

THE THOROUGHBRED RACE HORSE.— HOW TO BREED, REAR, AND TRAIN HIM.

BY AN OLD TRAINER.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Thoroughbred, His Value, and Usefulness to Man.

Continued.

From the Spirit of the Times

It was related, and by those who witnessed it, that, while a circus with a stud of horses were passing from New York to the West Indies Islands, upon the deck of a schooner, a storm arose in which the commander found it dangerous to the safety of the vessel to retain the horses on board any longer, and was compelled to throw them overboard. Among them was a thoroughbred purchased by the circus company while in Kentucky. Forty-eight hours after their being thrown overboard, this thoroughbred came alongside and neighed, but the storm was so great that with all their sympathy for the bravery of the noble animal, they could not take it on board. It was nearly all that day with the vessel, but became separated about dark, and was seen no more. The other horses, being in all probability of common blood, soon perished amid the billows of a disastrous storm, but this thoroughbred lived certainly over fifty hours: how much longer will, of course, never be known. So in all time to come, inculcate, my dear reader, the humane idea that the thoroughbred, in organization, temperament, and intelligence, is next to man, and is the most useful animal known upon earth, and the most friendly that man has ever domesticated. Therefore heed not the churlish pretence of man worm prouder when he vilifies the character of turfmens, and descends upon them cruelly to the racehorse, for in no capacity in which the thoroughbred has ever been used has he found so good a home, such kind treatment, and such congenial employment as in the turfman's hands, and the most exalted in intellect and in merit have been his friends.

CHAPTER XX.

Training of Horses of All Ages.

My articles upon the training of the horse have been heretofore confined chiefly to the two and three year olds. In this chapter I propose to treat of the training of all ages, for all distances, and to alleviate, if possible, the severe and almost savage treatment of the thoroughbred while undergoing preparation for racing. Most trainers, especially those inexperienced, or who are unacquainted with the conformation of the horse, are apt to think, and to treat the horse as if training consisted of heavy blanketing, profuse sweets, and many trial runs; and although the horse may come to the post and even win with this kind of treatment, still, being flesh and blood, he cannot stand its continuance, and must give way either in the legs or eyes; become feverish, lose appetite, and frequently train entirely off, so that he is useless, this rest of the season, as a racehorse; whereas, if the milder form of treatment had been adopted, he would improve in his training, for a racehorse will stand a great amount of abuse and ignorant treatment, and still win; but, as we are seeking for the best mode of treatment for this valuable animal—the horse—it is our interest as well as our duty, to select the best manner of training. Any close observer (that is, any turfman who has attended the races during the last thirty or forty years), will, of course, have noted many excellent horses ruined, broken down, and retired from the turf without ever distinguishing themselves or making anything like a good character for a horse to retire to the stud upon, when by nature they were among the best formed horses of their day, and had been properly and rationally treated, they would have shown qualities as racers, perhaps not excelled in their time. I could mention quite a number of horses which have been treated as I have described above, and which I know to have been excellent racehorses, but from a mistaken notion that a horse must be kept in training from his childhood to age, never allowed to become lusty or gross so as to fill up and develop his muscular form, but trained in the South in the winter, at the North in summer; kept constantly moving, his muscular powers sapped and drained until he becomes stale, and loses all his natural supple and vim, and his tendons, cords, and blood-vessels become contracted and dry as wood. Then the owner or trainer will say of him, as an excuse for the lack of speed which he shows in racing, "That he never was fast," or, "That he is not fast, but very game." The fact is, his muscles have become so dry and stale that he loses his speed, and the longer he is trained the slower he will get.

I have many instances in my mind of horses treated thus, a few of which I will mention by name. There was Privateer, who, when a two-year-old, ran a quarter of a mile, on the Centreville track, with Long Nine (the dam of the great mare Nettie Norton), the first quarter he ever ran, in 25 and a quarter seconds. Tim Le Mans, who knows something about a horse, told me that a few days ago, that he was looking at the colt Privateer at the time. He was just a little over two years old, and he was collapsed a few weeks, frequently turned the stable without any cooling off, and laid off when the other horses were got to work with, and this was the first or second time that he ever breezed him through the mile. I certainly the first time they ever timed. Now this horse ran from one to four

constant training from his two-year-old form until he left the turf, and during that time he had never enough flesh upon his bones to fill his muscles.

Another instance is that of Foster, who has recently distinguished himself by running four-mile heats in the thirties in the far West at San Francisco. He was a good deal of the same form as Privateer, only that he was a son of the great Lexington, instead of a grandson. He was a horse possessing a great share of speed, and his owner ran him in many races, and won several very good ones, though, as he lost many others that he should, and, no doubt, would have won, had he trained his horse with a view of retaining his speed and strength, which is what a horse wants—speed!—speed!!—speed!!! After that condition and good riding will carry him as far as horses ought to run. There has been no three-year-old on the turf, since Foster was a three-year-old, that I would give him for, and yet he left behind him, when he first retired from the turf, and went into the stud, a name of mere mediocrity.

