in my proper abode — to effect a retreat without discovery was desirable. I was rejoicing in my adroitness, when a gentleman in a scarlet jacket ran after me, and before I could gain the field half a dozen pebbles were levelled at me.

“Leave the Donkey alone, Robert,” said the fat Lady, my cabbage-leaf friend. And advancing towards me she added, “Poor Jemmy! did he forget to open the shed for you last night? Poor fellow! I'll take care it sha'n't happen again.”

I brayed in my most melodious style, hoping it would be understood as an expression of gratitude. I don't know that Mrs.

Bond penetrated my meaning, but her uniform kindness leads me to believe, there *are* persons in the world who appreciate and comprehend the feelings of a Donkey.

How often have I listened to the praises bestowed upon horses and dogs! How many records of their sagacity have reached my long ears! Alas! my vanity does not help me to one anecdote, one incident, in which *OUR* talents, natural or acquired, are favourably exhibited; yet in attachment to our masters and that faithfulness of memory so highly prized in the animals I quote—in these essential qualifications I *think* we stand nearly equal. It cannot be our rough exterior that places us beneath notice; for, as far as I can judge, beauty is not the exclusive possession of any particular class of animals.

But to proceed; I had sighed for a change in my mode of life, yet content was a stranger to my bosom. The voice of my parents no longer gladdened my heart: if my food was more sumptuous, there wanted that social intercourse, that lively chit-chat to which I had been accustomed. The days seemed grievously irksome, and though Mrs. Bond had politely shewn me my lodging apartment, it was impossible for a Donkey of my disposition to avoid some portion of ennui in a seclusion so unbroken. I began



to wish for some employment, now first discovering old Balaam's maxim to be just, "that idleness is fatiguing." An unusual depression had seized my spirits one afternoon, when perceiving my good friend Mrs. Bond, I ran towards her.

"Ah, poor fellow!" said she, "I can't stop to talk to you now; we are all in a pucker; and *you* will have enough to do when the pet comes."

"What does she mean?" said I to myself. "I never heard of such an animal."

While reflecting on the import of this speech, a travelling chaise with four horses turned into the court yard: a number of men-servants ran to and fro, and amongst others the man in the scarlet jacket, whom I now discovered to be a groom. Amused by the bustle, I stood looking over a gate, when a shrill, squeaking voice exclaimed, "Robert! Robert! shew me my Donkey; I say, Robert, I want my Donkey."

"He's in the field, Master Frederick," replied the groom. "I can't go with you now, Sir; if you'll wait till I've done in the stable, I'll give you a ride."

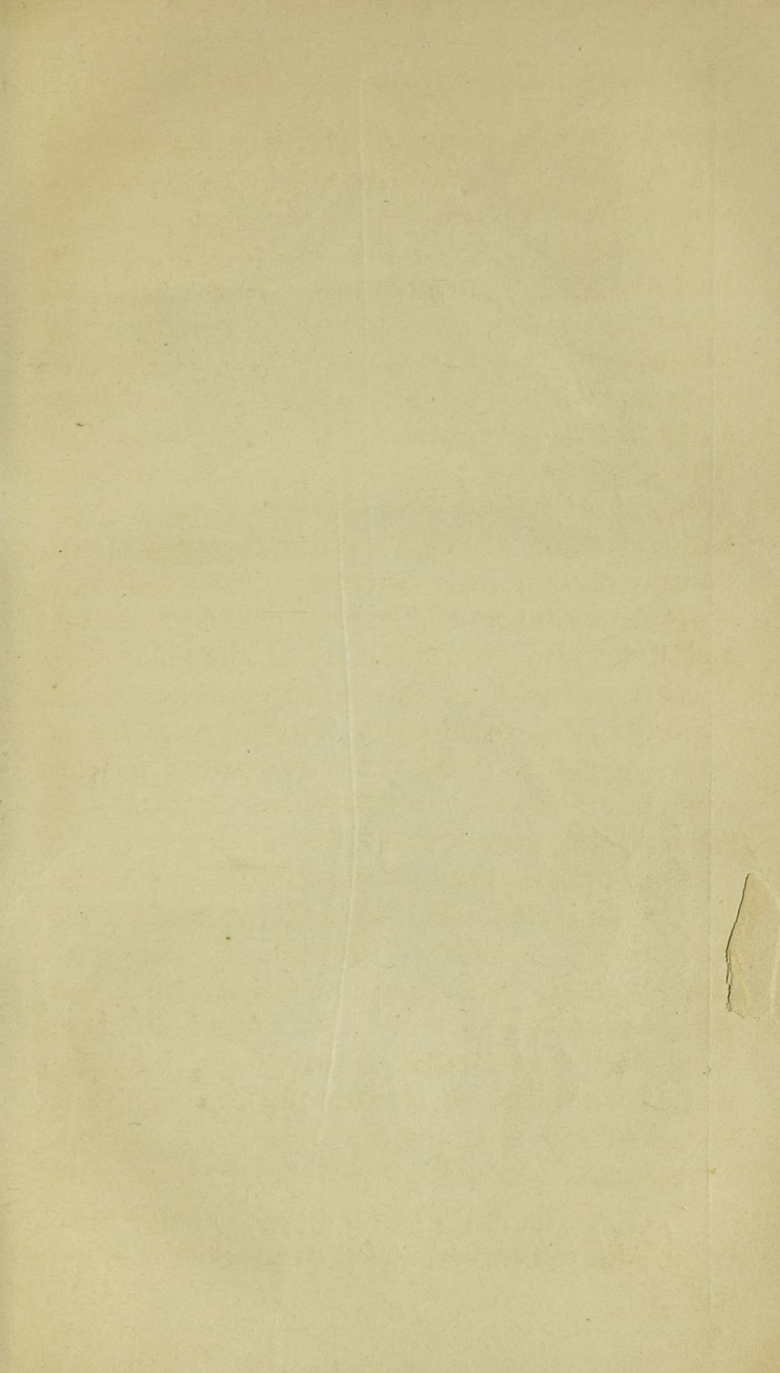
"But I won't wait, I will see him directly," resumed the young gentleman: "leave the horses, and come along with me."

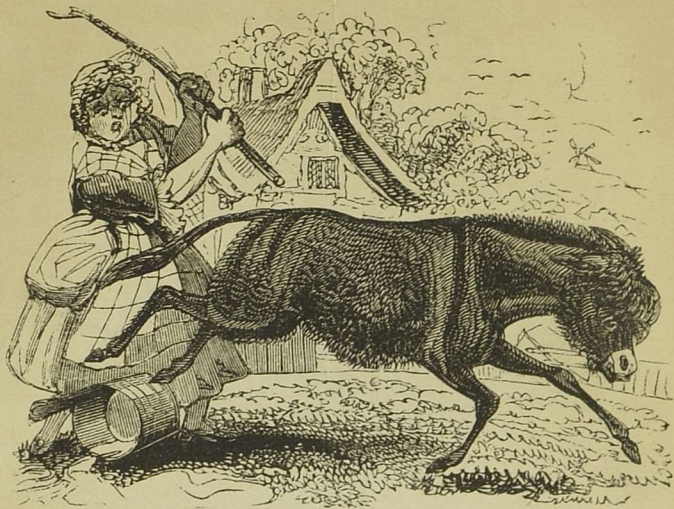
"What, leave my horses, Sir, after such a fag! No, no, Master Fredy; if you can't

wait I can't help it; only take care you don't worry the Donkey; he's a proper vicious one, I promise you."

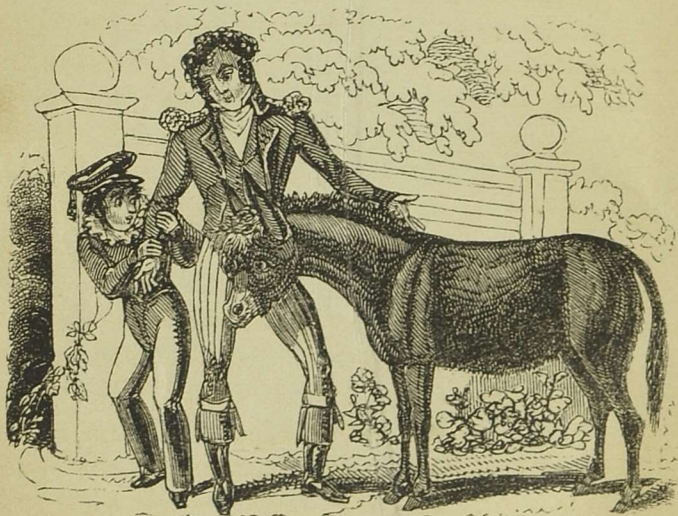
I concluded from the sketch the groom had thought proper to give respecting me, that my young master would avoid my presence. Deeply wounded that the prejudice of this man should so far mislead him, I assumed a cheerfulness foreign to my feelings, and, displaying my figure to the greatest advantage, endeavoured to engage the notice of Master Frederick by a thousand graceful movements: my exertions were unheeded, the young gentleman retiring at the summons of a man-servant. "We are indeed an unfortunate race," sighed I; "traduced by tongues that know us not, yet will be the chroniclers of our doings. I clearly perceive an Asinine existence is synonymous with misery."

These cogitations of your humble servant may with justice be traced to my early education. Balaam had impressed me with those gloomy anticipations which mar our present enjoyments. Ah! how different were the sentiments of my dear mother! but I cannot even at this distance of time speak of her without the liveliest emotion. I was regaling on some potatoe parings, and musing on my fate, when Robert introduced my young master into the field. Resolved on





“Fortunately I escaped from her cruelty, but not without adding to my crime by kicking over the pail in my flight.”—Page 8.



“The groom who had laughed heartily at Frederick, now coaxed me, patted my sides, and persuaded the child to mount my back.”

Page 21.

refuting the representation of my enemy, I approached Master Frederick with the utmost deference: as I drew near he retreated, till with a terrific scream he hid himself behind Robert. What was my mortification to find that *I*, who had been called a handsome Donkey, was an object of alarm to my owner! Now, as you all know, looking-glasses make no part of *our* domestic furniture, but we supply this deficiency by never drinking except from the clearest water within our reach. It is therefore unnecessary to add, that, like yourselves, we regard our reflected likeness with some little degree of partiality; if *we* exceed the bounds of prudence in the indulgence, remember I am speaking of Asses, and that it would be unreasonable to expect in an Ass more than belongs to him as an Ass. But I declare no stream in which I ever saw myself had impressed me with the belief, that my face or figure was calculated to frighten any person.

Overcome with disappointment, I continued to gaze mournfully upon my master. The groom who had laughed heartily at Frederick, now coaxed me, patted my sides, and persuaded the child to mount my back.

“I won’t, I tell you,” exclaimed the child; “he will throw me off, I know he will.”

“Let me hold you on,” replied Robert,

throwing a rope round my neck. After many assurances, the little gentleman was mounted. I cannot say I felt quite easy; his weight was trifling, but this was my debut as a beast of burden, and I somehow feared it would not prove auspicious.

Two or three quiet walks across the field inspired my young Nimrod with courage.

"Make him trot, Robert," said he. I instantly fell into the most agile motion. O sad mischance! Robert missed his hold, and my rider fell to the ground. The screams of Frederick brought Mrs. Bond to his assistance. Robert declared the young gentleman was not hurt, and endeavoured to pacify him.

"I will go and tell mamma you laughed at me when I tumbled off that ugly Donkey," said Frederick, pushing the groom with all his strength.

"O fie! Master Fredy; why I thought you was more of a man than to cry at a fall upon the grass," said Mrs. Bond.

"Get me a whip, Robert; I will beat the Donkey," resumed Frederick.

"No, Sir, I shall do no such thing," retorted Robert. "The Donkey carried you as well as possible; it was my fault in letting him slip from my hold."

"Then I wish I had the whip; I would give you a good lashing, that I would."

“Would you indeed?” laughed Robert. “I should like to try you.”

Enraged at the mirth of the groom, the young gentleman made his escape.

“Why he’s worse than ever,” said Mrs. Bond. “It is quite surprising to me, that such good people as my master and mistress are, should spoil their child so foolishly.”

“A puny, snivelling little pet!” rejoined Robert. “I pity Jemmy; sure enough he’ll have a fine time of it.”

“So then I am the servant of that animal called a pet,” thought I, and I reverted to all the creatures I had seen of the same size and genus. Farmer Howel had children, but to me they appeared quite a different description of animal. Neither pouting nor fretfulness had ever fallen under my observation. And as Master Frederick seemed to possess many comforts, I concluded the word *pet* to imply a discontented, self-willed animal, and I grieved to find myself the slave of such a tyrant.

It was remarkable, that Robert, who had hitherto taken pleasure in teasing me, from the moment of my master’s arrival adopted a distinct line of conduct. It seems to me, that mere thoughtlessness will at times induce a species of cruelty, void of malice. A good marksman (to shew his skill) will shy a stone at us with fatal accuracy. I

can assure these hurlers, we do not doubt their capability, but protest against the honour of being used as targets.

If I suffered individually at this period, I am willing to allow my situation afforded me views of life highly edifying to an inexperienced Donkey. I saw horses curried and dressed with the nicest care, and I beheld them lashed and beaten on the most trivial occasions. Though a stranger to corporeal suffering, my sympathy was powerfully awakened by these spectacles. "Ah! what shall I be in the hands of an angry master!" thought I; nor could I exactly ascertain the foibles which subjected them to this treatment. Time has enlightened me on this subject, and I now boldly declare, beasts of burden are as liable to suffer from the *temper* of their masters as from their own fallibility.

The parents of my young master deserved the eulogium Mrs. Bond had bestowed upon them; they were in themselves amiable, and would frequently reprove the impatience of Frederick; but alas! this spoiled boy had been too long habituated to indulgence to submit to controul. His natural timidity increased my difficulties: if I kept a walking pace, I was "a stupid brute;" if I ambled gaily, "a mischievous creature." I bore his revilings calmly for some time, yet it



was grievously humiliating that *all* my efforts should be so misconstrued; and in truth, my Donkey pride was offended that a saddle and bridle had not been provided for me. Under the impulse of this feeling, I one morning contrived to shift the green baize substituted for a saddle, and gently laid my master on his back; again Robert was my advocate, and by proposing the immediate purchase of the necessary trappings, appeased the tears of Frederick.

Mrs. Fenton assenting to the expenditure, I waited the hour of equipment with all the little anxiety of pride, and perhaps some of my readers will understand my disappointment, when I declare, nothing could be more contrary to my expectations than the dress Robert purchased. A common saddle and dark leather bridle for a Donkey whose imagination had been inflated by a glimpse of the most elegant Ass in the kingdom! This disparagement was not to be borne; I looked contemptuously on the groom, and in my own mind wondered such a commission should have been left to his taste. It is impossible for an Ass to guess how bipeds are affected by the stupidity or bad taste of their dress-makers, &c., &c. I only know I shrugged my shoulders with scorn, and would scarcely submit to be dressed. Ro-

bert conquered at last, and I was decorated in my new habiliments: what my sensations were at that time I cannot describe. In conforming to the fashions of the age, my readers enjoy a thousand advantages which a *solitary* Donkey must not hope to experience. I believe that fashion would cease to be of consequence altogether, did not emulation keep it alive. Now I (who had sighed to appear with all the splendour of a domesticated Ass) received these honours at a period when my talents and general character were totally obscured; thus the mere tinsel of ornament lost its most attractive charm, the power of exciting admiration; for that Master Frederick or any of the family would discern my merits or do justice to my personal beauties was what I dared not anticipate.

It must be allowed, fortune jumbled an odd variety in my juvenile path; but perhaps I err; and it is rather the singularity of my taste, which tempts me to lay these memoirs before the public, than any peculiar hardship in my fate. At all events, I am a truth-telling Donkey, and, writing from the heart rather than the head, I promise to be as succinct in my subsequent history as in these my first impressions.

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## CHAP. III.

### *A New Master.*

Two months of incessant drudgery had completely taught me to bear the restraint of a saddle, when Master Frederick on a sudden declined my services. I thought myself happy in losing his patronage, and was looking forward to a little ease, when Mrs. Fenton inquired if I could not be made serviceable, and proposed harnessing me to a Donkey cart: Robert replying in the affirmative, I was accordingly appointed to the honour of drawing my mistress about the grounds. The change was agreeable, and though somewhat above my strength, I acquitted myself to the satisfaction of Mrs. Fenton. But it was in vain I looked for the delicate white bridle, the object of my ambition. "Surely," thought I, "a lady will never bear to handle such common reins; why, even the pet complained that they stained his gloves!" My mistress, however, continued to employ and commend me without thinking it necessary to alter my dress. If the humanity of Mrs. Fenton had not interfered, my whimsical young master would gladly have added to my toil in these excursions, by taking a seat by her side.

"No, my dear Fred, I cannot allow you

to ride with me ; it would be too much for the poor Donkey," would she say. " Ask Robert to teach you to drive, and you shall take an airing before breakfast."

Alas ! this was putting new arms into the hands of an enemy. Robert undertook the office with a sullenness for which I could not then account, but, during the process, I gained an insight into the character of my master, which in a degree justified the repugnance of the groom.

In proportion as the feeble mind of this boy had rendered him contemptible to those about him, his arrogance increased ; every failure to which his pusillanimity exposed him, was revenged on those persons he considered his inferiors. Of course the *animal* who could not express himself orally, received his portion of ill-usage. If Robert was called " fool, rascal," &c., &c., my sides felt the effects of Master Frederick's temper ; fortunately the strength of this young tyrant was not that of a Hercules, or my situation had been miserable indeed. About this period a most agreeable change took place in our family ; a young lady and gentleman, relatives of Mrs. Fenton, made us a visit. Charles Fairfax was in his twelfth year, his sister Marianne a year younger ; their open, good-humoured countenances and lively spirits formed a striking contrast to

the peevish features of my master, but I was not so credulous as to decide on their characters from an index of this nature. No! it was their subsequent conduct which then claimed my gratitude, and enables me at this moment to speak of them with pleasure.

Nothing could exceed their astonishment when Master Frederick one morning thought fit to scold the groom, because the stable door had been locked, and he could not get my saddle exactly when he wanted it.

“You great fool, you; you are always doing wrong,” said he: “get me the saddle directly; here my cousins have been waiting this hour. I am sure my papa would be very angry if he knew you took the horses such a long airing, and I’ll tell him when we go to breakfast.”

“I am not your servant, Sir,” replied Robert, “nor do I know who would have any thing to do with you that knew you.”

“Hold your tongue, and do as you are bid,” resumed the little tyrant.

“Pray, Sir, do *you* wish to ride the Donkey this morning?” said Robert, bowing to Master Fairfax.

“Not particularly,” replied Charles.

“Then, Sir, if it is no disappointment to you, I will not give Master Fredy the saddle till I have seen my master; he would not

suffer his servants to be treated as they are if he knew it, but I will tell him my mind if I lose my place."

"To be sure you think yourself of great consequence, Mr. Bob, but I know something, and I'm determined I'll tell, so you had better give me the saddle."

"You get no saddle from me, Sir," retorted Robert; "but I think, when I tell all I know, somebody will sing to another tune."

Marianne Fairfax had very properly retreated from this altercation, calling her brother to look at a brood of chickens. I gladly pursued their steps, delighted to be near children whose appearance impressed me in their favour.

"I declare, Marianne, I never heard any thing like Frederick," said Charles. "I hope he will not expect me to take his part; the groom has treated him as he deserves."

"O, he was always a pet," replied Marianne; "but pray look at these pretty creatures; did you ever see such a fine brood?"

Charles was admiring the chicks, when Frederick, seizing my tail, caused me to start, and in avoiding him I accidentally kicked one of the little flutterers. Marianne ran to the spot, and taking up the chick, examined it tenderly; I listened with much anxiety, and was delighted to hear her say

its limbs were not broken. My tranquillity was of short date; a heavy stroke on my back nearly knocked me down.

“What are you about, Frederick?” said Charles, wresting a spade from the hands of my master.

“Why he deserves a good drubbing,” retorted Frederick; “he might have killed the chicken.”

“And you might have killed the Donkey, had the blow fallen on his head.”

“Well, it is my own if I had, Sir, and that spade is mine,” said he, endeavouring to regain the murderous weapon,—“and this field is mine; it is very odd I mayn’t do as I please in my own house.”

“I don’t call any of these things yours,” said Charles, “and if they were, you would have no right to act as you were doing.”

“O to be sure you are very good,” sneered my master; “but I say the Donkey ought to be thrashed, and he shall too.”

“Not while I am here to prevent it,” continued Charles, restraining the arm of Frederick; “but if you pull my hair, Frederick, I shall be forced to give you a thrashing, so I warn you in time.”

Marianne interposed, and begged her brother would leave him to himself, and take a walk with her in the shrubbery. Charles marched off with the spade on his shoulder:

this act, in itself one of humane courage, roused the anger of my vindictive tyrant, who, waiting till my friends were out of sight, attacked me again. As I have before observed, his powers did not keep pace with his intentions; I was more worried than injured by his malice, but thinking a little braying could do no harm and might bring my champion to my aid, I uttered two or three sonorous notes, and as I expected so it happened. In an instant Charles Fairfax leaped over a gate, and approaching Frederick, exclaimed,

“Touch the Donkey again, and I will either give you a drubbing, or carry you to your father.”

“Do if you dare; I should like to see you carry me, indeed! I dare say you think yourself a fine fellow because you have been two years at a public school; but who cares for you? Not I, I assure you.”

“It would be difficult to say what you do care for, except indulging your own humours,” replied Charles. “Believe me, Fred, I will not interfere with these so long as they are confined to yourself, but I should be ashamed to stand by and see you ill use a dumb animal, merely because the groom has offended you.”

“That’s right,” retorted Frederick; “I’ll get Mr. Bob a good rowing;” and running



off, he left my champion smiling at the vaunting cowardice of my silly master.

Though I do not profess to be a scientific Ass, nor in the least addicted to philosophical inquiry, there are certain estimates that a merely observing *animal* will make, and, by *chance*, stumble on probabilities. Thus I, a beast of burden, declare, that our fatigue is increased or ameliorated by the *temper* of those we carry; (of course this remark applies only to our services *à la cheval*;) I persuade myself this is not a Donkey chimera, but a truth that would be generally acknowledged were *we* in the habit of submitting *our* opinions to the public. There is something elastic in good humour; it gives a buoyancy to the frame similar to what it imparts to the countenance; while sullenness, passion, or any other deformity of the mind, by its uncertainties, diminishes the zeal of the employed, and makes *that* a task which might be made a pleasure. Charles Fairfax was more robust in appearance than my master, yet, when he did me the honour to mount my back I was all agility, anxious to display my best paces, and this without a touch from the whip.

But to return to the fracas I witnessed: I was beginning to regret that the habits of a Donkey precluded him from knowing what

occurs within doors, and that in consequence I should not hear how the cousins adjusted their difference, when Mrs. Bond entered the field with some provender for your humble servant, and was instantly joined by Robert.

“I thought you’d get your warning,” said Mrs. Bond, addressing the groom; “but Master Fairfax has done some good for us all, I hope.”

“Good! why he’s the finest fellow I ever saw: yes, little sniveller tried his worst, but master actually coloured for shame when young Fairfax spoke up; would you believe it, the spiteful monkey asked his father if he allowed the Donkey to be fed with oats? You know master is a little particular about stable expenses. ‘I never gave the Donkey one oat since he came from the farmer’s,’ said I. ‘But you gave me some for him, which was just as bad,’ said young mischief. So then I up and told, that Master Frederick was always in the stables taking the oats, that I was afraid he would get a kick some day or other, and that for peace and quietness’ sake I gave him a few oats one morning, and never but once. I wish you’d seen young Fairfax when I said this; you never saw such a scornful look as he gave our young one.”

“And what did mistress say?” asked

Mrs. Bond. "Why, she said, I ought to leave the saddle where Master Fenton could find it, as it was a great disappointment to the child, when he got up early on purpose to ride his Donkey, and was prevented by my carelessness. I said he could not put the saddle on if I left it out, and if it was not well braced he might get a fall. My master said I was right, and seemed satisfied enough; but the pet thought he'd get me into a scrape yet, so he begins again with, 'Ah! Mr. Bob, with all your impudence you can't deny that you was out two hours this morning, though papa said an hour was enough.' Now there was no standing this from a child, so I told master that I'd borne a great deal of bad language from his son, and that I had resolved to tell him of his swearing, but, if I was to be called to account by a baby, I would leave my place.

"Let him go, papa; send him away to-day," said Frederick. "No!" said master, "I'm afraid you have been a very bad boy, Fred." Mistress looked vexed, and asked where I had taken the horses that morning. I told her to the farmer's, by my master's orders. "Very true, Robert, I had forgot that I told you to do so," said master. "Well, then," said my mistress, "only take care and leave the Donkey ready every

morning by eight o'clock, Robert.' 'Will that make you happy, my love?' said she, hugging the young rascal. 'I don't know,' sobbed little Squeaky. Master Fairfax burst out a laughing: 'Well done, Fred, that's honest,' says he, 'for I don't think the Donkey is a greater favourite with you than Robert.'

" 'O yes, he's very fond of his Donkey, Charles,' said mistress, 'and will soon ride like a little man.'

" 'I hope Fred will never think of making *me* one of his favourites, then,' replied young Fairfax, 'for I should be sorry to receive such proofs of his regard as he bestows on his Donkey.'

" 'I should like to know what business you have with me or my Donkey, Sir?' said Frederick; 'I tell you it is my own, and I will beat him and kick him whenever I please.'

" Master grew quite angry at this, called Frederick a 'little savage,' and declared he would send the Donkey to the farmer's, for he had been worried to death by the frights and whims of his son ever since the animal came to the Hall.

" 'It is such an ugly, vicious beast,' said Fredy; 'Robert said it was; he knows he did the very first night we came here.'

" So then I said, the Donkey was a very

fine one, and though I had warned him not to ride him but when I was by, it was because I knew the beast wanted training like all other animals; but it is not by ill using him, as Master Fredy does, that the Donkey will ever be made a good carrying one."

"' You have said enough, Robert,' said master. ' Farmer Howel shall have the Donkey again; no child of mine shall use any animal ill. I am afraid we have helped to spoil you, Frederick, but I hope it is not too late to save you from becoming wicked.'"

"I left the room, but Thomas says, young Fairfax offered Frederick his hand, and declared he would not have said a word about what passed in the field, if he had not thought his cousin unjust to me. It seems the little pet defended himself, but the other was too clever for him, and master was so pleased with what his nephew said, especially about Frederick's trying to get me into disgrace for the very thing I had done to please him, that he wished over and over again he had such a boy."

It will readily be believed I was deeply interested in this discussion; it was not so much the important figure I made in the narration, as the conviction that intellectual animals occasionally condescend to think of us and of our sufferings: and with that

spirit of good fellowship which leads us to forget injuries, I augured favourably of the future conduct of my master. This was my first thought, the succeeding one told me I must no longer call Frederick Fenton my master. And as I had heard that Mr. Fenton was very decisive when he made a resolution, new hopes stole into my bosom that I should return to the farmer's and again see my parents. Next morning undeceived me in this particular. Dr. Manton, a physician, calling to see Mrs. Fenton, expressed a wish to see Master and Miss Fairfax; they were in the garden, and my mistress, in accompanying the doctor in search of them, came in contact with me.

“Where did you get that fine Donkey?” said Dr. Manton. “I am looking out for one: can you recommend me to any person who would serve me well?”

“You shall have that,” said my mistress; “we want to get rid of him.”

The doctor made a few inquiries, and I heard myself formally consigned to Dr. Manton. Something like a sigh escaped my bosom; it was grievous to perceive how lightly I was estimated where I had never voluntarily offended; while the recollection of Mrs. Bond's many kindnesses in the cabbage-leaf department, sensibly depressed my feelings. “I am again launched on the

world," thought I, "and perhaps, at a greater distance from my parents, new ills may await me: custom has, in a degree, reconciled me to my present lot; shall I have fortitude to bear a change which may only prove a change in suffering?" The white bridle flitted across my mind—"Ah!" thought I, "this may be the moment in which my hopes are to be realized."

Pardon me, my gentle readers, nor deem a Donkey a more egregious Ass, because an object so unimportant in your eyes to *him* appeared so attractive.

What is ambition, but an ardent desire to possess that which we believe would increase our happiness? Men seek fame and hoard gold without considering the instability of either of these possessions: yet, I never heard that the disappointments of the few diminished the ambition of the many.

Thus, whether it be a white-leather bridle or the treasures of Golconda, *time* only can elucidate our mistake; and, by unveiling the passing hour, teach us to value those which have fled for ever.

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## CHAP. IV.

### *A Journey and its Consequences.*

You will do me the justice to believe I

did not quit Fenton Hall without a sigh; but I am so little tenacious of being included amongst gourmands, that I am really scrupulous of declaring all I felt when the blue apron of Mrs. Bond was lost to my view.

Suffice it to say, my sensibility was painfully awakened: but, alas! there is no way of describing our griefs pathetically. If I said my tears flowed plenteously, you would laugh at the idea of a Donkey's tears; pallid cheeks do not rank amongst our personal beauties.

It is impossible to attempt the heroic style in the biography of an Ass; I must descend, and in simple language tell you, my heart was heavy, and I could not disguise it. It was some consolation to me to perceive, that Robert seemed sorry to part with me; I rubbed my nose gratefully against his sleeve as he threw the reins round my neck. The doctor had mounted his horse and taken the bridle in his hands, when he questioned Robert respecting my temper, &c.

“He is as good a Donkey as can be, Sir,” said Robert: “he has not had a fair chance here, but I will answer for him where he is well used.”

The doctor vouched for the humanity with which I should be regarded where I was going, and we issued forth.



This eulogium of the groom's deserved and obtained due consideration from me. "In giving me a good character to my new master, Robert has done me all the service he could," thought I: "yes, it must be my constant endeavour to merit the patronage of my employer:" and, like half a thousand projectors, I was laying down a plan of conduct perfect in theory, though its practice proved too much for Donkey philosophy.

The gentle pace of the doctor, and his encouraging expressions, beguiled a journey of five miles, insomuch that, before we reached Penrose, Dr. Manton's home, I found my spirits greatly revived. That prejudice known to exist between the Horse and the Ass had subjected me more than once to a contemptuous glance from my companion. I bore this patiently, perceiving that his rudeness did not escape the notice of my master, who was obliged to use his whip in order to make Martello quicken his pace. I entreat you to understand, that I did not rejoice in the stripes Martello received. No: it was my sense of the politeness due to me as a stranger, which led me to hope the doctor's reproof might prove salutary.

