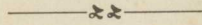




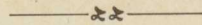
“ RAGGIE,”



the War Horse.



An Autobiography.



FOREWORD.

"Raggie," whose friendship I have enjoyed for over 17 years, has invoked my aid in recording the story of his life. The literary style may be indifferent; but it should be remembered that those who joined the Army 25 years ago were better thought of if they could fill in Army forms correctly (and generally in quadruplicate) than if they cultivated the facile pen or the persuasive tongue. That is why Soldiers have always had ten to one the worst of it in contests with Politicians and others whose trade is in dialectics and whose battlefield is the platform.

The object of this venture is to assist certain funds. Should it meet with success there may be a second edition, rather fuller and with many illustrations.

MIDDLETON.

June 1st, 1931.

Birdsall, Yorks.

"RAGGIE," the War Horse.

An Autobiography.

CHAPTER 1.

Great things happened in the year 1910. King George V. came to the Throne, and—I was born.

As one grows older memory for recent events becomes cloudy, but all the events of one's youth and prime stand out fresh and clear as the Birdsall beeches in early summer after rain. My first experience of life was on a farm in the Punjab of India, where I ran with my mother through one glorious summer. My mother's name was "Gladrags," and she was very beautiful. She told me that her mother had the best Indian blood in her veins and that her father was an English thoroughbred horse named "Caught-up."

My father was "Geneva," an Arab, and from him I inherit my fine silky coat, thin tail—carried as only Arabs know how—and ability to keep health and condition even when food is poor and scanty.

We lived in a large paddock with a bunch of mares and foals. Many of the latter were my half brothers and sisters. What fun we had galloping round together in the early mornings and evenings.

My mother taught me early to keep clear of the mares. Bad tempered as some horses may be they are never as dangerous and uncertain as mares, who kick with lightning rapidity and use their teeth when least expected.

It was a desperately hot summer, but we did not seem to mind it. There was ample shade, and we lazed and dosed in the heat of the day and chivied one another about in the hours of coolness. By June the country was dry and burnt up and there was not much grass in our paddock. However, the Indian soldiers who looked after us used to bring green fodder from the irrigated land and we never suffered like the villager's wretched bullocks that we saw dragging heavy carts along the roads, poor gaunt skeletons with hollow flanks and seemingly far too weak to pull anything. I was sorry for them. At the end of June we had dust storms, which filled the

air with burning choking dust that made us cough. These storms were followed by rain showers and blessed coolness. Later the rains broke in earnest and the whole country became green and cheerful. The damp heat was not without its discomforts, but on the whole it was a welcome change.

In the late autumn, when flights of cranes, barking of little grey foxes, and smoke from dwellings ascending skywards in straight columns heralded the coming of the cold weather I was separated from my beloved mother. With other foals I was herded into a yard and kept there for three or four days. No other experience in my life has given me a quarter of the misery and unhappiness that I felt at that time. We trotted and galloped round and round that yard neighing and calling for our mothers. In the distance we could hear them answering us. Gradually we settled down. We broke up in groups of twos and threes. My particular friends were half-brothers—a chestnut and a bay. I was nearly black in those days, but as time went on I changed colour and developed the right kind of flea-bitten grey, denoting descent from a high caste Arab. The dapply sort generally comes from inferior stock. Thick bushy tails, too, betray a humble origin.

Our lives while we ran loose at the farm were uneventful, but a painful accident remains imprinted deeply in my memory. One day when we were yearlings we were galloping madly round our paddock chasing one another. A colt was biting at my quarters, and, not looking where I was going, I caught my foot in a tree stump and fell with a crash. My pastern was badly cut, and when I got up I could only hobble with difficulty. Luckily the Indian Officer who was in charge of the farm was near by and he took me into a stable and dressed the wound. For some weeks I was tied up in the stable, but after a time the pain wore off and the wound healed and I recovered.

That was the only time in my life that I have experienced lameness, and it taught me a lesson never to be forgotten—to watch my step when galloping over bad ground, whatever distractions there might be. The lesson stood me in good stead in after years. The scar never disappeared: of that more anon.

