

Stock Department.

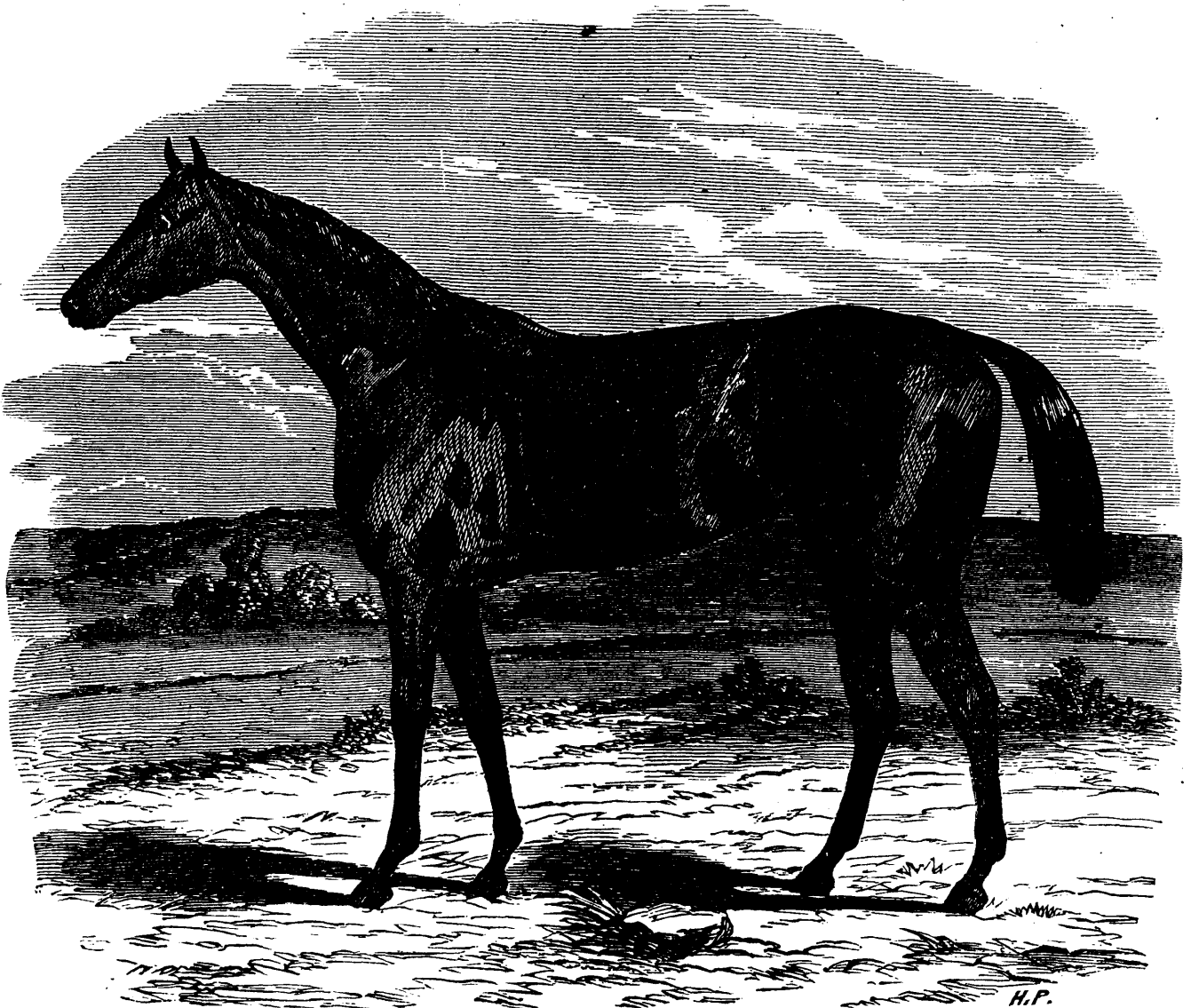
The English Thorough-bred Horse.

