

THE AMERICAN HORSE.

ADDRESS DELIVERED IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES OF THE COLUMBIA VETERINARY COLLEGE, NEW YORK, MARCH 26th, 1880.

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GENTLEMEN,—The modern attempt to elevate veterinary science above the mere empiricism which characterized it universally before the beginning of the present century, and which characterizes it too extensively now, is entitled to profound gratitude and liberal encouragement, on the score of both economy and humanity. Dedicated as this college is to the development and care and preservation of all that portion of the animal kingdom which man has subdued and devoted to his prosperity and comfort, and which constitutes more than \$1,500,000,000 of his property in this country alone, it deserves the support of all who are engaged in the practical affairs of life; and the sympathy and encouragement of all who would ameliorate the animal suffering which man forces his dumb allies to share with him in the warfare of life. As I consider what it may do to benefit both man and animal, and the difficult task it has to perform in interpreting voiceless complaints; in finding the seat of pain where no intelligence points the way; in groping for symptoms and diseases amidst the darkness of uninspired animal life; in arresting destroying disease where no enlightened observation points out the destroyer—I am tempted to deal with the relations which exist between man and animals, and to explore that mysterious problem which intelligent thinkers propound for that part of creation whose thoughts and reason are hidden in that solemn and silent realm occupied by instinct alone. But my inclination, in view of the practical object of this college, leads me to the companionship, rather than to the abstract, contemplation of the animal kingdom; and to an intimate association, for an hour at least, with that faithful and fascinating servant, without whom many of our active industries would cease, and our keenest pleasure would be destroyed. While I recognize the value and importance of all other domestic animals, and remember that the value of the cattle of the United States is estimated at nearly a thousand millions; that their annual product in meat is \$398,056,000, and in the dairy \$187,000,000—\$0,000,00 more than our product of cotton goods, and \$25,000,000 more than our woolen goods—I cannot forget the value of the horses of our country, or close my eyes to the fact that the relations which exist between man and the horse are of such an intimate and significant character that they cannot be destroyed or violated without producing an effect deeper than that produced by the simple loss of property. Somehow, the horse has managed to connect himself with so much that is interesting and valuable in life that we cannot abuse or insult him without wounding our self-respect; we cannot destroy him without serious loss. He occupies a strange and important place in our history. In great military expeditions, he has always performed an important part. Old warriors used him. Old scholars wrote about him. Jacob commenced early trading corn for horses with the Egyptians, and a long array of chariots and horses followed this patriarch in funeral procession. He was an Egyptian animal at a time when Egyptian civilization outshone all others and I am of opinion that he has found his most congenial companions where cultivation and refinement have prevailed. From the days of Pharaoh until now, as the arts of life advance, how he goes with them! I find him in Arabia the ally and protector and companion of man—his best possession there. I find him immortalized in the finest marbles of Greece and Rome. I find pages in history dedicated to the record of his wonderful deeds on the turf, on the road, at labor, in the chase, and on the field of battle. Kings have devoted the royal treasury to his increase, improvement and comfort; and ambitious and enthusiastic agriculturists have applied themselves unsparingly to his introduction into the best regions and systems of farming. Why, what a flood of charming associations and memories rushes around us, as we recall the position which the horse has held for almost all time! William the Conqueror and his Norman horses; King John and his Flemish horses; the admiring crowds that gathered around the Darley and the Godolphin Arabian; the enthusiastic admirers

of Sir Archey and Sir Charles; of Lexington and Bo-ton; of old Eclipse; the stables of Washington and the thorough-breeds of Jefferson. It is not worth while to tell you that there is nothing more in all this than the simple ownership of so many mentionable animals, to be valued by weight in the market. In great events of joy and sorrow, in crises and revolutions, the horse finds his place, standing next to man, the partner of his fortunes and his fate, and performing an important part in all the drama. I have been so struck with the place assigned the horse, in all the stirring incidents of chivalrous personal history, that I remember always the touching lines, which is the introduction to "The Betrothed," tell the vision which descended on the "Noble Moringer":—

"Thy tower another banner knows, thy steed another rein,
And stoop them to another's will, thy gallant vassal train;
And she, the lady of thy love, so faithful once and fair.
This night, without thy father's hall, she weds Mars-tetten's heir."