CHAPTER 2.

Every now and then a white man used to come to the farm and look round us all. He always paid particular attention to me, and I learnt that my mother belonged to him. She had been his favourite polo pony, and when her polo days were done he had sent her to join the brood mares at the regimental farm.

When I was three years old my education was begun: first I was driven with long reins and learnt to obey the signs and words of command—to walk, trot, turn, and stop, rein back and sidle, and then to jump over small obstacles. I rather enjoyed it all. I was groomed twice a day and had more corn than previously. The days of idleness were over, but I had nothing to complain of. The Indian soldier who looked after me was a kindly old man. He had been my owner's orderly for years and understood the handling and treatment of young horses. After a time they saddled me, and later a man climbed up on to my back. It felt very strange at first, but men had never given me any reason to distrust them and I made no fuss.

When the cold weather came in 1913 I had my first of many journeys. Several of us youngsters were taken off to a railway station and led into a small stable on wheels. It was rather alarming, and two of the other colts started kicking and plunging about. I told them that they would not do themselves or any one else any good, and they quieted down. Soon a big noisy horror bumped into us and our stable moved about—first one way, then another. Awful! And one could not help feeling terrified. Smoke, steam, noise, jerks, bumps: one after another, and sometimes all at once. Luckily one of the men was with us and he talked to us and didn't seem in any way frightened himself. It helped. It was a long journey—all the way from the Punjab to Jhansi, which is towards the middle of India. At long last we arrived and left the travelling stable. I made the acquaintance of my servant, a good old Hindoo Syce named Sutru, who did for me for the next few months.

CHAPTER 3

What a different place Jhansi was from anything I had ever seen. It was quite a big garrison consisting of my owner's Indian Cavalry regiment, some Artillery, and Infantry regiments. Our stables were behind my master's bungalow. There were seven of us and each had a small loose box. In the day-time we were picketed out under trees. The only stable companion I need mention was a very good-looking bay mare, a charger. She, too, had been bred and reared in the Punjab. She was called Galopia, after her father Galopian, a son of Galopin who won the Derby in 1875. What a high quality mare she was, but hot tempered and hasty. Her box was next to mine, and we often went out exercising together. We were good friends always.

My master rode me most days, sometimes on parade with his squadron and frequently in the riding school and on the polo ground. I soon became handy enough to play in the slow games of polo for young ponies and took to the game like a boy takes to cigarettes.

Early in 1914 came another change. Galopia and I were put in a stable on wheels and sent on a long railway journey. Sutru looked after us all the way to Baluchistan. We saw the last of him at Harnai station, and a young orderly took charge of us for the march to Loralai where my new master's regiment was stationed. We went with a convoy of mule-carts escorted by Infantry soldiers, and we were ridden in turns by the orderly. It was a three days march along a road winding through rocky mountainous country. We were stabled at nights and glad enough of thick blankets, for it was bitterly cold.

At length we arrived and made the acquaintance of our new master. The orderlies called him "Billy boy," but of course "Willoughby" was rather a mouthful for them.

Our stable mates were two English polo ponies and an old Australian charger. The ponies said that they had been hunted in the Sinnington country. That did not convey much to me then. One of them turned out a top class polo pony; the other pulled like

a fiend, so became a harness pony, no better than a mule or bullock. What a fate! I have done most things in my career, but thank goodness I have never had to trot about with a box on wheels hitched behind me.

The charger was Alphonse, a big bay horse, ugly as sin, with lop ears, flat sides, calf knees, and all sorts of bumps and blemishes. He made awful faces when anyone came near him, but closer acquaintance taught one that he was the most generous, good tempered old horse that ever chewed oats. He had been in the Artillery once, had won many prizes for jumping in the show ring, and was a well-known pig sticker. A former owner had done well on him in the great pig sticking event—the Kadir Cup. That same owner had once speared a bull nilgai off him, a feat that has seldom been accomplished. When the old chap told me about this I little thought that one day my chance would come of achieving the same distinction.

