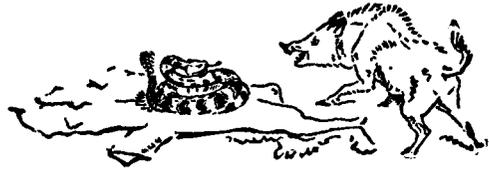
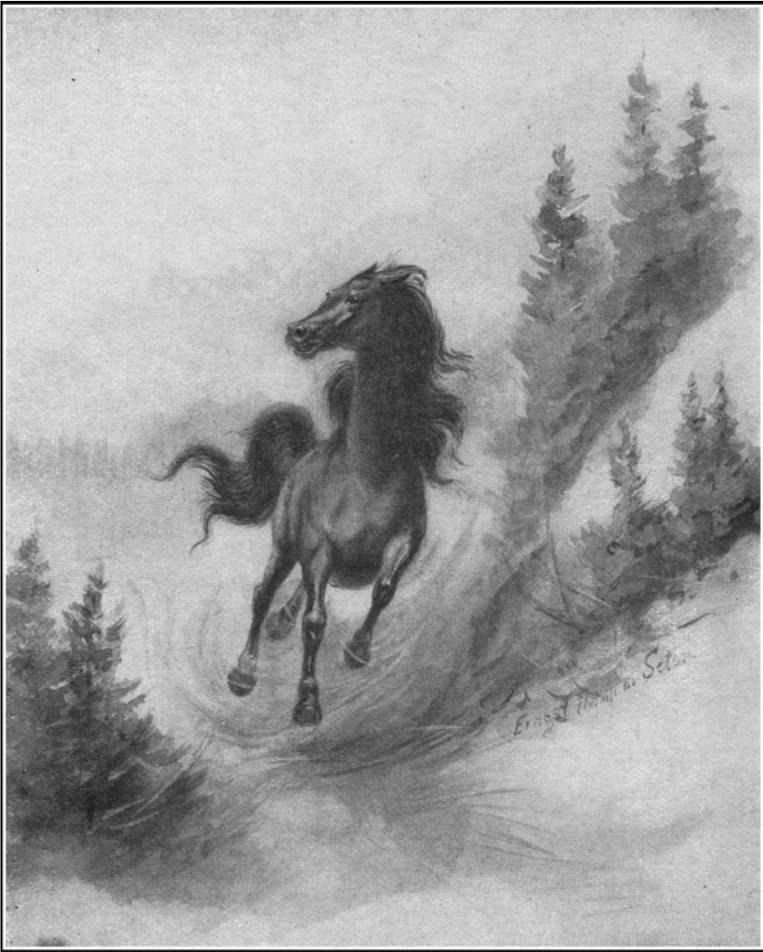


WILD ANIMAL WAYS





FREE AT LAST

WILD ANIMAL WAYS

By

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*"Wild Animals at Home," "Wild Animals I Have Known,"
"Two Little Savages," "Biography of a Grizzly,"
"Life Histories of Northern Animals,"
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Preface

When I look at the names of the animals whose stories are given here, I feel much as an artist might in looking at sundry portraits of his friends and ideals painted by himself.

Some of these I personally knew. Some are composites, and are merely natural history in story form. Way-atcha, Atalapha, and Foam are of the latter kind.

Foam is an effort to show how the wild things instinctively treat themselves in sickness. They have their herbs, their purges, their sudorifics, their hot and cold baths, their mud baths, their fastings, their water sluicings, their massage, their rest cure, and their sun treatment.

The final scene when the Razor-back utterly defeated the Bear was witnessed and related to me long ago by a Michigan lumberman, whose name I cannot recall. The minor incidents are largely from personal observation of wild hogs in various parts of America. I am in hopes that some will see the despised Razor-back in a more friendly light when they realize the strong and wise little soul that lurks behind those blinking eyes.

