

## DAPPLE'S OPINIONS.

I MAY say without vanity that I am a very handsome horse. I am a grey, streaked and spotted like a mackerel sky. Jim can make my coat shine like a looking-glass when he chooses to take the trouble; but Jim is a lazy, sulky old fellow, and it is not often that he does me justice. When he is currycombing me he "sisses" at me as spitefully as a goose, and he stops every two minutes to grumble out, "Blow greys, says I—they take twice as much groomin' as other 'osses." But if other horses only get half as much grooming as Jim generally gives me, I pity them. It does not matter so much in my case, because I'm so good-looking, but all horses have not my natural advantages. I do think that Jim is the only person belonging to the place who isn't proud of me, and even Jim is proud of me sometimes. Instead of giving a wrench or two at my mane and tail as if he wanted to pull them out by the roots, he'll brush and comb them till they look as silky as my mistress's hair, and he'll make my hoofs shine like master's boots, and rub me down and polish me up, as I was saying, until you could almost see your face in my coat.

It is twice as easy for Jim to get me to "kim over" when he treats me with proper respect. He has no need then to give me rude slaps behind, and I don't feel inclined then to turn round my head and pretend to mistake his drab breeches for a bundle of hay. At other times, especially when he is stooping conveniently, I am often sorely tempted to do so.

Sometimes master rides me, and sometimes he drives me in the gig, and sometimes my mistress drives me in the four-wheeler. It's when my mistress is going to drive me, I've noticed, that Jim takes most pains with me. Master often has to find fault because Jim has brought me round so rough and dusty, but mistress never has. I'm quite a swell horse then. I've silver-plated patent-leather harness, and my mistress has white ends to her reins to keep her gloves clean, and she's very pretty, and so are the children, and they're all dressed very smart, so that it is quite a swell turn-out altogether.

I should really enjoy being driven by my mistress, for the chaise runs very light, and she and the little ones don't make it much heavier, if she wasn't quite so fond of sawing my mouth, and flicking me with the whip. She doesn't hurt me—she wouldn't, I know, for the world—but such behaviour detracts

from my dignity. When a horse is stepping out with his head up, he doesn't like to have it pulled right and left for no earthly reason except to make a lady believe that she's taking care of the horse, instead of the horse taking care of her. If I were to mind mistress's jerks, we should often be in the ditch, and running foul of every cart we passed, and every turnpike gate we went through. And if I were to mind her whips, and begin to canter or gallop when I'm trotting along a good showy ten miles an hour, a nice screaming I should hear behind the splash-board! But I know that she means no harm, and I'm proud of her and the children, and remember that master has trusted them to my honour, and so I bring them back all safe and sound. Still, when a horse has done it all, it isn't quite pleasant for him to hear his mistress bragging about her clever driving when she gets home. Master understands it, though; so I don't mind so much. As for Jim, he's a sneak, and makes mistress believe that she's a wonderful whip to be able to drive a vicious horse like me. "He *is* vicious, ma'am," Jim says, "but he's too artful to show it with you and the master." Of course, that is because I sent Mr. Jim over my head once, when he put the spurs into me; and I'll do it again if he gives me the chance, but I'm afraid he never will.

However, if Jim is grumpy, I've three friends in the stable who properly appreciate me. They would be always with me if they could, and one of them, Snap, the terrier, almost always is. Master used to have a "plum-pudding" dog, but I never cared much for him. He was a heavy dog, with no fun in him. All he could do was to run behind the chaise, and yet, just because he was spotted all over, he was as proud as a peacock. He seemed to think that I ought to thank him for being allowed to look at him—the sleepy, sulky cur! I haven't the least doubt that he thought his spots far handsomer than mine! What conceited animals there are in the world!

But Snap is a very different kind of dog. He's full of fun—jumps up at my nose, and barks at my legs, when we're out together—but still he is never wanting in real respect. He knows that I belong to a superior class, and behaves himself accordingly. You might think that he was taking liberties with me sometimes, if you saw his funny ways. He will jump up and worry my tail—but, bless