Penrose was delightfully situated, and, though not so spacious as Fenton Hall, an air of comfort was diffused through the

grounds ; the cattle seemed to enjoy the most luxuriant pasturage, while the dwelling of my master appeared a perfect picture. "Happiness must reside here," thought I to myself, and in the fulness of my joy I was no sooner shewn into the paddock than I rolled on the grass, as if to take possession of this charming spot of earth. Imagine my confusion on discovering Martello and an old mare eyeing me with disdain from a neighbouring enclosure ; recovering my feet, I returned their stare. I had heard Mrs. Bond say, "A cat might look at a king:" and surely an Ass might look at a Horse ! Whether my countenance has any thing very comic in it, or that my juvenal effrontery moved their risibility, I know not ; they snorted loudly, threw back their manes, and galloped away.

While I was yet reflecting on the arrogance of my neighbours, the doctor and his son entered the paddock.

"If I thought we could get a side-saddle in the village," said Mr. Manton, "I should like to have the Donkey completely caparisoned before Caroline sees him."

"Shall I go to Wilcox ? Perhaps he has one," replied Mr. George Manton. My master acquiesced, and the gay gentleman departed on his errand.

What a palpitation I experienced during

his absence ! It was evident I was the appointed servant of a lady, and a white leather bridle seemed the natural consequence of such a distinction.

I paced the field, peeped over the gate, and regarded every approaching passenger with fixed attention. "Hope was deferred;" George Manton returned alone—my chagrin would have been obvious, did Donkey physiognomy make any figure in the studies of the biped. Be that as it may, my bosom admitted the good within my reach; the young gentleman patted me on the head as he passed, and as I followed him, plucked some grass with which he condescended to feed me; delighted with these attentions, I continued to accompany him. The doctor joined us; when I had the pleasure of hearing that Wilcox would bring a saddle he thought likely to suit, in the course of an hour. I had fancied myself rather fatigued with my journey, but this intelligence so entirely altered my feeling, that I seemed equal to any effort, and only longed for the arrival of the saddler.

That blissful moment came—the saddle fitted, and oh! enchanting sight! the "white leather bridle" at length graced my figure. Transported with myself, I would fain have sought some liquid stream in which I might catch a glimpse of my

person; the thing was impracticable at this juncture; and though the sun shone, and occasionally traced my shadow accurately, there was nothing to excite one's vanity in this sort of reflection. It is true, I was mindful of my carriage, wore my ears erect, and was in that happy temper of mind which makes every thing agreeable. I yet knew it was possible to increase my satisfaction, and I had every disposition to make the attempt. Mr. George Manton attended my toilet, and was pleased to express himself much to my liking.

“Poor Caroline will be delighted with her Donkey,” said he, and he sighed. “Dear girl!” he continued, “may it afford you a transient gratification, and we will endeavour to be satisfied that our intentions are directed to your comfort.”

“Ah! this is just what she will like,” said the doctor, examining me. “Come, George, lead him into the court, and I will persuade her to walk on the lawn.”

George Manton took the reins, and I hastened to meet my mistress; as we turned the angle of the house, I discerned a sweet-looking girl leaning on the arm of the doctor.

“My dear, Sir,” said Miss Caroline, “how kind you are! I shall be afraid of expressing my wishes, if I am to be the

occasion of so much trouble to you;" and walking towards me, she declared I was the handsomest Donkey she had ever seen.

"And I hope he is appointed to carry a docile girl," smiled the doctor, "who will never venture to misapply terms, and call that a trouble which is my highest gratification." Miss Caroline pressed the hand of the doctor; I thought she looked sorrowful, but it was very becoming to her, for her manner was perfectly natural. Mr. George Manton proposed her trying me immediately; my fair mistress making no objection, I had the inexpressible delight of conveying her to a spot called Prospect Point, at the summit of an adjacent hill. George Manton walked by my side, occasionally applauding the steadiness of my pace, and bestowing on our species in general the most flattering commendations. "Yet the Ass is an animal whose services are ill requited," said my mistress.

"Cruelly so," replied George Manton. "I declare I have often felt disposed to interfere in their behalf, particularly in London; where the heaviest loads are imposed on them without the least regard to their strength, or to the poor food on which they subsist."

"I have often thought the hardy nature of the Ass exposed them to greater suffering,"

resumed Miss Caroline. "We are anxious to provide for those creatures whom nature has made less independent, while such as can shift for themselves are liable to neglect."

"This does not excuse us, Caroline; on the contrary, it places our characters in a most unamiable point of view. There is a want of feeling, of common gratitude, in denying our support to the animal that performs its duties faithfully, and, as I believe, few persons deny the advantages of economy, I cannot comprehend why the services of the humble Donkey should go unrewarded."

"If this poor fellow could understand us," rejoined my mistress, gently stroking my neck, "he would know he had fallen into good hands; but the brute creation collectively claim my compassion; there is something shocking in the idea of a horse, a dog, or any animal, being pampered and petted one day, and on the next, ill-used, if not starved."

"The fluctuating nature of that animal, man, makes this too probable, Caroline; as your knowledge of the world increases, you will find this instability is not confined to his dumb inferiors. Power is a dangerous weapon, and, like riches, frequently changes the character of its possessor."

My mistress, smiling, replied, "Well,

George, we shall see how you use your wealth."

The young gentleman answered gaily, but there was a melancholy sat on his brow, which to me appeared extraordinary. The dew beginning to fall, we turned towards home, where I left my lovely burthen and repaired to a comfortable shed appropriated to my use.

It would be impossible to picture my individual happiness at this period; but, alas! I had drawn a false estimate of that of the Penrose family. Miss Caroline was not the daughter of the doctor, but his ward; the sweetness of her temper had endeared her to every member of the family; the servants contended who should wait upon her, and it was with deep regret I perceived she daily required more assistance. Naturally delicate, my respected mistress had taken cold after dancing — consumptive symptoms ensued, and when I became an inhabitant of Penrose paddock, the doctor considered her situation hopeless. Mr. George Manton would sometimes fancy he saw an improvement in her looks; his father repressed these hopes, gently reminding him that the disease under which Miss Caroline languished was frequently most flattering when its last fatal symptoms were at hand.

How sweet were my labours in the service of Caroline Morden, and with what zeal I attended her pleasure! How humane was the conduct of Mr. George Manton! This young man, then in his nineteenth year, possessed all that information which distinguishes the more advanced in life, without a particle of vanity: his opinions were given with so much deference, and there was so much pliability in his temper, that I think it would have improved the most stupid Ass in the world, could he have had the benefit of observing the manner, and listening to the conversation, of this excellent youth.

I freely confess my obligations to this young gentleman. The degrading insults I received from Martello and old Bessy, a half-blind mare, had more than once roused me to anger—it might be jealousy on their part, for my situation was certainly most enviable—but there is something in contempt which even an Ass is disposed to resent. Straying into their demesne one evening, I was pursued from place to place, snorted at and treated with every indignity; it was in vain I endeavoured to repel their attacks; fortunately Mr. George saw my distress, and came to my relief. When recovered from my fright, I could scarcely help smiling at the idea of an animal so large as the horse being so easily subdued by man.



At this moment the doctor joined his son, and hearing of my fracas, a conversation ensued which helped to enlighten me in this respect.

“One wonders to see the antipathy of these animals so lively in their domesticated state,” said George Manton; “the query to me is, whether the Ass is a degenerated horse or a distinct species.”

“Buffon says, the Ass is not a horse degenerated,” replied the doctor; “that, like all other animals, he has his family, his species, and his rank; his blood is pure, and although his nobility is less illustrious, yet it is equally good and ancient with that of the horse.”

“In their wild state, Asses become formidable enemies to the horse,” resumed Mr. George.

“Yes, they will not suffer a horse to associate with them, and should one stray where they are feeding, they attack him with the most savage fury, never quitting him till he appears to be quite dead. Thus, though man by cultivation and care seems to have changed the characters of domestic animals, I am of opinion that nature is more frequently restrained than subdued; there will be less ferocity in the creature that is uniformly well treated, but even the dog, that sagacious, faithful friend, has been

known to turn against his oppressor, though that oppressor was his master."

"Then you allow the existence of temper in the brute creation, Sir?"

"Why, I think it is impossible to deny it, George," replied the doctor; "the schoolmaster's rod is not more efficacious on occasion than the whip of the horseman; and with respect to the horse, I would say, this truly noble animal is tenacious of his rights, feels his superiority over all other quadrupeds, and, though capable of the warmest attachment, is at times subject to the caprices of temper."

"I have certainly observed a degree of obstinacy, as well as of passion, in the animal in question, and grieved to witness the chastisement he has in consequence received; yet one ought not to wonder at this when we reflect on the slight causes that rouse *us* to irritability."

"Poor Caroline's favourite must be confined to the paddock," resumed the doctor. "Martello is a high-spirited Castilian, but like his species, will acquire humility as his services become less distinguished."

"The patience of the Ass makes him valuable in my eyes," continued Mr. George, leaning on my back and kindly smoothing my coat.

"And what is remarkable, George," said

the doctor, "from the moment the Ass carries his first load, this tractability is a striking feature in his character."

The arrival of my mistress, who approached us leaning on the arm of her maid, interrupted the conversation. If I could have felt angry in her presence, this would have been the moment, for I was listening with all my ears, and, when their length is considered, it will be admitted that few animals possess more extensive opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge.

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## CHAP. V.

### *Symptoms of Education.*

CALLED to the performance of my duty, I bore Miss Morden to "Prospect Point;" the halts made in our short journey convinced me my mistress could ill bear the fatigue of riding. Yet the same gentleness of manner was remarkable, the same engaging spirit of inquiry which made her so estimable to her friends. Seated upon a camp chair, Miss Caroline asked many questions respecting my species. I grazed at her feet in the hope of increasing my little stock of information.

"It was the Spaniards who transported

the Ass to America, Sir?" said my mistress, addressing her guardian.

"Yes, my love," replied Dr. Manton, "and that country seems to have been favourable to this race of animals; they have multiplied in amazing numbers; so much so, that in Quito, the owners of the grounds where they are bred, suffer all persons to take away as many as they can, on paying a small acknowledgment in proportion to the number of days their sport lasts."

"I have read an interesting description of their manner of descending the Andes in South America; it must be terrifying to see them slide down such immense precipices."

"But the sagacity they display on these occasions, by no means entitles them to the degrading epithets so generally attached to the mention of an Ass. When they approach these descents, they stop of themselves, and should the rider attempt to spur them on, they continue immoveable. They seem at this time ruminating on the danger which lies before them, and preparing for the encounter. They not only view the road, but tremble and snort at the danger."

"I cannot conceive how the rider keeps his seat," said my mistress.

"He has only to sit firm on his saddle without checking the rein, for the least

motion would destroy the equilibrium of the Ass, in which case both must inevitably perish; and, indeed, the posture of the animal is favourable to his burthen in these descents. Their fore feet being placed as though they were stopping themselves, the hind feet put together, but a little forward; in this attitude they slide down with the swiftness of a meteor, and their address in this rapid descent is truly wonderful; for in their swiftest motion they follow the different windings of the road, as if they had previously settled the route they were to pursue."

"I really think the animal that conveyed me safely over a pass of this kind would ever after be entitled to my gratitude."

"Fame is all that the poor Ass attains," resumed Dr. Manton. "He gains a kind of reputation, after being long used to these journeys, but I rather doubt whether his happiness is increased by this; so true is it, that fame, whether attached to the rational or animal creation, is but an empty name."

"A mere bubble," laughed Mr. George; "the Ass, however, has certainly risen in our estimation. Surely, since the ladies have condescended to ride them, and make them useful in drawing carriages, some of those attentions bestowed upon the horse are indisputably their due."

“Unless you think with Gay, ‘an Ass should like an Ass be treated,’” smiled the doctor; “of course you allude to their being regularly fed, rubbed down, and washed; this is the practice at Cairo, they in consequence grow to a large size and are occasionally sold at a high price. In this country, on the contrary, this useful animal is much neglected and abused. We educate the horse with the greatest care; nothing is spared to render him beautiful; he is dressed, attended, instructed, and exercised; while the Ass is abandoned to the brutality of servants, or to the abuse of children. If he had not a great many good qualities, he would not be able to bear the hard usage to which he is daily exposed, and which certainly makes him more stupid and indocile than he otherwise would be.”

“My dear Sir,” exclaimed my mistress, “pray do not call them all indocile and stupid! I declare I could almost imagine my Jemmy understood my feelings; he stops when I cough, and is the best tempered creature in the world.”

You may be sure this remark of Miss Caroline’s met my approbation; for all my asinine pride had been roused by the concluding observation of the doctor. Mr. George further tranquillized my irritated nerves.

“We do not consider, that if the horse had no existence,” resumed my amiable champion, “the Ass, both in himself, and with regard to us, would be the most distinguished animal in the creation—it is comparison alone that degrades him.”

“And this ought not to offend him, did he understand us,” said my mistress, presenting some oak leaves for my acceptance, “for it is by comparison we draw most of our conclusions, and the Donkey must submit to that which his master has no means of avoiding. The flesh of the Ass is sometimes eaten, I believe,” added Miss Caroline.

“Yes, the Arabians take them in snares for the sake of their flesh,” replied Mr. George; “the Romans were likewise fond of them; Pliny tells us that the epicures preferred those of Africa to all others.”

“These creatures are very nice with regard to water,” resumed Miss Morden, “and I observe that in drinking they never sink their nose like the horse.”

“It is said that the Ass is afraid of the shadow of his ears; but I should rather attribute this to his general antipathy to that element, for he never wallows in mire or water, having a dislike to wetting his feet, and will turn out of his road to avoid a puddle.”

“If the Donkey would bear it, I should

like vastly to see how he would look when rubbed down and washed," said my mistress; "I am sure it must conduce to the health of the animal."

"We will try him," said Mr. George; "perhaps, Caroline, you anticipate some freak from your Donkey, for the Ass frequently takes the liberty of rolling himself amongst thistles, or ferns, without regard to his burthen, but seemingly with a view to reproach the neglect of his master."

Never had I before wished to possess the power of speech; how I longed to assure my mistress she had nothing to apprehend from me, that my utmost ambition was to attend her pleasure! And, though I certainly shrank from the operation to which she had doomed me, I yet resolved to bear it patiently, and, if possible, continue to deserve her good opinion. There is a promptitude in the plans of the young, which sometimes leaves reason at a distance: thus, though it was evening, and near the hour of retiring, we no sooner reached home than Mr. George hastened to fulfil the wishes of my mistress; disrobing me of my trappings, and throwing off his coat, he procured two pails of water, and dashing them at my sides, strove to encourage me under my suffering by the kindest and most endearing expressions. In vain I tried to



seem pleased—it would not do; my whole frame was shivering, nor could the rubbing down, or the approving voice of my mistress, reconcile me to the uneasiness of my situation. I take credit to myself that I did not rebel, and, by a kick, forfeit my good character. Impatient to make my retreat, I believe I made an attempt to escape, but Mr. George was really too much interested in my welfare to leave my coat absolutely wet.

The doctor, who had been visiting his patients, returned at this juncture.

“Hey-day!” said the old gentleman; “why is it possible you have been so imprudent as to wash the Donkey at this time of night? I am afraid the poor creature will suffer from your thoughtlessness, George: my dear fellow, you should have reflected that when inflicting a sort of penance on this animal, it was in your power to temper it, by giving him the benefit of a warm sun to dry himself; nay, it would have been good policy. The Donkey, invigorated and refreshed by your exertion, might in future have submitted to your wishes with cheerfulness.”

“Oh dear! I hope he’ll not take cold,” said my mistress, who was sitting at the window; “do pray, Sir, let Jenkins be called; he understands horses, and may,

perhaps, advise what is best to be done for my poor Jemmy."

Jenkins was called; but, mark the brutality of this man, he could neither allow that I was improved by my sousing, nor that any harm could come to an Ass for any thing of the sort.

"Why they are as hard as iron," said he, "and as obstinate as mules; for my part I cannot see why they are ever used, not I, nasty sulky brutes."

Mr. George could be very droll at times, and he knew the character of Jenkins.

"You must not speak disrespectfully of Jemmy," replied he; "he is a very good-tempered fellow, Jenkins; and if he does not suffer from his washing to-night, *we* must see that it is done every day."

"Sir!" replied Jenkins,—"*I* tend Donkeys! No! Mr. George; I have enough to do with my horses."

"So then you would not, to oblige me, bestow a little time on this inoffensive animal?"

"It would be lost time, Sir; I know it; time out of mind they have been known to be stupid, dirty brutes."

"Well," said the doctor, "Jemmy must decide this point; if *he* is not injured by my son's mistake in washing him at night-fall instead of the morning, I shall expect that

you, Jenkins, will be ready to do as Mr. George has proposed.”

Jenkins was mute in the presence of his master, but as he drove me to my shed his eloquence revived: nor did he omit to urge me on by several smart blows on my sides.

“A pretty thing, indeed, to turn Donkey-dresser after twenty years’ service!” muttered he. “Yes, to be sure, I’ll dress you, but it shall be with a good horse-whip.”

These threatenings were not lost upon me. It seemed as though my fortitude was to be tried to the utmost. It gives me pleasure, however, to state, I sustained no material injury from this my first introduction to a cold bath; the agitation of my nerves subsided as I reverted to the motives which influenced my mistress. It would have been ungrateful in the extreme had I done otherwise; and I recommend it to Asses in general, to adopt a similar effort of their understandings, under every real or imaginary oppression.

Had I sat—lain down, I should have said, —to ruminate on the wretchedness of my condition, and petulantly concluded that my protectors had a pleasure in seeing me miserable, it is probable I should have nourished revenge in my bosom, or, by concealing my feelings, have brought on some serious malady. That I looked to the morrow with the

same thoughtless indifference as formerly, I will not pretend to say. No, I dreaded a repetition of that shock from which I had so lately escaped; my sleep was broken and uneasy; huge pails and rough brushes passed before my "mind's eye," and the unamiable visage of Jenkins more than once crossed my imagination.

As I profess to be an Ass of some observation, it may be supposed I made my own reflections on the conversation of the preceding day.

As a member of the asinine community, I had received much gratification from the handsome things said of us; the subordination of animals to their masters no longer astonished me; on the contrary, I could not but admire the confidence man places in the beast of burden, by trusting his personal safety to our discretion and sagacity. I readily allowed, that *our* tractability should be *evident* ere these distinctions are bestowed upon us. And had there been any thing wanting to reconcile me to the degrees of master and servant, I had seen an instance between man and man, where a deficiency in the respect due to a superior had placed the humbler party in an ungracious point of view. The sullen reluctance of Jenkins incited the good doctor to exert an authority very foreign to his disposition.

Had Jenkins represented this additional labour as incompatible with his other employments, his humane master would readily have listened to him. How creatures possessing the power of speech can so far pervert its use I cannot understand.

But I am prattling like a giddy Donkey, forgetting, in my resentment towards Jenkins, the numberless imperfections in my own fraternity. I know we can be sulky—obstinate in the extreme! Yes, many a stripe have I borne, rather than submit to the guidance of a capricious rider; and if I *could* have spoken, there is no saying how far I might have committed myself. I perceive all the danger of judging others, more especially those of a distinct genus;—but surely there can be no harm in expressing one's contempt for that sort of revenge which leads a *rational* being to vent his anger on an innocent Donkey, when it was perfectly in his power to state his grievance, had he chosen to do so respectfully. Suppose *we* sometimes stand still when we ought to proceed, or dismount our rider by surprise, will you make no allowance for our fatigue; nor do us the honour of believing that, like yourselves, we have our caprices? We possess no modes of expressing our displeasure, but such as render us odious in the eyes of our superiors: yet

I declare (excepting the fastidious old Balaam) I do not recollect that I was ever considered an ill-conducted Donkey; and as I am willing to allow that I share in common the foibles of my particular class, it leads me to conclude that tenderness to the failings of one's *own* species is but a sort of self-love which even an Ass may detect, if he is disposed to take the trouble.

Amidst the many vague wishes which floated in my brain at this happy period of my existence, was one which had incessantly haunted me since first I entered on the world—a desire to exhibit myself in my handsome trappings before old Balaam.

Do not dishonour my feelings, courteous reader, or suppose that I had become insensible to parental love; no, an Ass of my acquaintance had informed me a meeting of this tender nature was totally out of the question, and that the first separation of the foal from its dam was generally a final one.

With Balaam the case was otherwise; he regularly passed the summer at Tunbridge, in Kent, and hearing by accident that we were only a few miles distant from that fashionable place, I sometimes indulged a hope of crossing his path. “How he will stare!” would I say to myself. “Yes, I think it will be hardly necessary to tell him,

a Donkey's life *may* be very comfortable.— He will see I am well fed, cheerful, and elegantly dressed.”

In short, it would be endless to repeat the various harangues my Donkey capacity suggested, as appropriate to this much-desired event. It did arrive, but not under the auspices I anticipated.

But I am galloping as though I were an actual racer at this moment; and, alas! I have some intervening vicissitudes to relate, and must endeavour to be methodical.

The morning arrived, and it was with heartfelt pleasure I heard the footstep of Mr. George Manton approaching my shed. Had Jenkins made his appearance, I really think I should have fainted; answering the kind salutation of Mr. George, I ran towards him, and we sallied forth. “Come, my poor fellow,” said he, “I am glad to see you so brisk; we must pursue the same course; there is a warm sun to dry you this morning.” I started back intuitively, and as is usual with *us* when alarmed, my ears inclined backwards; the young gentleman laughed at me, called me “a comical animal:” but finding him resolute, I made a virtue of necessity and submitted with a good grace. Jenkins was not of our party, and the expedition with which my young master performed his office soon left me at

liberty to bask beneath the rays of a glowing summer sun.

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## CHAP. VI.

### *A Transfer.*

THE increasing weakness of my beloved mistress left me at liberty to amuse myself, but idleness was no longer pleasing; my duties had been so moderate, and in themselves so delightful, that nothing could be more irksome than my situation when Miss Caroline ceased to employ me.

I heard something about a journey to Bristol, and such was my ignorance, that I actually considered myself included in the arrangement; disappointment was my lot—they departed one morning ere I quitted my shed, and to add to my melancholy, Jenkins, whether from forgetfulness or malice I know not, left me a prisoner during the whole day; in vain I kicked and brayed; my efforts were unheeded, and it is probable I should have been nearly famished had not the return of Mr. George, late in the evening, procured my release. “Is the Donkey housed, Mrs. Bennet?” said my young master, addressing the housekeeper, who was passing near my prison.



“Dear heart! why I ’ant seen him to-day,” said she. “Poor fellow! if he’s been locked up all this time, he must be almost starved.”

“This is Jenkins’s neglect,” replied Mr. George, opening the door. I ran forward, overjoyed to behold my kind friend.

“Dear Caroline!” he exclaimed, “your poor favourite is already doomed to neglect,”—and, following my footsteps, he seemed lost in his own reflections. I snatched a hasty but plentiful meal; took two or three trots across the paddock, and with due consideration for the fatigue and feelings of my patron, retreated to my shed for the night.

The doctor was absent nearly a fortnight; his return seemed deeply to affect his son,—my young mistress was no more; and every individual at Penrose, not excepting Jenkins, evinced the most heartfelt sorrow on this occasion.

I knew not what to think; days stole on, and if the full range of a fertile meadow, gentle treatment, from such of the family as chance threw in my way—if these ought to have made me content, I was a stupid Ass not to prize them; but my sweet mistress had said, “comparison was the medium by which rational animals judge,” and could an Ass err in adopting this mode?

Alas ! what a contrast did my inactive life present to that which had marked the days when Miss Morden's pleasure guided my conduct. I have some reason to believe that the doctor and his son entertained similar ideas respecting my situation ; for, though I occasionally received their kind notice, I observed the name of my mistress would escape their lips, as if they too were comparing the past with the present.

Whether idleness is really the parent of mischief I know not ; it is certain, want of occupation led me into a folly which fatally injured my future fortune. Tired with the monotony of my existence, I one morning strolled down a shady lane contiguous to Penrose, and charmed by the fragrance, not less than the flavour, of the hazel branches that courted my acceptance, continued my walk ; when, turning an angle, I found myself in the high road. The morning was lovely, and though the sun had scarcely risen, there was a chirping amongst the birds, and an appearance of activity in the sons of men, which forcibly claimed my attention. I saw labourers going to their work,—waggons creeping up the side of the hill,—while the inhabitants of a small inn seemed busily preparing to receive their guests. At length a heavy-laden stage approached ; I stood gazing at the panting

animals that drew it, when a smart stroke on my back caused me to recede a few paces;—it was the coachman, who could not suffer an opportunity of shewing his regard for our species to escape him. As the horses were unloosed from the carriage, and led to the stables, their languid appearance excited my sympathy; comparison here seemed to place my Donkey hardships in the most trivial point of view, nor did it escape me that the four animals led out to supply their place looked jaded and unfit to bear the fatigue to which they were destined. I was beginning to rejoice that I was not a horse, and I believe had made an apostrophe in the true spirit of an Ass, when a sallow-looking man, with an old kettle upon his shoulder, fixed his eyes upon me; accustomed to admiration, I concluded my beauty attracted his notice, and under this impression slowly pursued my way; the man continuing to follow and talk to me in the gentlest language. Descending a hollow, the face of the country assumed another aspect; a large wood lay before me, and I felt it would be imprudent to proceed. But what was my horror and surprise when this black-eyed gentleman seized me by the mane, and slipping an old leather belt from his waist, threw it round my neck, and, expeditiously mounting my back, began urging

me onward! My resistance was prompt, and for some minutes effective; I dismounted him twice, and bore the heaviest blows with determined courage,—till my brutal antagonist in a rage struck me on the head with his kettle, and nearly stunned me. Tortured almost to madness, I darted off at a pace which again unseated my rider; thinking this the moment for escape, I left him in a thicket, and endeavoured to strike out a new path. I did so, and ran until nearly exhausted, when hearing the cry of a child and the buz of voices at a little distance, I hastened to the spot, where a group of five or six persons were seated under a tree; my sudden appearance startled them, but they received me with hospitality, and kindly leading me to an adjacent tree, secured me from farther fatigue for the present, by fastening the tinker's belt to one of its strongest branches. As my agitation subsided, I took an opportunity of looking at my neighbours; their features and complexion were unlike all I had ever seen, except those of my recent enemy, and a prophetic tremor shook my frame as I admitted the belief that I had introduced myself into the family of my kettle acquaintance. My suspicion was soon realized. The tinker arrived, and no sooner beheld me, than he broke into an exclamation of joy.

“So you are here, are you, you rascal!” said he: “you served me a pretty trick, but as I’ve got you at last, I forgive you.”

This leniency was wholly unexpected, and my spirits rose in proportion. But alas! this tranquillity was transient. To an Ass of my education, nothing could be more uncongenial than my new mode of life. The mysterious manner of my owners excited my surprise and curiosity; we rarely travelled in daylight, and our lodgings were uniformly fixed in the most unfrequented parts. There was a constant trepidation and alarm amongst them on the appearance of a passenger; if the wind rustled through the trees they hid their property of whatever description: and, though we mutually fed on excellent food, I do not remember to have seen them *enjoy* a single meal.

These facts were incomprehensible to me for some days; till, on our arrival at Maidstone, in Kent, Dan, my unfeeling purloiner, returning from a morning ramble, imparted his fears to his companions. “We must be off,” said he; “there’s a notice for all vagrants to quit the town, and I only axed for a job at one house, and they told me if a gipsy made his appearance he should be sent to jail.” This intelligence produced the utmost confusion in our party; and my

back was destined to feel its immediate effect. Two panniers were slung across me; our remaining stock of provender, with the few cooking utensils that belonged to these wanderers, seemed too *light* a load in their estimation, and a squalling child was added to my burthen. My legs tottered under this enormous load, but it would have been useless to contend at such a moment. Only one of the women, with Dan, accompanied me: I heard something of arrangements for the night, but was too much oppressed by my own sufferings to attend to them. What self-accusations were mine during this day! Penrose and its quiet enjoyments were continually rising in my memory; and how often did I wish that the ignorance of my guides might lead them into its beloved neighbourhood. I misunderstood the character of my new owners; even though the fear of justice had not taught them caution, their natural sagacity cannot be questioned.

That we performed a long journey on this memorable day, my almost sinking frame could have attested; and the circuitous route we were compelled to make, in order to avoid towns and villages, added greatly to its length. It was ten o'clock, when, after wading through a sandy soil, similar, as I should imagine, to those coun-

tries\* in which *we* formerly made a conspicuous figure, Dan, with evident satisfaction, pointed to a light, and expressed his belief that our friends were at hand. This intimation gave me new vigour: his conjecture proved just: a large fire, kindled beneath a shelving rock, concealed the gipsies, and a plentiful supper regaled them after their fatigue. I must in justice declare, I never lived better than during this period; but whether to attribute this to their humanity, or to the profusion that is the attendant of profligacy, is not for me to determine. I certainly availed myself of their liberality with no disposition (at that time) to judge their conduct.

The assembled group now related the events of the day, which seemed to give universal satisfaction: till one of the women added, that she had heard a Donkey cried in the town of Tunbridge, and she was sure from the description I was the one. I was instantly on the alert. Hope took possession of my bosom. "Ah! and shall I again return to Penrose?" sighed I. The next moment damped my joy. "We must sell him then," said Dan; "I will set off in the morning, and see what I can do." Even this decision bore something of promise:—

\* Arabia, Persia, and Egypt.

I should be released from my present ignominious mode of life, should no longer be the companion of thieves, and perhaps at Tunbridge I might meet my old Mentor, Balaam. I will own there were other considerations which had their weight at that moment.

Tunbridge was a *fashionable* place: it was, therefore, natural to suppose some attention would be paid to the *exterior* of a Donkey, whose services were required by persons of fashion.

Surely, surely, vanity is the most formidable enemy to improvement! viz. with Asses: for I conclude no *other* class of animals are so foolishly blind. Could any thing be more ridiculous than my again fixing my thoughts on fine trappings, when I had so lately murmured at my fate, though in the possession of these things? But I believe it is necessary to our *true* enjoyment of life that we should experience some of its disappointments.

