

THE WILD HORSE AND COW

THE beautiful horse with silky coat that arches his proud neck and paws the earth, looks very different from his early ancestor, the wild horse, but still possesses many of his habits. Many thousand years ago the wild horse was a small animal not much larger than a dog. He had a split hoof like the cow, fed on swampy ground, and sought safety from his enemies in flight. As the swamps dried up and his pastureland became firm and rocky, the divided feet, which supported him over soft ground, gradually grew into a round hoof. Pick up a horse's foot and the dividing line in the hoof may still be seen.

Every line of the horse is a graceful curve. He is built for speed. The slender legs, deep chest, and wide nostrils for breathing, have helped him in running from his enemies. If turned loose today, the horse sleeps in the open spaces, lest he be taken unawares. With one twist he springs up on his front feet first and is ready for instant flight.

The horse has served man faithfully and well. When his drooping ears tell exactly how tired he is, he still plods on. His sight is peculiar as he is able to look behind without turning his head. He sees with each eye separately and objects look much larger to him than to us. The horse steps proudly to music and is ever eager for a race. His lifetime is short. At twenty his best days are past, but if his teeth are filed short to assist him in eating, he may give much longer service.

The cow is a creature of moods. She never takes much notice of man, even though she supplies many of his needs. She is best understood by studying the habits of the wild cattle of an earlier age. They had little pluck, those scraggy, long-haired bovines. Their long needle-like horns were mostly used in hooking one another, but when at bay facing a pack of wolves they put the young in the centre and their horns formed a circle of bayonets. The rash wolf that jumped in to drag down a calf was instantly gored to death by the horns of an angry bull.

When a new yoke of oxen is brought home and turned loose in the stockyard of the eastern farm, the boys from the district are all there balanced on the fence. The two strangers stand together near the gate and nervously size up the herd. "A tough looking bunch, Buck, a tough looking bunch, and every one thin. Not much feed here. I don't like the looks of that old brindle scratching himself against the fence. Do the ends of my horns look sharp enough, Bright? In about a minute I expect to lock horns with that old rascal." In a moment the herd draws together, and old Brindle trots out and issues a challenge. He paws the ground and bellows, flinging the dirt over his back, and circles around the new comers, daring one to come out and fight like an ox. He insults them with names no decent ox should endure. "Go after him, Buck, and get your feet in those holes first that he has dug and I will settle that long-legged Jersey that is edging in." Then Buck and Brindle lock horns and a battle royal begins. With head smashing against head and horn against