

to shore. The ponies are now again out-witted, and the quandary in which they find themselves caught for the thirtieth time in their day and generation is evinced by their restless and anxious movements. The ocean foams on either side; their pursuers are behind; while before them, though now far distant, lies the inevitable pound into which they are to be driven. As the hunters slowly advance the jealous stallion collects his outlying mares and foals, and gathers his herd together, and then keeping them well in pack, boldly confronts the enemy, while they retreat at a gallop. Up and down the line he marches, backs and fills, luffs and cruises to windward, like a gallant frigate, but finding himself closely pressed, fires off a snort of defiance and follows after his convoy. Gradually the several herds are driven together and mingled with each other; and then, with a yell of exulting triumph, the hunters dash after them at the top of their speed—the wild stallions, now thoroughly alarmed, mixing with the rest of the herd, and all scurrying away in promiscuous and wild career. Now follows a headlong chase and desperate riding over hill and dale, through tangling grass and sandy plains, accompanied by many a fall and ridiculous antic. Here one wild poney, detached from the herd, charges straight over the crest of a cone—leaping, with a plunge of full twenty feet, sheer over the back of his pursuer, who has coursed around its base to head him off, and then rolling over and over in the sand until he recovers his feet again. Anon some rider spurs gallantly up the gentle slope of a sand-hill, whose bold precipitous face is hidden from sight, and reaches the top to lapse suddenly from view amidst an avalanche of sand, which half buries himself and horse at the foot. This brings a shout and a jeer from the whole cavalcade, which is presently followed by some other mishap; and thus, with many a roll and plunge and fall, the terrified ponies are driven far up to the north end, where, amidst yelling and shouting and waving of caps and handkerchiefs, they rush headlong into the yawning chasm of the large corral which is waiting to receive them.

Then follows "confusion worse confounded"—a snorting kicking, plunging—a curious mixing up of heads and tails, a rushing and huddling of terrified masses together, a crushing of half-smothered colts, and a general desparate struggle to break through the bounds. This commotion is measurably increased by the efforts which are now made to lasso some victim from among the struggling mass. The process is as laughable as it is novel. A noose is made at one end of a long rope, the other end being secured outside of the pound. This noose is then carried upon the end of a long pole by an active fellow, who warily approaches the animal selected, and by a dextrous movement slips it over his head. Instantly this feat is accomplished he drops the pole and runs, while several men outside pull lustily until the tightening rope chokes pony into good behavior, and the creature is then drawn or led out of the inclosure, and from thence is pulled and pushed by main force down to the water's edge. Here two men seize the ends of a long rope, and, running in opposite directions, wind it around pony's legs, and drawing it tightly bring him submissively to his feet. His legs are then firmly tied, and half a dozen men lift him bodily into the boat. This process is repeated upon each successive victim until the desired number is secured. The balance of the impounded herd are then let loose from the inclosure, whence they scamper away, and speedily find their way back to their old feeding-grounds.

The boat carries three or four ponies at a time to the schooner, where a waist-band and tackle hoists them into the hold. Their legs are then untied, and they are properly secured for the prospective voyage. At first they are disposed to be fractious, and make the first night hideous by their furious kicking, altogether banishing sleep. Sometimes they seem to take a malicious revenge by fastening their teeth into the trowsers of their groom as he is descending backward into the hold to feed them, and snap at his head and hands when he distributes their provender; but the sea voyage soon quenches their fire, and by the time they are landed at Halifax they have become well-behaved brutes,

gentle as lambs, and the most vicious can be fondled with impunity.

It is not positively known when the present breed of horses was introduced upon Sable Island, though it is generally believed that they sprang from certain stock known to have been placed there by an American named La Mercier, about the year 1735. Some, however, think their origin of much earlier date. Dr. J. Bernard Gilpin, of Halifax, Nova Scotia—a naturalist of note, who has contributed many valuable papers and specimens to the Smithsonian Institute and the Natural History Societies of the Provinces—in a carefully-prepared paper describes them as a race of large-headed, low-withered ponies, with tail set very low into a very short quarter; a cock-thrappled neck, and a short, square ear; from twelve to thirteen hands high; mane and tail reaching nearly to the ground, and covering the nostrils; the coat long and shaggy during winter, especially under the chin and on the legs. He mentions an instance where the mane measured *three yards*. In form they resemble the tarpany and wild horse of Tartary, and are almost the counterpart of the horses depicted on the Elgin marbles and Nineveh sculptures. Their type is also found in the fecal breed of the Ukraine. As regards color, there seems a remarkable tendency to assume the Isabella, the light chestnut, and even the piebald, known from earliest ages. The bays and browns are the most numerous; of blacks there are a few, and of grays none. The bluish mouse color is also frequent. They persistently refuse the shelter of a stable in all kinds of weather, and always avoid the society of man. They are never observed to lie down to rest, but seem to sleep standing. Fights are frequent between the stallions of the several gangs, in which they are often nearly disabled. The young horses between two and three years old are driven from the herd by the leader, and hung in small bands upon the outskirts; and when an old or disabled mare, unable to keep up, drops behind, as sometimes happens, she at once becomes an object of greatest attraction to them, soon produces foals, and thus the nucleus of a new herd is formed.

From these observations it is plain that the horse, if left to himself for a long period of years, following the laws of natural selection, will return to the habits and appearance of the old primal stock, and the necessary inference is, that the numerous known varieties of the horse do not belong to distinct and different species, but have all one common descent from one common stock.

Should any reader wish to farther investigate this interesting page of Natural History, should he desire to roam the broad field of Romance, or more startling Fact; to read aright the lesson of Humanity; to moralize upon the instability and uncertainty of earthly things, or tremble at the majesty of the elements in anger, let him venture a trip to Sable Island. It is one of the strange places of creation. And when his visit is ended, and he turns a last look at its receding shores, he may perchance obtain, at a single glance, a comprehensive picture of the whole—a human skull bleaching on the sand, a wild horse snuffing the salt-sea breeze, and an ancient wreck surf-worn and barnacled. The single glance embodies volumes.—*Harpur's Magazine*.

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## SCIENCE.

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### Observations of the Changes of Colour and Modes of taking food in the Chameleon.

BY JONATHAN COUCH, F. L. S.,

The chameleon has ever been an object of curiosity, and in the times of great ignorance of natural history, it was a special subject of wonder, as well as of much fable, in consequence of its frequent and unaccountable changes of colour, and its supposed faculty of living without food; its only diet being the air, of which it drew within itself a large abundance, and from which it was believed to acquire a considerable increase of size. But its habits in these respects were differently represented, even by those who appeared to