At an early hour next morning, Mr. Dan took leave of his companions, promising to retain me if it could be done with safety. To my great surprise the complexion of this gentleman was at least twenty shades fairer on this morning; and I found from the jocose remarks of his associates that *he* was not a gipsy, but one of those criminal beings



who prefer a life of fraud to the respectable, and not more laborious, calling of a mechanic. This change in the appearance of Dan was adopted as favourable to his expected sale of your humble servant; but even the adroitness of the *ci-devant* gipsy was to be foiled. We were in the environs of Tunbridge Wells, near what are called the Bell Rocks: my ignorance in geography had led me to think the Wells must be contiguous to the town of Tunbridge—I was consequently surprised when Dan asked a waggoner if he thought there was any chance of his selling me if he crossed the hill.

“It’s like enough, master; the place is very full,” replied the waggoner. “But mayhap you *found* this Donkey?” continued the man: “ey! if that’s the case you’d better make your market that way; there’s one been cried yesterday at Tunbridge Town.”

Dan muttered between his teeth, and coolly declaring I was his own property, we pursued our way, but at a slackened pace. We had just reached Mount Sion, and I was looking with delight on the fertile valleys below, when a voice vociferated,

“Hallo, mister! I say, where did you get that Donkey?”

Dan dropped from my back, and ap-

proaching the window of a public house, asked who called him.

“Where did you find that Donkey, I say?” resumed the man, whom I now discovered to be Jenkins, my surly insulter at Penrose.

“Did you say you had lost a Donkey, Sir?” said Dan, with the utmost humility.

“Yes, we have lost one sure enough, and I’ve been a wild goose chase after it too,” continued Jenkins advancing; “but I should like to know where you found it; tell me that!”

“In —— forest, Sir, two days ago.”

“That’s a likely story, truly! And now I look at your face, you rogue, I remember you well; you stole a saucepan under pretence of mending it. Give me the Donkey, and think yourself well off I don’t send you to jail.”

Dan wholly denied having stolen me, declared he never mended a saucepan in his life, (which was perhaps true,) and positively insisted that he was taking me to Tunbridge, where he learned I had been cried, and hoped to get the reward offered for me, as he was very poor, and had a wife and seven children to support.

“You get no reward from me!” resumed Jenkins, seizing me from the reluc-

tant Dan. "Make the best of your way out of this place, or you may meet a reward you don't expect."

The mortified Dan was forced to yield, the few persons who witnessed the altercation being decidedly in favour of Jenkins. What incomprehensible animals we Donkeys are! I, who had blushed for my degradation as the servant of a gipsy, knew not how to rejoice at falling into the hands of Jenkins: yet I trusted his power would be temporary, and looked forward to resuming my gambols in the luxuriant paddocks of Penrose.

Jenkins seemed in no hurry to depart; a rope procured from the landlord, and fastened to the sign-post just without the door, secured me from straying, while it left me at liberty to observe my old enemy. I saw Jenkins and his companions drinking, and afterwards playing with spotted pieces of paper, which I have since learned were cards; though the party were at first cheerful, loud words ensued—yet they continued to be amused with these things. At last the words,

"I'll bet the Donkey on <sup>his</sup> this hand," reached my tired ears; I could not comprehend what *I* had to do with their employment; a short time decided my fate. It seems Jenkins lost, and I, in consequence,

became the property of his opponent. I thought Jenkins looked sad, as my new master (a short, coarse-featured man) with an exulting smile, declared I was a very fine Donkey, and would bring him in six shillings a day at the least. These men whom I had seen so boisterous and apparently friendly, parted in the most ungracious manner. I was led to a poor hovel of a shed, in which I found two Donkeys reposing after the fatigues of the day; while I, who had fasted since the morning, was left to my own reflections.

The unprincipled conduct of Dan, increased by the wilful falsehoods he had uttered, left a serious impression on my mind; yet, upon contrasting Jenkins's unjust transfer of his master's property, *he* appeared infinitely more reprehensible. He was a confidential servant, considered worthy of trust, and, though I would not defend the lawless depredations of my gipsy acquaintance, one does not expect the same correctness from those who exclude themselves from the influence of good example.

Now Jenkins lived in the bosom of a family eminent for their virtues, while Dan, by long association with the vicious, had become in a manner a stranger to those obligations by which man is bound to man and forbidden to do to another what he

would consider unjust if applied to himself. But I must not expatiate on this subject; it is infinitely above my capacity; and you are no doubt impatient to hear how I was received amongst the fashionable Donkeys at Tunbridge.

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## CHAP. VII.

### *High Life.*

FORTUNE had hitherto precluded me from any extensive acquaintance with my own particular class; it was therefore with some timidity I anticipated the greetings of my snoring companions; fatigue and hunger had so completely subdued me, that, contrary to our usual habits, I stretched myself at full length, and no doubt added to the *harmony* of my associates.

Daylight was just peeping through our dilapidated shed, when my slumbers were broken by the whispering of my neighbours.

“A fellow-labourer, of course,” said one.

“He little thinks what a life he will lead,” replied the other.”

“My friends!” said I, starting up, “allow an inexperienced Donkey the benefit of your counsel!” I was proceeding in a strain of respectful entreaty, when one of my new neighbours, imperiously replied,

“Experience implies *age*, and from your height I should conclude you were my senior.”

Hum, thinks I to myself, this is vanity, but of another kind. “But, Sir, or Madam,” I continued, “I presume not to judge by this light—you *may* be younger than myself, and you may be as old as my grandam.”

This unfortunate remark excited the indignation of my reprover, who, turning from me in disdainful silence, left me to regret my silly attempts at repartee. I was beginning to arrange a conciliatory apology, when the ill-suppressed laughter of my other companion checked my purpose.

“I certainly know that voice,” said he; “it can be none but the thoughtless Jemmy.”

“My dearest Mr. Balaam,” said I, *now* really glad to hear his rough voice, “by what fortunate event do we meet at Tunbridge?”

“The *fortune* of the thing rests with yourself, Jemmy, for I will answer for my visit being wholly involuntary; of course the love of novelty brings you hither; still a seeker after fashions, I suppose, though by the langour of your voice, I conclude you do not find that smart saddles and white bridles constitute the entire happiness of an Ass.”

With a sigh of heartfelt anguish I assented

to this, simply stating the long fast I had been necessitated to keep.—Balaam generously cheered my spirits by assuring me I should fare tolerably well in my present service, but it was equally certain my fatigue would be extreme. The high-minded Juba, who had treated me so cavalierly, now advanced, and appeared desirous of my friendship.

I was too great a novice in the ways of the Donkey world to understand that the countenance I received from Balaam had raised me in the estimation of this worldly Ass.

It might be a proof of *his discernment* to value those whom Balaam esteemed, but my ideas of *friendship* were at this period purely romantic, perhaps *you* will call them vain ; I looked for a congeniality of sentiments, similar tastes, in short, all those nothings which make up the tottering fabric of juvenile attachments. Of course, while under this delusion, the advances of Juba met my sovereign contempt. — Balaam laughed at us, called us a pair of idiots, and, by bidding me relate my precious adventures, diverted my rising indignation.

The sincerity of my nature would not suffer me to gloss over my faults ; I told my tale briefly, but faithfully.

“ Well,” said Balaam, as my narration

closed, "it must be confessed you merit your present degradation—to leave Penrose paddock for you knew not what! Silly, ungrateful Ass!"

"But, my dear Mr. Balaam," said I, "I fully intended to return; I only wished to enjoy a morning ramble; and pray take into consideration that geography is not our forte."

"Silence," retorted Balaam,—“no quibbling, Sir; instinct is bestowed upon *us*: let me tell you, Mr. Jem, that the Ass enjoys a large portion of this gracious gift;—what animal is quicker at scenting his master than an Ass; more readily knows his home, or is more sagacious in discovering the best track in a mountainous soil? But you have carved your own fortune, and must abide by it; only beware of murmuring, nor, by stepping out of your character as an Ass, expose yourself to contempt.”

My heart was full, the severity of Balaam seemed peculiarly ill-timed—it was not in nature that a young hungry Donkey could bear such cutting language.

"I may have been faulty," said I, "but all Asses are not as wise as Mr. Balaam."

Balaam brayed most ironically, then in a softened tone added,—“It is my regard for you which leads me to reprove your vanity. I know that the animal who offers advice



is generally considered an Ass, but it shall not deter me from warning the offspring of an old friend."

My feelings were instantly subdued, and with a tremulous voice I inquired after my parents. Balaam assured me my father was well when he last met him, and that my mother was most happily situated in the family of a farmer Adams.—The door of our hovel was now unbarred; after a glance at Juba, whose exterior by no means justified his *juvenile* presumption, and regaling on the soft luxuriant pasturage that abounds in this pleasant country, we were called to work. A saddle, at least half a foot too long, disgraced my back; I saw Balaam smile as I curved and evinced my dissatisfaction at the unfitness of my dress; the thing was irremediable; we were led to the hill where ponies and donkeys of all sizes and descriptions were assembled.

It was quite a new scene to me; ladies and children mounted on ponies, while nursery-maids and footmen were galloping away upon donkeys they seemed more able to carry than to guide; at length my turn came, and it was necessary to change the saddle, for my rider was a lovely little girl, about six years of age. A man and maid servant attended our progress; the dear creature was so light, and her attend-

ants appeared so careful of her, that I was convinced I carried no common burthen.

“Jane,” said my fair equestrian, “I wish mamma could see me on this nice Donkey.”

“As we are to have him for an hour, Lady Harriet,” replied the maid, “suppose we lead him down to the cottage.”

The footman instantly took the hint, and walked by my side; as we approached the residence of Lady Harriet, a lady from a chamber-window exclaimed,

“Well, how does my Harriet like her ride; are you sure you are not at all afraid?”

“Oh, no, mamma! it is so quiet; I wish it was my own.”

“A likely matter to be sure, Miss,” rejoined a young gentleman, who had just risen from his bed, and apparently roused to the exertion by a motive which did not do him honour: “if papa buys it, it will be for me, so make yourself easy as to that.”

At this moment a gentleman with a book in his hand issued from behind a tree.—“And pray, Sir, who told you I was disposed to give any indulgence to a selfish sluggard?” said he.

“Why I thought to be sure, you would never buy a Donkey for a girl,” pouted the young gentleman; “but, if I make haste and come down, may I have a ride, papa?”

“Certainly not,” replied his father.

“If I get up early to-morrow morning, may I ride?”

“I make no terms with my children,” resumed the gentleman, turning towards me. “It is a very fine Donkey, Philip,” he continued, addressing the footman; “does he go well?”

“Remarkably well, my Lord; quiet as a lamb; his paces are very good indeed.”

“What do you say, Caroline; shall we make a purchase for Harriet?”

“Think how far we are from home,” said Lady Hampton; “but do as you please, my dear; at all events we can have him for a week or two.”

“True; well, then, suppose we send Philip to make an agreement with his master?” Lady Hampton assenting, I was in less than an hour admitted into the temporary service of Lady Harriet Fancourt. It may be a silly remark I am going to make, but to me, there is not in existence so laughable an animal as a male pet.—Judging by what is expected to constitute the masculine character in our class, I can make no allowance for the irritable petulances, the tearful complaints, and the jealous whims these creatures exhibit towards the softer sex; and until these weaknesses are totally disowned by the masculine gender, I beg leave

to say, the word Hero must remain an indefinite expression.

I would call the month I passed in the Earl of Hampton's family a blissful dream, had not the caprices of Master Hubert Fancourt occasionally interrupted my happiness.

It might sound harsh to say this boy did not love his sister, but to judge from appearances, such really was the case.—If my little mistress was enjoying a morning ride, Hubert was sure to interrupt us; and when strictly charged not to mount my back, but to get a pony whenever he chose to rise at the hour his father appointed, the undutiful boy continually infringed this mandate, though it was considered by the Earl as decisive.

It was in vain that Philip interposed,—the poor nursery-maid's arms more than once suffered severely from his unmanly pinches, while the frightened Lady Harriet was threatened with a "good licking," if she ever told her papa or mamma that he rode the Donkey.

I used to wonder the servants did not betray this young tyrant, till I heard them say, "They could not find in their hearts to grieve such good parents; that it was quite impossible to make out how Mr. Hubert had grown such a tyrant; but they knew, when his brother, Lord Fancourt, came home for the holidays, he would either make him better, or

explain his thoughts to the Earl and his Lady.”

This event did not take place during my service in the Hampton family; thus it is my painful task to speak only of the foibles of Master Hubert. Lady Harriet was so gentle and affectionate in all respects, that the servants were always disposed to please her, and I observed in this sweet child a peculiarity of language I had never heard before.

“Philip, if you please, will you saddle the Donkey?” And, “Jane, if you have had your dinner, I should like a little ride.” These prettinesses of speech sounded remarkably harmonious to my ears;—it did not appear that the words in *themselves* were difficult of pronunciation; on the contrary, I *had* witnessed considerable efforts in children of *different* dispositions, who, by the adoption of peremptory commands, laboured to make themselves ridiculous.

And how different was the effect! Alas! if young ladies and gentlemen could know how much their characters suffered by such disgraceful ebullitions, I think they would endeavour to be cautious, though they considered their inferiors to be Asses.

But I was speaking of Hubert Fancourt; he had played us so many tricks, I never saw him that I did not anticipate mischief.

We were returning from a pleasant airing one morning, Philip employed in making a daisy chain for Lady Harriet, and Jane listening to the dear little creature's recitation of some beautiful verses, when this young ruffian rushed through a hedge, and seizing my tail threw me off my guard; I kicked up my heels; my lovely burthen, with astonishing presence of mind, grasped the pommel of her saddle, and was thus spared from harm; but the screams of Master Hubert assured me I had done mischief.

"You deserve it, Sir," said Philip, raising the boisterous boy from the ground,—“I only hope you are more frightened than hurt.”

“Frightened, you booby! do you think I'm afraid of an Ass?” replied the struggling Hubert. “Get away, I want none of your assistance.”

“Lead the Donkey, Philip,” said Jane, “and let me look at that cruel boy's cheek.—Sir, I must wipe your face; it is bleeding,” continued Jane, as the young gentleman strove to evade her purpose.

“Oh dear me, Jane, is my cheek really bleeding?” rejoined the alarmed Hubert. “What shall I do! will papa see it?”

“To be sure, Sir; but you did not think, perhaps, that your cruel trick might have been the death of your sister.”

“Well, but she is not hurt you see, so don’t stand chattering about what *might* have been; what shall I say to papa? Help me out of this scrape, for I know he will make such a row if he hears the truth.”

“Why I hope you don’t intend to tell a story about it, Sir; and, indeed, if I am asked, depend upon it I shall tell the whole truth.”

“You nasty, cross, ill-natured thing! get out, I want none of your assistance,” replied Hubert, pushing the conscientious Jane on one side, and hastening home.

I certainly regretted that any branch of Lord Hampton’s family should suffer through *me*, yet I put it to all and every description of animals, not to impute it to a *criminal* intention. — Against an *open* attack, the most simple Ass might guard, but there is no saying how *any* creature will conduct himself, who is *covertly* assailed. I hope I shall stand acquitted to my readers, for I should blush to think that even a momentary resentment had led me into the error of ingratitude.

My little mistress expressed her fears lest her papa should be angry with Hubert.

“We cannot help it, my dear, if he is,” said Jane; “Master Hubert is so thoughtless and passionate, that he must expect to suffer for it sometimes.”

Poor Lady Harriet could not understand the justice of this remark; her affectionate heart took alarm; I was dismissed, and I saw her sorrowfully approach the house.

Circumstances conspired to make me acquainted with the result of this accident. Master Hubert's wound, though slight, left some traces on his cheek. In his hurry to avoid his father, he stole through the library window, and unexpectedly encountered the Earl just issuing from his dressing room.

"What has happened?" said my Lord, discovering that the linen of the young rebel was stained with blood.

"I—I was playing—that is, I took hold of the Donkey's tail, and he kicked me," said Hubert, surprised into an acknowledgement of the truth.

"That is to say, you have been cruel, Sir," replied my Lord, "and the animal in his own defence has retaliated: it is very fair; I hope it will teach you humanity."

Master Hubert, discomfited, retreated to his chamber; and it is with conscious pride I add, this *involuntary* avowal precluded the young gentleman from being admitted into the presence of Lord and Lady Hampton for three days.

"We must check this pernicious propensity," said the Earl to his Lady, "or



heaven knows where it will end. Cruelty to animals is a cowardly vice, almost indicating a bad heart; indeed, I wholly doubt the existence of good feelings in any point, where this habit is suffered to take deep root."

I have heard that Lady Hampton shed tears upon this occasion, and while she lamented the misconduct of her son, wisely participated in the judgment of my Lord, and banished him from her presence for the prescribed term.—Had these excellent parents known the danger to which their little girl had been exposed by the mischievous Hubert, it is probable that his punishment would have been more severe.

The anger of this boy was now levelled at the servants, and during his disgrace I heard them frequently lament, that however contrite Master Hubert might appear while he thought his papa and mamma could hear him, he was, if possible, more passionate and overbearing than ever.

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## CHAP. VIII.

### *An Excursion.*

IF one could reckon on prosperity as a certain possession, the envy of the malicious would prove shaftless; in fact, there are dis-

positions to whom envy is a grateful incense. Now I will not allow that this was my case, but it is certain that during my temporary splendour I was an object of some consideration to the Asses of my acquaintance. Balaam would smile on me *en passant*, and if possible give me a word of advice, while Juba regarded me with a sort of jealous glance, that seemed to say a great deal. I knew he was an ill-bred Donkey, but, never having given him any personal offence, I could not tamely submit to his scorn. When he sneered, I carried my head with more than Donkey stateliness; and once, upon hearing him tauntingly say, "How proud I am!" could not forbear replying, "that I hoped I deserved my present good fortune."

It could not gratify my feelings to see other Asses less comfortable than I was. No! I was beginning to understand the mutability of Donkey happiness, and rather strove to enjoy the present moment, than trust myself to calculate on its durability.

Not any of the kindnesses the amiable Lady Harriet bestowed on me, more sensibly gratified my taste than those occasional feeds of corn I received from her pretty hands; and my appearance was so considerably improved by these indulgences, that I was actually becoming plump, when I perceived by the activity of the domestics that

the family were upon the eve of quitting Tunbridge. My spirits drooped at the bare idea of separation, but when I heard my Lord desire Philip to take me home, I thought I should have fallen to the earth. Lady Harriet patted my sides, venting her regrets in so sweet a manner, that I knew not how to make enough of her. "Good bye, poor fellow," said she; "Philip, pray tell Mr. Staples he is such a good-tempered Donkey, I hope he will always keep him; and if we come to Tunbridge next year, I am sure papa will let me have him again."

Philip promised to obey his young lady; but I saw him smile at her innocent zeal.

"You wont get into such snug quarters in a hurry," rejoined he, as we pursued our way to my home. It is no less singular than true, that every domestic in Lord Hampton's family had treated me with uniform kindness, nor can I account for this, but by supposing that the active and humane characters of the Earl and his Lady produced this laudable imitation.

They never spoke to their servants, but in the most obliging language; the consequence was, that a degree of willingness and order was observable in their household, which I never met with in any other family; yet there was no profusion, none of those mistaken in-

dulgences which spoil servants, and expose their employers to imposition.

Ah! happy days: I could grow eloquent in my regrets on this subject; but time presses, and my tale is to be told. Philip did not omit to give me due praise when consigning me to my master.

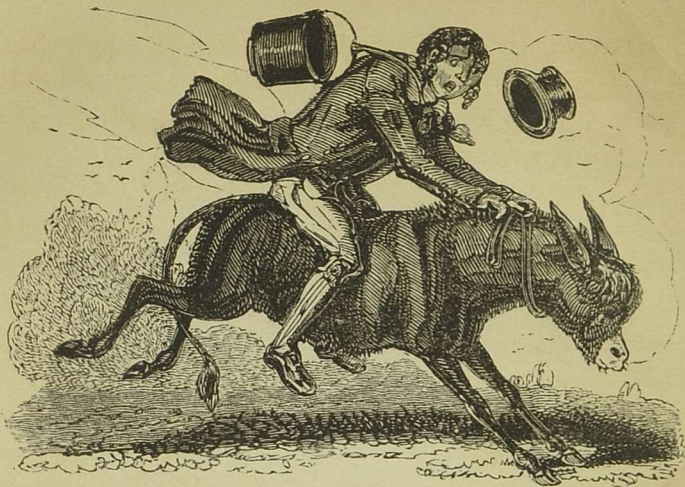
“It’s all very well,” said Mr. Staples, “but I’m glad the job’s over, for I could have made treble the money of him by day-work, only I didn’t like to offend his Lordship.”

Philip had nothing further to say, and I was left to my fate. The ill-fitting saddle was again put on, and although the evening was rather advanced, I stood on the hill. It was not many minutes ere a large fat woman singled me out, and, with the assistance of a livery servant, mounted my back. It was in vain the man told her she had better wait till a side-saddle could be got.

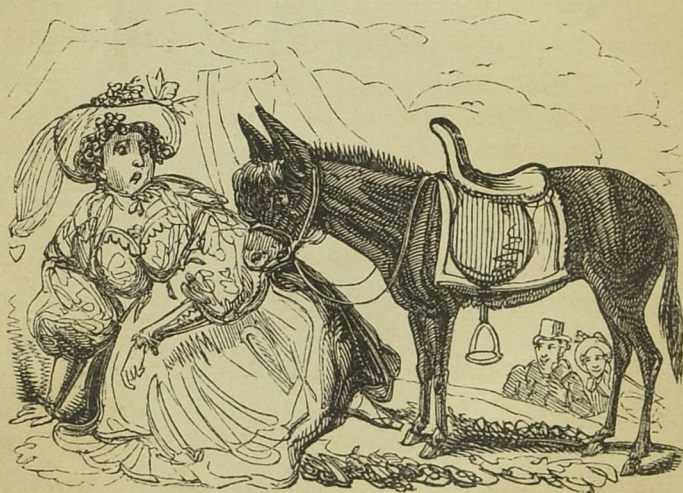
“Don’t talk to me, John,” said she; “why I hasn’t the least fear in the world; I tell you I used to ride when I was quite a girl, and, with nothing but a halter round the horse’s neck, could go a smart trot: do you think I can’t manage an Ass?”

John smiled, and seemed to think that as she was not now a girl, but a fat, unwieldy old woman, it was not a case in point.





“ And slipping an old leather belt from his waist, threw it round my neck, and, expeditiously mounting my back, began urging me onward!—Page 68.



“ And using her whip with energy, forgot the want of the pommel and fell from her seat.”—Page 93.

Perfectly indifferent to this lady's juvenile sports, I only felt I had a grievous load to carry, and exerted all my strength to get through my task with credit.

Greatly as I admired the scenery of Tunbridge, I found the soil peculiarly unfavourable to my progress. Its deep sandy roads added so considerably to my fatigue, I was forced to stop to take breath. My rider intent on shewing her skill, attributed this to obstinacy, and using her whip with energy, forgot the want of the pommel and fell from her seat. John was so cruel as to laugh, while I, yet held fast in her grasp by the reins, in struggling to get free, dragged her a few paces in the sand.

“You stupid booby, stop the Ass!” exclaimed the enraged lady; “I shall spoil my pelisse.”

“Let go the reins,” said John, half averting his risible features. She did so, and I very humbly stood still and looked on. John was in the act of wiping the dust from the soiled garb, when a lady and gentleman approached.

“Ha! is it you, Mrs. Price?” said the gentleman half smiling. “I hope you are not hurt?”

“O no, Sir George, I'm a famous horse-woman, but these Donkeys are such hop-

stropolous animals there's no managing them."

"What made you venture to ride without a proper saddle?" inquired the lady.

"O my lady, I has no fears; I never had when I was a girl."

"But pray do not run such a hazard again," resumed the lady; "it is very imprudent."

They passed on, and I found that my offended rider was the cook of Sir George and Lady R——.

Civil and considerate as their manner had been, it did not meet the approbation of Mrs. Price.

They seemed to treat her expedition as a foolish frolic, ill suited to her age; and, like the tenacious Juba, the allusion touched her vanity. I rather think she would have expressed her anger, had not some of the inferior servants of the family joined us.

"Dear me, ma'am, was it you that tumbled off the Donkey?" said a pretty giggling girl: "why, Mr. Thomas and I saw you from the mount; we little thought it was you."

"Then you see it was me," replied the old lady in a surly tone,— "but look if I've spoiled my pelisse. I'll give Staples a good scolding for saying this was a quiet Donkey



—an ugly, obstinate beast!”—and she made an effort to strike me. John interfered, and declaring there was not a Donkey in Tunbridge strong enough to carry her safely, diverted her rage from poor me. John now grew obstinate, and by persisting in his opinion, so completely deranged the temper of Mrs. Price, that I really expected it to end seriously.

“You had better lead the Donkey home,” said Thomas, addressing John, “and if Mrs. Price will lean on my arm I shall be happy to assist her down the hill.”

The offer was accepted, they departed, and John now indulged in a hearty laugh at the appearance of the fat lady. But the consequences of this evening proved injurious to me; Mrs. Price took occasion to vilify me, and actually prevented my being admitted into the family of Sir George R——. My master, vexed at this proscription, seemed disposed to vent his disappointment on me, though he had so recently asserted that day-work was preferable to a job.—But this is only another proof that the good within our reach is seldom as highly valued as that which eludes our grasp.

Balaam welcomed me most cordially to our shed. Juba yet kept aloof, though I could understand by his restlessness that

he listened to my description of the Hampton family with any thing rather than a friendly disposition.

“You are yet a fortunate animal,” said old Balaam; “I hope you will conduct yourself with temper, now you have returned to more common duties, always remembering that while no more will be expected from *you* than *other* Asses, every body knows how far our abilities extend.”

“But the fat cook, my dear Sir;” said I, “was she not unreasonable in expecting me to carry her, under the disadvantages I have mentioned?”

“Undoubtedly,” resumed Balaam. “She, like my friend Juba, would submit to any indignity, provided her youth was not called in question.”—Here Juba was evidently agitated. “But it wont do, Jemmy,” continued Balaam: “freaks and frolic are natural in the young; while they disgrace the dignity of the more advanced in life.”

There was something so decisive in the language and manner of Balaam, I did not wonder that Juba should be awed to silence in his presence, but I certainly was surprised to find *myself* so much the object of his dislike. He never could be civil to me; if chance led us the same road, he ran himself almost to death in order to get before me: and at the stand, if *I* happened to be

selected, he forgot the *certain* fatigue to which I was exposed, in the vexation of seeing me preferred. Experience had taught me that it was possible to live on terms of amity, even with horses; for the humble hacks of Tunbridge evinced none of that hauteur I had borne with from Martello and other highly educated animals of his species. And I felt it as a lamentable drawback on my little portion of happiness, that an inhabitant of the same dwelling with myself should so ill understand my feelings.

Naturally of a social disposition, I was beginning to give this matter some serious consideration, when the recollection of Master Fancourt's conduct towards his sister recurred to my mind.

“What can be expected from an Ass, when *rational* beings so far commit themselves?” thought I. Again, the youth of Hubert Fancourt presented itself; but that was only another reason why the tenderesses and gentle feelings of childhood should have graced his manner.

The petulance of Juba appeared less extraordinary on comparison, for he enjoyed not the blessing of parental care or the leisure of independence. Amongst other incidents that attracted my notice at this period, was a party to Penshurst, to view the venerable mansion of the Sidneys. A well-filled

barouche, two ponies, and your humble servant, formed the cavalcade, and pleasure was to be the order of the day.

My task was easy in the outset, being appointed to carry a young gentleman of light weight. I should have premised, that a basket of provisions had been packed in the barouche, under the idea of dining on the grass.

We had performed about half our journey, when a boy who rode a pony, slackened his pace to speak to my rider. "Are you hungry, Ned?" said he.

Ned answered in the negative.

"Poh! I know you are, only you are so modest; I have persuaded Fanny that she is; you will join us, and you shall see what a row I'll make."—Riding off before Edward could reply, he hailed the carriage; it was some minutes ere the coachman heard him. Miss Fanny, who rode the other pony, seemed pleased with the joke; but my rider declared it was altogether wrong.

The loud shouts of Master Arthur (as this young Pickle was called) alarmed the barouche party, and when we overtook them, they were all standing up.—"What has happened?—Is Fanny safe? I hope Edward's Donkey has behaved well?" were the several questions put at once.

"O we are all well enough," replied Ar-

thur, "but almost famished; I cannot go a foot without something to eat, and Fanny is quite faint."

"Dear me, she does look pale," said Arthur's mother; "what can we do?"

"Do? Why open your store basket, and hand us out something good," said the undaunted Arthur. "But it is under the seat, my dear," said a second lady entreatingly, "and it would disturb us to unpack it now."

"Very well, Ma'am; if you choose us all to be made ill, rather than you should suffer a trifling inconvenience, it is no matter."

"What a strange boy you are!" resumed his mother; "I suppose we must try what can be done."

"Sister, you do very wrong," replied the elderly lady; "the whims of Arthur ought not to be indulged; I will answer for his being no more hungry at this moment than I am."

"Aunt Jemima is thinking of the pigeon pie," laughed Arthur; "don't deny it, I see it in your face;"—the barouche party smiled;—"but we will be content with a few sandwiches, so don't look so cross."

"That boy's spirits never flag," cried a gentleman with more lenity than prudence; "it is impossible to be angry with him."

"I differ from you," rejoined Mrs. Jemima: "Arthur is not so much a lively as a mischievous boy, and I see nothing to ap-

prove in that sort of talent which can only be indulged at the expense of other people's feelings."

"He is young, sister," cried the mother of Arthur; "you should make allowances.—Dear me, what have we done?" she continued, addressing a young lady, who was assisting in opening the basket. "I am afraid we have broken a bottle; well, it can't be helped. There, my loves," handing a paper of sandwiches to her son, "you must make these do till we get to Penshurst." Arthur received the package, and ordering the coachman to go on, immediately dismounted.

"I dare say neither of you want these things," said he, "so let us give our cattle a luncheon." Edward laughed at the folly of his friend, while Miss Fanny declared it would be quite amusing to see a Donkey eat sandwiches.

We soon devoured these trifles, to the no small amusement of Arthur. But now a new whim seized his fancy. He begged Edward would exchange and let him ride the Donkey. I anticipated evil from this, but had nothing to do but obey.

He then proposed a race.—This was positively rejected by Edward, who exclaimed against the danger that might ensue to Miss Fanny, and the injustice of putting a Donkey in competition with a horse.

"Then good bye, I'm off," said Arthur;

“you shall see I will soon be up with the carriage.”

