

THE WHITE CHARGER

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The white charger by Richard Hort

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RICHARD HORT

**THE
WHITE CHARGER**

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THAT COST ME TWO HUNDRED POUNDS;
LOST ME SEVENTY THOUSAND POUNDS;
DROVE ME FROM SOCIETY;
EVENTUALLY DEPRIVED ME OF MY FRIENDS;
AND FINALLY COMPELLED ME TO QUIT THE SERVICE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE HORSE GUARDS,"
"THE DAYS WHEN WE HAD TAILS ON US," &c.

"Opportunities make us known to ourselves and others."
ROCKEFUCAULT.

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J. & D. A. DARLING, 126, BISHOPSGATE STREET.

MDCCCL.

THE WHITE CHARGER.

"MISFORTUNES never come singly, as the old saying truly has it," I exclaimed, in no very good temper, to a brother officer, one morning, after parade at Hounslow; "I lost both my watch and cloak at the opera, last night, and now, my first charger has got the glanders, so, of course, he'll go likewise."

"That *is* a bore," replied my compassionating auditor. "But are you *sure* it's the glanders?"

"No mistake about that," answered I; "the veterinary surgeon has so decided. Yet there was small occasion for his corroboration of a fact which an instant's observation might substantiate."

"I am heartily sorry for it," answered my condoling friend, "for if I recollect right, you gave a long price for him;" and, somewhat fearful that *his* stud might suffer also, my companion immediately departed, to issue strict injunctions for the prevention of any intercourse being carried on between the quadrupeds occupying our different stables.

The loss of the horse was, to me, most annoying; not so much on account of the pecuniary deprivation, but more by reason of the great difficulty I anticipated—as generally is the case with all similarly situated—in providing myself with an equally docile and showy charger; for, be it known to those not initiated into the secret, that a well-trained horse is next to invaluable on parade; and, indeed, I have known in infantry regiments instances where a *Bucephalus* of accredited strength of nerve in standing fire has been handed down, not from generation to generation, but from field-officer to field-officer, until I question if the brute did not understand fully as much of the complicated manœuvres, as did the biped, who bestrode him for the purpose of directing the movements.

Well, there was no help for it; the charger was dead and gone, and another was to be procured forthwith—but from where? Of the four horses remaining in my stables, there was not one sufficiently handsome for escort duty or review. It was therefore evident I must look elsewhere for that most necessary adjunct to a cavalry officer's appearance on parade, and accordingly I ordered my cab, and drove instanter to Bartlett's.

At the moment of my entering the yard, a splendid looking animal was led out for the inspection of a gentleman who had remarked him when walking round the stables; and assuredly when I beheld the horse, he appeared at the first glance to be the very

personification of a charger, and exactly the thing I wanted. Little did I then anticipate how bitterly I should rue my acquaintance with the brute in after years; but who can foretell his destiny? Better would it have been for me had I ridden at the coming review on a jackass, than have bought that magnificent looking quadruped to work my ruin, which consummation was speedily effected through the agency of the beast I then gazed at.

The horse under criticism was apparently perfect in all his points, milk-white, without spot or blemish, and in possession of that *sine qua non* in the opinion of all fair equestrians, a long flowing mane and tail.

"On my word, sir, the 'os is dirt cheap at £200," exclaimed the dealer, while the helper trotted him up the yard; "Sir Lubin Leathers would have given £300 last week for such a hanimal."

"Then, why didn't you let the baronet have him?" I asked.

"Oh, there's more reasons than one for that, sir," replied the owner, with a significant chuckle. "But trot him up again, Jem," he exclaimed, addressing the groom—"Give him his head;" and in accordance with his master's instructions, off went the milk-white steed up the tan-strewed yard, snorting, kicking, and plunging—and indisputably he was a beautiful creature.

"There's haction, gentlemen," cried Bartlett; "see how his head's put on. He's well worth £300,

any day. Beautiful!" he continued, by way of soliloquy. "Now, sir!" he again exclaimed, exalting his voice as the rider pulled up, suddenly bringing him well on his haunches; "pass your hand down his fore legs, sir, clean as a lady's new kid glove—warranted sound in all his paces—five year old—never done a day's work—free from vice, spavine, wind-gall; can't meet his match, never! The very thing for you, sir," added Bartlett, turning to me.

"What's the figure?" I replied.

"The least I *could* take, sir, is £200; he cost me more than that, upon my honour."

"Oh, of *course*," I observed; "all your horses, somehow or other, do cost you more than you sell them for, Bartlett. But never mind that; come in doors and see if we can make a deal."

I was accordingly ushered into the small room off the stables, an apartment well known possibly to many of my readers, there to listen to a further diatribe delivered by the dealer in praise of the qualifications of his property, which being ended, and after sundry additional trials of the quadruped in the yard, together with "more last words," touching the steed, I wrote a cheque for £200, which the jockey sent to the city, while I, claiming the horse, sent *him* to the barracks.

Nothing could more fully have answered my expectations than the progress my new purchase made in his military education, and I had every reason to be pleased with my bargain.