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A Wise Old Horse

Emilie Poulsson

I will tell you a true story of this horse. He was the horse of a Mr. Lane and Mrs. Lane, on going home one day, turned the horse into a field to graze. A few days before this, the horse had been shod, but had been 'pinched,' as the blacksmiths call it, in the shoeing of one foot; that is, the shoe was so tight as to hurt the foot.

The next morning, after Mr. Lane had turned the horse into the field to graze, he missed him. 'What can have become of old Sol?' asked he. The name of the horse was Solomon. He was so named because he was wise.

When Mr. Lane asked where old Sol was, Tim, the stable-boy, said: 'I think some thief must have got him; for I cannot find Sol in the field or in the cow-yard.' '

What makes you think that a thief has got him?' said Mr. Lane.

'Well, sir,' said Tim, 'the gate of the field has been lifted off the hinges, and left on the ground.'

'That is no proof that a thief took the horse,' said Mr. Lane. 'I think that old Sol must have done that himself. I will tell you how we can find out. We will look at the gate; and, if there is a mark of Sol's teeth on it, we shall know he has let himself out.'

So they went to the gate, and there, on the top rail, was the mark of a horse's teeth. 'Now, why should old Sol want to get out of this nice field, so full of grass and clover?' thought Mr. Lane.

'Perhaps,' said Tim, 'the blacksmith can tell us about him.'

'I will drive over to the blacksmith's shop, and see,' said Mr. Lane.

So Mr. Lane drove over to the blacksmith's shop, which was a mile and a half off, and said to Mr. Clay, the blacksmith: 'Have you seen anything of old Sol?'

'Why, to be sure!' said Mr. Clay. 'Old Sol came here today, and told me I had made a bad job of it in putting the shoe on his right fore-foot.'

'What do you mean, Mr. Clay?' said Mr. Lane. 'A horse cannot talk.'

'Oh, true! he did not say it in words; but he said it by acts as plainly as I can say it. He came to the forge where I stood; and then held up his foot, and looked at me, as if he would like to say, if he could: 'Mr. Clay, you are getting careless in your old age. Look at that shoe. See how it pinches my foot. Is that the way to shoe a decent old horse like me? Now, are not you ashamed of yourself? Ease that shoe at once. Take it off, and put it on in a better way.'



'Can it be that old Sol said all that by his look?' asked Mr. Lane, laughing.

'All that, and more,' said Mr. Qay. 'He stood still as a post while I took off the shoe. And then I put it on so it might not hurt him. And, when I had done it, he gave a merry neigh, as if to say, 'Thank you, Mr. Clay,' and off he ran. And now, if you will go back to the field, you will find him there eating his breakfast.'

So Mr. Lane laughed, and bade Mr. Clay good-morning; and back to the field he drove. And there he found Tim putting up the gate; and there in the field was old Sol eating grass, and as happy as could be.

Was not Sol a wise old horse?

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