Alas ! what was sport to him, was unutterable pain to me. The utmost exertion on my part could not satisfy this impatient Jehu. His spurs goaded my sides, and the incessant lash of his whip wounded even to torture ; panting, smarting beneath his thoughtless hand, I found it impossible to effect his wish of overtaking the barouche. My best efforts had proved successful ; the only alternative left was, to dismount him as carefully as I could, and thus tire him of my services.

Never had I encountered a more arduous attempt ; his agility and strength were really surprising ; and the blows I received, ere I accomplished my object, nearly exhausted me. I succeeded at last ; a friendly dunghill received my proud master ; while I, alarmed for the consequences of my resentment, scrambled on my feet, and at a gentle pace pursued the route of the carriage. I heard him halloo, and the rattling of some pebbles at my heels convinced me that he expected I should return, or await his arrival, but I was not quite such an Ass as to do either.

My readers may know what it is to suffer from a fall, or a wound, but they can have no idea of the anguish which a beast of burthen, from thoughtlessness or cruelty, is too

often doomed to suffer.—The pulsation or throbbing of a trifling wound, will disorder the frame of a rational being,—then what must it be when the whole body is in a state of irritation; when every nerve and fibre seems stretched to the utmost; and the continued exertion of the wretched animal is expected and enforced even in the moment of its greatest suffering?

Blush! blush! ye scratched ladies, and whimpering little gentlemen; or if ye think ye “have felt persecution, learn mercy.”

I do not believe Master Arthur was more cruel than many other boys; but what are called high-spirited boys, and Pickles, are for the most part very thoughtless, inconsiderate beings; and where these foibles exist, a degree of selfishness is generally observable. It was purely for his own amusement that Arthur incommoded his mother and her friends, and it was by the same laudable motive he was actuated when lashing me almost to a mummy. Did any other of the party derive additional pleasure from his folly? The sequel of my recital shall decide. Keeping the carriage in my eye, I trotted on, till seeing it stop at an inn, I hastened to the destined goal.

Mrs. Jemima, who first discovered me, looked horror-struck, till the gentleman declared, it was impossible any serious ac-



cident could happen through a Donkey's throwing his rider.

"How I rejoice Arthur did not ride the odious beast!" said the mother of my late tormenter.

"I hope poor Ned is safe," replied Mrs. Jemima; "dear boy! I shall not know a moment of ease till I see him."

"Dear me, sister, how silly! don't you hear Mr. Powel say there's nothing to fear? And Edward is so over cautious, so extremely prudent, I should not wonder to find he had sent the Donkey on out of pure humanity."

"Edward's intentions are always good, always amiable," replied Mrs. Jemima with calm displeasure.

This altercation, as may be imagined, gave me no satisfaction; I rather apprehended further oppression when it should be known that I had presumed to escape from the brutality of Arthur.

The party alighted, and a footman was sent in pursuit of the stragglers. Had I been perfectly free from apprehension on my own account, it is certain I might have found amusement in the desultory conversation that ensued; for as every body was anxious respecting the absentees, not one would enter the inn, but kept lounging near the door.

"I'm sure I hear Arthur's voice," said

his mother, and the next moment a boy driving some pigs made his appearance.

"I dare say it was those nasty animals that frightened the stupid Donkey," she added.

"Have you overtaken two young gentlemen and a lady?" said Mrs. Jemima, addressing the pig-driver—"one of the boys must be on foot,—have you seen them?"

"I only comed from yon field," said the boy, pointing across the road; "I've seen nobody, not I."

Mr. Powel had walked to some distance.

"Mr. Powel is waving his handkerchief," said the young lady; "I will run and inquire what it means."

She returned in a few minutes,—“All is well, Ma'am; Edward is with Mr. Powel; they will be here directly.”

"I trust you are not hurt, my dear boy?" cried Mrs. Jemima, taking the hand of her favourite.

"It was not I who was thrown, but Arthur," he replied; "but make yourself easy, Ma'am," turning to the frightened mother,—“the Donkey only laid him on a dunghill and took French leave.”

"Why, I thought you rode the Donkey, Edward?" she resumed.

"I did, till Arthur entreated me to exchange, and conceiving he would really be less liable to accident, I instantly complied."

"But you see you did wrong," pouted

the discontented mother, "for the Donkey proved vicious.—I expected more prudence from you, Sir."

"I am sorry I have disappointed you, Ma'am," added Edward, "but I am seldom so happy as to meet your approbation;" and turning away, he retraced the road a few paces.

"Sister! sister!" said Mrs. Jemima, "this is unpardonable. If he had refused the request of Arthur, you would have upbraided him; but it is no matter; I do not forget that Edward is my nephew, though you do."

"Why, indeed, I must say Master Edward does not appear to blame in this matter," said Mr. Powel, with great deference. "The charming spirits of my young friend Arthur are, beyond a doubt, very delightful; but, my dear Mrs. Cosway, we must at times fear, lest that which is really charming in his character should lead him into danger." Miss Mowbray, who ventured no opinion in the hearing of her fretful friend, whispered Mrs. Jemima, "that it seemed to escape the recollection of Mrs. Cosway, that her Pickle was infinitely more exposed to hazard with a half-bred pony than the poor Donkey; but, indeed, I am astonished altogether," she added; "not a word is said about

Fanny, and it is she only that engages my thoughts."

"Fanny rides remarkably well, my dear!" rejoined Mrs. Jemima, "though, with you, I regret to perceive my sister's too evident partiality."

By this time the equestrians made their appearance, and every thing and every body was forgotten in Mrs. Cosway's joy at meeting her darling. Edward was assisting his cousin Fanny in alighting, when Mrs. Jemima, turning to Arthur, inquired how it happened that "*he* again rode the pony."

"Ned made me mount him, because he said my mother would take fright if she saw me walking; but has he not explained his plan? Then I will: he is a capital manager; he walked on first to tell you I had taken a roll on a dunghill, and prevent any false alarms."

"Then it appears my nephew's *prudence* did not forsake him," retorted Mrs. Jemima, glancing reproachfully at her sister; "he was only so unfortunate as to be arraigned before he was heard."

"Come, we are all safe and well now," said Mrs. Cosway; "let us make the most of our time." They entered the demesne of Penshurst, and I was turned into a field of stubble, where it was as impossible to

make a meal, as to be reconciled to the idea that this was a day of pleasure. I must reserve what occurred in our journey home, and the *enjoyment* of the *rational* part of our company, for a new chapter.

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## CHAP. IX.

### *Going Home.*

It was expected that the fragments of the store basket would prove sufficient to dine the servants in attendance; and it was in consequence of their resisting this proposal, that I became acquainted with the following particulars.

The party had viewed the house, and adjourned to the park, where the cloth was spread on the grass. The basket was produced, when behold! even as suspected, a bottle of red port had been cracked, in complying with the whim of Arthur, and nearly the whole of the provision was spoiled: at this moment perhaps there was no doubt of the junior parties being hungry. Arthur still continued to rally his aunt on the loss of the pigeon pie, with more boldness than justice, for Mrs. Jemima (as I heard the coachman say) was the only person in the family who was simple in her diet. It seems that, after cutting such things as

were really eatable, Mrs. Cosway told the men to carry the remainder to the inn, and make the most of them. Joseph, an elderly, respectable servant, to whom this order had been given, pointed out the impossibility of doing so.

“I told my mistress,” said he, “that we would very willingly take a snack of bread and cheese, and wait till we got home; but she was in such a rage with me for saying so, I never saw her so angry.”

The coachman, to whom Joseph addressed himself, was sitting on a stile cracking nuts, and occasionally throwing the husks at me; having been a sufferer in this *pleasurable* jaunt, it is natural to suppose I was interested in every thing connected with it.

“Well, if we can get nothing better, I suppose we had best take our lunch at once,” cried coachman.

“To say truth, it is a shame to see such good victuals lost,” replied Joseph; “but look, here’s a mess!” presenting the basket. “To be sure, they’ve picked out the best; but you see it’s impossible to eat any of this; the salt has got in amongst it, and the wine—and the pie-crust is soaked through and through.”

While they were yet examining the spoiled remnants, Master Edward approached.

“Joseph,” said he, “you must be hun-

gry, and slipping a three-shilling piece into his hand, he ran off before either of the men could thank him."

"What a noble fellow that is!" exclaimed coachman; "I only wish he was in somebody's place, I think we might look forward to a good master."

"He is an excellent boy, no doubt, but our young one hasn't a bad heart neither; no: he's only giddy, and that is not so much his own fault. In poor master's time he was a different creature: to be sure, young Edward is ten to one more like his uncle than t'other is; but if that Mr. Powel doesn't do more harm than good, my name's not Joseph. He's always ready to praise him and juggle the mother."—Here, there is a chasm in my narrative. The men repaired to the inn, and I was left to *contemplate* the stubble. Having some taste for antiquities, more especially those of my native isle, I was beginning to regret that I should in all probability quit Penshurst without gaining the most trivial information connected with its history; when glancing my eye towards an adjacent field, I saw an intelligent looking Ass, whom I resolved to address. After the usual compliments had passed,

"Pray, Madam," said I, "will you be so obliging as to tell me such particulars as

may have reached your ears respecting your ancient pile?"

"From what I can learn," replied she, "it was built in the 16th century, I believe in the reign of Edward the Sixth. The Sydneys, Earls of Leicester, lived here in princely magnificence; *here* monarchs were entertained, and here the good and glorious Sir Philip Sydney was born."

"If I mistake not, Madam," said I, "our illustrious Queen Elizabeth visited her minister and favourite, Robert, Earl of Leicester, at Penshurst."

"She did," replied my new-found friend, somewhat pettishly. "Yes, her majesty was no enemy to favouritism, though it seems *we* were almost extinct during her reign."\*

"Indeed!" said I.

"It is true, however, and had not the faculty discovered the medical qualities of our milk, it is probable we had been expatriated from this island for ever."

"I cannot suppose her majesty had any personal enmity to us as a species," I resumed; "I should rather imagine, that the less luxurious habits of that period caused our more useful properties to be overlooked, if not unknown."

"I grant there was some difference in

\* This is a fact.



the style of living," resumed my new friend; "but the Ass, Sir! yes, the Ass, had indubitable claims on a princess who professed and practised the rites of the Christian religion."

The allusion was fair, inasmuch as the most honourable record attached to *our* history is connected with the history of the religion of Christ. But the warmth of my friend convinced me, she was not equal to discussing this subject judiciously; I therefore endeavoured to divert the conversation, by observing, "that we were now made very generally serviceable."

"But does it conduce to our happiness?" rejoined the lady. "The very contrary is the fact. Formerly the Ass had a distinct employment, and if her education was limited, it usually proved sufficient for her station; but since we have been appointed to run in gigs, act as ponies, draw loads, we do neither well; and those frequent tastes of ease which chance throws in our way, but disqualify us or impress us with that disgust for *common* labours which exposes us to chastisement, at the very moment we most deserve compassion."

Whatever justice there might be in these conclusions, I felt there would be danger in attending to them; my friend was evidently a discontented Ass, and as *I* had more than

once indulged in gloomy reflections and vague repinings, I thought it best to retreat ere I imbibed any additional taste for misery. We parted amicably, and as I stood gazing on the walls of Penshurst, I could not help fancying to myself the British Queen and her gay courtiers visiting this favoured spot.

This naturally gave rise to what amongst rationalists is called an association of ideas. Armours and helmets rose to my "mind's eye"—then *our* strength and stature: nor could all my self-love reconcile me to the belief that *we* could have been made useful as beasts of burden in those days. I do not speak of inanimate weight. Imagine to yourself, gentle reader, a man in armour seated on a full-grown donkey! The thing is too absurd to dwell upon.—Well, then, if the nutritive property of Asses' milk had escaped the observation of medical men, (as I believe was the case,) I think the Asses of the present day will allow that the Queen of England may be forgiven the sin of omitting to support the asinine race; since the human race were so highly benefited by the wisdom of her councils, the example of her government, and the never-fading lessons of magnanimity she has bequeathed to posterity. I recollected hearing Doctor Manton and his son discussing the characters of

some discontented Englishmen one evening; but I remember *they* were displeased with the present times, and found something to applaud in all that had gone past.

I cannot enter into the merits of this matter, but, like other Asses, I have my opinion; and must think those who vent their chagrin on the departed dead are infinitely less excusable than the cavalier who fights with the hour in hand. It is *seeking* misery, while it exhibits the very worst species of resentment. My new acquaintance would not suffer me to leave Penshurst without displaying further proofs of her unhappy temper.

“You have not fared too well here,” said she, thrusting her nose over the fence that divided us; “but it is no wonder; the owner of this field thinks himself a great agriculturist; he knows nothing of farming, or these acres would have been sown with turnips.”

I merely smiled, fearful of venturing any remark before so great an adept.

“Turn which way you will,” she resumed, “there is nothing but hops, as if the *sight* of these plantations was to satisfy the appetite.”

“Oh, oh, Madam!” thinks I, “I understand you now; the old fable of ‘the fox and the grapes’ applies here, as I believe it

does in a thousand instances which escape our observation." So anxious was I to avoid the contagion of this lady's example, I actually forgot the short allowance to which I had for some hours been doomed, and only longed for the moment of departure. It was nearly five o'clock, when, seeing the horses putting to, I bade adieu to my testy friend, and approached the gate. Chance brought Mr. Edward to the spot.

"Why, Joseph," said he, "if this poor animal has had nothing given to him, he must be almost starved; he could not pick a mouthful from this field."

"Not much, to be sure, Sir," laughed Joseph.

"Get me some corn," rejoined Edward.—Conceive my joy as these words reached my ears; and imagine the glee with which I fed from the sieve my kind young friend brought to me.

O! ye, who eat from habit, for whom many hands provide, and who are regularly *summoned* to your meals, you know not what it is to be forgotten—to hear the joyous gaiety attendant on a pleasant dinner, nay perhaps *smell* the tempting viands, while one's empty stomach is yawning to partake of the feast. If I thought amplification on this head would have the effect of procuring a single comfort to my contem-

poraries, I would venture to be diffuse ; but I doubt my powers in this line. You *all think* you know how an *Ass* should be treated or *maltreated*, and my zeal might chance to expose him to more obvious neglect.

We quitted Penshurst, observing the same arrangement in our cavalcade as when we left home. Mrs. Cosway had gently hinted that she would prefer her son's taking a seat in the barouche, but Arthur was too used to command, to listen where his own wishes were concerned ; we therefore set off at a pleasant trot. Miss Fanny Cosway soon took occasion to express her disappointment in their excursion.

“ It has been so stupid ! ” said she ; “ for my part, I see nothing wonderful in old houses and old furniture, with all the long stories about the Sydneys ; our own house in Warwickshire is much handsomer.”

“ Edward is laughing at you, Miss Fan,” replied Arthur ; “ he was quite at home, while old Powel displayed what he knew, or thought he knew : still I think it is a fine place ; but pray, Ned, how do you manage to recollect names and dates ? Aunt Jemima was in raptures with her dear boy ; I could have forgiven her that, if she had not rowed me, because I forgot there ever was such a person as Edward the Sixth.”

“ You affected ignorance in order to tease your Aunt,” said Edward : “ if I know any

thing of English history, I owe it to her instruction; and as you have had more of her society than I ever enjoyed, it must be your own fault if she did not give you the same advantage."

"Why, to be sure, I recollect she was well disposed to teach, if I had chosen to listen; but I never could bear to be taught by a woman. They think themselves so clever, and gabble so much. Don't *you* tell the old lady what I say, Miss Fan: I know you have a trick of blabbing."

"I'm sure, Arthur, you are very unkind," pouted Miss Fanny; "but this is always the way, when you are vexed with yourself."

"I never was better pleased with myself than at this time," said Arthur, "for if there has been any fun to-day, it may fairly be attributed to me."

"It certainly has not been the most pleasant of your whimsical attempts," resumed Edward; "at least, I judge so from Mrs. Cosway's being so low-spirited."

"O! my mother is subject to such fits," said Arthur, with the utmost coolness; "but as you say, she must be flat indeed, for even old Powel's flattery of me could not make her smile:—I hate that old quiz."

"I neither like nor hate him, Arthur, and only wonder to see him made of consequence any where."

"Edward, you ought not to set Arthur

against Mr. Powel; he is our guardian, you know," said Miss Fanny, "and I'm sure he's very good natured, and makes us very handsome presents whenever he comes to stay with us."

"It was your brother said he hated Mr. Powel," rejoined Edward; "I hope you do not believe him, Fanny, and I likewise hope *you* have a better motive for *liking* your guardian than that of the useless presents he brings you."

"Dear me! you are so good, Edward, there's no saying a word before you."

"He is very right, for all that," cried Arthur; "I only wish you and I thought like him in all respects."

This justness of sentiment in Master Pickle claimed my unqualified approbation; it was clear to me that he wanted only the guidance of firm and judicious friends to make him a respectable member of society: whether these advantages ever fell to the lot of the young gentleman in question, I cannot say.

It soon became evident to me, that the seniors in this *pleasurable* excursion were equally disappointed in its result. As the carriage was ascending a little steep, Mrs. Cosway inquired of her son, "how far he thought we were from home." The question

was put, and answered according to the different ideas of the distance entertained by the respective members of the party, till the coachman set us all right by saying, we had about four miles to go.

“Four miles!” exclaimed Mrs. Cosway, “why it will be dark. Sister, I said it would have been better to set off directly after breakfast, but you said there would be sufficient daylight for our purpose.”

“It was impossible to foresee the delays to which we have been subjected,” said Mrs. Jemima, calmly.

“Poor Arthur!” sneered Mrs. Cosway. “Well, he will soon return to school, and spare his aunt the pain of seeing him happy.”

“You mistake me, sister; I am anxious when he is from home,” rejoined Mrs. Jemima, “because I know his foibles, and he never visits us, that I do not discover additional cause for uneasiness.”

Arthur laughed, distorted his features, and shewed every mark of silent derision; fortunately the road became level, and we were left a little behind.

“The old lady is seriously offended,” said he, “yet it is ridiculous in my mother to squabble with *her* because a day in September is not like a day in June.”

“When you recollect what influences your



mother to this opposition, I think at least *you* should not arraign her conduct," said Edward.

This rebuke offended the young gentleman, who, I suppose, aware that he dared not resent it as his feelings at the moment prompted, found an opportunity of revenge in teasing me.

"Ah! Mr. Long-ears, I owe you a thrashing," said he, at the same time giving me a few lashes with his whip. Edward remonstrated to no purpose.

"It is but a hired Donkey," said Arthur; "you are over squeamish, Sir; if you don't like his capering, exchange, and I'll be bound to work him so, he shan't throw me again."

"He shall not be left to your mercy, Arthur," rejoined Edward, and clapping his spurs, I understood his wishes, and triumphantly bore my burden off at a smart canter. It had escaped my rider's notice, that a shoe of the pony Arthur rode was so loose as to impede his progress. I, however, had seen it, and more confident in myself from this discovery, entertained no fear of being able to distance my tormentor. We did so, and arrived at the dwelling of Mrs. Cosway without further adventure. I just heard Mr. Edward give orders for tea being made ready for the expected travellers, and was quietly led home by a boy, whom my

considerate young friend paid handsomely for his errand.

“And this,” thought I, “is what they call a day of pleasure: yet it is certain, as far as happiness consists in cheerful spirits, a *desire* to be pleased, a wish to accommodate one’s-self to the *circumstances* of situation, not one of these rationals has known what it is to-day. Balaam laughed immoderately at my description of this trip; but he astonished me by saying, that if I could hear the party *themselves* describe their pleasure, it would wear a very different character.”

“Impossible,” said I; “excepting Master Edward, there was nothing but cross purposes from the time we left Tunbridge till we returned.”

“And for this very reason it would be as I say,” replied Balaam; “each knows how far his own petulance contributed to make it uncomfortable; it is therefore his interest to *combine* in thinking or saying it was otherwise; unless, indeed, he is seriously determined on correcting his temper.”

I cannot say *I* was convinced by the reasoning of my old Mentor, but I had learned to respect him so far as to be silent, though unconvinced. Balaam certainly was a most discerning Donkey: I trust my readers have discovered this long since: for myself I may truly say, even his pleasantries were les-

sons in disguise; and though I ought to blush for the many ignorances these memoirs contain, I must acknowledge, that had he not given me habits of thinking, and taught me to arrange my ideas, "The Adventures of a Donkey" had never glided into the press,—a loss which the juvenile world will, I trust, duly consider; and while they do justice to the character of my old friend, will make every allowance for the deficiencies of his grateful pupil: for you all know that the wisest teachers do not always succeed in making their scholars wise.

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## CHAP. X.

### *New Services and a Removal.*

It would prove an endless task to attempt an illustration of the various characters I met at Tunbridge. I must, however, acknowledge, that there was a diversity in my employment which exactly suited my disposition.

If I was one day the slave of the froward and intemperate, the next perhaps introduced me to those gentler spirits to whom even a Donkey is disposed to do justice. But I must not omit to mention the races which took place during my sojourn in Kent.

The first day passed without any thing memorable or essential to my history, excepting that a sort of emulative ambition swelled my Ass-like bosom, on seeing a really *ordinary* Donkey receive many marks of favour in consequence of his success as a racer. I rather imagine that my carriage and manner betrayed a desire for this distinction; for Mr. Staples, on the ensuing morning, held a consultation in my presence, which seemed to imply that he thought me *capable* of an attempt of the kind, and expressed some regret for his remissness in not proposing me as a candidate for a saddle to be won that day. As ill fortune would have it, the destined competitor for this prize was missing at the appointed hour; every search was made, but without success; and, at a few minutes' warning, a perfect stranger to my jockey, and wholly untrained, I was called upon to exhibit myself on the Donkey course. Conceive the delicacy of my situation, when, led through a crowd of spectators, I took my place between two professed racers! I saw them sneer contemptuously, and felt how complete their triumph would be if I suffered myself to be frightened into inertness: and though the object of a new saddle was to me, whose back was already sore from the friction of my present accoutrements, a most desirable prize, I would

gladly have borne with "the ill I knew," rather than venture on an attempt which might expose me to derision.

My jockey was certainly very encouraging, but I recollected that on the preceding day a most marked difference was observable in the manners of the multitude when the horses ran, and when the Donkeys displayed their agility. On the former occasion, a sort of interested attention was visible, and in their applause were mixed some of those expressions which implied sympathy for the animals that contributed to their amusement. But when the Donkeys started, nothing but laughter ensued — loud, boisterous, unrestrained laughter! Now, to me this was particularly offensive; I always had a dread of this species of mirth. Whether I am really more nervous than the generality of my class, I know not, but I confess the effect of this emotion has frequently incapacitated me for exertion. As I could not hope to escape this mark of distinction, I endeavoured to collect my harassed spirits; and, listening attentively to the opinion and expectations of my appointed rider, hoped that I had acquired some portion of fortitude. We started!—and the shouts of the spectators as instantly commenced. I lost my self-possession, suddenly stopped, nor could the whip or spurs of my rider move me

until my competitors had reached their goal. I never could (even to myself) satisfactorily account for this failure. If I said the voices of *rational* beings frightened me into cowardice, you would call me an impertinent Ass;—yet, I have sometimes thought the event would have been different, had my efforts been received with more politeness. I know it *was* insinuated that I took fright at the sound of a penny trumpet blown by a little boy at the moment I was passing; and some of my enemies went so far as to say, that my ears were laid back;—in short, that I exhibited every symptom of pusillanimity of which my species can be accused. But I positively deny these slanders. Might not modesty, *genuine* timidity, be supposed to have some influence on an Ass thus *suddenly* brought into public notice? Admitting that I had sighed to be distinguished, I only wished to share the honours of my brethren; it never entered my imagination that my master would elevate me to the highest post, without allowing me to acquire some knowledge of the part that I was to perform! Nor can I, to this day, think I deserved the sarcasms that succeeded my defeat.

I can imagine the smiles of my readers at this epoch of my memoirs. You will recollect my little vanities, and perhaps think I

deserved to be humbled. But I appeal to your *dispassionate* judgments, ye gentle judges! and would ask, if there is not some difference between the animal that obtrudes his accomplishments upon the public, and one that is involuntarily thrust into notice? You will say, my *secret* wishes stand in array against me.

I presume to controvert this position, and will obstinately maintain, that a Donkey must be acquitted of all tendency to vain presumption on this head, until something more near perfection is discoverable in *your species*.

I am not such an Ass as to believe that vain wishes are not general foibles. I have seen too much of the world to be deceived in this respect; and while my natural candour leads me to avow my own defects, I entreat my juvenile readers to be lenient in their censure.

But to return. My master, who witnessed my disgrace, and whose awful voice had too often been the harbinger of suffering to lose any of its potency on this occasion, no sooner saw my failure, than he rushed forward, and, seizing the whip of my discomfited rider, beat me most unmercifully. To what extremes his revenge might have been carried it is impossible to say, had not a

gentleman interposed, and, in an authoritative tone, ordered him to desist.

“Inhuman man!” said the gentleman, “is it thus you abuse the faculties with which your Maker has endowed you? Which is the greater brute—this dumb animal, made unmanageable by fear, or want of training, or you, who thus wantonly display the brutality of your heart?”

“He cou’d ha’ won it well enough if he’d chose,” replied my master, “but he’s obstinate; and as he’s my own, I shall do as I please with him.”

The whip was again raised, when my benevolent champion darted into the crowd, and snatching the arm of Staples, wrested the weapon from his hand.

“Master Staples,” said a countryman, in a low voice, “have a care what you’re about; the gemman’s a magistrate, and may commit you.”

“Oh!” thought I to myself, “what a happy thing it is when such good men are entrusted with power!” This was said in the simplicity of my heart. I thought it impossible that my master would not feel ashamed of the conduct which had exposed him to the reproofs of the humane justice. I may be mistaken; perhaps he was ashamed, and my ignorance of the way in which



this feeling exhibits itself in *your* genus, led me into error. I will only add, that though his passion was restrained while we were in public, he did not forget to give me a thrashing when we got home.

Balaam, who witnessed the inhuman revenge of my master, sympathized most truly in my suffering.

“What a savage is man!” said he, when we were left to ourselves. “I heard of your disgrace,” he continued, “if that can be called disgrace in which we are machines and not free agents. But you were pleased with the humane man who interfered between you and our master, Jemmy?”

“Yes,” said I; “I wish he were my master.”

“Aye, that would be well. Yet, rely upon it, you owe your second drubbing to his kindness.”

I stared in astonishment.

“Ha! ha!” resumed Balaam; “you may prick up your ears, Jemmy, and look surprised; but mark me, the more brutal a man is, the more he will dread exposure: had Staples been allowed to give you the thrashing he thought you deserved, it is probable his passion had soon subsided; the reproof of the magistrate drew the eyes of the multitude upon him. He dared not answer a man whose authority was so well

known, and you in consequence suffered for that which was really intended to do you a service."

Though my sides were actually smarting under this second proof of Staples' ferocity, there was something so incongruous in the reasoning of Balaam, that I could not bring myself to believe him:—feigning fatigue, I betook myself to my old corner, and retraced the events of the day.

"What, then," said I, mentally, "does virtue cease to be virtue when exerted in behalf of an inferior species?—it cannot be!" And reverting to the many anecdotes I had heard Mr. George Manton read to Miss Caroline, (where the active humanity of man, as directed towards dumb animals, was most feelingly panegyricized,) I felt clearly that Balaam was wrong, and for this once took credit to myself for superior discernment.

At length the Tunbridge season closed, and our master, whose love of gain was insatiable, let us out to a bricklayer, who lived about a mile distant. Behold your humble servant, Balaam, and Juba, with three neighbouring Donkeys, harnessed in team! It is true, our feeding was more regular, nor could we complain of its quantity; but you may imagine my displeasure when a pair of blinkers were affixed to my head!—it seemed to

impugn my character. Was I an impertinent, staring Ass? Did they think I knew so little of good breeding, that I could not conduct myself without these screens? Balaam happened to be my partner on the morning I made my *début* in the brick-layer's employ. Whispering my dislike to these things, the old gentleman, as usual, laughed at me.

"Why, Jemmy, you will always be a child," said he; "I thought you had drawn a garden chair at Mrs. Fenton's; of course their harnessing was not complete! Blinkers are indispensably necessary to draught animals; they constrain us to look straight forward, and thus expedite our progress."

"They look very ugly," said I; "though I now recollect horses wear them."

"Undoubtedly," resumed Balaam. "Use has taught me to consider them a pleasant shade to the eye. But, my dear Jem, let me advise you to think a little before you speak:—here are six of us, and one man drives us; could he do so if our attention was diverted from side to side? if we were at liberty to look about us?—The thing would be impossible. No, we must plod on in the way you see, and as I cannot suggest a better fashion, nor hope to see it adopted if I could, pray learn like other Donkeys to bear with blinkers."

“I suppose I must,” sighed I; “but, surely, Mr. Balaam, you cannot admire the language of our driver? For my part, I don’t understand the man:—Gee up! and Waugh! what does he mean by such strange words?”

“You will understand him presently,” smiled Balaam; “nor is there any thing to complain of in the words themselves, their *accompaniment* is sometimes rather painful. All you have to do is to catch their meaning and avoid the blow to which your stupidity or obstinacy may expose you.”

“Mighty well,” I replied; “so these rationals expect us to understand *them*, though they seldom recognise our meaning.”

“There are good masters as well as good servants,” continued Balaam, “and our present employer is a very good man—I have served him before: but there is an enthusiasm in your nature, my dear Jem, which does not tend to make you happy. If we are subordinate to man, he is likewise under controul, and that to his own species too—a kind of subjection to which we are strangers. How would you like to be the servant of a rich, over-fed Donkey, that kept you at work early and late, fed you scantily, yet expected you to be humble and contented?”

“Oh, horrible!” said I; “say no more, my dear Balaam; blinkers are very pleasant things. I dare say our driver has the happiest way of imparting his meaning; I shall soon comprehend his gee ho’s! &c.” And using my feet rather adroitly, old Balaam could not refrain from laughing.

“Spare my old legs,” said he, “and take care that your friskiness does not displease the carter.”

I fell into a quiet pace, and was delighted to find my old Mentor well disposed to bear with my vivacity. Nearly two months elapsed in the service of Mr. Maxwell, the bricklayer, when we returned to our old master.

One of Staples’s boys was ill of the ague, and the doctor advised change of air: after some deliberation, they proposed sending him to Bromley, (likewise in Kent,) where they had a relation. I was saddled one Sunday morning, and, with the invalid on my back, set off for Bromley.