CHAPTER 4.

Loralai was not a bad spot. We were 4,500 ft. up and the air was clear and bracing. The lucerne and corn were good and my new servant "Mohomed Alum" was a gem and did me proud.

Soon after my arrival my Master had to go away for two months and left his orderly to school us. One day, we three ponies were brought out to stand on a level concreted place to be measured for registration as polo ponies. The other two passed easily enough for 14 hands and 1 inch, but I had grown well and was nearly two inches over the mark. However, the measurer was apparently not over strict and I passed. Lucky indeed for master, as without a certificate I would not have been allowed to carry him in polo tournaments.

Same day I was named. It seems that Master had forgotten to leave instructions, so a friend of his entered me as "Ragtime" which was made up of my parents' names: "Rag" from "Gladrags" and "Time" from Geneva, where they make watches. It was rather a silly name but it has never done me any harm.

When master returned he found that I was sufficiently advanced to play fast polo. What a joy! that wild race after the ball, bumping other ponies off it. Halt, about and after it again. One got knocks now and then with stick or ball, but it was all in hot blood and these little drawbacks never destroyed my keenness. Some ponies hated it and shied off the ball and did all sorts of things to avoid the chance of a blow. One generally noticed that such ponies were soft hearted in all their work. Troop horses and pig stickers are the same. Some will stand up to anything and are bold and generous; others cut it on all occasions. They tell me that men vary in the same way.

CHAPTER 5.

One afternoon in August 1914, some important news came and everyone became very excited. War! What was it? and what did it mean? Only one horse in the regiment had ever seen it—an old Australian charger who had carried his Master through the 1897 campaign on the N.W. Frontier of India. "Rotten job," he said, "men and horses get hurt and there is often enough the very hardest work and little or no food." It didn't seem much to get so excited about. Well—my Master went off before long to join another regiment and took Alphonse and Galopia with him. I was left behind in charge of one of his friends and played polo. The war was far enough from Loralai. The only change we saw was that drafts of men and horses went off at intervals, and crowds of new officers and men and young horses came to be trained.

It was not long before my turn came, and off I went down the road to the station with a new syce to look after me. I was going to join my Master in Mesopotamia. After a twenty-four hours rail journey I was in Karachi and there I was led up a sloping gangway into a huge stable on the water. I was put into a little stall between two bad-tempered mares who snapped at me at intervals. We had no exercise and were glad enough to get to the end of this travelling business. We went ashore at Busra, and my syce and I were sent to a depot in a date palm grove for a week. I need not say much about the journey up the River Tigris. Part was in a small stable on the river; close quarters and hot as a furnace. Then a long halt at another depot followed by a deadly slow march with a column of infantry and carts. Now and then at night shots rang out and someone took a hurt. Sometimes Arabs got into the camp and stole horses or rifles. One of them tried to lead me out one night, but a sentry spotted him and damaged him with his bayonet and caught him.

These night alarms affected my syce's nerves, and it seems that he deserted. Anyway a new man took his place and he looked after me until in due course the column reached a big camp where my

Master welcomed me. He seemed very thin and light. I was truly delighted to meet my old friends Alphonse and Galopia again looking fit and well.

What a lot they had to tell me ; the fighting they had seen, the heat and thirst and long marches with little food. Alphonse had been hit by bullets twice in one day, and a pony that my Master had bought received two wounds on the same occasion. Both had recovered, but not long afterwards the pony sprained a fetlock on a long march and had to have a "mercy bullet" as he could not keep up. Poor Chap !



CHAPTER 6.

I won't attempt to describe all the fighting that took place after my arrival, the night raids on our camps by Arabs, the bombing by aeroplanes, and other adventures. We were lucky in having two really first rate syces to look after us—Shah Nawaz and Mahomed Alum. If food was short they stole other peoples' rations for us. If it was cold or wet they purloined blankets and waterproof sheets for us (and for themselves). We were always fit and well, and we had a full share of luck in avoiding shells and bullets.

