

on, and then they trust entirely to their horses, which when left to themselves make their way back to their accustomed feeding ground.

Mr. Fell, the head man of the Company at Darwin Harbour, said that a band of horses will always stay with a mare that has a foal. Mr. Darwin has described a degeneration in the size and strength of the horses which have run wild in the Falkland Islands,<sup>1</sup> ascribing the degeneration to the action of the climate on successive generations. Mr. Fell, and other persons brought into constant relation with the horses, hold the opinion that it is only the wild horses, occupying a particular district in the neighbourhood of Port Stanley, which are small and pony-like; further, they believe that the reason why these particular wild horses are small is that they are sprung from a stock originally inferior in size when imported. The wild horses, which are abundant in the large peninsula known as Lafonia, were said to be of full size and vigour, and to show no signs of degeneration, and to be preferred for all purposes to those bred in domestication. Several of these horses which had been wild were seen, and one was ridden by a member of the party; they were not at all undersized. The guide rode a sturdy pony, which he said was one of the smaller wild breed.

Mr. Fell has watched the habits of the wild horses in Lafonia closely. The strong and active horses each guard a herd of mares; they keep the closest watch over them, and if one strays at all, drive her back into the herd by kicking her. The young horses live in herds apart, but the more vigorous ones are always on the lookout to pick up a mare from the herds of the older ones, and drive her off with them, and they sometimes gather a few mares and hold them for a short time, till they are recaptured from them. When they think they are strong enough, they try the strength of the old horses in battle, and eventually each old horse is beaten by some rival and displaced; the fighting is done mainly with the tusks, front to front, and not with the heels. Thus the most active and strongest males are naturally selected for the continuation of the herds.

The wild horses, as well as others, are often broken in by tying them with a raw hide halter to a post, and leaving them for several days without food or water. After long ineffectual struggles to break loose, the animals become convinced of the absolute power of the halter over them, and in future become cowed and docile directly a halter or lasso is over their heads. The wild horses when broken in are very tame and quiet to ride, and obey the rein with astonishing facility. There is no necessity, as a rule, to make them feel the bit at all in order to turn them; merely laying the part of the reins close to the hand against that side of the neck from which they are wanted to turn is sufficient; well-broken horses can be turned round and round in a circle by this means, by a gentle touch on the neck only.

The wild cattle in Lafonia will probably all be killed off in order that sheep may be

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Researches during the voyage of H.M.S. "Beagle," p. 192, ed. 1879; Animals and Plants under Domestication, vol. i. p. 62, 1868.