“Tom,” said my master, as we were just departing, “tell cousin Smith, if he can get a chap for the Donkey he may sell him; I’ve no mind to the fellow since the race-day.”

Tom promised to tell his cousin, and we proceeded. I did not dislike this intimation, yet I grieved to think that I had not

taken leave of Balaam, whose good sense had so entirely won my affections, that it was really painful to me to think we might never meet again.—Our journey was rather tedious, poor Tom's malady having weakened him so much as almost to incapacitate him for a guide:—it was past ten o'clock ere we reached Bromley. The night was cold and dark, and the reception of the invalid such as impressed me with no very favourable opinion of cousin Smith's hospitality. I was turned to graze in a swampy field where an old horse was quietly reposing after the fatigues of the week. Excepting the short period in which I was the gipsies' servant, I had never slept but under a shelter. Balaam had deplored this circumstance as unfitting me for the vicissitudes which he believed inseparable from my fortunes as an Ass. Never having considered the matter in this point of view, how great was my restlessness on the night in question! I believe I should have wasted the hours in idle regrets, had not the calm fortitude of my neighbour awakened a more just train of reflection.

“This animal,” sighed I, “is of a class peculiarly favoured by man; and, perhaps, were I acquainted with his early history, I should find he too has tasted the luxuries of life, and in a degree superior to those I have

enjoyed; he may have been a successful racer." As this idea took possession of my mind, something like a feeling of conscious inferiority checked my discontent, and I composed myself to sleep; where, I beg my readers will suffer me to rest for a few hours.

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## CHAP. XI.

### *A Journey towards London.*

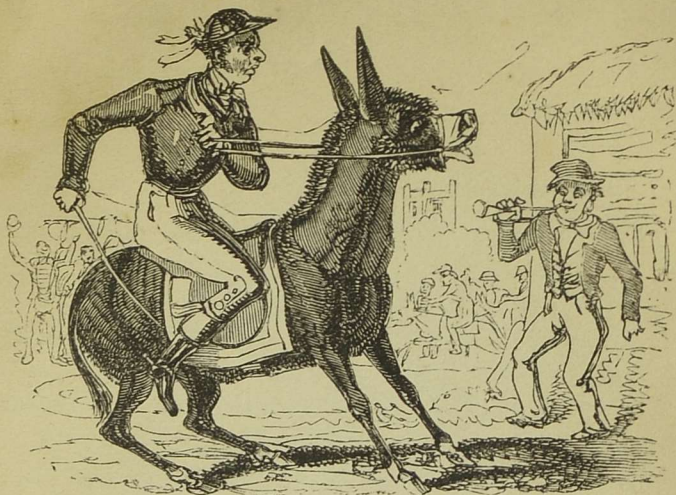
THE morning brought Mr. Smith to the field, who, casting a careless eye over my figure, led my companion away. The too perceptible anatomy of this poor animal caused me to shudder; his bones seemed actually starting through his skin, his knees were broken, and two or three half-healed wounds on his shoulders, assured me the friction of his harness must be a constant source of pain. I saw nothing of my aguish friend during two days; on the third, he crept by the palings, and in a feeble voice explained his father's wishes respecting me. Cousin Smith appeared disposed to depreciate my value; Tom would not allow this. After some altercation, Smith muttered that he would see what he could do, and I was left to myself. The air of Bromley did not suit my taste; the coun-

try was flat, and, after the pleasant hills of Tunbridge, appeared very uninteresting.

Just as I was beginning to hope a purchaser might not be found, and that I should return to the society of old Balaam, a new master was introduced to me in the person of a sandman, whose business, according to his description, seemed to be extensive. He talked of "Lunnon, Fulham, Kensington," &c., &c. But it was the first word only that had charms for me; I sighed to behold the metropolis of my native Isle, and in my desire to visit London, forgot the ignominious circumstances under which it was most probable I should make my *entrée*. The bargain was soon concluded, and I quitted Bromley for Lewisham.

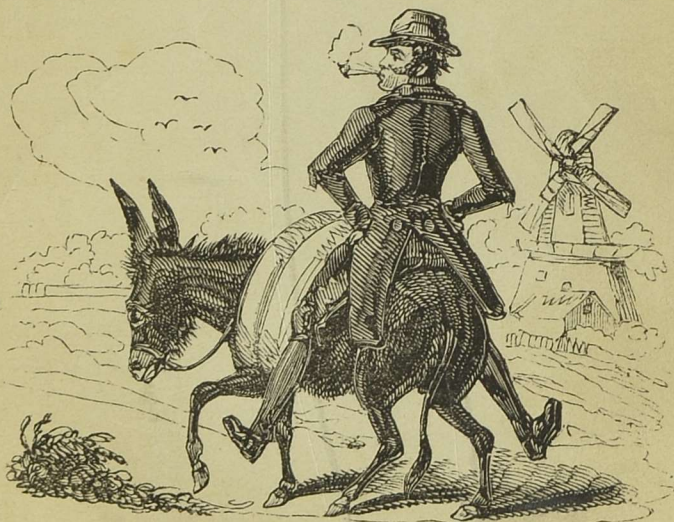
Our first journey was to Blackheath, where I was loaded most heavily, nor could the frequent stripes of my master teach me to consider my burden light; my knees would tremble in spite of my wish to give satisfaction. I rather think my master conceived my load was not equally balanced, for he thought proper to mount behind the bags, and added so considerably to my fatigue, it was with the utmost difficulty I reached home. Two or three labourers had joked him on the road, and one man, whose language sounded new to my ears, declared "It was a great big cruelty to load a dumb





“I know it was insinuated that I took fright at the sound of a penny trumpet blown by a little boy at the moment I was passing.”

*Page 124.*



“I rather think my master conceived my load was not equally balanced, for he thought proper to mount behind the bags, and added considerably to my fatigue.”—*Page 134.*



baste so unmercifully ; and by St. Patrick, I'm glad it isn't I that's your servant," said he.

My master growled something about " a Paddy," and bade him mind his own business.

" And isn't this my business, and every man's business?" resumed the man. " Oh! shame on ye that can keep a sarvant, and don't know which way to trate him."

My sides now bore full testimony to old Balaam's assertion, " that the interference of the humane," provokes, if not increases, the ferocity of the naturally brutal disposition.

However, as I have said, we reached home. I hoped my toil was over for this night ; no such thing : two ragged children mounted my back, and, proud of having something on which they could exercise their authority, galloped me up and down the village, to the no small amusement of their tattered acquaintance.

Many requests were made, that Bob might have a little ride, and Dick try just how he should like riding the new Donkey. Thanks to the selfishness of my master's family, these aspiring gentry were regularly refused. When I did retire for the night, I really thought I could have enjoyed one of those ablutions Miss Morden recommended

as healthful; so completely had the dirty poverty of these people disgusted me.

Six weeks of toil so wasted my form and subdued my strength, that my master entertained fears for my life; his ill-humour increased; he had not had enough work out of me. What was to be done? Telling his grievance to a milk carrier, it was suggested that at Blackheath there were always some invalids, and I might do very well to carry a sick child. My master took the hint, and giving me two or three days of good feeding, carried me thither. I suppose I might call this short interregnum "being at nurse," for I was placed under the care of a laundress, who had a fine drying ground, allowed the full range of an adjoining field, and left at my ease.

Fortune favoured me here: one of Mrs. Ellis's customers saw, liked me, and made no demur at the price required. The money was instantly paid, and I heard the lady say, she would send for me in an hour. I stole a side-long glance at my mistress, saw she was well dressed and looked good-natured, and instantly felt a sort of renovation run through my whole frame. Yet, I must in justice to the salubrity of Blackheath declare, I believe it to be a very eligible situation for sick Donkeys. You may suppose I had my own reflections, or rather

anticipations, respecting my new home. At one moment I pictured to myself a noble mansion and extensive grounds—then, a romantic cottage and luxuriant shrubberies—in short, I experienced all those sensations that a sanguine mind will feel under suspense. At the appointed time a man in a plain livery made his appearance, and I was delivered over with due form.

“Come along, my old fellow,” said the man, as he ran by my side: there was something auspicious in this commencement, and I put my best leg forward in order to shew my tractability.

“Matthew,” said my companion to a groom who was rubbing down his horses, “is not this a handsome Donkey?” Matthew advanced. “Yes, he is a monstrous fine Donkey,” he replied; “he doesn’t look over strong, though,” and, as he relaxed his hold from me, he squeezed a sponge (which he was using on his horses) full in my face. Now this was an unexpected ablution; and, unmindful of Balaam’s advice, I not only shewed my teeth, but, retreating a few paces, brayed with all my might. The groom laughed heartily, and wished to repeat his joke, but my kind guide prevented him.

“You are as mischievous as a child, Mat,” said he; “but there’s one good thing, if the young ladies see you play any

tricks with the Donkey, you will get into a scrape, so I'd have you take care."

This was joyful news to me. I was to serve ladies, and they must be humane from what my conductor intimated.

They were humane—amiable in every respect; I think I see the sweet girls at this moment. But they deserve a regular introduction, and I must summon all my Donkey eloquence to do them justice.

The family consisted of a gentleman, lady, and three daughters—their ages eight, ten, and eleven. Maria Turner, the eldest girl, was a very clever, intelligent child. I observed in her a kindness and consideration for her younger sisters that was truly delightful; indeed, there was more affection in this family than had ever previously fallen under my view.

Mr. Turner was a merchant, and rode to town daily; the young ladies were employed in the house during the morning. At one o'clock I was regularly saddled (and, let me tell you, it was a very complete thing, white leather reins, &c.), when our pastime began, and it was pastime to attend these children. Well then, we sallied forth on the heath, and they rode me by turns;—there was no wrangling, no pouting with—

"I am sure you have rode longer than I did," or—"That is not fair, Emma," and

“ I am sure Charlotte ought to let me ride before her, because I am the eldest.”

No ! all was harmony. I know their parents set them an excellent example, but I believe they were likewise much indebted to the care of a lady who accompanied us in our rambles. Miss Howard (as this lady was called) used to relate very pleasant anecdotes during our rambles, and as we only went at a gentle pace, I had an opportunity of listening to them. I cannot omit one anecdote which took my fancy amazingly. The wind was rather high on the morning she related it, so that I did not exactly catch the name of the person, or the place in which it happened.

“ A great man (I believe it was in European Turkey) was riding out one morning, when he observed three Asses, heavily laden, standing at the door of a house in which their masters were regaling. He pursued his journey, and on his return three hours afterwards, beheld the poor animals at the same spot. Calling for their owners, he ordered the Asses to be unladen, and their burthens placed upon the backs of their masters for the same space of time, saying, ‘ it was the fittest punishment for such thoughtless cruelty.’ ”

My readers may think little of this fact, but to me it was a most amusing anecdote ;

I fancied to myself the mortification of these gentlemen ; nay, so completely did I enter into the spirit of the thing, I felt my sides shake with laughter, and was only fearful lest my mirth should incommode the lovely little Charlotte, then seated on my back. Nor did I fear that the Donkeys could suffer for the degradation their owners had sustained ; for, as an occurrence of this sort could only happen in a despotic government, where the vigilance of the powerful is ever suspiciously alert, it is most probable these Turkish Donkeys submitted to their punishment without daring to think of revenge.

Excuse me, but I cannot resist a smile, even at this moment. It is true, you will not enter into my feelings on this occasion, yet, as often as I have related this story to the Asses of my acquaintance, (and I confess that is little less than a hundred times,) we have been inconceivably amused. I regret old Balaam never heard it ; it was exactly the thing to please him. Poor Balaam ! alas ! he—but I am wandering. Let me see, we were riding on the heath :—well, though the weather was cold, and Christmas near at hand, we seized every fine afternoon to ambulate about this pleasant spot. It was delightful to see these children meet their father, as we frequently did ; their questions were so pertinent and



sensible, and his manner of answering them so pleasant, that I used to call these my intellectual rambles. I remember Miss Maria one day was very anxious to know, why Asses were called Donkeys. Miss Howard had declared, she could not tell how the appellation originated, as it bore no reference to any living language. My ears were stretched to the utmost to catch all the information I could on this subject; indeed, it was one which had often engaged my thoughts.

While the young ladies were yet talking, Mr. Turner arrived, and they immediately appealed to him.

“My information will not be perfectly satisfactory, Maria,” said he; “and for this reason—it is not derived from an authority to which I would yield implicit credit. Like you, I was curious to know why Asses were called Donkeys, and after some search, I found a definition which I will give you verbatim:—

“‘Donkey, or Donkey Dick, a male Ass; called Donkey, perhaps, from the Spanish or Don-like gravity of that animal: also entitled, the King of Spain’s Trumpeter.’”

The party smiled at this explanation; for myself, I rather liked the gravity ascribed to us,—it implied dignity; but the allusion to the trumpeter was a satire upon our har-

monic powers. I looked timidly around, expecting every moment to hear some remark that would make me feel uncomfortable.

I did my young ladies injustice. They laughed at the oddness of the derivation or application of the term; and while Miss Maria declared she could look at me till she fancied she really saw a great deal of solemnity in the character of my countenance, Miss Emma said, I was a very handsome, good-natured creature, and little Charlotte observed I was never tired.

Tired! no, my dear, kind mistresses, it was not in your natures to injure a worm!

I ingenuously confess, that for this once, I rather turned to the living page of existing goodness, than sought to treasure up what might be further quoted by Mr. Turner; so throwing aside the gravity ascribed to us, I set off at the most lively trot imaginable,—my young rider delighting to shew her skill, and calling to her papa to see how well she could manage me. Between ourselves, this was a little mistake—my care in choosing the smoothest paths went more than half way towards making her equal to guiding me. Pardon this egotism, gentle reader, and think how seldom *our* merits are fairly estimated.

A few days before Christmas, I heard

some talk of the family's going to town for the holidays. Maria and Emma were overjoyed at the idea; Charlotte regretted it, "because she could not ride a Donkey in London."

"O fie! Charlotte," said Emma, "you forget that your brother George will come home; besides, you know papa says, the days are so short he cannot come to us every day, and you would not like to go to bed without kissing him, would you?"

"No, to be sure I would not; but cannot we take the poor Donkey with us?" asked Charlotte.

"Why you would be laughed at if you rode a Donkey in London, and where could we keep the poor creature? Evans will take care of him here, and when we come back he will be quite glad to see little Charlotte," said Emma.

I was discouraged by Emma's mention of London as a place in which persons riding a Donkey would be a matter for laughter. Foolish Ass that I was, I thought that vulgar prejudices must be confined to those whose limited intercourse with what is called the world, might in a degree justify their ignorance: alas! I had no Balaam to set me right, and I secretly wished I could make my appearance on this great theatre, if but

to clear up the mistake of my young friend. On the evening previous to the removal of the family, Mr. Turner came home rather earlier than usual, and, with his daughters, took a turn in the meadow in which I was grazing:—"Ah, there's your Spanish Trumpeter," said he. "Girls, you remember your poor pensioner, Mrs. Arnot?" The young ladies replied in the affirmative.

"She is in great trouble," he continued; "her old horse died yesterday morning, and as she cannot afford to buy another, the poor woman is quite disconsolate."

"Dear me, papa," said Maria, "we will all join our pocket-money; how much will a horse cost?"

"More than you possess, my dear girls," he resumed; "but I was thinking, with your mutual consent, it would be an act of charity to present your Donkey to her, and I will buy you another, or perhaps a pony will suit you better, when we return to the heath."

"But indeed, papa, her cart is too large to be drawn by a Donkey," rejoined Maria.

"I have thought of that, Maria, and if you all agree, it would be a good plan to let her sell the old cart, and I will buy her one suited to the strength of your favourite."

"Then we all agree, I'm sure," said

Emma. "Yes, papa, we are quite willing Mrs. Arnot should have the Donkey, because she will use him well."

"What a nice Christmas present it will be!" said Charlotte; "but I hope Mrs. Arnot will sometimes bring her cart into the Square, that we may see the poor fellow:"—and, rubbing her little hands across my forehead, she looked as though she had rather not part with me.

The ease with which this transfer was arranged, very powerfully affected my sensibility. I had considered myself a favourite servant, and really hoped that I had found a permanent home. It is true, the motives by which my owners were actuated were at once liberal and humane. But, with all my respect for the Turner family, there was blended that sense of humiliation, that feeling conviction of our insignificance as a class, which rendered me truly miserable.

In the warmth of my heart, I could not help questioning their right to dispose of one who had faithfully fulfilled the duties of his station. But here memory helped me to be just. I had heard more rational beings than one lament the caprice of their employers. I recollected that a clean, healthy-looking young woman, with grief, declared, she had thought herself fixed in a good service, when a visitor procured her

dismissal, by remarking a defect in one of her eyes, which, the lady said, “was really awful, and made her quite nervous whenever she met her.” And a labouring man had worked more than a fortnight for a stone-mason, who, discovering he was an Irishman, instantly paid and sent him off.—These facts stood me in good need. If change was the inevitable lot of my fraternity, I, certainly, had no right to complain; for I should not only quit my employers with a good character, but carry with me the regrets of some of the family. That personal vanity in which I had too often indulged, was now gradually declining. It is true, I sometimes heard civil things said of my figure, &c., but no lasting advantages attended these compliments: on the contrary, they had in my more youthful days subjected me to those humiliations the conceited more or less experience. Latterly, I learned to consider such encomiums as reproofs—they seemed to throw a slur upon my mental capabilities. “I want those *agrémens*,” would I say, “which give a sterling character to beauty.” Yet the question is, should I have been happier, should I have learned the art of being content, under my chequered fortunes?—If so, what a faulty Ass have I been! But who will look for superior endowments in a

Donkey, whose best services have procured him no higher honour than that of drawing a London cart ?

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## CHAP. XII.

### *A Glance at the Metropolis.*

It was finally arranged that I should go to Town with the groom, who had orders to set off early next morning. An unusual melancholy took possession of me, as I reflected that this was, perhaps, my last appearance in genteel life. I was less sanguine respecting London and its wonders ; and, indeed, as my fate was already carved out, there was nothing like incident or adventure attached to my migration, a circumstance peculiarly disappointing to an Ass of a romantic turn of mind. Matthew, who was a good-humoured, giddy young man, cheerfully undertook the charge of me, and it was on our way towards Deptford I learned something of my destined mistress.

“ So you are off, I see,” said a man in livery, addressing my conductor ; “ but what will you do with the Donkey in Town ? ”

“ Master intends giving him to a pensioner of his,” replied Matthew.

“ Well, that’s good ; but I do think there isn’t a better man than your master.”

“It is a good family altogether,” continued Matthew. “I wouldn’t change,—no, not to live with the King himself!—Yes, and not only the Donkey, but a new cart is to be got for the poor old woman; and all the children are as pleased at it as if they had the finest present given to themselves.”

“Well, such people deserve money, I say,” resumed the man; “I only hope they may never meet a bad return, for that sometimes makes even the best hard-hearted.”

“They are not likely to be imposed on, because they go about and seek into things,” said Matthew. “Why, the old woman that’s to have this Donkey, goes about London with garden-stuff: well, she fell down just opposite our door in Russell Square—one of the children saw her, and sent out somebody to assist her: it was in the hard frost last winter—the poor creature was almost froze—we had her in, and the maids rubbed her ankle. Mistress came down to inquire into her story—ordered her to have some victuals—gave her a pound note, and advised her to go home for that day at least. Well, next morning Mistress walks to Somers’ Town, where this woman lives—hears a good character of her—that she brought up a nephew that had been her ruin, and forced her to take to her present business.



So then she gave her our custom, which is something—sent her in some coals, and almost kept her all the winter; and Master brought home word last night, that her horse is dead—so she is to have this Donkey and a new cart.”

This recital met the entire approbation of our detainer; who, wishing the Turner family a hundred guineas for every one they now possessed, suffered us to depart. You may be sure I did justice to these really good friends, and though I might not actually fall in love with the occupation of my appointed mistress, I hoped every thing from her gratitude. We trotted along the road, and, to my great disappointment, each step that brought me nearer to the metropolis, increased the unpleasantness of my feelings. You will ask, what I could expect at such a season of the year, but dirt and fog. Now a fog was a luxury to which I had hitherto been a stranger; consequently its effects rather surprised me. My breath seemed impeded by this extraordinary quality of the atmosphere, and I began to think that blinkers must be a superfluous appendage in London, where it seemed almost impossible to find one's way in broad daylight. As we crossed Blackfriars-bridge, the sun cast a partial gleam, and exhibited a view

which I was well disposed to admire. I shall never forget the delight with which the Thames inspired me as an object. *We*, as I have before observed, are epicures in water; and though as an element we have our fears and prejudices when in too close contact with it, so much of our comfort depends upon the pure state in which we get this beverage, that I trust I shall be pardoned for the warmth with which I express myself on this subject.

I was not so silly as to expect to find London paved with gold, but I certainly thought it would be whole—complete in every part. Great, therefore, was my vexation when I found myself less equal to preserve my paces, according to *my* ideas of grace, than in many mean villages through which I had passed. Matthew had frequent occasion to pull my reins, in order to save me from falling. It is true, the thick mud which filled up the interstices between the stones, might help to retard my progress; but I really think, if abstemiousness were not an acknowledged property of the Ass, any person who had seen me stagger into London would have called me a most immoral Donkey.

Our route lay through a part of Fleet Street, Chancery Lane, across Holborn to

Russell Square. What a scene it was altogether! What bustle and noise! The splendour of gay carriages contrasted by loaded carts, waggons, &c., &c.! and, to add to my astonishment, *men* carried loads that appeared to require the strength of a horse. I was beginning to think *we* really were a proscribed animal in this world of business, when a strange sensation in my nose, something like what *you* would call sneezing, occasioned me to look about for the cause that could produce such a *nouvelle* effect on my olfactory nerves. I soon discovered a miserably fragile-looking Donkey, dragging a small railed cart, laden with bags of soot. I have since learned, that any sudden surprise checks the emotion called sneezing with your genus. Such a specific was at hand. Hear it, O ye neglected, uncombed Donkeys! a human being—yes, a man—drove this cart, whose black face and hands were only rivalled by his sable garb! They call this description of person a chimney-sweeper; but as it was never proved to me, that these people have an antipathy to water, I cannot reconcile myself to the idea of their invariably dirty appearance. My poor fellow-donkey excited my compassion: his drooping frame seemed little able to drag his load, yet he was young. Two

lines I had heard Mr. George Manton repeat, occurred to my mind:—

“And most unlike the nature of things young,  
That earthwards still thy moveless head is hung.”

Under such circumstances, I really thought shame would have bowed my head.

How super-eminently fortunate did my lot appear! There was something invigorating in the idea of carrying fresh garden plants! and I was actually calculating the chance of a few stray cabbage-leaves occasionally falling to my share, when a completely trimmed vegetable cart, drawn by a Donkey, obstructed our path. It was in vain I strove to inhale the freshness of its contents; every thing looked dry and impoverished, so unlike all I had ever seen, that I knew not how to believe such trash could meet purchasers. The wretched Donkey was nearly knee-deep in mud. I shuddered at these specimens of the estimation in which *we* were held in London, and, scarcely raising my eyes lest I should encounter some new object to pain my sensibility, we reached Russell Square.

“Would I had been born at Grand Cairo!” sighed I, as I saw Matthew cleanse his horses after their journey. What though I partook of the shelter of an elegant stable in a spacious mews; the weight of my

limbs seemed insupportable : and on the instant that I might be called an inhabitant of the great metropolis, I would have given worlds to have been transported to the fields of Tunbridge, or any other fields in which I could have indulged in a roll on the grass. You will think me a dissatisfied Ass, and perhaps wonder that at such a time my mind could be occupied by such seeming trifles. Cleanliness is a half-virtue, and it had ever been my habit to practise it to the utmost of my power. I cannot describe all I thought and felt on this important day. Ignorant as I was respecting London habits, I waited with great anxiety the arrival of the family, fully expecting they would visit me in my new abode. But the carriage was put up, night closed in, and my hopes were disappointed.

The ensuing morning brought Master Turner to the mews :—he was a fine boy, full of vivacity, but perfectly conciliating in his manner. He did me the honour of mounting my back, and expressed himself highly pleased with me :—only regretting that persons did not ride Donkeys in London, or he should have enjoyed an airing in the New Road.

On the subsequent morning a light compact cart was brought to the stables, and, my harness being fitted, I was led forth by

Matthew, who had orders to take me into the Square, that the young ladies might see me before I departed. I saw them all standing at the drawing-room windows; they looked pleased, but by no means gay; I rather think I was honoured by their mutual regrets at this moment; for, as Matthew received his final directions, the sash was gently raised, and the words,—“ Good bye, poor fellow !” “ I declare he looks very nicely,” and “ Pray, Matthew, tell Mrs. Arnot he is remarkably good-natured, and seldom requires the whip,” were pronounced. These compassionate sentences fell on my ears with a sweet but melancholy sound: I scarcely dared raise my eyes to take a parting glance, so powerfully did the certainty of my separation affect my spirits.

I was soon called to witness a more pleasing scene:—on our arrival at a small house, rather agreeably situated in a lane leading out from the road called Somers’ Town, Matthew (who was highly pleased with his errand) stopped, and rapping with his whip, Mrs. Arnot answered the summons.

“ Well, old lady, how are ye ?” said Matthew. The poor woman replied to his question by stating her recent loss.

“ I know your good young ladies will pity me,” said she; “ indeed, master was quite grieved when I told him Dobbin was dead ;

it is, as I may say, losing the very bread out of one's mouth."

"Why, so it would be," replied Matthew, "if there wasn't good people in the world, to help them that can't help themselves: but what say you to going partners with me?" laughing. "I think this cart is big enough for us, in all conscience."

"You are always merry; but it's fit you should be—you are young. That's a convenient little cart, sure enough, Mr. Matthew, but I hope you're not going to leave your place; I should be sorry to hear that."

"I hope I'm settled for some time," resumed Matthew: "but I forgot, I have a bit of paper for you, which will explain my errand;" and, presenting a note to Mrs. Arnot, he waited the effect of her surprise.

"I'm in such a tremble—and I don't know where I've laid my spectacles," said she; "your eyes are younger than mine, Matthew; read it for me."

Matthew took the note, and read as follows:—

"MRS. ARNOT,

"We were very sorry to hear of your loss in the poor old horse; we hope, however, that the cart and Donkey which Matthew has the pleasure of conveying to you, will answer your purpose, and prevent your

feeling any serious inconvenience. Papa and mamma think a lighter cart will be better for your health and strength. You will call for orders as usual; and if you find any difficulty in disposing of the old cart, papa bids us say, he will speak to a person with whom he has lately had some dealing, and who perhaps may be desirous to oblige him. Wishing you every success, we are your sincere friends,

“ MARIA TURNER,

“ EMMA TURNER,

“ CHARLOTTE TURNER.”

“ Sincere friends !” exclaimed Mrs. Arnot—“ they are angels ! O, what children ! Mr. Matthew. But let me not forget their dear parents ;—it is they that have trained them up to goodness, and God will reward them :—they are rewarded, for their children are humble and dutiful, and will live to repay them for all their cares.” The poor woman seemed oppressed while paying this tribute to my late patrons. Matthew kindly drew her attention to her new property, and, as he unharnessed me, and led me to a respectable patch of pasture at the back of the house, I was gratified by the unfeigned approbation Mrs. Arnot bestowed upon me.

“ It will indeed be better suited to my



strength," said she, following us; "yes, Master was quite right; if Dobbin had lived, I should ha' gone on in the old way. Make my duty to the dear young ladies—you know what to say as well as I do—tell them I've no eyes for writing, or I would answer their pretty letter, but I'll keep it as long as I live. You wont forget, Matthew, to tell 'em how happy they've made me. And about the old cart—pr'aps as Master will take the trouble, he would make a better hand of it than I should. And be sure and say, I will call in Russell Square the first thing to-morrow. I shall be off to market early in the morning."

"Master George guessed as much," smiled Matthew, taking a bit of paper from his pocket; "so, as he had no share in the young ladies' present, he sent you this one pound note to go to market with."

My mistress actually shed tears at this proof of Master Turner's liberality, and I have no doubt I should have joined her, had she remained any longer.

She retired with Matthew, and I fell to and made a very tolerable meal, considering the season of the year, and the extent of Mrs. Arnot's demesne.

It may argue little in favour of my gentility, when I add, that I really preferred Somers' Town to Russell Square. Vaulted

stables and neatly-paved mews could not reconcile me to the want of herbage ; there is something refreshing to the eye (putting the taste out of the question) in that universal colour with which Providence has clothed the earth. I was absurdly going to say, that no other colour could prove so acceptable to the senses, when the very circumstance of its being a provision of nature makes the fact incontrovertible. We want neither the sanction of the Poet, nor any conviction but our own unbiassed judgment to convince us, that in nature's plan,

“ Whatever is, is right.”

The next morning initiated me into the bustle of a market : I have heard that many Asses have made their *début* in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, but I really think few, if any, were ever better received than I was on my first appearance.

A little audience was collected around me, and though their applause was not uniformly expressed in a language to which my ears were accustomed, Donkeys as well as other animals can discern what is intended as compliment, and *vice versá*.

There was a very singular looking old lady, who was sitting on an inverted basket, with a tube in her mouth from which she whiffed a gale by no means aromatic : this extra-

ordinary personage certainly excited my surprise, and, retreating a few steps, in order to avoid suffocation, I forgot an appendage—the cart, and, coming in contact with a passenger, had nearly done mischief, when the old lady started from her seat, a flame issuing from her mouth, and, seizing my bridle, exclaimed,

“Can’t ye be asy now? Sure y’re a great big blockhead, that ye can’t see y’re killing the craters behind ye.”

It would seem that her reproof sounded as ludicrous to the by-standers as myself—laughter ensued, but the good humour of my reprover did not forsake her; she resumed her seat, until a man summoned her to carry a load, which it astonished me to see a woman able to bear. She, however, went off cheerfully, and I felt something like a twinge of conscience when I recollected how frequently I had made a difficulty of trifles; though I could not bring myself to think of the fair sex, while recurring to the features and person of this portress. It was sufficient that she was a woman, and I grieved at the necessity which placed her in such a situation.

My mistress was evidently superior to most of the persons assembled in this place; every body seemed willing to serve her. But though she received their civilities grate-

fully, I perceived she was by no means familiar. Regulating my conduct by hers, I kept a respectful distance, not making the least approach to acquaintanceship with any of the Donkeys in waiting.

