A HORSE STORY.

A keeper of a hotel not fifty miles from Boston is, or was, a famous man for horses—owned many, and was always ready for a trade in such cattle. He was sharp at a bargain, and was never known to make a move that didn't count on his side, until the following happened, that proved an exception to the rule. He always had some particular emergency of trade, and the adroitness of his operation in putting off a beast, was a subject for delighted approval on all hands among connoisseurs of that delightful and noble animal, the horse. No one ever traded with Staffle that did not confess himself satisfied, though satisfaction being a latitudinal word, did not always mean location—satisfaction was the ultimate of happiness in the trade—like the same term in connection with the table.

There was a jolly cobbler whose name was Wax, that occupied a small shop near the hotel, to whom Staffle was accustomed to refer in case of any slack in a transaction, and he being a disinterested man, would decide on the matter of difference, always, however, by what was deemed a strange fatality, deciding in favor of Staffle. Some, however, went so far as to intimate that Staffle and the cobbler had talked the matter over previously, and had certain signs by which they understood each other.

When the stick came, then Staffle would say, "Well, well, we can't get along any further. Now I'm willing to leave it out to a third party, and as Mr. Wax, round the corner, knows the value of the horse I am swapping with you, he will be as good an impartial arbiter as we can find, so I guess I will call him."—Mr. Wax would accordingly come out, leather apron and all, and, after looking at the matter candidly, would decide that Staffle receive a smart consideration as the difference in value, and this would settle it nine times in ten.

One day there came along a stranger with a pretty good horse, and it was at once the object of Staffle's interest. He examined the horse in all his points, and determined to have him. The determination worked itself up to a positive fever by the next morning, and when the stranger's horse was led out to be harnessed, Staffle stepped up and asked the owner, who was looking on seeing that the harness was properly adjusted, if he didn't want to swap horses.

The stranger told him he hadn't the least objection, provided he could make a little something out of it.

"Well," said Staffle, "I am glad to hear you say so. John, bring out the red colt."

The red colt was accordingly trotted out. Its name was a misnomer. It was one of those animals that, having been called a colt when legitimately entitled to the appellation, had forfeited it by the offence of age, and was now sunning under false colors. The stranger looked at the "colt," and gave a whistle as he saw the discrepancy between the age and the title.

"Well," said he, at last, "how shall we trade? What do you willing to give to boot?"

"Boot!" said Staffle, with feigned surprise, "the boot is on the other leg, I think."

"Ah!" said the man, "well, if you think so we will stop negotiation. Good morning."

"Hooaa!" cried Staffle, "hold on—don't be in a hurry. Suppose I should offer you—say, twenty-five dollars—how would that please you?"

"It would not please me at all," was the reply, "I shouldn't want to take less than eighty dollars."

"Well," said Staffle, "I can't do that, but I'll tell you what I will do—I leave it out to umpires."

"Done," replied the stranger, "anything for a trade. Whom will you have it to?" "Somebody, I hope, that knows what a good horse is."

"Never a better, sir," said Staffle, delightedly, "and here's just the matched mate to others, that I would like to see coming in the yard. Hoosh in there, Mr. Wax."

Wax nodded good to coming back again, and said so, and then stood with his hands under his apron looking at the horses.

"Mr. Wax," continued Staffle, "this gentleman and myself are about trading horses, and we want you to decide on the amount of boot that I am to pay him—You know what an excellent horse the 'colt' is, and can judge by comparing the two what the difference should be."

"Mr. Wax, are you a good judge of horses?" asked the stranger.

Mr. Wax stood, and looked up into his face, as most people do, as he replied, "I should like to have you consider me so."—He then proceeded glancing from one to the other, as if a little in doubt which was the better horse, for some minutes, when he said, "Gentlemen, I consider the two horses equally good."

"Well," said the stranger, "I'm willing to abide by your decision. I think the horse is worth eighty five dollars, and would give that for him."

Staffle was in ecstacy, and drawing out his pocket-book, he counted off eighty five dollars, and passed them over. The transfer was made, the horses changed, the stranger drove away, and Staffle turned to Wax, who stood there with very smiling countenance.

"That was a clever trick you played me. What was you to do with it?—Didn't you know it was a poor, lame horse, that the 'colt' was none?"

"Yes," replied Wax, "but you didn't suspect that the other horse was lame, do you?" "Lame!—lame!—why, what do you mean?"

"Why, I mean that he was lame when I gave you the two dollars and a half to boot!"

"Lame!—lame!—why, I—I—I—