

A London cab horse

This passage is about a horse called Black Beauty.

My new master's name was Jeremiah Barker, but as everyone called him Jerry, I shall do the same. Jerry had a cab of his own and two horses which he drove and attended to himself. His other horse was a tall, white, rather large-boned animal, called Captain; he was old now but when he was young he must have been splendid; he still had a proud way of holding his head and arching his neck; in fact, he was a high-bred, fine-mannered, noble old horse, every inch of him. He told me that in his early youth he went to the Crimean War; he belonged to an officer in the cavalry and used to lead the regiment.

Jerry's family were very kind to me. His wife, Polly, brought me a slice of apple each morning and his daughter, Dolly, brought me a piece of bread and made as much of me as if I had been the "Black Beauty" of olden times. It was a great treat to be petted again and talked to in a gentle voice, and I let them see as well as I could that I wished to be very friendly. Polly thought I was very handsome and a great deal too good for a cab, if it was not for the broken knees.

The first week of my life as a cab horse was very trying; I had never been used to London, and the noise, the hurry, the crowds of horses, carts and carriages that I had to make my way through made me feel anxious and harassed; but I soon found that I could perfectly trust Jerry, and then I got used to it. Captain would go out with the cab in the mornings and I would pull it in the afternoons.