The Wild Geese is a simple narrative of well-known

facts, facts that I observed among the Honkers in my own home park.

Jinney, the bad monkey, I never saw, but I have told her story as it was given to me by my old friend Louis Ohnimus, at one time Director of the Woodward Zoölogical Gardens in San Francisco, California.

Billy and Coaly-Bay are in the main true, and a recent letter from the West gives me new light on the history of the wild horse. The story had just appeared in *Collier's Magazine*, where the writer saw it.

The letter runs as follows:

“January 26, 1916. I, too, knew Coaly-Bay, the glorious creature. He began his struggles in the Bitterroot Mountains of Idaho, left through the Salmon River country straggling tales of his fierce resentment under the yoke, and escaped triumphantly at last to the plains in the south.

“I was sixteen then and it is six years ago.

“Something, however, you failed to record. It is this: that before he escaped from the world of spur and lash, the world of compulsion, the world that denies to a horse an end in himself, he came to love one person—me, the woman who petted instead of saddled him, who gave him sugar instead of spurring him, who gloried in him because he dared assert that he belonged to himself. For I, too, was an outlaw.

“When I wandered joyfully through the evergreen labyrinths of the Florence Basin, sniffing like a hare or fox the damp spring smell of the earth, going far down the narrow, rock-walled canyons for the first wild orchids, Coaly-Bay came, too. I did not ride or drive him. He trotted beside me as might a dog. We were pals, equals, fellow rebels. I went with him where he could find the first young meadow grass, and he went with me where grew the first wild strawberries. As together we glimpsed, far below, the green ribbon that was the Salmon River, or saw, far off, the snow attempting to cover the sinister blackness of the Buffalo Hump, we laughed at the stupidity of the world of man, who sought to drive things, to compel things, to master things, breeding hate and viciousness thereby; the stupidity of the world of men who never dreamed of the marvellous power of love!

“But they came between us, these men; and when Coaly-Bay broke the leg of one of them, I laughed. That day when they were going to crush his spirit with a bullet, I *hated* them! And when he escaped down those endless labyrinths, which we had threaded together so often, how I gloated! But later I wept, for he had left me to be an outlaw alone.

“Yes, always I shall love the memory of Coaly-Bay. He was a symbol of the eternal spirit of Revolt against

the Spur of Oppression. My desire is to be as true to that spirit as he was, to fight the lash and spur, to bleed or starve rather than submit.”

I gladly quote this letter because it interprets some others of my friends as well as Coaly-Bay.

New York,

February 27, 1916.

Ernest C. Burton



CONTENTS

COALY-BAY, THE OUTLAW HORSE	1
FOAM, OR THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF A RAZOR-BACKED HOG	15
WAY-ATCHA, THE COON-RACCOON OF KILDER CREEK	82
BILLY, THE DOG THAT MADE GOOD	113
ATALAPHA, A WINGED BROWNIE	130
THE WILD GEESE OF WYNDYGOUL	189
JINNY, THE TAMING OF A BAD MONKEY	200

Coaly-Bay, The Outlaw Horse

THE WILFUL BEAUTY



IVE years ago in the Bitterroot mountains of Idaho there was a beautiful little foal. His coat was bright bay; his legs, mane, and tail were glossy black—coal black and bright bay—so they named him Coaly-bay.

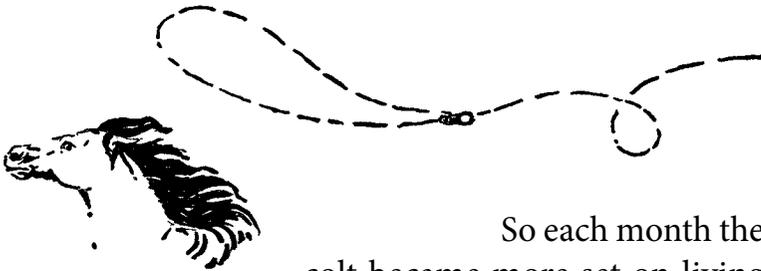
“Coaly-bay” sounds like “Kolibey,” which is an Arab title of nobility, and those who saw the handsome colt, and did not know how he came by the name, thought he must be of Arab blood. No doubt he was, in a faraway sense; just as all our best horses have Arab blood, and once in a while it seems to come out strong and show in every part of the creature, in his frame, his power, and his wild, free roving spirit.