Indeed, they were for the most part of the very lowest order of Donkeys:—you will ask how I ascertained this. Rest assured, gentle readers, that, as in your species there are orders and degrees in society, so amongst us, there are well-bred Donkeys, vulgar Donkeys, and Donkeys that neither ease nor indulgence could render elegant. But I will never lend a foot (the scribbling member in all Asinine literature) to publish what could not edify the public. Indeed, I am of opinion, that were we indifferent to the failings of our immediate class, there is no danger in delineating vices too faithfully;—in setting forth the consequences of error, an author may hope to do some good, and even should he fail, he retains the consolation of knowing his own moral taste cannot be questioned.

Upon the honour of a Donkey, who is most solicitous of being considered an ingenuous Ass, I am literally surprised to find myself thus wandering from Covent-garden market, to authorship and its moral effects.

Jemmy's—"himself again."

Our marketing turned out well; a great proportion of this morning's purchase was left in Russell Square, where I looked anxiously for my good friends—they were out in the carriage, and I saw nothing of them that day. To dwell on this period of my history would be tedious; suffice it to say, my days were uniformly quiet and comfortable, no more labour being required of me than what I could with ease perform. The Turner family continued to be our best customers, and the sale of the old cart producing a tolerable sum, my mistress looked forward to the approach of spring with a satisfaction to which she had for some years been a stranger. I cannot omit one remark respecting my feeding, if but to do honour to my mistress: considering me as a sort of partner in her toils, she never forgot to place fresh water in an old tub set aside for my use; and many a stale cabbage, aye, and many a fresh leaf, fell to my share when in our journeys she thought I had fasted too long. Excellent woman! you deserved a better——What was I going to say? My gratitude had nearly led me to anticipate what you will find in the next Chapter.

## CHAP. XIII.

*An old Enemy with a new Face.*

IN the month of April we received frequent visits from the Miss Turners, who, having persuaded my mistress to put a little fruit in her windows, took this opportunity of further befriending her; they, however, left town the first week in May. Mrs. Arnot soon after took cold, in consequence of getting wet in returning from market. Her complaint ended in the rheumatism, which prevented our accustomed little journeys. A neighbour, who sometimes chatted over the palings which enclosed our house, advised her to let her cart by the day, and give up going to market. My mistress hesitated more than a week; at length she assented, and my life was now totally altered.

One day, I fetched and carried linen for a laundress; on the next, a pair of panniers dangled at my sides; and, accompanied by a man whose voice almost deafened me, I was the bearer of a weight such as I had never before sustained.

On these days I always observed, that, in proportion as my load lessened, I experienced his favour or anger, and though I could not

possibly have any influence on the public taste, it seemed that my driver thought otherwise, and revenged his ill fortune on my poor sides. Yet I was compelled to smile sometimes, when he would recommend his asparagus, &c., &c., as fresh from the gardens, when the truth was, they were the refuse of those large green-grocers who must daily be supplied with fresh vegetables. At last, to complete my degradation, I was deemed to work one whole day for a chimney-sweeper. This arrangement was made by the neighbour of my mistress, who, unmindful of my feelings, only stipulated for the black gentleman's providing his own harness.

I rather wondered that Mrs. Arnot should assent to my being thus employed; and while a sort of trappings were manufactured of old ropes, I looked anxiously in at the windows, hoping her humanity might yet save me from this odious appointment. She was not visible, and I set off somewhat, I confess, out of humour. O! what a tedious day did it seem! My nerves were in a state of irritation truly pitiable. I suppose I must not say we sneeze; as an emotion indicative of extreme sensibility, you may not choose to share it in common with you; but I declare, I think I sneezed on this unfortunate day. My head was in constant action—

a sort of tremor agitated my tongue, accompanied by a noise not unlike the snorting of a horse.

After perambulating through half the streets of London, I was, late at night, conveyed to my humble home. Alas! my mistress's kind care was wanting, my tub was dry; no cheering good-night met my ears; all was gloom; and, spiritless and disappointed, I endeavoured to compose myself to sleep.

Mrs. Corsan, the good neighbour of my mistress, paid me a visit in the morning, bringing a pail of water in her hand. "Poor fellow!" said she, "I'm afraid your kind mistress will never give you another herself." I stared her in the face, but must have remained ignorant of her meaning, had not a man stopped to inquire after Mrs. Arnot.

"She's very bad," said Mrs. Corsan, "hasn't closed her eyes all night; you see that fellow's coming has made her worse; poor soul, it's hard she can't live at peace after meeting with such good friends."

"I wish the family was in town," replied the man, "I'd let 'em know—that I would. She has no right to be made a beggar for such an idle rogue as that!"

"So I told her," continued Mrs. Corsan, "but it's no use advising her; she says he



is her own brother's child, and, if helping him will save him from wicked ways, she must do it while she has a shilling."

"And he will take her last shilling: he has no more heart than a stone. He got money of her last night, and I saw him at an ale-house directly after."

"Well, I'm determined I wont leave the house to-day," resumed Mrs. Corsan; "and if he does come, I'll tell him my mind."

"Do so," said the man; "I could find in my heart to write to some of Mr. Turner's servants. But if she isn't better by Sunday, I shall be at leisure then, and will go to Blackheath—it is but a pleasant walk."

The kind-hearted Corsan blessed this honest creature, while I watched his departure—fancying the tranquillity such a man must feel within himself. The indisposition of my mistress gave me serious uneasiness. I wandered round the house, peeping in at the windows, in the hope of seeing her: fortunately, this proved a day of bodily rest;—I say fortunately, for in the afternoon, as I was strolling by the door, I heard a faint voice say,

"Ah! poor fellow, are you looking for me?" It was my dear mistress—I hastened to greet her—the day was warm and the sash thrown up. She patted my head, and seemed truly glad to see me, inquiring of

her friend if she had thought of giving me water. Mrs. Corsan's attentions claimed my gratitude, which I evinced by rubbing my head against her arm, in token of recognisance. While I was thus basking in the presence of my good friends, the garden gate was opened—I turned intuitively, and beheld Jenkins!

My mistress looked agitated: he approached the window, and, leaning on the sill, exclaimed,

“Why, old lady, you look a hundred per cent. better than you did yesterday: you wont die this time.”

“I hope not,” said Mrs. Corsan, stepping forward; “and, while I'm her nurse, I'll take care she shall be kept quiet.”

“That's what I say,” retorted Jenkins, “and I advise her to sell her cart and Donkey and enjoy herself while she can, and I know a man who wou'd be glad to buy 'em.”

“No, indeed, that must not be,” said Mrs. Corsan; “she can let 'em out while she is sick; besides, she must not offend the family that gave them to her.”

“A gift's a gift!” sneered Jenkins. “I should like to hear any body tell me what I was to do with my own property.”

“Then leave me to do as I please with mine,” said my mistress, feebly.

“She'll do,” laughed Jenkins; and, ta

king me by the mane, he said I was "a fine Donkey, a very fine Donkey, worth three guineas of any body's money."

Admire my self-possession;—no turn or look of mine betrayed that I had ever seen him. And, indeed, had not his peculiar voice been an indisputable proof of his identity, his strangely-altered person might have led me to discredit the accuracy of my visual perception. He was no longer the stout, healthy-looking man I remembered at Penrose:—his face was florid, but it was the flush of intemperance; while his almost skeleton figure bespoke any thing but health.

Mrs. Arnot really seemed afraid of him: and when he asked for something to eat, I thought she trembled. He entered the house, and, as his voice grew elevated, I heard Mrs. Corsan arguing with him to be moderate. The Turner family were named, and the word Blackheath; but I could not attach any thing certain to what I overheard. He went away early in the evening, and for two days we saw no more of him. On the third, he again made his appearance. Mrs. Corsan forbade him admission, declaring his aunt was in bed, and had been getting worse ever since his last visit. Jenkins ridiculed this—said he must see his aunt, he had a message for her from the

Miss Turners, who had sent her some wine that was to cure her.

“Why, you haven’t been there!” exclaimed Corsan.

“To be sure I have, though,” replied Jenkins; “I took care what I was about, and didn’t say I was her nephew; I knew better than that: they took me for a neighbour, and gave me a good dinner for my trouble.”

“She will break her heart if she hears this, you cruel man; haven’t you once been her ruin? She might have had a comfortable house over her head, and lived like a lady, if it hadn’t been for you.”

Jenkins grew abusive, forced his way into the house, and I was left to conjecture the consequences of this unfeeling outrage.

Alas! before Sunday arrived, my poor mistress was no more: her feeble frame sunk under the conflict of disease, heightened by the brutality of her nephew. Jenkins kept possession of the house—a violence which his relationship to the deceased seemed to sanction. He was her heir, and, such had been the correctness of her worldly dealings, that the little furniture, the cart, and myself, remained unencumbered by any claim whatever.

Mrs. Corsan, whose zealous indignation knew no bounds, threatened to apprize the

Turner family of Jenkins's imposition. He took fright at this, and, ere my mistress was buried, called in a broker, had the goods valued, and actually sold the cart and your humble servant to a dealer in crockery-ware. I was to quit Somers' Town next morning; but, so secretly had he conducted his villany, that Mrs. Corsan knew nothing of my destination.

As I stood gazing at our humble dwelling, and thinking of the calm pleasures I had enjoyed in the service of my respected mistress, my old friend Matthew alighted from a horse, and entered the garden. The poor fellow started back as he saw the closed windows. Mrs. Corsan (who would not quit the house till the last duties were performed) led him into the garden, and, with great tenderness, told her little tale. Matthew was too much affected to speak for some minutes;—then, resting his arm across me, he sighed.

“Well, I'm sure our people will be truly sorry,” said he; “she was such a good old woman: I little expected to find things as they are. I came on an ugly errand. Pray, can you tell me where the man lives who brought us word that Mrs. Arnot was ill?”

“Not I,” replied Mrs. Corsan; “it was her wicked nephew; he deceived you, and, God forgive me, but I shall always lay her

death to him; he flurried her, and she was too weak to bear it."

"And as sure as the world, he robbed us," rejoined Matthew. "We missed two silver forks and a table spoon soon after he was gone, and the butler had somehow a suspicion about him; so I said, I would come and inquire what sort of character he bore."

"He has no character that's good. Why, he has sold every stick to a broker, and got the money, or a part of it. I've seen nothing of him to-day, and if he's done as you suspect, he'll take care to keep out of the way."

"And what will he do with the cart and Donkey?" asked Matthew, kindly regarding me.

"It's impossible to say: perhaps that's sold too. He's afraid of me, because I fetched my husband to prevent his having a parcel of people in here to drink with him."

"Well, as I don't know how Master would act if he knew this rogue was poor Mrs. Arnot's nephew, I can say nothing, only I think hanging is too good for him."

"Aye, he'll meet his punishment, no doubt," resumed Corsan. "Why, when I knew Mrs. Arnot fifteen years ago, she had as good a house and furniture as you shall

see; and, what makes it worse, she gave this fellow his learning, and bound him to a printer, where he might have done well: he got into debt, however, and she was forced to help him: then he came home to live with her—this was her ruin: from one thing to another, she parted with all her property, and at last took to selling garden-stuff. But it is so hard to think, that just when she might have been comfortable, through the goodness of your family, this wicked man should come and destroy her.”

Matthew was deeply sensible of the worth of my mistress, and said all that was humane and considerate to her truly firm friend.

“Well, if this scoundrel appears,” said he, “it might be as well to give him a hint that we suspect him; for I confess *I* should not like to have any hand in bringing him to justice, on poor Mrs. Arnot’s account. But, do you know, one of our maids said she was sure he was an impostor, and when the butler gave him the wine in charge, she saw something shine in his pocket as the bottle was being put in.”

“I’m afraid it is like him,” sighed Cor-san.

Matthew took a melancholy leave of this good woman, and, as he patted me, said, “I wonder if this poor fellow is sold or not:

our young ladies would willingly have him again, I'm sure."

Mrs. Corsan could give him no information on the subject, and he departed.

Think what my feelings were at the bare suggestion of such happiness, when I knew how I really was engaged. The sketch I had heard of Jenkins's history was truly painful: that sullenness I had observed in him when in the service of Dr. Manton, now appeared characteristic; to a man of his vicious turn of mind, good humour must ever be a stranger. There must be a sort of harmony between the actions and the feelings of the person in whom this gracious charm of character is discernible. For my own part, I should as soon expect to meet forbearance in a hungry tiger, as equability of temper in the being whose conscience is his constant (though secret) accuser.

What a singular fate was mine—again to be at the disposal of this wretched man! But the actual misery he had occasioned my late respected mistress, would not permit me to think of myself. There was some consolation in knowing I should not be *his* slave:—thus I looked to the morrow, if not with pleasure, at least with calm resignation.

My purchaser arrived at an early hour next morning. Mrs. Corsan vehemently op-



posed my removal until she could send for her husband. The man waited patiently, and, upon hearing a detail of Jenkins's conduct, seemed to regret having had any dealings with him: but he had paid three guineas in advance, and had appointed an hour to conclude the bargain. Mr. Corsan joined us, offered his opinion, and strongly advised the man to get off his bargain. This did not suit my new master; he wanted a cart and Donkey, had made a fair proposal, which had been accepted, and, producing a written agreement signed by Jenkins, the Corsans had nothing further to say: I was harnessed to the cart, and bade adieu to Somers' Town as a residence.

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## CHAP. XIV.

### *A Summer in London.*

LONDON is a little world of itself. I declare I thought myself well acquainted with the metropolis, but I found I was quite a novice in this respect; and as we journeyed southwards towards Westminster, I was sensible of a striking difference in the air. The month of May, in a clear atmosphere, is an enchanting season. In a close, populous neighbourhood, where poverty is

conspicuous, the luxuries of nature seem almost an inconvenience. I am certain, from all I have seen, other animals besides Asses have an antipathy to water: it must be so—or we should not be disgusted by the sight of those thousands of squalid beings with which the city of London abounds. My new master and his family were of this class, and, to my utter surprise, neither pasture nor stable awaited me in this service. Some varieties I had seen; but it had never occurred to me that I should be led through a house, and destined to consider a space not exceeding twelve feet, a place for repose and refreshment after the toils of the day. I literally shuddered as the cart was backed upon an adjacent dung-hill, and I was introduced through the family mansion.

Did I say the family mansion?—it was an egregious mistake; the dwelling contained at least half a dozen families, equally elegant in their habits and manners. I believe they were industrious, but it did not appear to me that the best consequences of industry attended their exertions. The younger branches were uniformly idle, wandering the streets from morn to night; while the seniors, when their appointed labour was over, were chiefly employed in eating and drinking. To me, this was a strange per-

version of common sense in creatures who know all the necessity of providing against the approaches of old age, the attacks of disease, and those thousand ills to which "flesh is heir." Thus, while I say there was an influx of money amongst these people occasionally, they yet lived in a state which, while it implied poverty, scarcely deserved commiseration. My situation was truly deplorable, my immediate duties being of so hazardous a description as to keep me in constant alarm.

You have seen those slight carts decorated with crockery-ware: well, it was a vehicle thus ornamented I was doomed to lead. I had made the discovery that the sun could shine in London, as my half-roasted body could have attested. We began our travels at an early hour, and seldom got home before nine o'clock at night.

A few mouthfuls of hay were thought sufficient for my support during the day, and, though I was really tantalized by the sight of a green field, many temptations presented themselves in the course of my peregrinations: for instance, could I see those long bags suspended to the mouth of a hackney-coach horse, and not sigh for such a charming appendage?—see them drink from the offered pail, and not feel my own deprivations? It will be said, I am mistaken; that

hack horses are by no means so well treated as I imagine. Granting that individual suffering leads us to magnify the comforts of others — you cannot deny that we are an abused race. The simple fact, that there are men appointed to attend to the feeding of horses, places this in an unequivocal point of view. Who thinks of an Ass; momentarily releases him from his harness, and suffers him to feel a glimpse of liberty; slakes his thirst; or, in the most trivial particular, seems to consider him endowed with feeling?

O! if nature had not been more provident, and kindly bestowed on us the virtue of abstemiousness, how much more wretched had been our lot! But as man possesses the power (did he feel the inclination) to improve our condition, it is surely a disgrace to him, and somewhat impugns that high character of justice with which he too frequently invests himself. Old Balaam used to say, “that *rational* animals occasionally mistook the meaning of the word justice, and, while pride influenced their actions, really thought they were acting equitably.” I am not disposed to refute this assertion, more especially as I have seen some instances of quickness of feeling, a dread of being under obligation, which forcibly corroborate the remark of my friend

Balaam. Yet, how can we reconcile the contradiction of that stately *biped* called *man* owing obligations to creatures like us, and taking no account of our services? The stronger the contrast between the obliged and the obliger, the more imperiously does it claim the regard of the former.

But here again all-beneficent Providence has befriended us: we are patient, submissive, not prone to resent injuries; and surely these qualities should endear us to beings to whom authority is so invaluable.

We ask no special favours, nor require a code *Asinine* to be enacted for our benefit. No; it is the simple exercise of humanity to which we think we have undoubted claims; and these pretensions will ever remain in force amongst Asses, until **MAN**, by a reference to the religion he professes, or the laws under which he lives, disproves our appeal by convincing us he is licensed to wound and maltreat the defenceless.

Forgive this digression; the subject is one in which I am too feelingly interested to be concise.

To return to my perishable burthen. Our success was various; there were days in which I was scarcely sensible of any diminution in my load, and others when a brisk trade gave mutual satisfaction to my master and your humble servant. Attentive, and

open as my ears always were to receive information, it will not be supposed I could exactly comprehend those nice distinctions between the names of persons and things, only to be acquired by intense study and deep research. My ignorance in this particular led to a painful result: we were in Piccadilly, had just received payment for some of our goods, a gentle touch of the whip apprized me I was expected to proceed, when words, which sounded to me like "Plates off," caused me to stop suddenly; a jingling, or rather a concussion amongst our crockery convinced me I had done mischief. My master seized my reins, struck me violently across the mouth, yet evidently expected me to bear his brutality with Spartan indifference. How far my natural hardihood might have helped me at this juncture I know not, for the whole street was in commotion. I shared in the agitation, and, in endeavouring to recede from my master's grasp, plunged the cart into one of those holes so frequently left open for the good of the public.

Like other erring animals I stood still when the mischief was done;—but as I looked around me, and saw the people running to and fro, I said to myself, "This is surely a very extraordinary proof of sympathy; these people can feel upon occasion,

yet I really had no idea that a few plates slipping off my shelves could have had such an effect!" And, conscious that my second error must have proved more extensively injurious to my master, I fully expected the crowd would now surround us. Conceive my surprise when my master, forgetting his rage, inquired which was Platoff!

"That's he," said a coachman from the box, "that's the Don Cossack!"

"Ah," thought I to myself, "this then is the trumpeter of some king! I suppose nations differ in the animals they select for this office. The king of Spain prefers Asses, I should say Donkeys." My limited education did not allow me to judge of this personage by his dress; as good fortune would have it, a gentleman with a little boy (who had mounted behind a carriage to get a sight of this hero) in a few words set me right.

"That is Platoff," said he, "General of the Cossacks, called Don Cossacks from their inhabiting the neighbourhood of the river Don, in Russia."

"I think," said the young gentleman, "that the Emperor of Russia should be styled Alexander the Great; I am sure he is a better man than the son of Philip was. But when will they write a history of these

times? I want to read an exact description of the entrance of the Allies into Paris."

"Fame will do justice to their magnanimous conquests," replied the elder stranger; "but, my dear boy, there are already printed documents which may help to assist your laudable curiosity. It will require time and reflection to give such a history of late events as shall be worthy of the men it is intended to immortalize."

"Oh, thought I, "what an Ass have I been; history is to be the trumpeter of these men!"

The plan appeared excellent according to my idea, for I had heard so many amusing anecdotes quoted from books of Natural History, I could not doubt that a natural history of great and good men, must tend to the edification of the whole species. I shall be dubbed a jealous Ass when I add, that my nationality was a little touched as these high encomiums on foreigners reached my ears. "What," said I, "are we to be overlooked? Are the English people a degenerate race?" And looking round (somewhat pettishly I own), my murmurs yielded to a contrary conviction. All was enthusiasm, loud shouts! "hats off!" The warmest congratulations spontaneously uttered!

"I understand it, now," said I, exultingly.



“An inferior people would not know how to receive these warriors. It is only the brave that participate the achievements of the valourous.”

But to descend from *my* heroics; the streets were in a few minutes deserted, and my master found leisure to resume his resentment. Many degrading epithets were bestowed on my stupidity, but not one word was said of the bad state of the pavement.

Whether our gravity is against us in some situations, or that we really want that physical animation which, when opposed to passion, will sometimes awe even a tyrant, I cannot determine; I rather fear our timidity is mistaken for insensibility; and we suffer for that very deference we observe towards our masters. Mr. Carter (my then owner) had not sustained any material injury from my accident, but he had lost time, and though this was perfectly optional on his part, it was attributed to me; nay, the flight of the populace added to his ill humour,—there was nothing to be done in the way of business. Men of a certain character (aye, and children too) must have something to quarrel with—I, an unresisting Ass, stood before him,—could any thing be more opportune? Forgetting the chances were against his brittle merchandise, he seized

his whip and lashed me so unmercifully, that, contrary to all precedent, I made a desperate effort, broke from his hold, and, running with all my might, reached the top of St. James's Street, amidst the clattering of my demolished burthen and the cheering of two or three gentlemen who had witnessed our contest. There, an unexpected obstacle presented itself,—the poles of a sedan chair stopped my progress: the chair was rescued from destruction by the activity of one of those herculean animals who carry these leathern vehicles; but I fell, and my knees received an injury never to be recovered. Carter arrived, furious almost to madness: by this time, a small but select crowd were assembled—one or two persons lamented the poor man's loss in his broken crockery, but a gentleman who had been chiefly instrumental in assisting me to rise, declared, "the scoundrel is justly punished. I have watched you for some minutes," said he, addressing my master. "Do you know, Sir, you are liable to imprisonment for maltreating this wretched animal? And I am strongly inclined to make you an example." Carter looked alarmed, and as it is the custom to call every thing that looks timid, an Ass, I suppose it would be proper to say, he looked like an Ass. I confess, I never beheld a more striking contrast than the

countenance my master exhibited while under this gentleman's censure, and that which had distorted his features when exerting himself to wound me. It may be, that personal fear is not becoming to man, for certainly I never saw a human face that carried less of dignity in it than my master's did at this moment. Referring to the board on which Carter's name and abode were painted, the gentleman drew out his pocket book and made a memorandum; then, in an impressive voice bade him be cautious how he conducted himself, for that he would not lose sight of him.

We moved on slowly. I was now for the first time suffering under bodily infirmity; and conscious that my misfortune was of a nature to lessen my usefulness, the future filled me with horror.

I could not but observe, however, that in the late instance the interference of the stranger seemed to have an effect somewhat different from the doctrine of Balaam.—My master really appeared humbled, and once or twice stopped to examine my knees, without uttering any of those murmurs I anticipated from concealed, rather than subdued anger. We reached home, and our adventure was related to the assembled family. I had heard of such a thing as embellishment of style, figures of speech,

&c., &c.; but certainly never was tale more partially amplified, than that in which I was the unfortunate hero.—“Oh,” thought I, “if my actions are thus trumpeted by one who knows me, what a portrait will be handed down to posterity!” I really believe it was the injustice of this story-teller that first led me to think of writing my own memoirs. It was too bad to hear myself called an obstinate brute, not worth my feeding! Nay, more, that I had brought ill luck into the family, and now was good for nothing!—Whatever truth there might be in the last remark, I thought I had some claim on their humanity; my lameness was got in their service, and if more tenderness had been shewn me, I might yet have retained the full use of my limbs. How to get rid of me was the thing;—my knees were bound up, and for nearly a week, I was a prisoner. The natural vigour of my constitution was yielding to this unwholesome confinement, when a clean, respectable-looking woman was introduced into my presence.

“Poor thing! he’s been sadly maimed,” said she; “to be sure, he won’t be hard worked with me, but if I buy him, and he don’t answer my purpose, that would be a great disappointment.”

Carter strongly recommended the animal

“that was good for nothing!”—he would gladly keep me himself, for he knew I should soon be as strong as ever, only he had met with a horse, a great bargain; and indeed, his work was too much for a Donkey!

After some demurs on the part of the woman, they agreed, and he was to send me to Kensington next day.

I felt it was impossible to change for the worse, and resigned myself to the vicissitudes of fortune with all the calmness of philosophy. My spirit was broken; that vivacity which had supported me under so many difficulties no longer lent its aid, nor did I ever hope to find a service that should restore me to my former self. It was therefore with a listless indifference that I obeyed the summons of Jack Carter, my master's son, who was deputed to convey me to Kensington. On his mounting my back, I was fully sensible of the injury I had sustained in my legs. I rather tottered than walked; my rider perceived it, and with that cunning which belonged to his family, dismounted, in order to avoid giving me the appearance of being what I really was at the time, a worn-out, melancholy Donkey. Mrs. Dawes received me kindly; the agreeable situation of her house, and the comfort of the open air, were quite a regale to me,

who had been suffocating in Westminster for three months. I saw she was a laundress, and, recollecting with pleasure my former service with a person of this calling, adjourned to a field at the back of the drying-ground, more composed and happy than I had felt since the death of the excellent Mrs. Arnot.

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## CHAP. XV.

### *More than one Surprise.*

I SHOULD deeply regret, if any thing I have said of myself should dispose my readers to think me a censorious Ass; nay, it would vex me if I thought any one could justly accuse me of caprice. Yet, I know not how far I shall stand acquitted to the juvenile world, when I declare, that in less than a week after my arrival at Kensington, my renovated health and improved spirits, by leading me to look out of myself, presented objects which called forth my disapprobation, and exceedingly offended my ideas of propriety. It may be argued, that, having associated with the Carter family and other Westminster gentry, I ought to have been lenient towards less conspicuous personages. Allow me to say, that in propor-

tion as people are removed from the more immediate pressure of poverty, we expect to see some of that gratitude, those attentions to the wants of others, which make prosperity doubly valuable. My mistress was what is called a hard-working woman, viz. she employed a number of hands, and in order not to lose money, made no difference between Sunday and other days. Though she paid her assistants regularly, it was always at a lower rate than others paid; and such was her fear of being cheated, that I really think she was more miserable while gaining money, than thousands who are in actual want of a shilling. I soon learned, it was to her taste for bargains I owed my station in her family: consequently, my increasing strength was matter of triumph to one who placed all to the account of her own foresight, rather than the real cause. I could not respect this woman: she had not an atom of sympathy in her nature. And though I fed well, I did not feel in the smallest degree indebted to her care; the season was luxuriant, and the field in which I resided was not her entire property.

The Donkey of a neighbour shared my pasturage; a circumstance which helped to restore me to cheerfulness. He was intelligent and amusing, and used to relate the

occurrences of each day as they arose. His immediate employment was that of carrying goods for a small grocer. It was from him I learned the character of Mrs. Dawes. Once put upon one's guard, every thing tends to confirm or controvert our suspicions. I was soon convinced he was right. If my mistress was called away for half an hour, her poor servants took a little respite, or enjoyed a laugh amongst themselves; for I should have told you, Mrs. Dawes was an enemy to mirth in every shape. I used to watch these poor labourers with lively emotion, and often as I stood gazing at them, have I heard them say, they worked harder than horses, but never could give satisfaction to their employer. My own fate compared with these women's was bliss; in fact, there were only three days in the week in which my services were required: and though my knees never acquired their former strength, I was then fully able to get through my appointed duties. The natural character of any animal is frequently obscured by the circumstances of situation; the creature himself often doubting whether he has not mistaken his own feelings and tastes.

Poverty and low life had given me this sort of impression. I had sedulously avoided the contamination too often produced by



“evil communication,” but with that *ennui* inseparable from an English Ass, believed it impossible I could ever be cheerful again. Vivacity was certainly a striking feature in my character; it must have been a radical quality in my disposition,—for neither broken knees nor past experience could teach me to be grave when I left myself equal to a frolic. One sunny morning, perceiving the drying ground full of linen, whose whiteness almost dazzled the sight, I walked round the field admiring the regularity of the lines; on a nearer approach, I observed that some of the articles were of an immense size, suspended over two lines, forming beautiful avenues beneath. The whim seized me, that I should like to walk in these lovely alcoves: when, opposing my shoulders to some weak palings, they gave way, and in I marched. Nothing could exceed my delight on finding myself enclosed within these tents; I wandered from one path to another, snuffing the freshness of the gale which gently wafted my covering to and fro, when a screaming amongst the women startled me. I stood transfixed, hoping I was screened from detection, and not quite certain that my vagary had caused their alarm. Could any thing be more silly than my conduct? I forgot that my legs were exposed to view; and not until I was

compelled to exert them in running from my assailants, did I discover my error. Perhaps a more laughable scene has seldom been witnessed. Figure to yourselves half-a-dozen women armed with mops, clothes-sticks, and wet linen, and think you behold me, running up one path and down another, the women laughing all the time as though they enjoyed this part of the frolic as much as I had done the former. In the midst of our contest, Mrs. Dawes returned from an errand. Her voice struck terror into the cheerful group; each was accused of having left the gate open. I grieved at this, and, making a sudden spring, rushed through another part of the palings, effecting my escape, but at the expense of my poor knees, which were again seriously injured. Mrs. Dawes followed, and, reviling me as a mischievous brute, gave me some severe blows with one of the broken palings. Resistance was out of my power—I could scarcely stand; and, indeed, such was my consciousness on this occasion, I almost thought I deserved the chastisement she inflicted on me.

There was nothing miserly in the blows of this lady: she dealt them most liberally, I assure you. But when I heard her say, “all the bed-furniture must be re-washed,” I cannot describe my regrets. It was in

vain the women examined and declared they were not in the least soiled—she would be obeyed. This tyranny completely disgusted me; and I believe I should have taken a resolution never again to indulge in a frolic, however innocent, had not Mrs. Dawes received a letter which caused her immediate departure for Town. The women took advantage of this, and she had scarcely left the house, when the curtains were replaced on the lines. I had now leisure to think of the consequences of my folly. My lameness was really very painful: ah! how I dreaded the idea of dragging a load; convinced as I was, that my mistress would not fail to reproach me, if I experienced not more lively proofs of her temper.

My mode of life at this period might be called purely domestic—I saw so much of the household arrangements, and was constantly within hearing of its concerns. Task-masters and mistresses owe little to the zeal of their slaves; and though in this happy country the whip is reserved for unfortunate quadrupeds, the tongue, that goading weapon, (when unfeelingly exercised,) though it enforces obedience, never claims esteem.

