

Reminiscences of a Hunter.

BY "WHIP."

I am a son of Woodburn, my dam is Jessie by Old Terror, second dam by War Cry, hence I am seven-eighths bred. There can be no mistake about that, I have heard it said so often. I am a solid bay, stand 16 hands and weigh 1,260 lbs. I was born on a farm and did well the first summer. My master gave me to his son Tom, a lad of 17 years. He taught me to lead and stand tied when I was quite young; he also taught me



"THE IMP" WITH THE DUMMY ON.

to eat crushed oats, and when I was old enough to wean gave me a nice box stall and fed and cared for me well. It was not surprising that I was a good yearling. When strange men came to the barn, Tom used to lead me out for inspection. I looked and felt well, and used to show to good advantage. The remarks that were made by some were really laughable; it is not hard to know a horseman by the manner in which he criticizes a colt. I remember one day when two strangers were looking me over, one said: "Now, Tom, take my advice and trade that thing off for a steer; he is no good, his legs are like pipestems and he has a very poor brisket." The idea of a man talking about the brisket of a colt! The other said, "Don't pay any attention to him, Tom, he doesn't know a horse from a steer; you have a grand colt, he has the quality of a Thoroughbred, with the substance of a plow horse; if you take good care of him and handle him properly, he will make a high-class heavy-weight hunter and probably a good steeplechaser." I immediately concluded that this man recognized a good thing when he saw it.

The opinions of all horsemen were favorable, so Tom became very proud of me, impressed with the idea that he had in me the makings of

A WORLD-BEATER.

Occasionally, people wanted to purchase me, but Tom would not price me. He always said, "He is not for sale." Tom's father was not so sanguine of future glory; he favored the heavy classes, and had sold my mother as soon as I was weaned. He advised Tom to sell me, but did not insist upon it, as he had given me to him, and was not one of those men who adhere to the old adage, "Boy's pig, but daddy's bacon." I came on well the summer of my yearling form. Tom continued my education and had me handy on the halter. In the fall he exhibited me at several exhibitions, in the class for yearlings by a Thoroughbred sire, likely to make saddle horses or hunters. I won first prize in every case, and Tom refused many tempting offers for me. I was admired for my size, quality, action and manners. I continued to improve the following year, and as a two-year-old won wherever shown.

During my third winter Tom was ill. I was left to the care of hired help, and soon learned what it means to a colt to be neglected. A great many strange horses were stood in the stable and I contracted colt distemper. I used to hear the men and Tom's father talking about his condition, and one morning I learned that he was dead. Everybody loved Tom and was very sorry, but none felt his death more than I.

Tom was an only son, and as his father was an old man, he decided to retire from farming. He advertised and sold his farm and chattels by public auction. Owing to neglect and the effects of distemper, I was neither feeling nor looking well the day of the sale. When I was led out I coughed badly and discharged freely from the nostrils. I heard several remark that I might not recover, and as the disease was contagious, it would not be safe to put me in a stable along with other horses; so there was no bidding. At last I heard some one say, "I have no horses to contract the disease. I'll give you \$25.00 for him." As no one else would have me, I was knocked down to this man, a Mr. B. He led me home and tied me in a dirty, foul-smelling stable with two cows and some hens. I soon realized that I had got into bad hands. Mr. B had a son called Sam, about the same age as Tom. He did not like horses, and the extra work my care entailed made him angry. He had a differ-

ent way of handling colts from Tom, and gave his orders in a different way. As a rule, I did not know what he wanted me to do. If I were not prompt he would kick me or strike me with a fork or anything he had in his hand. He did not feed me well, nor give me water regularly. Even under these conditions I soon recovered from the distemper, but being so poorly fed and roughly used, I became sulky, ill-tempered and treacherous. I resented the ill-treatment by kicking and biting whenever opportunity offered. I did not regain the flesh I had lost during my illness, and when I was turned out to grass in the spring of my three-year-old form, I was a tough-looking specimen of horseflesh. I did fairly well during the summer. Occasionally, I would jump into the neighbor's field for better pasture. Whenever I was found trespassing, the men of the farm would try to catch me to take me to pound, but I was so handy with my mouth and heels that they were afraid of me, and would set the dogs after me and throw stones. I could get away from the dogs, but could not always escape the stones. The whole neighborhood was afraid of me, and I was

CALLED A VICIOUS BRUTE.

In the fall Mr. B and Sam managed to get me back into the stable with the cows and hens. The place was worse than before, as owing to neglect the hens were covered with vermin, which soon attacked me and caused intense agony. Sam was no more kindly disposed to me than formerly, and my love for him had not increased, so it was a fight from the first. I had gained some flesh and was now a big, strong fellow in fair condition. One day Sam told his father that he was going to break me to harness and sell me. He borrowed an old set of harness and a cart, and proceeded to put the harness on me. I kicked and would not have it. With his father's assistance, he got a twitch on me and got me harnessed and hitched to the cart. He had a long, strong rope around my neck and looped around my under jaw, while his father held the reins. This was the first time I ever had a bit in my mouth, and it irritated me and the harness produced a peculiar sensation. As soon as the twitch was taken off I commenced to plunge and kick, and as both harness and cart were rotten, I was soon free, except from the rope held by Sam, from which I could not escape. They got me back into my stall, and Sam said sullenly, "I'll starve you into subjection."