Coaly-bay loved to race like the wind, he gloried in his speed, his tireless legs, and when careering with the herd of colts they met a fence or ditch, it was as natural to Coaly-bay to overleap it, as it was for the others to sheer off.

WILD ANIMAL WAYS

So he grew up strong of limb, restless of spirit, and rebellious at any thought of restraint. Even the kindly curb of the hay-yard or the stable was unwelcome, and he soon showed that he would rather stand out all night in a driving storm than be locked in a comfortable stall where he had no vestige of the liberty he loved so well.

He became very clever at dodging the horse wrangler whose job it was to bring the horseherd to the corral. The very sight of that man set Coaly-bay agoing. He became what is known as a “Quit-the-bunch”—that that is a horse of such independent mind that he will go his own way the moment he does not like the way of the herd.



So each month the colt became more set on living free, and more cunning in the means he took to win his way. Far down in his soul, too, there must have been a streak of cruelty, for he stuck at nothing and spared no one that seemed to stand between him and his one desire.

When he was three years of age, just in the perfection of his young strength and beauty, his real troubles began, for now his owner undertook to break him to ride. He was as tricky and vicious as he was handsome, and the

COALY-BAY, THE OUTLAW HORSE

first day's experience was a terrible battle between the horse-trainer and the beautiful colt.

But the man was skilful. He knew how to apply his power, and all the wild plunging, bucking, rearing, and rolling of the wild one had no desirable result. With all his strength the horse was hopelessly helpless in the hands of the skilful horseman, and Coaly-bay was so far mastered at length that a good rider could use him. But each time the saddle went on, he made a new fight. After a few months of this the colt seemed to realize that it was useless to resist, it simply won for him lashings and spurrings, so he pretended to reform. For a week he was ridden each day and not once did he buck, but on the last day he came home lame.



His owner turned him out to pasture. Three days later he seemed all right; he was caught and saddled. He did not buck, but within five minutes he went lame as before. Again he was turned out to pasture, and after a week, saddled, only to go lame again.

His owner did not know what to think, whether the horse really had a lame leg or was only shamming, but he took the first chance to get rid of him, and though Coaly-bay was easily worth fifty dollars, he sold him for twenty-five. The new owner felt he had a bargain, but after being ridden half a mile Coaly-bay went lame. The rider got off to examine the foot, whereupon Coaly-bay

WILD ANIMAL WAYS

broke away and galloped back to his old pasture. Here he was caught, and the new owner, being neither gentle nor sweet, applied spur without mercy, so that the next twenty miles was covered in less than two hours and no sign of lameness appeared.

Now they were at the ranch of this new owner. Coaly-bay was led from the door of the house to the pasture, limping all the way, and then turned out. He limped over to the other horses. On one side of the pasture was the garden of a neighbor. This man was very proud of his fine vegetables and had put a six-foot fence around the place. Yet the very night after Coaly-bay arrived, certain of the horses got into the garden somehow and did a great deal of damage. But they leaped out before daylight and no one saw them.



The gardener was furious, but the ranchman stoutly maintained that it must have been some other horses, since his were behind a six-foot fence.

