

MY GRANDMOTHER'S STORY.

THERE lived in Auburn, N. Y., some sixty years ago, a clergyman, an intimate friend of my grandmother. This gentleman owned an exceedingly beautiful, fleet, and graceful sorrel mare, which bore the classic name of Diana. She was the admiration of the town, and the pride of the clergyman's family. But alas! one dark and stormy night the barn was boldly entered, and the beautiful Diana stolen from her stall. All efforts to discover the clever thief, though long and perseveringly continued, were useless. At last the family sorrowfully abandoned hope; another but inferior horse was purchased, to which, by the way, the children would not allow the occupancy of the old stall of their pet, for that, with everything else which had belonged to her, they insisted upon keeping sacred to her memory.

Nearly twenty years had passed, the clergyman's hair had grown white with age, and his children had become young men and women, when he chanced, one autumn, to be called on business to a remote part of the State. Having an easy chaise, he made the trip, as was not uncommon in those days, by private conveyance. He was riding slowly along a winding road, on the third morning of his journey, when his attention was forced from the beauties of the scenery to the strange behavior of an old horse confined in a pasture by the roadside. The creature seemed bent upon attracting the clergyman's notice; it pranced, snorted, and beat the fence with its forefeet, keeping all the time in line with the slowly moving chaise.

Wondering a little as to the cause of such singular conduct, the clergyman drove along to the end of the pasture, and then turned from it down a road which branched off in an opposite direction. As he did so, he was startled by a cry of such human agony from the poor creature in the pasture, that he instantly stopped his horse and looked back. There, at the corner of the fence she stood, her neck thrust despairingly forward, trembling in every muscle of her body, her eyes

fixed upon him with an expression of utter, helpless misery, which strangely moved the tender-hearted clergyman. He now discovered that the head and face of the animal bore a marked resemblance to his lost Diana. Impressed by the likeness, he obeyed a sudden impulse, and drove rapidly back to a farmhouse near the pasture, where he found the farmer just getting up from his twelve o'clock dinner.

"Friend," said the clergyman, "is that your horse in the field yonder?"

"Yes: the mare's mine. I've had her about twenty years."

"Twenty years! May I ask where you got her, friend?"

"I bought her of a peddler, who cheated my wife on a gingham gown, but he didn't cheat me on that horse."

"Diana! as sure as I'm alive!" cried the clergyman, starting excitedly for the pasture, followed by the astonished farmer. He entered the field, and the moment the old mare caught sight of him, she rushed wildly forward, snorting with delight. Old and faded, rough and lame, the clergyman still unmistakably recognized his lost beauty; and oh, the joy of Diana! Tenderly she licked her master's hands and face, lovingly nestled her head upon his shoulder, and at last, with something of her old coquettish ways, took the rim of his hat daintily between her teeth, and lifting it from his head, replaced it hind side before.

"Never saw her do that before!" cried the farmer.

It was a trick which the clergyman himself had taught her, and which she had remembered during their twenty years of separation, to practice once more for her beloved master.

The farmer consented to part with Diana for a small sum, and she was welcomed back to her old home amid general rejoicing. There she lived, tenderly cared for, for several years, and there she died a painless death, expending her last breath in a vain attempt to lick her master's hand.—*Our Dumb Animals.*

The merciful man regardeth the life of his beast.