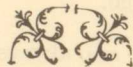
Now and then, when there was a lull in the fighting business, Master used to take us out hunting wild boars, great big ugly brutes, fierce and savage as they make them. Only two varieties of animals will stand up to their charge—men and horses, and they have to be good hearted specimens. The Master was pretty useful with his spear, and experienced in the art of hog hunting, and we never came to any harm. Once or twice I saw inexperienced men let boar get right into their horses' legs, knock them over and slash them with their sharp tusks. Sometimes where there were no wild boar, we had hunts after jackals. These were hard, gruelling runs. Not only did jack seem to go further than boars, but they turned with amazing quickness, and one had to be pretty nippy to enable Master to spear effectively. The polo training stood me in good stead. One day two great fat wolves got up out of a patch of tall grass just in front of Master. We both longed to try to hunt them down. It has seldom been done ; but we were in the midst of "bullet times," fighting the Turks, and we had to let them go.

I believe that men folk are always arguing about the cruelty of hunting wild animals. My views may not be worth much but here they are :—There is a certain amount of cruelty in all sport : the good sportsman reduces it to a minimum and he does not take any delight in it, as his traducers say. Put yourself in the place of a fox. If hunting were abolished all foxes would be exterminated ruthlessly by shooting, traps, and poison. I would rather take my chance of being hunted, when one realises that the odds are about

ten to one on the fox, than have no chance at all if there were no preservation for hunting.

The Anti-everything people may serve a useful purpose. There are black sheep in every fold and they are less likely to perpetrate needless cruelty when their actions are subject to criticism than they otherwise might.

I have seen a good deal of sport in many parts of the world. I can say this; that I would rather be a wild boar, fox, or hare any day, running a fair chance of being hunted by sportsmen, than have the existence of a bullock or sheep, which has no liberty, is stuffed for the butcher and inevitably slaughtered without a chance of escape. I don't hope to convince anyone that I am right, but as I am about it I give my views, right or wrong.



CHAPTER 7.

In late summer, 1916, the Master, accompanied by his faithful old Indian servant and Alphonse, Galopia and yours humbly with our two syces went on board a river stable, and went on a journey down the Tigris, which lasted several days. We were taken off at last, and after a day's rest we had to go on to a very small stable-on-the-water which had a big blanket to catch the wind. Master and his servants were parted from us then. We had a job to get into this stable. There was no gangway, and we had actually to jump off the river bank on to the stable floor about ten feet below us. Luckily we were well accustomed to strange adventures, and did what was asked of us. They made a heap of sacks and blankets on the bottom of the stable, and Alphonse jumped first. He landed on his head and chest, but didn't do himself any harm. I went next, and fetched up beside him in a heap. Galopia jumped right on to our backs, clumsy idiot! We sorted ourselves out and there we stayed, exposed to the sun and with no breeze to cool us, for a week, jammed up tight against one another, unable to move. It was a good job that we were all friends. Kicking games would have meant big hurts.

After a slow journey up the Euphrates we were at last pulled out of that nasty stable and went off to a new Cavalry regiment. Master was expected, but he never came, as he had been ordered elsewhere, and later we heard that he had been sent to India for a time.

After a month or so the syces took us off to a big horse depôt and some officers looked us over. It seems that we were sold to the Government. They had Galopia out first. She pleased them, and she told me they gave top price (900 rupees) for Indian-bred chargers. Then they felt my legs and trotted me up and down. I stuck my tail out in true Arab style, and gave them little enough cause to suspect war-weariness in my case. Top price for me, too—700 rupees, the most they gave for ponies.