Another noted instance, of very recent date, no longer ago than last year and the year before was Nettie Norton, one of the best forward animals now upon the turf, and by nature one of the best race mags of modern times; yet she has been trained, and worked, and run until she became so stale that for a year or two she scarcely got a place, and although she managed to win two or three races last season, and one of them a very valuable one, at Baltimore, in which she distanced Aaron Pennington and Shylock, yet if she had been properly trained and judiciously handled and run, there is scarcely a race in which she was engaged but that she should have won. There was no filly, excepting Olitipa, that was her equal in form or speed.

Again, there is B. F. Carver, another instance of overtraining. He is a horse of remarkable speed, of rather light conformation, and, therefore requires but very little hard work, especially in trial runs; yet he ran more trial runs with heavy weights upon his back, than any other horse trained last season. He is a very remarkable horse, for in his first year upon the turf every trainer predicted that he would never come again, yet he was out the next year fresh and vigorous, never doing better than last season. Still his owner brings him to Jerome Park, where thousands of cartloads of new soil had been placed upon the track, making it exceedingly heavy, runs him a trial with his shoes and overweight, in 1:49, when most of the horses that had been breezed previously over the same track, could make no better time than 1:51. He has often shown to his owner that, when in high robust health, after a reasonable amount of training, he could run faster and stay longer than in any other condition he had ever had him in, yet he permits him to be trained down to a skeleton, and then expects to win with him. Poor Carver! He will be another victim who will leave the turf without a character, and from nothing but cruel and over training. I mention these few examples as landmarks for the benefit of the truly intelligent trainer, who wishes to learn, at least for the sake of success, the best mode of treatment of the horses while in training. There are many other instances that could be cited where horses have been trained to a stand still, and left the turf without a chance to show their excellence as racehorses.

An aged horse, or a horse over four years old, of course, requires a great deal less training or less work to order him than a three year old, as his form is completed: that is, his bones, cartilages, and the harder ligaments of the body are in a measure matured, and, therefore, nature has supplied, by being allowed to complete her growth, what the trainer is compelled to do in ordering the two and three years old. They, being immature, he is obliged to, and will, if he has the proper knowledge, keep them in the highest possible condition, even in advance of their age, in order to enable them to perform their great and arduous duties as colts in their sweetstakes. In fact, my experience has been that the older the horse the less training he requires. Of course there are exceptions where their form and glutinous disposition to eat may require a great deal more work, but that is only in some instances, which, according to the adage, "That the exception makes the rule," proves the rule in this case. Allowing an aged horse to be sound in his wind and his limbs, one half the work required to order a three-year-old will condition him. Therefore, the five-year-old and upwards properly trained never ought to be broken down in training. He may get into a long race or in the mud, which is so trying upon the tendons, and break down, but it never ought to occur in training, because no such exposure or trial runs are necessary to properly condition him when he has arrived at that age. His anatomical frame being settled and complete, all the vigor and strength you can give to his muscular form the better, as it enables him to retain his speed, where if dried up, soiled, or inflamed from severe or over training, he is deprived of that muscular strength, which is so necessary to carry him along with ease. Without the proper use of his muscular development in a race he is sure to show deficiency in speed, and will seldom win under those circumstances.

Now my great desire in informing my friends, the trainers, how to treat the horse of that age, or how to bring him to the post in the perfection of health, is an excuse for reiterating here what I have often mentioned heretofore, that nine horses are overtrained, where one is undertrained; and the great lesson that I am desirous of teaching is that every trainer should learn the disposition, conformation, and locomotive action of his horse, and by attentive care in watching, through all the ramifications of training, such as feeding, grooming, riding, and so forth, to note carefully every peculiarity of each and every

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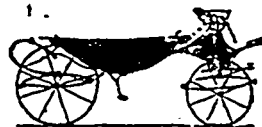
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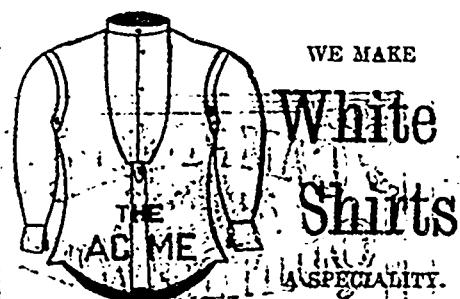
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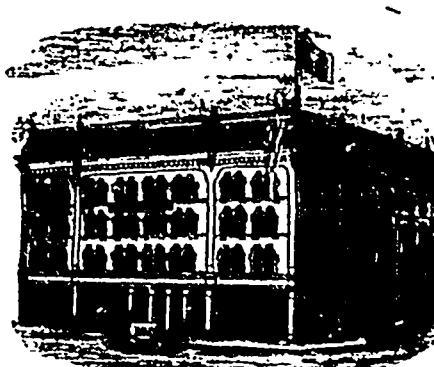
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