

THE ADVENTURES OF A DONKEY

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The Adventures of a Donkey by Arabella Argus

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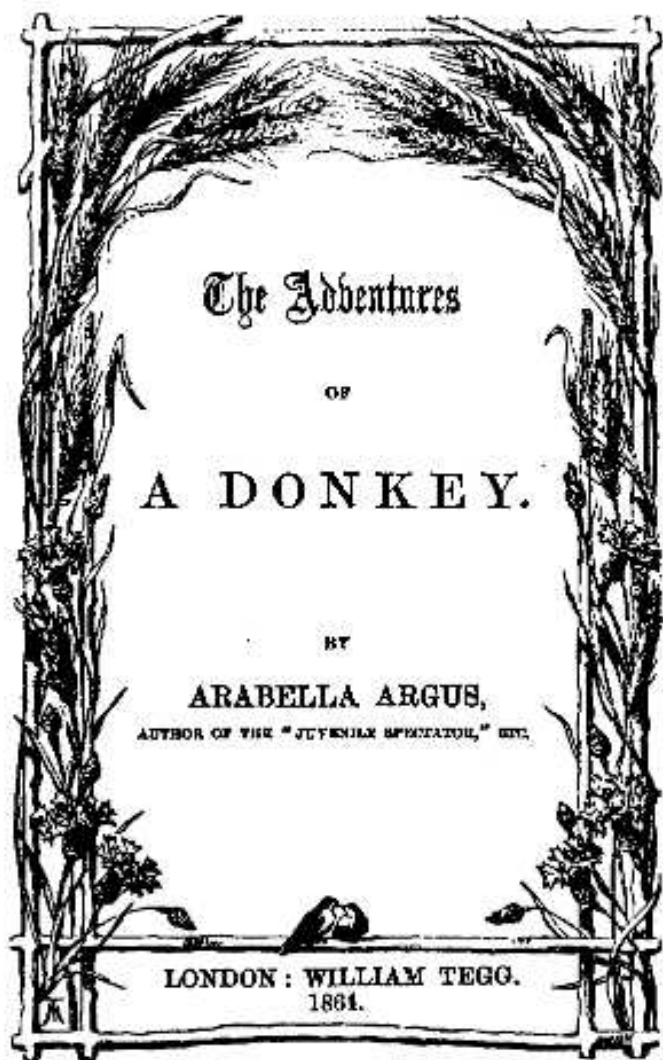
ARABELLA ARGUS

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OF A DONKEY**



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1882



The Adventures

OF

A DONKEY.

BY

ARABELLA ARGUS,

AUTHOR OF THE "JUVENILE SPICERARUM," ETC.

LONDON: WILLIAM TEGG.
1861.

THE
ADVENTURES OF A DONKEY.

PREFATORY ADDRESS.

THOUGH the services of my species are no longer of that character which distinguished them in former ages, I presume to think the biography of an Ass may yet be worthy of publication. Pride of ancestry, a usual weakness amongst bipeds, will, I trust, be forgiven in creatures doomed, even in their most fortunate state, to bear the taunts and insults of the *rational* part of the creation. If we refer to antiquity, it must be allowed the record is every way consoling to our feelings as a class; and though the comparative happiness of any animal at distinct periods is of little moment to his present content, it cannot be denied that there is something satisfactory in reflecting on the respectability of our progenitors. Thus I, an Ass of the nineteenth century, obtrude my history on the public; and

while I avoid the arrogance of claiming particular merit on the score of pedigree, I honestly confess there have been moments in my life when the memory of my descent has proved highly congenial to my feelings. Naturalists—as I believe those learned persons are called who describe the genus and character of animals—have done us justice as a species. Mine, as a domestic sketch, will bear none of those features of authorship which embrace deep research and elaborate disquisition. I present for your patronage the life and adventures of a home-bred Donkey, and, trusting to the liberality of an enlightened juvenile public, remain their respectful and obedient Servant,

JEMMY DONKEY.

