

HOW ONE COLT WAS TRAINED.

EUGENE DAVENPORT, Dean of Illinois Agricultural College, in *The Farmer's Voice*

Every farmer in the country is interested in training colts. It is a part of his business which the average farmer feels "skittish" about, and in the performance of which he perhaps makes more mistakes than in any other direction. The number of potentially noble horses which have been ruined in the breaking is countless, and man's stupidity, oftentimes brutality, is responsible for many grievous sins against one of his very best friends and most reliable helpers.

Professor Davenport tells below, in language simple and clear, "how one colt was trained." The chronicle of that performance, simple though it be, is of highest importance. It points the way to others who are confronted with this problem, and it shows that love and kindness when dealing with brute creation produces the same happy results as when it is applied to the social relations of life. Time, patience, intelligence, firmness, the winning of the young horse's will to subservience to your will—these are the lessons of Professor Davenport's experience. To-day he has a thoroughly-trained horse, preserving all the life and spirit native to him, yet gentle and submissive to the hand and voice of the master whose gentle leadings won his confidence and trust, and amenable to the direction of others who treat him in like manner.

What the chronicler of that experience did others may do with equal success. What the result would be if all horses were "brought up" in that way is past computation; that it would contribute untold blessing to the world and add vastly to the usefulness and value of the horse is not to be doubted.—Editor *The Farmer's Voice*.

The old carriage horse was breaking down and another must take his place. The following is a chronicle of the daily performance of a green colt:

July 12.—Took up from pasture a half-blood German coach filly, three years old. Had been broken to the halter from the first, but nothing more. Walked her behind a self binder at work; took her up to the line where the laundry was blowing about in the wind; found an old piece of sheet iron and tumbled it about on the ground and over a stone pile while she had pretty free play of the halter; opened and closed an umbrella before and behind; tumbled it about upon the ground and against her, and made her carry it open and upon her head with her ears among the braces. End of first lesson; time about an hour; took to stable; carefully groomed her and fed a few oats from the hand.

July 13.—Repeated much of previous lesson, but in full harness. Then stepping behind, but with the lines not in the turrets, in case of a sudden whirl, waited for her to go in any direction. Did not tell her to go, but kept behind her whenever she tried to come to me. Finally started up the road. Of course stopped and started as she pleased, and turned completely around on meeting a horse and carriage and tried to follow. Then made her feel the line for the first time and turned her to one side. Found ourselves in a plowed field and wandered about for a considerable time, she showing some resistance to being guided by the line, but no inclination to bolt or to throw herself. Finally got her into the road, and in the return succeeded in inducing her to mind the line whenever it seemed a matter of indifference to her as to where she should go. Did not attempt to strongly oppose her. End of second lesson; time about an hour. Distance about a mile. Unharnessed outside the stall without tying, having left the halter on. Groomed and fed oats from the hand.

July 14.—Repeated lesson of day before, only used more force as she learned the line and kept her from turning out of the road. Had a few oats in the pocket and occasionally fed from the hand. Soon she minded the line perfectly unless strongly desiring to go in some other direction. This was in no case allowed on this day, but she was kept in the middle of the road.

July 15.—Drove in harness with one line only free from the turret; made her drag chunks of wood and old sheet iron. Found a pile of ashes which she refused to approach. Tried to turn

around, but she always found herself facing the ashes. After three or four attempts to get away she walked boldly over the pile. On this day succeeded in teaching her to go forward by the word, and commenced to stop her by word and line. Unharnessed her by the roadside and sat a considerable time grazing her. Got her into a deep ditch and led her the length of it. I had always unharnessed her in hall of barn without tying, and here I unharnessed her in same way.

July 16.—Evening. Drove about a mile to a small river and put her over a bridge for the first time. A little afraid of it, but easily went over after a little study. In no case was she led over or past an object that she feared, but rather held still till she studied it out and was willing to proceed. Then circumstances compelled a cessation of training for several days, during which she stood in the barn on an earth floor.

July 22.—Drove again and taught her to stop when told, but not yet to stand till told to go, for that is one of the hardest things for a horse to learn. In driving up and down the road she was strongly determined to turn into the barn at each passing of the gate, but this she was not allowed to do, but was put back and forth past the home gate until she gave up all notion of entering without the sign from the line. To clinch it all, at last she was pulled in and started for the barn, then suddenly turned back into the road again. She never but twice afterward refused to mind the line instantly, and then only for a moment.

July 23.—At this lesson she was taught not to stop until told to do so and was made to feel a touch of the whip. She has never been struck with the whip up to date of writing, but knows perfectly well what it is for.

July 24.—Got out the breaking cart for the first time. Let her look it over, and eat oats off the seat. Led her into the shafts wrong end ahead and let her eat more oats off the seat. Raised the shafts and dropped them beside her, making all the noise possible. Pushed the shafts against her with considerable force, put them on her back and between her legs, then pulled the cart against her both in front and behind. Put her in and out of the shafts repeatedly, and in this way spent a half hour. At last pulled it beside her for some distance, jamming the shafts against her sides; hitched her in with help of an attendant and started off; drove about half a mile and returned.