The character of Mrs. Dawes was now severely handled by her assistants. I had heard an old adage, viz. “When the cat’s away, the mice will play.” “I must just

run and see if my boys are come from school," said one of the women; "and I," said another, "must tell the baker to save me a stale loaf:" to be brief, all, save one woman, departed.

This was undoubtedly wrong; but there was some apology for these persons, inasmuch as I have good reason for thinking they were actually employed as they said. I stood looking at the chasm I had made in the palings, when I saw a man enter the drying-ground: he walked upon tip-toe, and began to clear the lines. I thought this good-natured, being always pleased to see women spared unnecessary fatigue. An enthusiastic Donkey, like other animals of a similar description, is apt to evince its approbation in some way or other. I thought I could do no less than regard this kind stranger attentively: I dare say there was a strong expression of sensibility in my countenance at the moment. I wished to catch his eye, not in the vain hope of exciting his sympathy—that I positively deny: no, it was a simple tribute of silent admiration I intended to bestow on him. I ran forward—he started a few paces—then turning, with a ferocious grin menaced me, but it was by action only. Conceive my dismay, when I discovered in this active personage the features of the villanous Jenkins! What could

a poor Donkey do?—It was not a case in which braying could be serviceable. Unintentionally I adopted a line of conduct which rescued my mistress from an immense loss. This man had always been my terror; his threatening aspect on the present occasion revived that fear he was but too well calculated to inspire:—hastening from his scowling glance, I ran towards the house—startled the solitary woman, who, raising her eyes, beheld the depredator, and instantly gave the alarm.

Jenkins had carried off a large bundle, and would have escaped detection, had not the other women been near at hand, and hearing the cry of “Stop thief!” actually seized his person. I saw him brought back, followed by a mob; all was confusion: no one knew how to act till an officer of justice was summoned. The guilty Jenkins was then conveyed to a place of confinement, and the frightened women were left to account for their absence. The exact result of this business never reached me: I conclude their excuses were not accepted, as I saw strangers in their place next day. Jenkins only escaped condign punishment from the circumstance of the linen he had stolen being *dry*;—a point in law certainly beyond my comprehension, though highly grateful

to my feelings when I recollected his amiable aunt. He was transported for seven years. When this sentence reached my ears, I could not help breathing a wish, that a change of climate might produce that alteration in his conduct which might ultimately lead to reformation. My Donkey friend on this evening appeared much depressed: I delicately sought his confidence, when, with a sigh, he exclaimed,

“Your present life leaves you at liberty to enter into the concerns of man, while I am wholly occupied by the oppressions under which my own species languish.”

“My dear friend,” I replied, “surely you cannot doubt my Donkeyish sympathy? I am an Ass, and nothing that relates to Asses is indifferent to me.”

“Spoken like yourself,” resumed Bobby. “I met an old friend to-day whose sufferings have touched me keenly: I remember him one of the strongest Asses I ever saw—indifferent to labour, cheerful, patient; in short, quite a perfect animal. This morning I saw him feeble and almost sinking for want of sustenance, dragging a load of wood, under which his legs trembled, yet he had some miles to go. When I expressed my sorrow at seeing him in this situation, he smiled calmly; said there was

nothing remarkable in his fate, that we were destined to labour, and should endeavour to bear it with fortitude."

"Such characters make one ashamed of oneself," replied I; "but if your friend has escaped broken knees, he is probably as equal to his station as I who am young and apparently healthy."

Bob smiled. "Then you take no account of age," said he, "nor think perhaps that quiet and repose would be acceptable to an old Ass?"

"You mistake me, my dear Sir; I only suggested the possibility of your friend's good constitution supporting him under difficulties my shattered limbs could not endure."

"The truth is, my dear Jemmy, we are all prone to consider our own misfortunes too deeply. I grant yours is a case that must excite fears for the future, but we must not rob the present hour of its enjoyment, in order to speculate on an issue which may never arrive. There is a degree of selfishness in this, unworthy of your character: forgive my freedom; did I esteem you less, I should not have presumed to reprehend your sentiments."

"A thousand thanks, my kind Mentor," sighed I, and I rubbed my nose against his neck in token of my perfect gratitude. "I

stand corrected; I fear it is too true that debility renders us irritable and partially selfish: but I am a fortunate Donkey in meeting such a friend. I could almost think, while I listen to you, that my early instructor, the excellent Balaam, was before me."

"Balaam!" exclaimed Bobby, "did you say Balaam?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"O Jemmy," continued my friend, "it is for that inestimable Ass I am now grieving! Yes, it was he whom I met with this morning; but give me the history of your acquaintance; I am impatient to hear when and where your friendship began."

As well as my feelings would permit, I complied. Bob was all attention, only interrupting me to express his approbation of the justice with which I delineated the character of our mutual friend.

"My mother should have been his wife," resumed Bobby. "I have heard he was the most lively Ass imaginable, until disappointment somewhat soured his temper. I owe him infinite obligations; forgetting the injury he had sustained in my mother's broken faith, he has ever shewn me the greatest tenderness; and, when my father deserted us, by constantly making me his companion, attracted the notice of his



master, who eventually received me into his service. Fate removed me from his protection, but I have never ceased to retain a just sense of his virtues. But what can words, or what will gratitude, avail?—He is doomed to incessant slavery! Alas! if his own strong mind were not his best support, how pitiable were his situation! As it is, I question whether he would not reprobate that sensibility which leads us to lament irremediable evils, rather than strive to bear up against them.”

You may be sure I listened to this admirable model of my esteemed old friend with all the attention he deserved. Yet, such was my natural love of inquiry, I could not help wishing to be informed respecting those circumstances that had brought Balaam to London.

Bobby could give me no light on this subject, further than that he now resided at Hampstead.

In this instance, as in many that preceded it, I felt the disadvantage we labour under, in being ignorant of geography. I believe few animals are more sagacious in finding their homes than Asses: but this is a species of local sagacity that scarcely soars beyond instinct. What am I saying?—Instinct is at once our limit and our bliss: did we possess higher attributes, Nature, jea-

lous of her rights, would lead us to rebel, and counteract those separations to which we are invariably doomed. But as vague wishes are confined to no particular species of animal, I hope mine will meet indulgence; more especially when it is remembered, that friendship is an active principle, "never easy when a friend's distressed," bold in its designs, and, however well-intentioned, not always reasonable in its speculations.

Had I known how to find my way to Hampstead, and entertained no fear of being stopped on the road—not by highwaymen nor footpads—but as a strayed Ass, and perhaps put into the pound, I certainly should have decamped that evening in spite of my broken knees: but I was a hired slave, and was yet to endure my share of Mrs. Dawes' tyranny.

There was a luxury, however, in talking of dear Balaam: Bobby promised me, that if chance again brought them together, he would not fail to convey my dutiful remembrances to the worthy old Ass.

It is surprising to think with what different sentiments one regards the same character at different periods of time. I, who had presumed to arraign the justice of Balaam—who had thought him severe, if not illiberal—now saw him as he really was,

a very superior Donkey. His cautions were the results of observation—his warnings, invaluable lights to those who had sense enough to heed them—and that peculiar art with which he drew aside the veil that concealed follies which escaped the notice of less sagacious Asses, was well calculated to repress the simple credulity of the trusting, inexperienced Donkey. I blush to think that I ever breathed a censure against this venerable animal.

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## CHAP. XVI.

### *A Fair and an Elopement.*

WHEN the head of a family is distinguished for ill humour, it rarely happens that the dumb dependents escape its influence. I had felt the utmost commiseration for a poor dog that was chained to his kennel and most sparingly fed by a mistress who yet expected him to be vigilant in his office of watching the clothes; and in the simplicity of my heart, wondered he made no effort to absolve himself from so vile a bondage, when I was doomed to experience a similar kind of confinement. I beseech you not to suppose I incurred this punishment by any new frolic—in fact, my spirits

at this period were particularly low :—no, it was the parsimonious disposition of Mrs. Dawes that led to this result. The palings remained some time as I had left them, until her landlord, paying her a visit, made some remarks which compelled her to have them repaired. The expense could not be considerable, though I heard her tease the carpenter, and declare he was making a job of it because she was a lone woman. The man denied the charge, and hastened his work, glad no doubt to be released from her voluble complaints : but, in order to prevent any future transgressions on my part, a rope was thrown over my neck and tied to a tree—thus confining my exercise within its limits. I felt this as the most pointed insult I had ever encountered, nor could I bear the idea of meeting Bobby under so painful a degradation. I was boisterous at first, kicked up my heels, brayed, and in short, shewed every disposition to resist : alas ! what imbecile creatures we are ! What is our strength opposed to the ingenuity of the rational creation ? But it was hard to reflect that the very quality which made us useful to our employers, should thus be rendered negative when our own comfort was the consideration. Nor could I look around me without anticipating the day when, having eaten to the length of

my rope, I might be starved in the view of plenty.

I knew Mrs. Dawes practised this sort of self-denial, scarcely allowing herself the necessaries of life: this was no rule for me; I was not a glutton, but most assuredly I had no liking to the fasting system. Ere evening arrived I had changed my mind, and longed to consult with Bob respecting this new misfortune: so true it is, that the consolations of friendship are a balm for almost every ill. Bobby came home later than usual—I heard his footsteps—but could not, as was my custom, meet him half way. The worthy fellow was grieved to find me under such a restraint: but here his good sense did not forsake him; he would not allow that I was the most unfortunate Donkey in existence, nor listen to my passionate regrets at the loss of my liberty.

“This is weak in the extreme,” said he; “liberty is undoubtedly a privilege of incalculable worth; but you breathe the fresh air, are in no immediate want of food, and your occasional duties will vary the scene a little. Think of the female Ass, so often doomed to drag a chained log not only within a limited space, but frequently is this chain connected with the head, thus

holding her in a state of inconceivable un-comfortableness!"

"I have heard of such things," said I; "thank fortune, I never saw a lady Ass in this situation, nor can I understand why such a refinement in cruelty should be inflicted on a female."

"She is thus punished," resumed Bobby, "because her maternal feelings would lead her to pursue her purloined offspring. There is no danger nor difficulty from which a female Ass would shrink, where the safety of her young ones is concerned. That her state on many occasions is deplorable, no one will deny: it of course excites our sympathy; but even rational animals have taken note of it. I heard our friend Balaam repeat some lines on this subject, which pleased me excessively."

I besought Bobby to recite them. He complied as follows:—

"—— is thy sad heart thrill'd with filial pain  
To see thy wretched mother's shortened chain?  
And truly, very piteous is her lot!  
Chained to a log, within a narrow spot,  
Where the close-eaten grass is scarcely seen,  
While sweet around her waves the tempting green."

"Very natural," sighed I: "yes, yes, I can feel the full force of this description; 'the tempting green,' beyond the reach of

a hungry Donkey, must be a most fascinating prospect.”

“Poor Balaam!” retorted Bobby in an impressive tone, “how does he fare to-night? Possessing this coveted liberty, he perhaps wants strength to seek the requisite nourishment.”

I felt myself blush from the tip of my ears to the point of my chain, which is giving an uncommon latitude to this most becoming of all beauties.

“Say no more,” said I, with emotion; “you shall be spared the trouble of reproving me on this subject again; have you heard of dear Balaam? Is he better?”

“I did not see him,” replied Bobby, “but his fellow-labourer, Mr. Juba, overtook me this morning in Oxford Street, and tells me our friend was too ill to come to town to-day.”

In spite of my promise to bear my present enthrallment patiently, this intimation threw me into an agony not to be described.

“Help me to break these ignoble fetters,” said I, “that I may flee to my suffering friend!”

“I am afraid Juba knew you better than I thought he did,” retorted Bobby. “I have been your defender, Jemmy; but he is right—your heart may be, I believe it is, good; your judgment is very defective.”

“Juba was always my enemy,” I replied; “he is a Donkey of the meanest capacity, grovelling in his ideas, and can never hope to rise in the world;—I confess, I should not have expected you to listen to such an Ass.”

“I did not give entire credit to his assertions,” continued Bobby; “not for the reasons you assign, for though Juba is an unpolished Donkey, he possesses that most essential of all qualifications, useful or common sense, and will succeed where hundreds would starve—but he was angry, and I never rely too implicitly on the depositions of angry Donkeys.”

“I shall never be wise,” said I. “O! most excellent pupil of my respected old friend, bear with my follies,—and tell me, if it is utterly impossible for me to reach the residence of Balaam!”

Bobby could not encourage me to hope such a scheme was practicable; but his natural goodness of heart led him to applaud my zeal in this particular, and, ere I closed my eyes to dream the usual dream of a prisoner, namely, of liberty, he quieted my scruples respecting himself.

“You are not singular,” said he; “it may require some courage to speak simple truths; but the listener who is to profit by advice, must possess a species of courage



seldom to be met with at your time of life: nothing but a perfect knowledge of self can render us patient of reproof; and I am afraid this is an acquaintance which we rarely make until the benefits to be derived from it become unimportant—because we adopt the means when the end must be too transient to do us credit.”

This home appeal produced the most unqualified candour on my part. I am not conscious that I concealed the most trivial failing in my temper or dispositions. Bob applauded my ingenuousness, and thus ended our conference.

Well, next morning while we were at breakfast, Mrs. Dawes brought a man into the field, who, approaching me, began to examine my knees.

“I’ll warrant I deliver him up as sound as I found him,” said he; “so then the bargain’s struck, Missus.”

“Why as for that, if you’ve a mind to have him for good and all, I don’t care; I can always hire a horse when I want one,” replied my mistress.

“Why that wouldn’t suit me, ye see; I’ve no pasturage, and as I say, its a mortal sin to keep a dumb beast and not give it enough to eat.”

Mrs. Dawes was silent—and the man

proceeded—"No! for three days, I should like to have him—the fair only lasts three days."

I felt a cold shiver at the bare mention of a fair. "Oh!" thought I, "if there are Races at this place as at Tunbridge, what shall I do?—And again, if it really was the *penny trumpet* that caused my failure, what may I not expect to meet in the environs of London, where, of course, every species of toy is on a more grand scale!"

"His knees are terribly broken, to be sure," resumed the man, as he released me from the rope.

My vanity instantly fled—who would think of proposing a broken-kneed Donkey as a Racer!

I wonder whether rational beings make mistakes of this nature, and reckon upon their beauties and attractive qualities, when they no longer exist:—if so, they, and they only, will understand the awkwardness of my feelings at this moment. Bobby smiled significantly. "You are vastly clever indeed, Mr. Bob," thought I, "if you can guess my secret thoughts;"—and I raised my head in the expectation of being reproved, when the kind creature in a half whisper informed me—that if my destination was West-end Fair, it was in the

neighbourhood of Hampstead, and I might probably meet Juba, and gain some intelligence respecting Balaam. Again I blushed, and it was a blush of shame, to think that I had judged this amiable Donkey's feelings by my own disappointed, or rather humbled vanity. We parted,—and I had soon the pleasure to hear, West-end was to be the theatre of my actions. Mr. Ford, my temporary master, soon harnessed me to a miserably shattered-looking vehicle; but though I doubted its security, there were four full-grown persons who held a contrary opinion; they ascended the cart by a ladder—to use the language of Gilpin,

“Four precious souls, and all agog  
To dash through thick and thin.”

Dashing, however, was out of the question with me. Fortunately my driver was humane; and as he walked by my side, my incapacity was not suspected for some time. At length a lady exclaimed, “You had better come in; we can make room for you, Mr. Ford; and then we can whip up the Donkey.”

Ford declined the offer, perhaps conscious that I should disappoint their expectation if he complied, though his answer carried a better interpretation. “No! no;” said he, “we must think of the Donkey too; four

to one is enough in all conscience, besides, I shall want him when I get there."

The party were very impatient, continually inquiring how far we had to go, &c., &c. Ford was civil in his replies, and by hinting, that it was better to go at an equal pace, than to hurry and perhaps have me founder on the road, reconciled them to my certainly tedious pace. A case in point soon presented itself,—we had past through Kilburn Turnpike, when a crowd of people in the road obstructed our progress. I heard a whip used with great vehemence,—Ford stepped forward, the crowd made way for him,—when I saw a wretched Donkey writhing beneath the hand of its cruel owner. A party of men, women, and children stood around, who it appeared had been the load with which this creature's strength could not contend; and for this, his master chose to wound him, almost to flaying, in order, of course, to increase his capability.

I admit, that there was a great degree of obstinacy in this animal, at least what you would call stubbornness—for so every opposition of an irrational animal is termed by your genus; with us, it has a different meaning,—we call it self-defence: and though greatly varying from your acceptance of this natural right, we think obsti-

nacy at times stands us in good need. The master who finds blows do not answer his purpose, will adopt another line of conduct. Granting that we suffer in these amiable indulgences of our owners, I speak from conviction,—it is better to get one or two sound drubbings in the way of experiment, than to erect our masters as licensed savages, by patiently bearing every blow that temper or malice can inflict. The poor Ass in question was quite a Spartan in his way, he stood immoveable, neither heeding the taunts of his master, nor the impatient complaints of the party whose pleasure he retarded.

“Why, master Dawson,” said Ford, “is this the way to get any service out of this poor beast? Lend me the reins; I’ll warrant he’ll go quiet enough with kind usage.”

“You don’t know him,” replied Dawson; “but come, let’s see what you can do with him:” and he resigned the bridle with a sneer. Ford began by patting the Ass on the head, coaxing him, and then, with a gentle flap of the whip, ran by his side. The Donkey instantly accommodated himself to this pace, to the no small surprise of the by-standers. Dawson was vexed; he had been proved incompetent to manage an Ass—and no doubt the poor fellow paid for it when we left them, which we soon

did, I mentally eulogizing the judicious and humane Mr. Ford, with whom I should have thought myself happy to pass the remainder of my days. That was not to be.

But to proceed—we reached the fair; Ford, during the remainder of our journey, enforcing the policy as well as the justice of treating dumb animals with kindness.

“I always find my account in it,” said he; “slow and sure is my way; and if the beast wont work with good words, why I am sure he wont with bad;” and unloosing my harness, he gave me an excellent feed of hay, which tended greatly to raise my spirits and renew my strength.

The fair was excessively amusing, and might have captivated any Donkey whose thoughts were given to the scene,—mine were intent on Balaam, or, in the event of his inability to appear in public, on Juba, whom I resolved to meet with all possible cordiality. But a rustic Donkey is quite a novice in a certain sphere. It is only in London we acquire a knowledge of life. I had never heard of penny rides in a Donkey cart,—nor knew that a dozen children might be crammed into a carriage scarcely large enough to hold half the number conveniently. It was at West-end fair I was feelingly taught to understand this item.

Though my master superintended these

gambols, and was really very considerate, he could not shield me from the fatigue and lassitude attendant on such constant exertion. And as each new load I took up brought fresh spirits, and expected proportioned enjoyment, I dreaded lest my failure should injure Mr. Ford. While I was anticipating disgrace, a friendly shower of rain compelled every body to seek shelter; and I was unloosed from the cart and placed under a canvas shed. Here I found Juba, who, like myself, looked fagged to death. I soon discovered I was indebted to Bobby's good offices, by the graceful manner in which Juba met my advances—yes, I say graceful manner, for never surely was Ass so much improved as Juba since I saw him last. We talked of Balaam, and I heard, with delight, he was rather better that morning. Juba described his residence, and when I found it was not much above a mile from West-end, my active mind was planning how to catch a glimpse of my respected old friend.

Great, therefore, was my delight, when upon the re-appearance of the sun, and my resumption of my toil, I heard Ford tell a friend, he should remain at West-end till the fair was over. I weighed my projected elopement by every bearing of gratitude,

and could find none sufficiently powerful to deter me from its prosecution. Mr. Ford was a good man, but he was a new friend. Balaam claimed my utmost deference and esteem; I owed him obligations innumerable; and as I fully proposed returning to my new master, felt I was acting no dishonourable part.

Ah! how I longed for the shadows of evening to fall; that when left to myself, I might put my design into execution! It was late ere this happy moment arrived—and when it came, I found I should have many difficulties to encounter. In the first place, the fair continued to be illuminated till nearly midnight,—secondly, I was in a field surrounded by a high bank and a well-secured gate,—and thirdly, there were other animals besides myself within this enclosure. I imagine that I took a short nap, for, on a sudden I was startled by some noise, and on looking around found the fair was in darkness, and the sky spangled with stars. “This, then, is the moment,” thought I; and creeping towards the bank, I placed my fore-feet in the earth and peeped over. The regular snoring of a pig (as I imagined) met my ear—“Then I am safe,” I continued, “for, dirty as these animals are, they do not absolutely *sleep* in ditches;” and with an



agility quite extraordinary, considering the fatigue I had undergone, I reached the summit, descended a few paces on the other side, still encouraged by the somnific harmony of the pig, when, finding the earth moist towards the bottom, I hesitated,—it began to give way, my feet were sliding, and the smell of stagnant water offended my nose. Retreat was impracticable. I recollected that the she Ass would encounter any difficulty in behalf of her young ones, and even from attachment to her master; and making a plunge, gained Terra Firma. Scarcely had I time to congratulate myself on this exploit, ere I stumbled over something soft—the snoring instantly ceased, and the voice of a man vociferated, “Murder! thieves! help!” I took to my heels, not stopping to take breath until out of hearing of these appalling sounds. It was impossible to refrain from smiling at my mistake. There could be no doubt I had taken this gentleman for a pig! But time was precious, and I dared not indulge the mirth to which this circumstance gave rise. Hampstead church-steeple was to be my guide, the night was yet too dark to direct me accurately; so turning to a small common in my way, I endeavoured to cleanse myself from the contamination of the odious ditch.

At that moment the church clock struck four,—I pricked up my ears and followed the sound. The grey light of morn was beginning to unveil the hill—the prospect refreshed my spirits—and, as I trotted on, I could not help rejoicing that so pleasant a spot was the residence of the invalid Balaam. “How surprised he will be!” would I say to myself. “Yes, I know he will be delighted to see me, when I convince him that I have no intention to desert my present employer.” He was surprised! but I must reserve that and another adventure for a new chapter.

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## CHAP. XVII.

### *An Asylum.*

I SHOULD have told you that Juba’s home being contiguous to the fair, he did not sleep at West-end. This circumstance proved fortunate to me. It was now broad day-light, and I was impatient to snatch a hasty interview with dear Balaam, and return to Mr. Ford. I had peeped into many enclosures, and regarded the figure of half a dozen Donkeys without tracing any likeness to my friend, when Juba made his

appearance:—he absolutely started when he saw me.

“In the name of prudence, have you wandered hither to see Balaam?” asked he.

I answered in the affirmative, entreating him to lead me to the old gentleman.

“I cannot do that,” he replied; “my master has just called me to be harnessed; but if you cross the road behind that villa,” pointing with his chin, “behind that villa you will find Balaam: he is in good care, and I really think looks better this morning, though I had but a slight glimpse of him from my field. I fear you will suffer for this, Jemmy,” he continued; “beware of the pound; and, if possible, retrace your path before you are missed.”

He scampered off—while I, with similar speed, approached the white villa. How my heart palpitated when I caught a glance of Balaam’s longears! His figure seemed emaciated—but it was the wreck of a handsome Donkey, graceful even in its decline. Putting my lips to the palings, I gently repeated his name—he listened for a moment—“My dearest Mr. Balaam!” said I—he was before me in an instant.

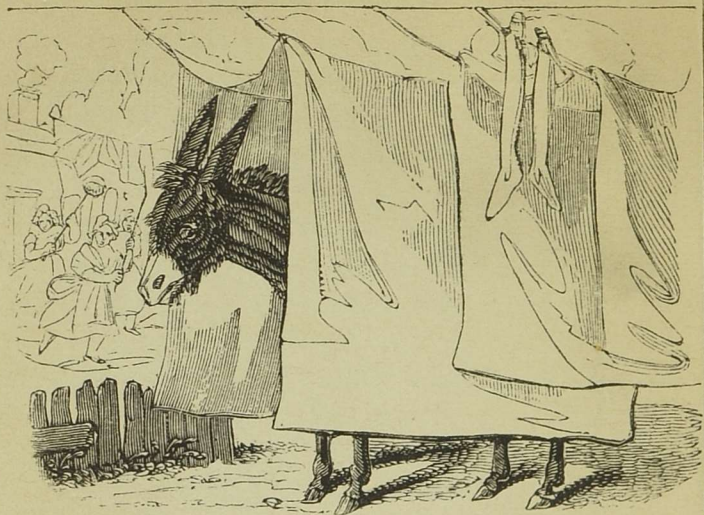
“Dear Jem, is it you!” he exclaimed; and we rubbed our noses together with unrestrained affection.

“I know your situation,” he added; “Juba gave me a brief account of your meeting yesterday; but, much as I value your friendship, my dear fellow, I tremble for the consequences of your present truancy.”

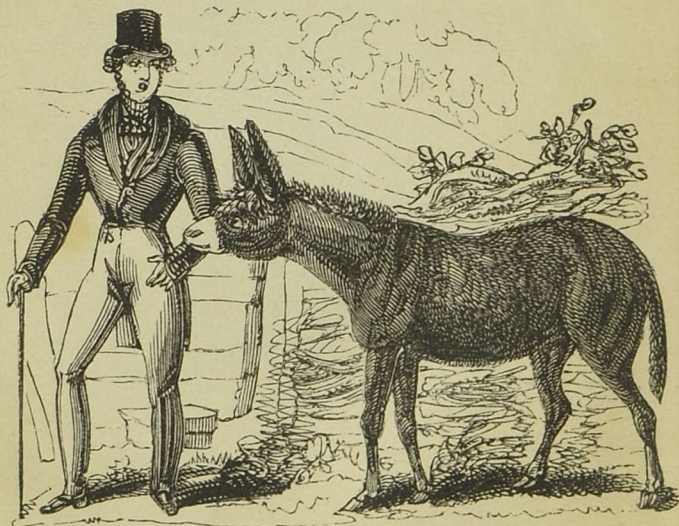
“I shall have time to get back,” I replied. “Oh! let me enjoy the delight of beholding you once more! How often I have thought of you I cannot describe.”

My old friend was visibly affected by my manner, tears filled his eyes, and for a few seconds we were silent. Just then, a tall, elegant-looking man crossed the field, and bounding over a gate, alighted close at my side. I must think that the finest perception of a Donkey lies in his nose; mine was so sensibly affected on this occasion, I scarcely knew how to express myself—every nerve was in agitation—I felt it was my dear young master, Mr. George Manton, and, forgetting that deference Asses owe to man, ran after him, pursuing his footsteps so steadily as to excite his notice; he turned, and I beheld it was he; he looked at me kindly, and then proceeded. It was not self-interest, gentle reader; there were a thousand reasons against a man’s retaining any recollection of an Ass:—but no time or distance could obliterate from my





“The whim seized me, that I should like to walk in these lovely alcoves: when, opposing my shoulders to some weak palings, they gave way, and in I marched.”—Page 189



“I ventured to approach nearer—walked round him—and at last rubbed my head against his sleeve.”—Page 217.

memory the amiable conduct of this young man.

I continued to follow him. Touched, as I suppose, by the singularity of my attentions, he leaned against a tree, regarding me steadfastly. I ventured to approach nearer—walked round him—and at last rubbed my head against his sleeve. “This is very extraordinary,” said he, musingly; “poor Caroline, if I thought this really was, or could be, your old favourite, I would purchase him at any price.”

These words transfixed me. Whether the expression of my countenance confirmed his suspicion, or the strong dark line which extended the whole length of my back, and had occasioned Miss Morden to say I was marked like a zebra—to which of these his reflections were given, I will not determine: Suffice it to say, I was highly gratified by his manner; convinced that a man of his dispositions would not only be pleased with the attachment of a dumb animal, but take delight in cherishing his fidelity. Determined on putting my sagacity to the test, he climbed a bank and was lost to my view: I instantly set off at a canter, braying most sonorously. He re-appeared at a considerable distance, and I hastened to him with all imaginable speed.

“Poor fellow!” said he, opening a gate,

“I must think you know me: come along.” I continued by his side until we reached a meadow belonging to the beautiful white cottage: here he left me for a while, and to my inexpressible delight, I found Balaam was my neighbour—only separated from me by an elegant wire fence. I related my adventure—he listened with profound attention.

“It promises well,” said he, “but you are the servant of another—who is most probably seeking you at this moment.”

I sighed: and dreading lest Balaam should enforce the propriety of my immediate departure, began making a few desultory inquiries respecting the owners of the villa. He knew little of them—they were customers of his master’s (who was a baker)—and he believed Mr. Manton to be a relation of the family, as he often saw him playing with the children. White bridles and smart saddles no longer engaged my vanity; but if I could attain a service amongst children, (provided they were humane,) it seemed the only station in which my shattered limbs could make me moderately useful.

It would be impossible to describe my feelings during the absence of Mr. Manton; every sound made my heart flutter.

At length he returned, accompanied by a lady and three children, two girls and a



boy. "Now observe him, Charlotte," said Mr. George, addressing the lady, and walking across the field: I pursued him.

The lady laughed—declared it was extraordinary, but she united in thinking I was the identical animal he described.

"I must go to town," continued my dear young master, "but the Donkey must remain here; if any owner arrives, offer what you think fair—at all events buy him: you see his legs are not sound, but he will do for the children."

"Thank you, cousin George," said all the children in a breath; "how nice it will be to ride about the fields on a Donkey!"

Mr. Manton kissed them and departed.

What a revolution in my favour had a few hours produced! My spirits were in a state of intoxication—it was a happiness too perfect to appear real! "Am I really at home?" said I, mentally. "May I range this field, drink from that clear pond, and see my dear master daily? Oh! this is too much!" and taking a roll on the grass, I endeavoured to tranquillize my feelings. The equitable arrangement Mr. Manton had made respecting my purchase, entirely quieted my conscience with regard to Mr. Ford. He would act for my real owner, Mrs. Dawes, and I had that opinion of Ford, that he would deal fairly by all parties. Balaam

and I had a long chat in the afternoon: it was only then I discovered the immense ravages time had effected in the person of my friend. His intellects were as acute as ever—but his debility was a depressing contemplation to one who loved him as I did. “And is this venerable animal doomed to labour?” sighed I. “Ah! what a fortunate Donkey am I!”