Next night it happened again. The ranchman went out very early and saw all his horses in the pasture, with Coaly-bay behind them. His lameness seemed worse now instead of better. In a few days, however, the horse was seen walking all right, so the ranchman's son caught him and tried to ride him. But this seemed too good a chance to lose; all his old wickedness returned to the horse; the boy was bucked off at once and hurt. The ranchman himself now leaped into the saddle; Coaly-

COALY-BAY, THE OUTLAW HORSE

bay bucked for ten minutes, but finding he could not throw the man, he tried to crush his leg against a post, but the rider guarded himself well. Coaly-bay reared and threw himself backward; the rider slipped off, the horse fell, jarring heavily, and before he could rise the man was in the saddle again. The horse now ran away, plunging and bucking; he stopped short, but the rider did not go over his head, so Coaly-bay turned, seized the man's foot in his teeth, and but for heavy blows on the nose would have torn him dreadfully. It was quite clear now that Coaly-bay was an "outlaw"—that is an incurably vicious horse.



The saddle was jerked off, and he was driven, limping, into the pasture.

The raids on the garden continued, and the two men began to quarrel over it. But to prove that his horses were not guilty the ranchman asked the gardener to sit up with him and watch. That night as the moon was brightly shining they saw, not all the horses, but Coaly-bay, walk straight up to the garden fence—no sign of a limp now—easily leap over it, and proceed to gobble the finest things he could find. After they had made sure of his identity, the men ran forward. Coaly-bay cleared the fence



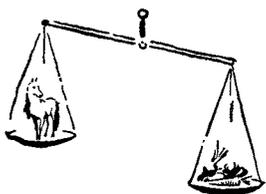
WILD ANIMAL WAYS

like a Deer, lightly raced over the pasture to mix with the horseherd, and when the men came near him he had—oh, such an awful limp.

“That settles it,” said the rancher. “He’s a fraud, but he’s a beauty, and good stuff, too.”

“Yes, but it settles who took my garden truck,” said the other.

“Wall, I suppose so,” was the answer; “but luk a here, neighbor, you ain’t lost more’n ten dollars in truck. That horse is easily worth—a hundred. Give me twenty-five dollars, take the horse, an’ call it square.”



“Not much I will,” said the gardener. “I’m out twenty-five dollars’ worth of truck; the horse ain’t worth a cent more. I take him and call it even.”

And so the thing was settled. The ranchman said nothing about Coaly-bay being vicious as well as cunning, but the gardener found out, the very first time he tried to ride him, that the horse was as bad as he was beautiful.

Next day a sign appeared on the gardener’s gate:

<p>FOR SALE First-class horse, sound and gentle. \$10.00</p>
--

THE BEAR BAIT

Now at this time a band of hunters came riding by. There were three mountaineers, two men from the city, and the writer of this story. The city men were going to hunt Bear. They had guns and everything needed for Bear-hunting, except bait. It is usual to buy some worthless horse or cow, drive it into the mountains where the Bears are, and kill it there. So seeing the sign up, the hunters called to the gardener: "Haven't you got a cheaper horse?"



The gardener replied: "Look at him there, ain't he a beauty? You won't find a cheaper horse if you travel a thousand miles."

"We are looking for an old Bear-bait, and five dollars is our limit," replied the hunter.

Horses were cheap and plentiful in that country; buyers were scarce. The gardener feared that Coaly-bay would escape. "Wall, if that's the best you can do, he's yourn."

The hunter handed him five dollars, then said:

"Now, stranger, bargain's settled. Will you tell me why you sell this fine horse for five dollars?"

"Mighty simple. He can't be rode. He's dead lame when he's going your way and sound as a dollar going

WILD ANIMAL WAYS

his own; no fence in the country can hold him; he's a dangerous outlaw. He's wickeder nor old Nick."

"Well, he's an almighty handsome Bear-bait," and the hunters rode on.

Coaly-bay was driven with the packhorses, and limped dreadfully on the trail. Once or twice he tried to go back, but he was easily turned by the men behind him. His limp grew worse, and toward night it was painful to see him.



The leading guide remarked: "That thar limp ain't no fake. He's got some deep-seated trouble."