Then came the turn of poor old Alphonse. Poor old chap, he never was a beauty, and though he had bumpy, knobby legs, he could stand all the work that the hardest active service involved. To start with, they angered him by entering him as being 15 hands 1 inch

high, whereas he stood 16 hands without his shoes. He made awful faces at them! They put him down as an old troop horse worth 100 rupees. Great suffering snakes! how he raged. "Troop horse, indeed! When he had emerged from that sort of thing years ago; run successfully in point-to-point races, won jumping competitions, carried Master for eight months without a fall through the Cavalry School at Saugor, caught pig and a bull nilgai, and all the rest of it; and in this war business hadn't he carried a squadron Commander for months and had two wounds under him!" So he fulminated. Well, we were parted, and I never saw either of my good friends again. I heard that Galopia went to carry a Cavalry officer. She came out of the war unscathed and later was raced. She was hot enough in all conscience without that, and racing must have made her quite useless for any other work. She was not the sort to stand it, being far too highly strung.

My Master, I heard, indignantly declined to accept the price for Alphonse, and gave him to a police officer at the Base on condition that he gave him a "mercy bullet" if he were sent up the line without him. His new boss rode him as long as he remained in Busra, and then fulfilled the condition. Alphonse was then 17 years old and had seen much hard work. Ugly and cynical, he pulled pretty hard and cannot have been a comfortable ride—with his awkward gait: but there never was a bolder nor more generous horse nor a better doer. On night marches master used to tie his bridoon rein round his own ankle, and Alphonse kept men and horses from stumbling over him while he slept. On day halts Master used to take off all his saddlery and turn him loose. He foraged for himself or lay down and rested and never strayed more than a couple of hundred yards away. And what a swimmer he was! It was his example that gave me such confidence. He would jump right out into a river off a high bank, and swim with tremendous vigour and pace, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Master used to ride him into the water and then slip off his back and lie alongside him with an arm over his withers and steer him. Once his head was in the right direction, Master used to drop back and be towed along by his tail. He was the best horse friend I ever had, and I grieved when we were parted.

CHAPTER 8.

After a short spell at the depot I was sent with a big bunch of horses to a cavalry regiment that had just landed in the country. Lo and behold! It was Master's regiment from Loralai! He was not with it, but they recognised me at once, and I went as second charger to a nice light-weight Subaltern. I got on well with him. For some months we had an easy time of it, and then came days and nights of long marches and bullet times. I remember one day that was especially "bulley," and there were big bangs and much mess-up. Many horses and men were damaged. My new Master rode me into very bad places where the dust was kicked up all round us and the air whizzed and zipped. He seems to have made the war go right by doing all this, and we went further up the river and the Turks fled many miles before us. Master wore a purple and white ribbon on his chest henceforth: these things seem to be given to those who made wins, same as shiny cups go to polo players who defeat their opponents.

After a good many months my new master went away, and I was sent to a depot again. Soon I was chosen by a heavy master with a red browband—a staff officer. He was a decent sort—all except his weight. He ought to have had less corn. He rode me until a day of much shouting and waving when it seemed that bullet days were over. Everyone seemed pleased and happy and talked of going home.

Then came polo again, and lots of it. Two or three afternoons a week I carried my heavy master on the hard polo grounds of Baghdad. One day there was big polo; flags and bands and lots of people looking on. While we were having martingales adjusted and finishing touches before the first match some of the opposing players came and looked round us with our masters. I was thrilled when I saw that one of them was my Loralai Master, Willoughby. He recognised me at once and came and made a fuss of me. Dash my tail: it did give me a queer feeling!

Well—they started much talk and argument about me, and Willoughby said he insisted on his right to buy me back. Heavy-weight said there were thousands of grey ponies in the Army and how on earth could he identify one of them? Fortunately the big remount officer, boss of all army horses, was one of our polo team and they turned to him to settle the argument. He asked Willoughby Master if I had any distinctive mark anywhere. Naturally he told him of the big scar on my near fore pastern. They examined me and of course it was there just as he described it. So my accident of yearling days did me a good turn after all these years.



CHAPTER 9.

My old Master bought me back and I became his property again. He took me from Baghdad after the polo to a place where the 10th Lancers were quartered up the River Euphrates. My stable companions were his two chargers, "Viv" a big bay thoroughbred charger and "Cherry Blossom," a black mare, both Australians; there was also a little white tubby sort of pony mare.