THERE is, perhaps, no animal except the dog that exhibits such a variety in the same species as the horse. From the superb English draught-horse to the diminutive Shetland pony, we have a marvellous diversity in size, and not less extraordinary is the difference in general proportions and configuration presented within the same limits, in such examples as the London brewer's dray, the thorough-bred race horse, the hunter, the carriage horse, the hack, and the hundred distinct or nameless varieties of horse and

a comparison of the best specimens of almost any well established and approved domesticated breed with the wild or semi-wild horses of any country. The famed Arabian steed, long accounted matchless in symmetry, speed, endurance, and intelligence, may perhaps justly be regarded as the best type of the original race, and inhabits a region which may be considered the most natural home of this noble animal—yet he is undoubtedly surpassed by the English thorough-bred, and even by the English horse of inferior rank with thorough-bred blood in his veins. The trial has repeatedly been made in England with the best Arab horses that could be procured, and they have invariably been beaten, miserably beaten, we believe, by the English race horse; and even on

verance through successive generations, at length so successfully combined and developed.

If it now be asked what constitutes a thorough-bred horse, we believe the correct answer to be that the term implies one that can be traced through the "Stud-Book," by sire and dam, to any Eastern stallion, or to what were called the royal mares, imported by Charles the Second, as they, together with two or three of the first imported stallions, constitute the remotest limit of all racing pedigrees. The first step to improve the native breed of English horses appears to have been taken by James the First, who gave £500, an enormous sum in those days, for an Arab stallion, which, however, the Duke of Newcastle, in his work on horsemanship, decried, and thereby created a pre-



pony which may be seen in every country of the globe. The differences are due partly to natural causes, in which man has had only an accidental share, or none at all, and they are partly also the result of artificial management and breeding. Under a long-continued and judicious system of the latter, as in the parallel case of the breeds of cattle, a marked improvement has been effected upon the original wild stock, and the various types of form and character, adapted to special purposes, have been brought to a high degree of excellence, if not to the *ne plus ultra* of perfection. This is especially the case with the English thorough-bred horse, in which so many of the best qualities of the horse are combined, that although bred and trained for the particular object of the race, yet it is also the parent of nearly all the improvements attained in the other useful breeds, to the excellencies of which some infusion of thorough-bred blood has mainly contributed. That art, by acting in accordance with natural laws, has effected in this beautiful race of animals an exaltation and not a degeneracy of nature's type, may be shown by

his native plains the Arabian has met the same fate when put in competition with the English horse, not only in regard to speed for a short distance, but also in the more useful qualities of endurance, strength, and capacity for long-continued exertion. A sort of romantic and poetic interest attaches to the Arabian horse, and without doubt he possesses great beauty, a most winning docility of temper, and marvellous powers; but it must be admitted that the English trained horse is more beautiful, far swifter and stouter than the justly famed courser of the desert. In the burning plains of the East, and the frozen climate of Russia, he has invariably beaten every antagonist on his native ground. But while we claim this superiority for the English horse, we acknowledge that it is to the introduction of Arabian blood that the first marked improvement in the breed of the former is due. The African horse or Barb, the Turk, and the Persian, have also had their share in imparting to the thorough-bred horse of the present day those original excellencies which the skill and training of the English breeder have, by judicious perse-

judice, which it took many years to remove, against Arab blood. Charles the Second subsequently effected considerable improvement by the importation of Barbs and Turks, whose blood was engrafted on the original stock, already considerably ameliorated by the services of a stallion called Place's White Turk, imported by Oliver Cromwell's master of the horse, and subsequently by those of the Helmsley Turk, followed by Fairfax's Morocco Barb. The greatest event, however, in the early history of the English thorough-bred horse, was the introduction, during the latter part of Queen Anne's reign, of the Darley Arabian, purchased in the Levant by a Yorkshire merchant of that name. The immediate descendants of this invaluable horse, the parent of the best English stock, were the Devonshire or Flying Childers, the Bartlett's Childers, Almanzor, and others. The two Childers were the means through which the blood and fame of their sire were widely circulated, and from them descended another Childers, Blaze, Snap, Sampson, Eclipse, and a host of excellent horses.

The Devonshire or Flying Childers, so called from the name of his breeder, Mr. Childers, of Carr House, and the sale of him to the Duke of Devonshire, was the fleetest horse of his day. He was at first trained