Towers, horse, vassals, and lady-love—all join to make the significant picture. But not in deeds of war and chivalry alone has the horse endeared himself to man. I have said he seems to belong, by right, to the highest civilization, and to find there his most favoring and congenial home. Not, however, to this sphere alone is his genius confined. Obedient to surrounding circumstances as no other animal seems capable of being, his frame and temperament alike conform to the necessities which he meets. The pride of the race-course, to which he is often led when he is but two years old, prematurely developed by protection and care into all the nerve and vigor of mature life, restless, impatient, and beautiful, he finds an elephantine, stolid, patient brother leaving the pastures of Holland and the Clyde for the weary toil of the brewery and the coal-yard; he finds a hardy, diminutive, busy, cool, and sagacious member of his family browsing on the ferns and moss of the Orkneys; he hails from the desert the lithe and sinewy form of a more immediate relative; he looks quietly on as his self-poised American cousin whirls along the road with that tremendous stride which has been developed by the wants of a free and driving people, each one of whom is bound to reach his destination first; and he finds a rough and wiry specimen of his race scouring his plains in all the vigor of savage life, proving its characteristics under all circumstances, and in whatever form he may appear. He gradually adapts himself to soil and climate and circumstance with a readiness unknown to any other animal but man. In the battle-field, he is a war-horse; on the race-course, he is a deer; on the farm, he is a drudge; on the road, he is a locomotive; at the civic procession, he is as airy as his rider; as a hack, he is sagacious in the use of his forces; at the stage-coach, he is "flying all abroad"; at the private carriage, he is as proud and disdainful as the petted beauty who sits behind him. It is in this cosmopolitan animal family that the American horse takes a high place. Not in any sense a thorough bred trotter, as he is sometimes called; for that name belongs to a breed of horses as distinct under this name as the Arab or the Barb's under his name. No English man speaks of a thorough-bred as a thorough-bred Orloff, or a thorough-bred Canadian, or a thorough-bred Persian. The thorough-bred is, in his mind, a distinct breed of horses, and the term belongs to no other. The name does not belong to cattle, for we have no such breed of cattle. We have shorthorns and Ayrshires and Devons and Herefords, but no thorough-breeds as a breed. It is as manifestly improper to apply the name thorough-bred to a known and named breed of cattle as it is to another and varied breed of horses. You cannot speak of thorough-bred Shorthorns more than you can speak of thorough-bred Arabians. The names of Shorthorns, Ayrshires, Devons, Herefords, among cattle, are sufficient, without any prefix. But if you desire especially to indicate the purity of your cattle with marked distinctness, you can call them pure-bred Shorthorns, etc., but not "thorough breeds." Not in any sense is the American horse a thorough-bred; but he is an animal after his kind, and unequalled by any other horse on the face of the earth in all that makes such an animal truly valuable in every kind of service. It takes true equine genius to make what is known as the American horse—that animal which, when he has reached the height of his faculties, is known as the American trotting horse. His mechanism must be as well-balanced and symmetrical as a locomotive. Propelled as he is by one quarter at a time,* his progress is the result of nerve and strength and decision unknown, and utterly ignored, in that leaping, bounding motion of the running horse of the English turf. The American horse must be solid on the foot, strong in the hump, firm in the back, free and easy in his stride, and, above all things, calm and collected amidst all trials of the track and the road, which tend to throw him off his balance,

and reduce him to the level of the hare and the fox and greyhound—running helter skelter, without the exercise of any faculties except those with which nature endow him who flees from danger or conflict. The American trotter requires bones and muscles and brains, and when he stands high on the list, he has them all. For compactness of form and ease of motion; for strength and endurance and sagacity, he is unequalled. Now, this animal we have almost as the natural product of our farms. Descended from the thorough-breeds of generations long since gone, he is undoubtedly, as he now appears, the result of that social and civil equality which, in our country, makes one man's time as valuable as another's, and which authorizes the farmer's boy to take the road from the parson or the doctor whenever he can get it.

Every man in this country who can keep a horse wants a good one; and, when he has got him, he wants to avail himself of his horse's powers to make the distance between one place and another as short as possible. We all drive on the road; and this continued, with certain fortunate aptitudes of soil and climates has given us all the peculiar merits of the American horse, heir as he is to strong physical power and tractable domestic faculties. Why, then, should we go abroad with the expectation of improving what we now have? While we have the many valuable families well known to us, so divine in size and shape, so well fitted by form and temper to every labor, and yet possessing a kind of prevailing uniformity expressed by the term "a horse of all work"—can we hope to derive much benefit from a resort to those specific breeds of horses which, in England, are devoted each to its own speciality? There is no necessity, for instance, for importing a Suffolk Punch; for half a day's search would undoubtedly provide you with just such an animal, raised on your own soil, which, in all its varieties, develops almost every style and shape and quality of horse known on earth. We need not import hunters, for we have no need of such a horse among us. The Cleveland bay, valuable as a carriage horse, could hardly expect to improve the stylish breeds of the South and West.

The adventures of the thorough-bred of America on the English turf shows our capacity for producing that class of animals; and when we consider that it is only after we have reached many removes from the thorough-bred that we have arrived at good trotters; when we remember that neither in shoulder, nor leg, nor quarter, nor general mechanism, is there any analogy between the thorough-bred as raised in England, and the trotter as raised in our own country—we may well ask ourselves what advantage is to be derived from the introduction of such animals among us? In saying this, I do not fail to recognize the value of those old progenitors who brought into our country, many years ago, the bone and muscle and nerve and wind and capacity of the English thorough bred of that day. I am mindful of old Messenger, and of what he and his sons have done; and I cannot forget that his fame, as the ancestor of trotters, was established not in Bucks County, Pa., but on Long Island, and various other points in the State of New York, whence his stock was distributed throughout all the fair, billy, breezy, brainy, horse-growing sections of New England. As the sire of Miller's Damsel, and of Sir Harry (thorough-bred), he won a fair reputation; but it was as the sire of Mambrino, whose dam and grand-dam were of unknown blood, and not allied to the thorough-bred, that he won his distinction as the ancestor of some of the most remarkable trotters known on earth; and how, as generations went on, that unknown blood worked indeed the speed of his family increased. From Mambrino sprung Abdallah, dam Amazonia, and Mambrino Paymaster, with unknown dams and great accomplishments.

*The lecturer is in error here. The trotter is propelled by two quarters at one and the same time. The thoroughbred on the contrary uses each quarter in rotation and no two in perfect unison, as is the case with the trotter.—Ed. T. & C.]

To be continued.

A traveller from Leadville tells his neighbors in the east how he had to travel fifty miles in a stage. When about half the distance had been traversed they stopped at a small place to change horses. While they were changing them, the passengers improved the opportunity to take a lunch. They stepped up to the counter of the little restaurant and each took a piece of pie and a cup of coffee. When they had finished the lunch they asked the price. The man in attendance said:—"One piece of pie 5 cents; one cup of coffee 25 cents—75 cents each." One of the party grumbled a little about the price, whereupon the old man behind the bar straightened himself up, folded his arms in a dignified manner, and said:—"Stranger, look at me; do you suppose I am staying out here for my health."