

dozen of 13, only linger in some rural corners; the cwt. of 112 lbs. is fast giving way before the legitimate claimant of that title, and the Bank of England has just taken one important step, which will be followed by many others, in announcing their intention to use hereafter only weights which are decimal multiples of the Troy grain.

These facts give us hope that some day or other our children's children may be saved the irksome labour that our childhood underwent, and an arithmetic book of the present day be regarded by them as a useless curiosity.

The Horse and its Rider.

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It is thought that wild horses existed in Europe, but that among the Celtic tribes the domesticated horse was not known until about the period that the Celtic-Seythian Gauls ascended the Danube and crossed the Rhine, and that it was introduced into England by the Phœnicians, who were the means of bringing many Eastern customs and commodities into the land with which they traded. Now we know that the Celtic tribes in France were horsemen, for Pausanias tells that they used in their armies the trimarkese, or well-known tripartite arrangement of a knight and his two squires, while in Britain, at the time of Cæsar's invasion, the natives fought in chariots; the Gallic Celts therefore followed more the custom of Northern Asia, and the British Celts that of Southern Asia.

It has been commonly believed and asserted, that astronomical observations were first made in Egypt, and that there the Zodiacal belt was divided into its twelve horses; but it has now been satisfactorily shown, that the zodiacal constellations were named in some country more northerly either than India or Egypt, therefore before the civilization of either, or the introduction of the domesticated horse; and that as in the houses of the sun, the horse is not placed, we may take that as an indication that that animal was already used as a type of the moving power of the sun, and as a personification of that luminary, by the nation to whom we may attribute the division of the zodiac; some riding nation of Central Asia. Among all the riding nations the horse, or the name of the horse, was used to express beauty, power and exaltation; and in the earliest annals of the Persians, the various names of that animal are not only titles of the sun, but of kings and great lords: as *Var*, in *Varames*; *Phar*, in *Pharnabazus*; *Asp*, in *Lorasp*. The same practice prevailed among the Gothic nations, where we find *Hengist*, *Horsa*, *Uppa*, and *Bayard*, all names of the horse, applied to princes and chiefs. It is probable that superstitious veneration was first applied to the horse in Egypt, Arabia, and the neighbouring countries, at about the period of the first Seythian invasions; for we find that some of the tribes of idolaters by whom the Jews were surrounded in Palestine worshipped gods in the form of horses. The kings of Judah themselves were often polluted by this worship, for we read that the pious Josiah took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord. In Europe, a black horse was long considered a form of the evil one. Among many of the Pagan Asiatic tribes at this day, their magic ceremonies are performed with small images of horses; and the very Mahometans, to whom "the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters that are under the earth," is an abomination, admitted a kind of semi-idolatrous worship of the horses of two of the great heroes of Islam, *Hosein* and *Khizr*. Our own Teutonic ancestors sacrificed horses to the sun, *Ertha*, and other divinities, in their temples on the Island of Rugen. All the sun-gods, wherever worshipped, by whatever people, under whatever name, had studs of sacred horses, either to draw their idol chariot, or to be led in

solemn procession before its shrine; such were those of the Persian *Ozmud*, snow-white, and bred for the service of the temple in Cilicia. In every temple of the sun, in every sacred grove, from the Baltic to the Ganges, there were stalls for the holy horses. The horse has been everywhere the type of victory, the national emblem, the standard of battle—either by the exhibition of its skull, or its tail, or by the whole image of the animal. Who has not heard of the white horse embroidered on the banners of our Saxon ancestors? To this day, once in each year, the whole peasantry of the neighbourhood meet to clear the weeds and grass from the surface of a huge white horse, extending over more than an acre, cut deeply into the face of a chalk hill, near *Letcombe Regis* in Berkshire, supposed to have been so cut in commemoration of a great victory gained by *Alfred the Great* over the Danes, under *Offa*, in the year 871.

"Carved rudely on the pendant sod is seen,
The snow-white courser stretching o'er the green;
The antique figure seen with curious eye,
The glorious monument of victory.
Then England reared her long dejected head,
Then Alfred triumphed and invaders bleat."

Other traditions, however, affirm that this singular antiquarian relic is of much older date than *Alfred*, and was intended to represent the white-horse of *Hengist*; to this day, the tail of a white horse, with the ends of the hair dyed red, and fixed to the end of a lance, is the standard of the Mahometan cavalry: it has replaced over all Islam the white banners of the *Ommiades* and the black ones of the *Abassides*.

The great object hitherto has been to ascertain the original habits of the horse in its wild state, the race of mankind by whom it was first subjugated to man's use, and its probable first introduction to what are commonly known as civilized countries. I shall now proceed to notice a few other facts with respect to this animal, as known to and used by the ancients, and trace its history to our own time. Proceeding to other countries in the neighbourhood of Egypt and Arabia, we learn from *Herodotus* that the Babylonians had vast numbers of horses. He speaks of a certain satrap, or lord, of their country, by name *Tritantechmes*, as owning, in addition to his war horses, 800 stallions and 16,000 mares. The same author also notices the numerous cavalry of the Bactrians and Caspians, and tells us, that though the quadrupeds and birds of what is now British India far exceeded in size those of other countries, the horse was an exception, for it was far surpassed by a peculiar breed in Media named the *Niscan*. Ten horses of this breed, superbly caparisoned and of extraordinary size, drew the chariot containing the idol of *Jupiter*, in the train of *Xerxes* during his expedition into Europe. At this day the horse of Hindostan, of the native breeds, is a very inferior animal; and we learn from *Col. Sykes*, that the only firm, well-made horses in the country are the result of repeated crossing with the best blood of Arabia and Persia: and latterly the importation of English blood has done much to improve the race. Major *Gwatkin*, the Superintendent of the East India Company's breeding stud in Northern India, describes the original Indian mare, as very inferior in shape, and generally a jade with narrow chest, drooping mean quarters, and if above fourteen and a half hands high, much too leggy. Just such as Major *Gwatkin* describes them, are the sculptured horses wherever met with in India, showing that what the native horse is now, it has been from the earliest times. It does not appear that the Babylonians, any more than the Persians and Greeks, at or about the time of *Homer*, were accustomed to ride on horseback. All the heroes of the *Iliad* are depicted as fighting in chariots; and chariots alone are found sculptured on the basso-reliefs of *Persepolis*. Late discoveries in the ruins of ancient Nineveh lead us to suppose, that the Medes were accustomed to ride on horseback at a much earlier period; for *Mr. Rich* speaks of a basso-relievo of a