July 25.—Repeated last lesson, but with less preliminary and more driving. In all cases avoided seeming to hold her, but was always in reach of a line and stopped her instantly if she was about to move away.

August 2.—Nothing done since last date. Loaded her in freight car at Woodland, Mich., to ship to Illinois, a distance of 300 miles. Took every precaution at her first sight of the cars, and tied her in the cars in such a way that she was able to see from the side door. Exhibited fear when the car started, becoming wet with perspiration. Reassured her by patting the neck and head and by gentle words and soon succeeded in attracting her attention to me, which was the object, until she could ride contentedly with her eyes hidden by tucking her head under my arm. She was to make a family horse if she had the quality, and nothing was too troublesome in her education. After five or six miles she quieted down and showed very little fear when a train passed upon the next track, but was much disturbed if I left the car and would call to me constantly. I knew then that I had succeeded in fixing her mind strongly upon myself, and knew that the principal work in her education was over.

August 3.—Spent considerable time in freight yards and she saw much of engines and passing trains. Unhitched her and led her to the open door at the side to see what was going on, both as we were standing and when under motion. She tried to put her nose on a locomotive that had stopped just by us on the next track, and called to it as it moved off. Stood at the door as fast trains passed, and we rode many miles that way through cuts and over embankments and bridges. A small book and several newspapers were torn up and the pieces left flying about the car for half a day. Of course they frightened her at first until I fed her oats from one hand and with the other held half a newspaper fluttering in the breeze, and allowed it to whip her about the body and the head. She would endure the paper for the sake of the oats, and in a few minutes would eat contentedly while thrashed over the head and eyes with papers in both hands. With this day everything like fear or timidity seemed to disappear and with one exception has never developed since.

August 14.—After arriving at her destination circumstances prevented resuming her education until over a week had passed. She was now hitched to a cart and driven to the city, a distance of two miles by the route chosen. I was a hot day and she was given a rest by the railroad track when trains were passing and taught to stand without being held and to stand still by constant rubbing over all parts of the body with a wisp of grass. This gave her something to enjoy and prevented the forming of the disagreeable habit of restlessness when standing. We drove her close to the track to face passing trains, that she might learn to know them from the ground; let her see street cars for the first time and put her down alleys and about mills and factories. Showed a little hesitation about crossing some shadows cast by escaping steam. Let her stand and study them and in a moment she went over, but was not allow-

ed to hurry, either then or after. At one time showed a determination to go ahead upon a certain street rather than down a side alley. She was held to the spot until she gave up to the rein. We had found all the worst places in town and returned. Time three hours.

August 16.—Repeated the lesson of Saturday, but in a few minutes overhauled a traction engine, drawing a separator and a water tank. Drove behind it all for a quarter of a mile, then pulled out and drove beside it, gradually gaining until she walked beside the engine, and close enough so that the escaping steam drove out among her legs. Drove this way a quarter of a mile. Gave a good deal of practice in turning to right or to left, round and round, and in backing until she minded the rein perfectly. Returned to the barn and hitched immediately, and for the first time, to a four-wheeled rig. After getting a little accustomed to this, returned to the stable. This was the first that she had been driven off the walk, which was just before changing from cart to buggy.

August 17.—Hitched immediately to the buggy and drove to town. Did not allow her to start for some minutes after hitching up. Gave some practice in suddenly stopping and standing still until told to go. She showed fear of an iron cover to a manhole of a sewer at the side of one of the streets. Stopped her by it, but she would not step on it. We drove her by it time and again until she would pass by it without shying, but did not get her upon it until a later drive.

August 18.—Very leisurely hitched to the buggy and stood a long time after getting in before starting. Then started in the slow walk. Never allowed her to start upon the trot. After some driving about returned to a house near the barns to take in a couple of ladies. Expected that she would want to go to the barn, and for that reason did not immediately go for the ladies. When she found that she was not to go to the barn she took a fit of the sulks. Was determined to take the drive leading to the barn. We were as determined to go the other way. There had always been two of us and we now fully expected the tussle that is always likely to come some time during breaking. Her head was pulled in the direction that we desired to go and held there. She was unable to go her way and reared a little. It was a case of her stubbornness against ours, and in about two or three minutes she gave up to superior intelligence and marched off our way. If she had not we would have been right there until the next day. We then drove her about the drives around the barns, to and from, for quite a time; then took in the ladies and the four had a fine drive. In now writing up these notes I may say that this was the last time she showed any sign of stubbornness, and her training since that time has been simply a continuance of her education.

In two or three days longer she was driven by my wife, or, in other words, inside of a week after her first attachment to a four-wheeled vehicle; and I consider her now at this writing (September 4) perfectly trained, as far as safety is concerned. She stands perfectly still while being harnessed and