CHAPTER I.

"Poor little foal of an oppressed race!
I love the languid patience of thy face;
And oft, with gentle hand, I give thee bread,
And clap thy ragged coat, and pat thy head."

Coleridge.

"SINCERITY" is my motto; I am therefore compelled to begin, by declaring that the early seeds of vanity were sown in my breast by the praises of a doating mother. I was scarcely ten months old when I overheard my mamma repeating to my papa all the handsome things farmer Howel had said of me. I now recollect her voice faltered as she closed her recital, and from this I conclude that she even then anticipated our separation. For myself, I was so elated with the words, "He is a remarkably handsome Donkey," &c., that I never thought of the price set upon my head, but gambled from morn till night, and while my parents pursued their accustomed labours, remained a stranger to the cares inseparable from servitude.

Description would fail me, were I to attempt to portray the attachment *our* mothers feel for their offspring. I well remember exciting the alarm of my mamma one evening.

I had pursued some ducks into a barn, and was enjoying the fright I occasioned, when her well-known voice echoed through the meadow. I fled at the summons, and to this day have not forgotten the tender chidings and affectionate caresses she bestowed upon me as her fears subsided. Farmer Howel, though a humane man, was sedulously attentive to his own interest; thus, in the absence of my parents, I found myself an object of some moment to his visitors.

Modesty induces me to omit the flattering comments which occasionally reached my ears. Whether this organ in our species, from its size, is more exposed to the admission of vanity, I presume not to decide; it is sufficient to say, I listened with delight, and retained *all* I heard.

Various opinions were passed upon my capacity. One thought it would be a pity to harness me—another recommended taking me to Tunbridge, where there could be no doubt of my selling well—a third declared a private family where there were children, would be the most profitable plan.

The farmer seemed pleased with this last suggestion, and I suppose believed he knew a likely purchaser, for I was released from further scrutiny, and again scampered at liberty. I ought to blush while I add, that I buried these consultations in my own bosom, and, if this concealment ultimately spared my parents some necessary pangs, it must be confessed that my *motives* were highly reprehensible.

Ambition, however, had pervaded my every feeling; I had thrust my head through an aperture in some old palings one day, and was snuffing the air in listless vacancy, when a Donkey, smartly caparisoned, on which sat a beautiful young lady, came trotting down the road. "O happy Ass!" sighed I, "shall I ever be so blessed?" To add to my delight, a footman on horseback followed. "Here," said I, exultingly, "here is a triumph for us!—the horse, our imperious enemy, in attendance on an Ass!"

Sleep fled my eyes that night; white leather bridles, stuffed saddles, and handsome young ladies, haunted my imagination. I dare say I was very troublesome, for my father complained that I

kicked the straw about, and was remarkably restless.

All that the farmer and his friends had said recurred to my memory, and, though I could not decide which proposition best pleased me, the idea of change was in itself enchanting, and I longed for the moment that was to effect this wish of my heart. Alas! it arrived too soon, though I did not immediately discern my misfortune.

My readers may have felt the inconvenience of a tight shoe, but they can have no conception of what we suffer under the hands of our shoemakers; suffice it to say, I was shod according to the usage of our genus, and, like other thoughtless animals, soon forgot my pain in the novelty of these new appendages.

I have since learned that pride is, in most instances, attended with pain. I dare not contradict the remark, having some reason in my person for believing it true. Yet I know you will all smile at the little airs I assumed on this important epoch in my life.

In the first place, the addition to my height seemed immense; I actually lowered my head as I entered or issued from our stable; my poor mother laughed at me sometimes, and at others would sigh prophetically; but my chief pleasure consisted in kicking up the dust, and making all the noise I could with my shoes. The farmer and his wife were highly amused with my freaks. I had received two or three handfuls of hay from them upon different occasions, and, attributing these kindnesses to my powers of entertainment, I ventured to intrude upon forbidden ground, scampered into the paved court, and finding a pail of warm milk standing invitingly in my way, had nearly drank the