

**THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER, OR,
SKETCHES AND ANECDOTES OF
THE NOBLE QUADRUPED AND
OF EQUESTRIAN NATIONS**

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The Horse and His Rider, or, Sketches and Anecdotes of the Noble Quadruped and of
Equestrian Nations by Rollo Springfield

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ROLLO SPRINGFIELD

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BY ROLLO SPRINGFIELD.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

DOMESTICATION OF THE HORSE—HORSE FURNITURE—VARIOUS BREEDS—BLOOD HORSES—PONIES	Page 1
---	-----------

CHAPTER II.

PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE HORSE—SAGACITY—FIDELITY—SOCIALITY, &C.—ANECDOTES—INSANITY	22
--	----

CHAPTER III.

VICES, AND DISAGREEABLE OR DANGEROUS HABITS	47
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

SPEED AND ENDURANCE—CARNIVOROUS HORSES—HORSE-FLESH AS FOOD—HORSEBATTING.	63
--	----

CHAPTER V.

PRIMITIVE STATE OF WILD HORSES—THE STEPPES	81
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

THE CENTAUR—THE MONGOLS AND CALMUCKS—A RUSSIAN TARBOON	94
--	----

	Page
CHAPTER VII.	
THE COSACKS—THE CIRCASSIANS—THE MAMELUKES	124
CHAPTER VIII.	
BELA—A STORY OF THE CAUCASUS	142
CHAPTER IX.	
RUNJEET SINGH'S FAMOUS HORSE LYLEE—ANECDOTES— PERSIAN HORSES	169
CHAPTER X.	
ARABIAN HORSES	183
CHAPTER XI.	
FERAL HORSES OF AMERICA—INDIANS AND GAUCHOS	193

THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER.

CHAPTER I.

Domestication of the Horse.—Horse Furniture.—Various Breeds.
—Blood Horses.—Ponies.

THE reduction of the horse to the domestic state, as Buffon justly observes, is the greatest acquisition from the animal world ever made by the art and industry of man. Every one knows and admires the graceful symmetry, the speed, vigor, docility, and endurance of that noble creature; but few, perhaps, have reflected on the important part he has played in the history of our race; few are aware how much we owe it to him, that we at this day are not as rude and wretched as our barbarian forefathers, but live surrounded by those countless blessings which are the birthright of every child born in a civilized land. We fear that there has been little gratitude or humanity evinced in our general treatment of the horse;

and now that we rush along like the wind on the wings of steam, we are perhaps in danger of still more undervaluing his worth. But had we never known his aid, how different far would have been the fortunes of mankind! how hardly would it have fulfilled its destiny, to "multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth!" Unaided by the strength and swiftness of this generous servant, men would but partially and slowly have emerged from barbarism; at the most they would have congregated into tribes and petty states, covering only so much ground as might be traversed in a day's march or two on foot; and these would have been perpetually engaged in war and rapine: but peace, order, plenty, knowledge, and national power, could never have been established or have made progress, so long as men, divided by wide tracts of country, had no means of rapidly communicating with each other, and of uniting together for their mutual welfare.

Neither sacred nor profane history informs us in what country the horse was first domesticated, or whether he was first used for draught or riding. It is probable that the animal was employed for both purposes in very early times, and in various parts of the world; but though many of the ancients possessed great mastery over their horses, and performed with

them admirable feats of skill and agility, it is nevertheless surprising by what slow steps the arts and inventions, connected with horsemanship, have reached their present degree of perfection. The polished Greeks, as well as the ruder nations of northern Africa, for a long while rode without either saddle or bridle, guiding their horses with the voice or the hand, or with a light switch. They touched the animal on the right or left of the face to make him turn in the opposite direction; they stopped him by touching his muzzle, and urged him forward with the heel. The horses must have been excellently trained, to be governed by such slight means, in the violence of their course, or in the tumult of battle; but the attention, docility, and memory of this animal are such, that it is hard to say to what a degree of obedience he may not be brought.

Bridles and bits were at length introduced; but many centuries elapsed before anything that can properly be called a saddle was used. Instead of these, cloths, single or padded, and skins of wild beasts, often richly adorned, were placed beneath the rider, but always without stirrups. It is a very extraordinary fact that even the Romans, in the times when luxury was carried to the utmost excess amongst them, never devised so simple an expedient for assisting the horseman to mount, lessening his fatigue, and securing his seat, although painful diseases were not unfrequently