Day after day the hunters rode farther into the mountains, driving the horses along and hobbling them at night. Coaly-bay went with the rest, limping along, tossing his head and his long splendid mane at every step. One of the hunters tried to ride him and nearly lost his life, for the horse seemed possessed of a demon as soon as the man was on his back.

The road grew harder as it rose. A very bad bog had to be crossed one day. Several horses were mired in it, and as the men rushed to the rescue, Coaly-bay saw his chance of escape. He wheeled in a moment and turned himself from a limping, low-headed, sorry, bad-eyed creature into a high-spirited horse. Head and tail aloft now, shaking their black streamers in the wind,



COALY-BAY, THE OUTLAW HORSE

he gave a joyous neigh, and, without a trace of lameness, dashed for his home one hundred miles away, threading each narrow trail with perfect certainty, though he had seen them but once before, and in a few minutes he had steamed away from their sight.



The men were furious, but one of them, saying not a word, leaped on his horse—to do what? Follow that free ranging racer? Sheer folly. Oh, no!—

he knew a better plan. He knew the country. Two miles around by the trail, half a mile by the rough cut-off that he took, was Panther Gap. The runaway must pass through that, and Coaly-bay raced down the trail to find the guide below awaiting him. Tossing his head with anger, he wheeled on up the trail again, and within a few yards recovered his monotonous limp and his evil expression. He was driven into camp, and there he vented his rage by kicking in the ribs of a harmless little packhorse.

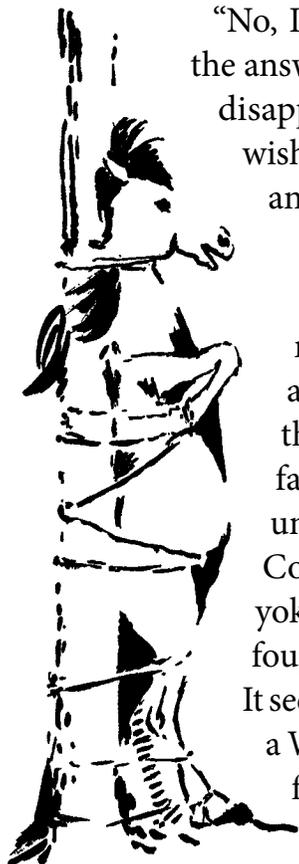
HIS DESTINED END

This was Bear country, and the hunters resolved to end his dangerous pranks and make him useful for once. They dared not catch him, it was not really safe to go near him, but two of the guides drove him to a distant glade where Bears abounded. A thrill of pity came over

WILD ANIMAL WAYS

me as I saw that beautiful untamable creature going away with his imitation limp.

“Ain’t you coming along?” called the guide.



“No, I don’t want to see him die,” was the answer. Then as the tossing head was disappearing I called: “Say, fellows, I wish you would bring me that mane and tail when you come back!”

Fifteen minutes later a distant rifle crack was heard, and in my mind’s eye I saw that proud head and those superb limbs, robbed of their sustaining indomitable spirit, falling flat and limp—to suffer the unsightly end of fleshly things. Poor Coaly-bay; he would not bear the yoke. Rebellious to the end, he had fought against the fate of all his kind. It seemed to me the spirit of an Eagle or a Wolf it was that dwelt behind those full bright eyes—that ordered all his wayward life.

I tried to put the tragic finish out of mind, and had not long to battle with the thought; not even one short hour, for the men came back.

Down the long trail to the west they had driven him; there was no chance for him to turn aside. He must go on, and the men behind felt safe in that.

Farther away from his old home on the Bitterroot

COALY-BAY, THE OUTLAW HORSE

River he had gone each time he journeyed. And now he had passed the high divide and was keeping the narrow trail that leads to the valley of Bears and on to Salmon River, and still away to the open wild Columbian Plains, limping sadly as though he knew. His glossy hide flashed back the golden sunlight, still richer than it fell, and the men behind followed like hangmen in the death train of a nobleman condemned—down the narrow trail till it opened into a little beaver meadow, with rank rich grass, a lovely mountain stream and winding Bear paths up and down the waterside.