Mr. George returned in the evening, bringing in his gig a complete saddle and bridle for your humble servant: alas! with what different feelings did I view these once desired ornaments! No Ass of common delicacy but must be pleased to find himself decently dressed—but it was no longer the decorations of a *handsome* Donkey:—in fact, I believe I should at the moment have been better pleased, had my liberal master selected a less conspicuous garb for me. But I found I was in error, and checked my presumptuous folly.

The distinction was a compliment to the children of his cousin, and I was vainly ascribing it to myself.

I was soon in a state of requisition. My duties were pleasant—for kindness and good humour graced the little Herberts—they were truly amiable; and forcibly reminded me of the Turner family. Towards evening, Mrs. Herbert and Mr. George

walked into the field, when my master related a circumstance which claimed my entire attention.

“I saw an enemy of this poor animal’s to-day,” said he, “but I did not know how far he had betrayed the confidence my father reposed in him till this morning.” He then proceeded to state, that he had been to see Jenkins, an old servant of the Doctor’s, who was under sentence of transportation. “Like most guilty men, checked in their career of vice,” continued Mr. George, “he reverts to his lesser crimes with the strongest compunction; no doubt, as being the foundation of his later turpitude, they may be considered as the primary causes of his ruin: yet, I am apt to think, conscience suggests this sort of compromise, as the least fearful contemplation to a guilty heart.”

“This is rather in favour of the actually penitent,” replied Mrs. Herbert; “the being who confesses his less glaring crimes, is doubtless well acquainted with himself; and when the law, (as in this man’s case,) does not affect his life, we may forgive him if he refrains from criminating himself too scrupulously, provided he is resolved to turn from his evil ways, and to offer his contrition where it may and will (if he is sincere) be accepted.”

“I suppose I thought as you do at the time,” replied Mr. George, with a benevolent smile; “I hope the wretched man will find some comforts provided for his voyage; I have seen the captain of the ship and given him directions to supply him with a certain sum on his arrival at their destined port, provided he conducts himself properly during the voyage. He was greatly affected at seeing me; related many impositions he had practised under our roof; and amongst others, said, he found poor Caroline’s Donkey in the possession of a gipsey, from whom he took it, and afterwards gave him in compensation to a man to whom he lost money at cards. He really seemed to deplore his injustice towards my father more than any other errors of his life.”

“No wonder,” replied Mrs. Herbert; “my uncle’s character is so uniformly amiable, that none but the most dissolute of beings could injure him, without feeling remorse at some future period.”

Here the conversation was suspended; but I, who had witnessed Jenkins’s cruelty to my dear mistress, was at a loss to account for his silence on this subject. Surely his want of duty, his unfeeling avarice towards her, were crimes of the deepest dye! I checked this effervescence of my zeal, and, recollecting how leniently Mrs. Herbert had

judged the wretched culprit, retracted my hasty censure; not less convinced it was presumptuous in an Ass to arraign a rational animal, than that a rational animal must pay the forfeit of his errors even though our verdict be withheld.

In less than a week from this epoch, my excellent Mr. George, through the medium of an advertisement, had settled my transfer with Mr. Ford; and I now felt secure and happy. I might say, it was only now I tasted real happiness.—My feelings were calmed; none of those chimeras which had misled me in the season of health and beauty, now ruffled my temper: nay, that very sameness in my duties, that had formerly appeared tedious, from being suited to my present infirmities, excited that active gratitude in my bosom which I have every reason to believe was daily appreciated by my owners. In fact I know it was, and you shall know my reasons for this self-assurance ere I take my leave.

I used to grieve me to see Balaam go out to work; it is true his business was not laborious, but to my idea he was not in a state of convalescence when called to resume his duties; and I trembled lest a relapse should ensue. How flattering it was to my feelings, to hear the dear old Donkey declare, my lively chit-chat kept him alive!

Many a moonlight night have we loitered over our palings, each unwilling to bid adieu. Juba would sometimes join us, and his society was agreeable; but as he could only give us this pleasure by stealth, (having two or three fields to cross, and the chance of finding Balaam's gate fastened,) we were never quite sure of his company, a circumstance that Balaam used laughingly to say gave a greater zest to his visits.

I understood the old gentleman, but had too much value for his opinions to question their justice; he alluded to that love of adventure, which had certainly had too much influence on my actions.

However, thinking it impossible he could again have occasion to reprove me in this particular, I rather encouraged his cheerful sallies as indications of improving health.

You will scarcely believe it, gentle readers, but so it happened, I did transgress again; and having announced myself a Donkey of veracity, I suppose I must relate the fact; nor will you wonder at my prolixity in its detail, when you learn what serious reasons I have for remembering this my last juvenile frolic.

From the moment of my being established at Hampstead, I resolved on writing my memoirs; but, such was the deference I felt for Balaam's judgment, that I wanted cou-

rage to apprize him of my intention; yet I was determined to arrange my plan, and I trusted to some fortunate moment for asking his advice and assistance. About this period, a very elegant lady Ass used to ramble down our lane every morning. Balaam had spoken of her talents with much respect. "She has seen the world," said he one morning after she departed; "I don't know that I ever met a more intelligent Ass."—Now I had observed rational beings to pay great respect to elderly females, seeming to consider their opinions valuable. "Ah!" thought I, "if this sensible Ass would condescend to encourage my attempt, it might prove a passport to the countenance of Balaam; at least there could be no harm in sounding her on the subject." The next evening proved auspicious to my design. Balaam, greatly fatigued, retired early: one of the Miss Herberts had left the gate open, and I sallied forth in quest of Mrs. Scamper (for so she was called). Well, I wandered from enclosure to enclosure, the night was getting dark, and no Mrs. Scamper to be seen; when just as I was preparing to return home, I thought I heard her mellifluous bray; I paused, stood in mute attention; but the sound died away, or if it was repeated, the sullen church clock had drowned the enchanting harmony. How authorship

affects other animals, I know not; with me, it was beginning to be an imperious feeling, it was my daily thoughts, and my nightly dream: thus a confidant was absolutely necessary to my repose, either to patronize my undertaking, or repress my ambition. With these feelings I resolved to absent myself from home this one night; daylight would facilitate my return, and as I was assured the *musical* bray I had heard could issue from none other than the amiable Mrs. Scamper, I determined to remain near the spot till morning. A public road, however, is no secure place for an unoccupied Donkey. I therefore turned down a lane, making my supper *en passant*. It was nearly midnight, when stealing near some palings that enclosed a neat modern cottage, a small gate gave way, and afforded me ingress into the fore court. I walked leisurely over the lawn, and approached the house, when the night breeze wafted a fresh and most grateful odour under my nose. I raised my head, and found a well-loaded Vine whose fruit tempted my palate. I fear I was somewhat voracious in my attack; making as free with the branches as the fruit. I had eaten half way round the house, when I heard a whispering within. Thought I, "it is time to decamp;" and treading as lightly as possible, still keeping close to the house, my ears



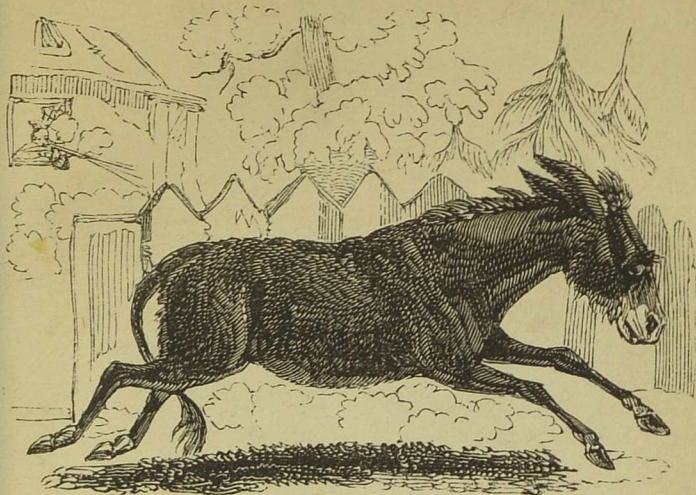
touched a wire which communicated from a trellis work door-frame to the house; a bell immediately tinkled; I took to my heels; but ere I reached the outer gate, a gun was fired from a window above; it grazed my tail. I scarcely knew whether I was wounded or not, so great was my alarm! "Thieves and Murder!" were the words which followed this warlike defence; but I had paid too dearly for my dessert, to wait further chastisement. I ran as though the enemy had actually been at my heels; nor stopped till I reached the cow-house of Mrs. Herbert. Here I found time to reflect on my folly; but neither the fright I had endured, nor the injury my tail had sustained, was to be compared to my shame at having such a tale to relate to Balaam. "He will think me incorrigible," sighed I, and I wept as I anticipated our next meeting. While I was thus the victim of self-accusation, the cow-herd approached, and, unlocking the door, was entering, when I thrust by him, well knowing if I could make my way through the shed, I should gain my own meadow. Alas! in my haste I perceived not a bar which crossed the interior door. The good fellow knew me, and was throwing open the door when the bar fell on my back, and I sunk on the ground.

It was some minutes ere I could rise, and

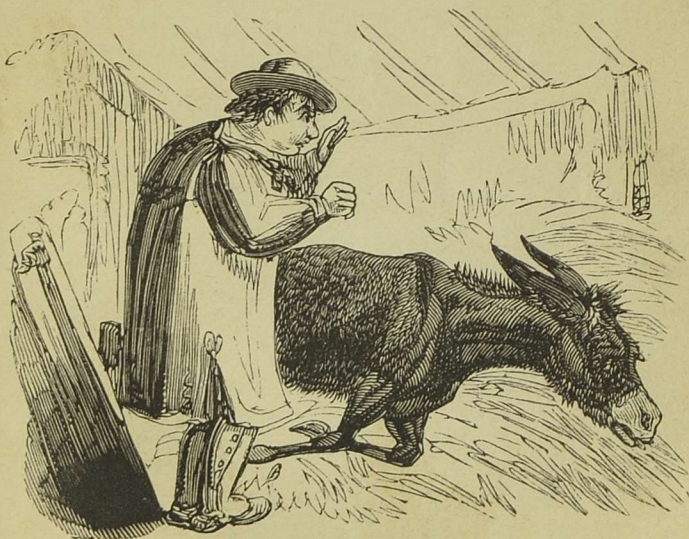
when I did, was but too sensible I had received an incurable injury. Hobbling to my immediate residence, I threw myself on the grass, the kind cowherd following and pitying me, in accents of the most compassionate interest. I was soon surrounded by the dear children, whose artless expressions, and tender caresses, at once filled me with gratitude, and touched me with remorse.

“Silly Ass that I was,” said I, mentally, “to be seeking patronage when I possessed the friendship of such disinterested beings as these!” Yet, as my pain in some measure subsided, the excess to which my desire of fame had exposed me, seemed an additional motive for giving publicity to my follies. “It may warn the thoughtless Donkey,” thought I, “and teach him to curb those aberrations of the imagination that have made me a cripple for life.” As these reflections occupied my mind, Balaam peeped over my fence.

“What has happened?” said he, the liveliest sympathy agitating his aged frame.—I explained myself *ad libitum*, not omitting my authorship propensity. Balaam looked surprised, and I really believed entertained some doubts of my sanity—but, with his usual consideration, started no objections, simply saying, “it was not a time to talk of mental exertion, when my bodily weakness



“I took to my heels ; but ere I reached the outer gate, a gun was fired from a window above ; it grazed my tail.”—Page 227.



“Hobbling to my immediate residence, I threw myself on the grass, the kind cowherd following and pitying me, in accents of the most compassionate interest.”—Page 228.



claimed every attention that friendship could bestow." Dear old Donkey, yes! yours were not professions: how would he watch my gait, and comfort me with the hope, that time (by reconciling me to the awkwardness of my carriage, and the slow pace I was compelled to use) would teach me to be grateful, that no more serious consequences had attended my inauspicious search after patronage!

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## CHAP. XVIII.

### *A Congress of Donkeys,—and Conclusion.*

You will believe that my young master was not an unmoved spectator of my sufferings. It was on this occasion he expressed himself in terms which at once convinced me of his humanity, and assured me, that even an Ass, by diligence and fidelity, may make a lasting friend of man.

"Charles," said Mr. George, addressing master Herbert, "so long as you condescend to ride a Donkey, I make you master of this poor animal;—your sisters will, of course, share him with you as usual, but I give him to you. I know I can rely on your using

him well, and I recommend your preventing him from wandering, by cautiously shutting the gates. And, my dear Charlotte," turning to Mrs. Herbert, "I have a request to make of you;—never part with this faithful creature; but should he become useless, leave him at liberty to range about the grounds. I am persuaded you will oblige me, for you, equally with myself, loved the dear girl to whose comfort he contributed most materially."

Mrs. Herbert was evidently affected by this reference to the sweet Caroline; she willingly acceded to the request of my master, promising she would take care of me so long as I lived.

This arrangement threw me into raptures, and had I been as agile as formerly, no doubt I should have evinced my joy by a thousand lively antics; as it was, I could only look my delight; and if the eyes of a Donkey may be allowed to look brilliant, mine certainly did on this memorable occasion. Mr. George then turned to a livelier topic, and with great humour described my recent frolic. It appeared, that the gentleman on whose vine I had regaled was a friend of Mr. Manton's; they had met since the eventful night, and Mr. Crosby, when reporting the ridiculous alarm of his servants, declared he had never witnessed a more comic scene.

It seems the gardener having missed some fruit, (unknown to the family,) slept with a loaded musket by his bed-side. My munching had been heard by this vigilant gentleman; and the frequent pulls I made at the vine, led him to believe there must be a gang of thieves in the garden. The tinkling of the bell he conceived to be unintentional on the part of the depredators; but when I ran down the gravel path, he thought he had his man, and fired. Mr. Crosby, whom the report of fire-arms roused from his bed, instantly arose, and, on quitting his room, found the male and female servants assembled on the landing-place.

“Depend upon it, it is that great Irishman, that said he was a haymaker,” said one of the women. “I tell you it’s no such thing,” replied the gardener; “it was a little short thick-set man.”

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Thomas, but for my part I’ve never closed my eyes to-night, which I reckon quite miraculous, and I have been listening for three hours or more, and at last I peeped through the curtains, and if ever I saw a tall, black, ill-looking fellow, he was one!”

Mr. Crosby now interfered, demanding the cause of the alarm, and who had presumed to keep loaded fire-arms without his knowledge. The gardener excused his

transgression by declaring the garden was robbed every night.

“But where’s the groom?” asked Mr. Crosby; “I thought this musket was in his care?”

“I begged it of him,” replied the gardener; “but Jack’s gone after the rascals, Sir;—we shall hear some’at of ’em. He would go; there was no hindering him; he got over the stables and dropped over the wall.”

Mr. Crosby thought fit to follow the dauntless Jack, making Thomas (most unwillingly) his companion. It appears they met the groom a short distance from the house, who laughingly declared the thief to have been a poor Donkey, which he had followed all the way to Mrs. Herbert’s cow-house. The gardener was not to be convinced: he had seen the villain, nay more, he knew he should discover traces of blood in the morning, for he heard the fellow groan, and hobble off as if he was wounded!

Daylight, however, brought no proof of Mr. Tom’s accuracy; there were no traces of blood, nor any print of a human footstep. The Vine was stripped to a certain height all round the house, the bell-wire bent, and the shoe marks of some hoofed animal plentifully imprinted on the flower beds. Mrs. Herbert’s cowherd further corroborated the



testimony of the groom, by examining me, and discovering my tail to have been singed. Thus the tall Irish hay-maker, and the little fat man, dwindled into no more formidable an animal than a poor giddy Donkey, who finding himself unexpectedly placed in the way of temptation, had not resolution to resist its allurements.

As I listened to this whimsical fact, I could not help wondering at the extraordinary difference there must be in the sight of men and women, and that of Donkeys. Did all these people say what they believed to be truth; or, did fear lead them astray? From what Mr. George said in conclusion, it would appear, each of these persons maintain their assertion, and though in the hearing of their master they avoid the subject, enjoy amongst themselves that most delightful of all predilections (with the ignorant)—“a tale of terror.” Now if we were to indulge such a taste, when conviction so palpably proved our mistake, we should be called obstinate Asses. Query—What are these gentry?

But I have done with adventures; and in this stage of my existence, when I am pressing forward as a candidate for Donkey fame, feel all the presumption and danger of attempting further analysis of the *human* character.

As my spirits recovered their tone, Balaam reverted to my hints respecting authorship. I hung my ears, and no doubt looked very silly as he commenced his harangue. I thought, however, that my answers had their effect. He was silent for a few minutes, when, resting his nose on my fence, as was his custom, he asked, what I anticipated from the publication of my memoirs.

“Why, my dear Sir,” said I, “the writer who neither desires nor could be benefited by pecuniary emolument, has some right to be considered a disinterested scribe. I grant that our lives exhibit none of those marvellous incidents that can amuse the romantic, but surely, if a genuine history of a very useful animal was submitted to the public, it might teach that public to estimate their services more agreeably to humanity.”

“The attempt is hazardous,” replied Balaam; “in fact, my dear Jemmy, I feel so timid on the subject, so fearful of encouraging you to do that which may expose you to derision, that I would prefer your seeking the advice of an Ass better qualified to give you counsel on a matter of such importance.”

“If you approved,” said I, despairingly, “what were the whole race of Donkeys to me?”

“I cannot apply this compliment to myself, for I do not deserve it,” resumed Balaam;—“however, not to dismiss the subject too abruptly, suppose we were to convene a meeting of the best-informed Donkeys of our acquaintance, and take their opinions. It could do no harm, and may exonerate me from that appearance of fastidiousness which I perceive has had its effect on your spirits.”

I denied this, but I fear rather awkwardly, for Balaam with a smile added, “You may ride your *hobby* yet, Jem; younger heads, and more sanguine Asses, may see this matter in a different point of view; I think Juba must be our secretary on this occasion. Shall I depute him to apprize our friends of your wishes?”

“My dear Sir,” I replied, “if I am not asking too much, will you allow the committee to be assembled in your name?”

“That is incompatible with my principles, dear Jem. It is a serious thing to lend one’s name in a case of this nature, nor could it be done, without, in a manner, announcing me as favouring your design; and as I at present cannot give you encouragement to prosecute your plan, I would rather remain a neutral personage, in this stage of the business.”

“Then I must give it up altogether,” sighed I.

“By no means,” continued Balaam. “Juba shall intimate, that you have suggested a plan which you conceive to be beneficial to the Donkey world at large: but that, unwilling to rely on your own judgment, you request the presence of such of our mutual friends as are interested in the lives and fortunes of the Asinine community.”

“Admirable!” I exclaimed; “nothing can be better; we shall muster pretty strong, no doubt. But, my dear Sir, you will give me your support?”

“I will broach the subject, Jemmy,” he resumed; “but recollect, it will be with the utmost impartiality.”

“Enough, my respected friend; I feel all the value of this condescension, and can never sufficiently express my gratitude.”

“I will imagine it to be such as I prize,” rejoined Balaam, “viz. sincere. But now, my good fellow, compose your spirits; and as authorship is your passion, arrange your thoughts, and prepare yourself to submit them to the *ears* of our committee.”

We parted, and it was now that I felt all the temerity of my project. Stretching my length upon the grass, I began (in idea) to polish my language, smooth my periods, and, according to Donkey taste, improve my style altogether. But I found this a most

unprofitable if not an endless rumination; what I liked one moment I rejected in the next. "I believe I must trust a little to the imagination," said I to myself,—“that is, not in point of fact, but for that colouring which a favourite subject ever receives from the fancy.”

Again, I recollected I was preparing a work expressly designed for the juvenile world, a class of readers who demand the best efforts of all who presume to address them; and perhaps in point of criticism, there is not a more formidable ordeal than that which is sometimes instituted by these caviling young gentry. "Tush!" said I, "they cannot expect much from an Ass, a simple, self-taught Donkey." In short, though the sanction of the committee was yet wanting, I did not find my scribbling mania subside; that happy leisure on which I could now securely reckon, increased my desire of imparting my memoirs; and, when Balaam the next evening whispered me, that I might expect the junto at eight o'clock the ensuing night, I gave myself up to meditation, scarcely taking food or nourishment, so completely was my every feeling absorbed in that of authorship.

At the appointed hour, I beheld the assembled group, consisting of Balaam, Mrs.

Scamper, Juba, Dicky, Snap, Fairy, Hob, Bobtail, Fatima, and Vixen. By a whimsical concurrence, Balaam's field gate was unclosed,—thus I, from my green fence, appeared as if placed at the bar, before my judges. Balaam opened the sitting, in a forcible but impartial statement of my wishes. I saw some ears particularly erect, and Mrs. Vixen stepped forward and examined my countenance with deep scrutiny. Balaam proceeded, without noticing this lady's rudeness; as he made his peroration, a silence of a few seconds ensued. Mrs. Vixen, with a grin, was on the eve of replying, when Balaam good-naturedly observed, "Seniority of age must have the preference," bowing to Mrs. Scamper.

"Then I may take a nap," retorted Vixen, "for I believe I am the youngest lady in the committee."

We all smiled, well knowing madam Vixen had made an egregious mistake. Mrs. Scamper, however, advanced towards my fence, and, in a voice of conciliating harmony, addressed me as follows:—

"If I am not misinformed, Mr. Jemmy, your proposed publication is designed for the use and amusement of young people; then how do you hope to benefit your species by an address to children; beings under

authority, incapable of doing us service, even were they so disposed?"

"It is with the utmost deference I venture to avow a contrary opinion, madam," I replied: "children of amiable manners have much influence in society, particularly amongst their inferiors. A well-educated child may, in the most graceful manner, and in language at once appropriate and kind, reprove the inhumanity of the less informed; and since we have been appointed to the distinction of carrying ladies and gentlemen, drawing garden-chairs, &c., &c., this sort of interference becomes a point of some importance."

Mrs. Scamper smiled; "I know it is a thankless office to oppose the favourite project of an ardent mind," said she, "but until I hear something of your plan, and the incidents it is to comprise, I must continue to doubt its utility."

"I differ from you, ma'am," interjoined Snap; "so many rational Asses have thrust their histories on the public, I can see no reason for preventing a *genuine* Ass from telling his own story."

There was such an emphasis laid on the word *genuine* by this petulant Donkey, that I really rejoiced Madam Luna denied us her beams; I felt that I blushed profusely, and

had not the gentle voice of Fatima rallied my aroused feelings, I believe I should have retorted.

“Mr. Jemmy,” said the charming Fatima, “I applaud your intention, and sincerely hope you will carry it into execution: allow me to ask, if you propose to make your work a general or an individual memoir?”

“Individual, madam,” I replied, “but interspersed with anecdotes and observations.”

“Ah!” she resumed, “to be sure you are the best judge; yet I must think our genus, from its antiquity and the honourable mention made of us in the best and most valuable of records, offers a wide field for exalting us in the estimation of the present generation.”

Here old Balaam drew nearer the fence, evidently desirous of attending to my reply.

“My dear madam,” said I, “I was fully aware of this, and would gladly have availed myself of testimonials so irrefragably convincing and distinguished; but we are no longer the animals we were! The horse has superseded us! Our very name is a by-word amongst the vulgar! And our occupations (though varying in laboriousness as in respectability) yet expose us so



much to the ludicrous, that I would rather forbear from quoting the proofs you mention, than blend them with matter irrelevant."

"But, Jem," interjoined Balaam, "as you would turn author in the service of children, how can you reconcile this omission?"

"Sir," I replied, "the children for whom my humble efforts would be exerted, must of course have some acquaintance with the Sacred Writings; and it is from them I should expect that blending of authentic record and individual history, which might ultimately prove beneficial to my species."

"You have my free assent from this moment," rejoined Balaam; "it was this one point which led me to oppose your scheme. I will hope your reasoning is just, for it is agreeable to principle—and that view of the human character, it has ever been my wish to entertain."

"So then," exclaimed Mrs. Vixen, "you expect great things from your undertaking! Well, vanity is a fine dream, till we wake and find it *but* a dream."

"We shall never get a blow less, nor an additional mouthful of hay, for all the wisest of Donkeys could say in our favour," sneered Snap.

“I think I saw you once in Kent, Mr. Jemmy,” resumed Mrs. Vixen, “at the Tunbridge races. You may remember my husband won the saddle. You must have been very nervous at that time; it quite surprised my friends to see you frightened by a *penny trumpet*—ha! ha! ha!”

“Madam,” I replied, “I have not forgotten the circumstance: the penny trumpet shall be duly mentioned in my memoirs; I will neither increase its size, nor enhance its value; nor will I omit to name Mr. Vixen’s talents as a racer.”

It was in this stage of my examination that Juba stepped forward.

“I do not pretend to know any thing of books or histories of any kind,” said he; “but if you do publish your life, Jemmy, do not forget to say something of Donkey prejudices and Donkey satire.”

It is clear he alluded to Mrs. Vixen, and I was alarmed lest the junto should squabble amongst themselves, and prematurely dissolve the meeting.

“It is my firm intention to be just,” I replied; “and if a Donkey may pledge his honour, I here declare, that I will

—“‘Nothing extenuate, nor ought set down in malice.’”

“Then now, Mr. Jemmy,” said Hob,

“give us a brief sketch of your intended history.”

I complied—but not without considerable embarrassment: my situation was in truth very trying. To see so many long ears stretched to catch my accents—to hear two or three (as I thought) dissentient snorts, as certain observations escaped my lips—how I got through my task, even at this moment appears extraordinary. Yet I accomplished it, and obtained a majority.

Bobtail, who was of a phlegmatic character, astonished us all by entering into the spirit of my memoirs. “What you say of soot-carrying,” said he, “is strictly true; I could almost have fancied the odious powder was under my nose: yes, I know what it is to carry bags, and chimney-sweepers too.”

Dicky and Miss Fairy evinced little interest during the first part of the discussion; but perceiving they whispered, I thought it possible timidity restrained them from offering an opinion. Therefore, addressing myself to Miss Fairy, I begged she would favour me with her sentiments.

“Indeed I have no opinion to give,” she replied petulantly; “Mr. Dicky and I, to be sure, have remarked, that you have said very little of the beauty of lady Asses,

though one ought not to be offended at that; for some Donkeys are too much taken up with themselves to think of any thing else."

This was a terrible attack upon a Donkey who had the highest respect for the fair sex.

"Madam," I rejoined, "I trust those who know me will exonerate me from the imputation of being insensible to the worth of the female Ass. If my memoir enters more largely into the sufferings of Donkeys, it is, because I hope and believe, excessive labour and hard usage are more particularly their lot. Of the utility and worth of our feminine friends, none but an illiterate Ass could entertain a doubt. That I have not attempted the language of the flatterer, is a point on which I pride myself; for though this style is said to be a favourite one with *Asses*, I have not availed myself of the privilege,—not less cautious of injuring the morals of my own class, than fearful of appearing the copyist of a higher order of animals."

The committee now dispersed; and Balaam with an impressive adieu retired to repose.

I saw the dear old Ass go out to his accustomed work next morning, and, occupied

by my own projects, night again revolved ere the claims of friendship refreshed my memory. Nine, ten, eleven o'clock—and no Balaam. I lingered near the fence, cheating the tedious minutes by a thousand vague conjectures; at length, wearied with watching, I sunk into a light slumber, from which I was awakened by the well-known voice of Juba; it was day-break, and a cold, rainy morning.

“Jemmy,” said my friend Juba, “you have been alarmed by the absence of our poor Balaam?”

“Yes, indeed, Juba, most seriously alarmed.”

“Alas!” he resumed, “our anxiety on his account is at an end—you will see him no more—the excellent Balaam is dead.”

“Dead!” I exclaimed; “tell me when and where he died.”

“It happened yesterday morning; I overtook his master in Tottenham-Court Road; our old friend lay extended quite senseless, and by what I heard from the crowd, his death was occasioned by a fit.”

This melancholy intelligence affected me deeply; I had lost my early counsellor, my constant friend; and the only consolation now left me was to talk of him, an indulgence in which Juba feelingly participated.

One evening, after having enjoyed this luxury, my mind yet dwelling on his virtues, the following tribute to his memory escaped me :

*To the Memory of Balaam.*

If ever Donkey claim'd the meed of fame,  
 Balaam! that honour should adorn thy name ;  
 Born to do credit to thy helpless race,  
 In thee each virtue of the Ass we trace ;  
 Patient, submissive, moderate in food,  
 The vicious shaming, following still the good ;  
 Thy bright example should for ever give  
 Rules, to succeeding Donkeys, how to live ;  
 But, if inconstant feelings lead astray,  
 And Asses yet in Folly's mazes bray,  
 One grateful convert shall thy worth proclaim,  
 And cherish virtue in thy much-lov'd name.

JEMMY.

Effusions of this description can never be generally interesting. The parties should be known to each other in order to excite that pleasing sympathy so soothing to friendship. As such, I shall freely forgive my readers for criticising my poetic talents. I can only say, Juba applauded my little offering, and, having a taste for recitation, has frequently gratified me by repeating these lines, with a pathos which had an excellent effect, according to my Donkey conception.

Shall I experience similar indulgence from

my rational censors? Alas! I tremble at the idea of what may be my fate: yet, surely, the intentions of an author should have some weight with his readers, and mine, I boldly declare, are humane. I know that every living thing has feeling—that from man, who “walks erect and can contemplate the heavens,” to the “beetle that we tread upon,” each can feel;—the great Disposer of the Universe hath placed his intelligent creatures above all the other works of his mighty hand: he has invested you with power, but that power must be tempered with mercy, or ye are no longer the servants in whom he will be “well pleased.”

If you have laughed with me through some of the preceding pages, let me hope you will not reject a brief admonition at the close of my literary attempt:—I positively assert, that I am a patriotic Ass; that I love my country, respect her laws, and take a lively interest in her prosperity; and though I stand up in the defence of my own class, I presume to think, the object I have in view does not, in the smallest degree, implicate us as a body. We are willing to give you our labour, submit to your guidance, and in all respects conduct ourselves as faithful servants, and the only return we ask is

*kindness*—the simple offices of humanity. Would it were in my power to impart to your species a small portion of that habitual patience with which we are endowed! convinced as I am, that we more frequently suffer from the hasty temper than the actual insensibility of our masters. To the readers of my *Adventures* I trust it will be sufficient for me to add,—that should any dumb animal fall under their temporary displeasure, I hope they will pause ere they disgrace themselves by cruelty, and bestow a thought on one who, having “felt persecution,” conceived himself qualified to implore mercy—one who, while he allows his fallibility as an Ass, has no hesitation in declaring himself,

The most respectful

And humble of Donkeys,

JEMMY.

THE END.



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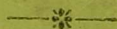




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