Life was fairly uneventful. There was polo on three afternoons a week, and now and then Master rode me into the desert when he went to shoot sandgrouse, quail or bustard. Then there was racing. "Cherry Blossom" won a race at a place on the Euphrates, and then she and "Viv" were both put into training for big races in Baghdad. An Arab dealer brought two young Arab ponies for Master to train. They were beautiful little chaps only about 13½ hands high, but so green and unfit when they came that master had not much chance with them and only one of them managed to run into a place. "Viv" was second in his race, and "Cherry Blossom" won hers easily. There were thirty starters and she led all the way. Master won many rupees and was very pleased.

About Christmas time 1918 our Squadron marched about 150 miles up the Euphrates. Some trouble was brewing with Arab folk. However things quieted down for a bit and we marched back by degrees to the regiment, which was established in comfortable quarters for the summer. The horse lines were in shady date palm groves and supplies were good. At the end of 1919 Master, who had become very light and thin, went off on leave and the Colonel took me into his stable.

CHAPTER 10.

It was not long before "bullet times" started again. It was the Arab rebellion and our regiment was in the thick of it. We had worse days than any we had known in the Big war times—terrible marches in the hottest weather, very little food and much fighting. Four or five Officers and a large number of men were killed and many were wounded. "Viv" and "Cherry Blossom" both died of exhaustion, and horse casualties were truly dreadful. I ran up very light but kept going and carried the Colonel to the end.

For many months this big trouble lasted.

At last peace days came. A good many of our people, including the Colonel, had new ribbons for doing the things that eventually brought peace and "close-time" for bullets.

At the end of October, 1920, the regiment went to the Base and entered a big iron sea-stable. Nearly all the horses were left behind, but I went with the regiment. After a few days on the sea we came to India again and travelled by stables-on-wheels to Multan for peace days.



CHAPTER 11.

Multan is the dustiest spot on earth and is the subject of a well-known Persian verse in regard to this defect and its notoriety for heat, beggars, and graves.

After a good rest I quickly recovered my condition. Polo became the order of the day as far as I was concerned, and I usually carried a young Sikh Officer—a fine horseman. We played many tournaments, including the Indian-Cavalry and Inter-regimental.

I enjoyed it all.

Early in 1921 Master came back and I went to his stable. He bought five young ponies, all bred in the Punjab. We did not stay long in Multan, but had a long journey by rail to Muzaffarpur in Behar, where Master was Adjutant of a regiment of white men who seemed to be scattered all over a big country. We went in turns with him for parade work and we played polo on a bumpy ground once a week.

One day on parade the white soldiers, who only seemed to be soldiers in the early mornings, did a lot of galloping and made their horses very hot. Master lectured them and told them they ought not to gallop their horses tails off or they would never last long in "bullet days." No sooner had he finished than a hare got up close to where we were collected. He jumped on to my back and, followed by the soldiers, we had a terrific cross-country gallop after the hare. It was open country but rough going. A wild hunt: all the men cheering and shouting. At last the hare dashed under a bush and Master ran it through with his sword! How they laughed at him for starting this hunt after his lecture about excessive galloping.

After the summer Master went off for a few days and brought back his lady and a small Master who went about in a white box on wheels. The orderlies seemed very excited about him and used to carry him round to the stables to see us.

A little before Xmas we all went off to Patna for ten days. Master had something to do with a big camp there. When the big day came there was a procession and bands and much cheering and

we escorted a carriage drawn by six horses. It was the Prince of Wales' visit to Behar on his Indian tour. He played polo in the afternoon and his team beat our soldiers.