“Guess this’ll do,” said the older man. “Well, here goes for a sure death or a clean miss,” said the other confidently, and, waiting till the limper was out in the middle of the meadow, he gave a short, sharp whistle. Instantly Coaly-bay was alert. He swung and faced his tormentors, his noble head erect, his nostrils flaring; a picture of horse beauty—yes, of horse perfection.

The rifle was levelled, the very brain its mark, just on the cross line of the eyes and ears, that meant sure—sudden, painless death.

The rifle cracked. The great horse wheeled and dashed away. It was sudden death or miss—and the marksman *missed*.



Away went the wild horse at his famous best, not for his eastern home, but down the unknown western trail, away and away; the pine woods hid him from the

WILD ANIMAL WAYS

view, and left behind was the rifleman vainly trying to force the empty cartridge from his gun.

Down that trail with an inborn certainty he went, and on through the pines, then leaped a great bog, and splashed an hour later through the limpid Clearwater and on, responsive to some unknown guide that subtly called him from the farther west.

And so he went till the dwindling pines gave place to scrubby cedars and these in turn

were mixed with sage, and

onward still, till the faraway

flat plains of Salmon River

were about him, and ever on,

tireless as it seemed, he went,

and crossed the canyon of the mighty

Snake, and up again to the the high

wild plains where the wire fence still

is not, and on, beyond the Buffalo Hump, till moving

specks on the far horizon caught his eager eyes, and

coming on and near, they moved and rushed aside to

wheel and face about. He lifted up his voice and called

to them, the long shrill neigh of his kindred when they

bugled to each other on the far Chaldean plain; and

back their answer came. This way and that they wheeled

and sped and caracoled, and Coaly-bay drew nearer,

called and gave the countersigns his kindred know, till

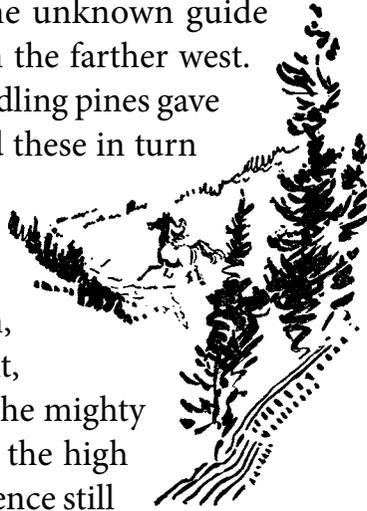
this they were assured—he was their kind, he was of

the wild free blood that man had never tamed. And

when the night came down on the purpling plain his

place was in the herd as one who after many a long hard

journey in the dark had found his home.



COALY-BAY, THE OUTLAW HORSE

There you may see him yet, for still his strength endures, and his beauty is not less. The riders tell me they have seen him many times by Cedra. He is swift and strong among the swift ones, but it is that flowing mane and tail that mark him chiefly from afar.

There on the wild free plains of sage he lives: the stormwind smites his glossy coat at night and the winter snows are driven hard on him at times; the Wolves are there to harry all the weak ones of the herd, and in the spring the mighty Grizzly, too, may come to claim his toll. There are no luscious pastures made by man, no grain-foods; nothing but the wild hard hay,



the wind and the open plains, but here at last he found the thing he craved—the one worth all the rest. Long may he roam—this is my wish, and this—that I may see him once again in all the glory of his speed with his black mane on the wind, the spur-galls gone from his flanks, and in his eye the blazing light that grew in his far-off forebears' eyes as they spurned Arabian plains to leave behind the racing wild beast and the fleet gazelle—yes, too, the driving sandstorm that overwhelmed the rest, but strove in vain on the dusty wake of the Desert's highest born.