I was kept in the stable for about six weeks with little to eat or drink, and in the meantime Sam was more cruel than before. At last he thought he had me sufficiently weakened to make it safe to hitch me, so he borrowed another outfit and proceeded as before. I certainly was in a wretchedly weak state, but the blood of my ancestors had lost none of its blueness, and while reduced by poverty and abuse, I was not conquered. It was winter now, and they hitched me to a cutter. About the time that I had freed myself, except from the rope held by Sam, and both he and his father were endeavoring to express their opinions of me in language not fit for publication, a Mr. H. drove up and said:

"Hello B, what in thunder are you trying to do? Do you mean to say that that skate is too much for you."

"Too much for us!" said B, "he is a devil; I



"THE IMP" READY FOR THE HUNT.

bought him at A's sale, and I wish I had never seen him."

"The amount of the business is, B," said H, "you have never given the colt a chance. I remember him as a 2-year-old, and he was a grand fellow. You have starved and abused him, and ruined his temper. If properly fed and handled, he will be all right yet; he has breeding, quality and size."

"As you admire him so much," responded B, "you had better buy him. I gave \$25 for him

and you can have him for \$40. He will be four in the spring."

"I'll take him," answered H. "Here is your money."

He paid Mr. B. got a halter on me and started to lead me behind his cutter. Sam said, "I wish you luck; be careful, he kicks, bites and does everything that is mean; in fact, he is a perfect imp."

"Thank you for the warning and the suggestion. I will call him The Imp," said Mr. H.

I followed without giving trouble, but he had



FIRST LESSON OVER TIMBER.

to go slowly, as I was weak and hungry. On reaching his home in town, Mr. H called his groom, Harry, an Englishman. When he appeared, Mr. H said: "Here, Harry, is a three-year-old that I have bought. Put him in the empty box, give him a drink and a light feed of scalded bran and crushed oats and some hay; feed him lightly for a while, as he is not used to much, and heavy feeding at first might make him sick. I am told that he is vicious, so be careful. He has been abused, and I think he will be all right if kindly treated."

"Do you mean to say that you 'ave bought that thing?" said Harry. "What are you going to do with im? 'Ee is nothnink but a pile of bloomin bones."

"I am going to feed and treat him well and make a hunter of him," responded Mr. H. "I will require a good mount to follow the hounds on next fall."

"Follow the 'ounds on 'im!" said Harry. "I tell you 'ee's no good, 'ee can't carry a hempty saddle."

"Never mind, Harry; do as I tell you, and we will see how things will turn out. In the meantime be careful until he gets used to you."

Harry did as directed, and I felt assured that I had got a good home, and made up my mind to act well. The next morning, when Mr. H came to look at me, he discovered that I had vermin, so he had me clipped and applied some peculiar smelling stuff over my body, and this killed them, which was a great relief to me. He also had me docked. Harry put a blanket on me, and Mr. H told him to not show me to anybody until they got some flesh on me, and to turn me out in the back yard every day for exercise. Harry did as directed, and we soon became good friends. One day he said to Mr. H, "I believe you were right about the bloomin Himp, 'ee is beginning to look

SOMETHING LIKE A HORSE.

"Of course I was right," said Mr. H. "He is doing better than I thought. I'll be able to show them all the way next fall. Put the dummy on him for a few hours every day, and as soon as he gets used to the bit and a little restraint, take him out and lunge him regularly."

One day they put a saddle and bridle on, and Mr. H mounted. He weighs 190 lbs. After this he rode me mostly every day, and also taught me to go in harness. He drove a kicking strap on me for a few times, but I did not want to kick. By the time the roads were dry in the spring of my four-year-old form, I was in good flesh and handy in the saddle. I weighed 1,230 pounds, and stood 16 hands. I had regained my normal condition of style, quality, ambition and action. Several wanted to purchase me, but Mr. H said: "He is not for sale. I want him for myself; he is well up to my weight and that kind is hard to get." He commenced to school me over timber, and I performed well from the first. He gradually asked me to go higher, and one day I heard him tell Harry that I was jumping so well he would enter me in some of the classes at the big exhibition to be held in the neighboring city. When the time arrived he put me in a car and sent Harry with me. He came later himself and rode me in the class for heavy-weight green hunter, and the class for performance over hurdles of different heights. I won in each class. Considering himself too heavy to ride me in the class for best leaper, he tried to get a good light-weight rider, but they appeared to be all engaged. Harry was very much excited over it, as he wanted me to win and could not ride himself. Just as the class was called, a young