In the following spring we did some pig sticking. It was rough and tumble work, galloping fast over broken country, but we caught a few pig. On one occasion Master rode me after a big old boar in thick tamarisk scrub. The grass and bushes hid him from us and we could only see the dust as he sped along in front. After a chase of a mile or so we closed up to the dust cloud and found that the boar had apparently squatted and we were on the heels of a small herd of nilgai (blue bull). It is usually futile for a horseman to hope to catch up with these, but Master had his monkey up and on we went as hard as we could lay legs to the ground. When I was getting a bit blown we came to a patch of tree tamarisk, 10 or 12 ft. high. The nilgai were only a few yards ahead of us and turned sharp into the patch. I hadn't been trained to polo for nothing and turned just as sharply as they did. Thinking they had shaken us off they stopped. They saw their mistake and crashed into the jungle, but a bull who was nearest to us didn't move quite quickly enough, and Master drove his spear straight through his heart and he dropped dead. For us both it was a triumph! There was luck in it. True. If the nilgai had not checked in their flight we would probably never have caught up with them. However, there it was! I had equalled old Alphonse's feat, which few horses have accomplished, and I think I am justified in feeling some pride.

CHAPTER 12.

Another change came in April, 1922. We did a journey on wheels to Calcutta where Master took command of the Governor's bodyguard. This was a spit-and-polish affair. Seventy tall men in beautiful red uniforms, all on big Australian horses. It was guard and sentry work and escorts with the State Carriage for important functions. The trumpeter's horse was white, but all the others were bay with black points. As there were two trumpeters and only one white horse Master used to mount one of them on me to make a match. We were exactly alike in colour, but he was a good bit the taller. I had a fine blue and gold shabraque over my saddle and a leopard skin on top of that.

It was a brave show, and we all felt as proud as peacocks when crowds turned out to see us pass. The streets in Calcutta were terribly slippery, but we got used to them and only a few impetuous fool-horses ever came down,

I played a good deal of polo at this time and we had tournaments in the winter.

In summer I was sent with another pony to Darjeeling for the lady to ride. There was much rain there and the paths were rough and steep. What a place for a horse! I have never been able to understand why anyone should ever want to live in such places. There are no flat open places to stretch one's legs, and it was damp, foggy, and unpleasant nearly all the time we were there. I was glad when we returned to a decent life in Calcutta—polo, parade work, and occasional pig sticking.

In the following spring Master and his family went away on the sea. All the other ponies were sold, but I stayed with the bodyguard and had an easy time.

When winter time came I had my last big change. I was put in a sea-stable again and after some weeks of travel came to England.

CHAPTER 18.

This is the last Chapter. There is not much more to tell.

I arrived at Birdsall in January, 1924. After a rest to recover from the long journey Master started riding me about, and now and then we followed hounds out hunting: but I was beginning to feel my years and my joints were not as supple as they used to be. Master understood, and has only given me light work since I came to England. For five years in succession he took me to camp with his Territorial Infantry Soldiers for a fortnight. It was easy work and I liked seeing the parades again and marching at the head of a battalion behind the band.

I had five medals presented to me by a Gracious Lady, three for the great war, one for the Arab rebellion, and one for long service and good conduct. When I wear them I seem to attract much attention.

Life is easy and comfortable now; as much good grass as I can do with in summer and the best of hay and corn in winter. I generally live with yearling colts, and I find their youth and activity bracing and they keep me young in spirit. Of course it is very much to their advantage to learn from me what only one of my years and experience can teach them.

Well-well: if all horses had the security and comfortable old age that I have they would not have much to complain of. Men folk are all right if you hit on the right sort and serve them well. I have seen much of the world. I have told you of war and of peace: of polo and sport. There does not seem to be much more to relate.

Once a year I go to York to collect money for horses and other animals that haven't had all the luck I have had—the best I can do for them. I meet interesting people at this Whit Monday Parade. Last year I met Fritz, the regimental pet of the Inniskilling Dragoons, a captured German pony. This year I met old Ginger, a 27 year old Charger who was wounded in France.

It is a peaceful life now. It has interested me to write this yarn and think over all the events of 21 years.

I understand that the proceeds of the story go to something Master is interested in. Good luck to Him!

T. Baker & Son,
Printers,
2, Church Street, Norton, Malton