

III. *A Communication of a singular fact in Natural History. By the Right Honourable the Earl of MORTON, F. R. S. in a Letter addressed to the President.*

Read November 23, 1820.

MY DEAR SIR,

I YESTERDAY had an opportunity of observing a singular fact in Natural History, which you may perhaps deem not unworthy of being communicated to the Royal Society,

Some years ago, I was desirous of trying the experiment of domesticating the Quagga, and endeavoured to procure some individuals of that species. I obtained a male; but being disappointed of a female, I tried to breed from the male quagga and a young chesnut mare of seven-eighths Arabian blood, and which had never been bred from: the result was the production of a female hybrid, now five years old, and bearing, both in her form and in her colour, very decided indications of her mixed origin. I subsequently parted with the seven-eighths Arabian mare to Sir GORE OUSELEY, who has bred from her by a very fine black Arabian horse. I yesterday morning examined the produce, namely, a two-years old filly, and a year-old colt. They have the character of the Arabian breed as decidedly as can be expected, where fifteen-sixteenths of the blood are Arabian; and they are fine specimens of that breed; but both in their colour, and in the hair of their manes, they have a striking resemblance to the quagga. Their colour is bay, marked more or less like the quagga in a darker tint. Both

are distinguished by the dark line along the ridge of the back, the dark stripes across the fore-hand, and the dark bars across the back part of the legs. The stripes across the fore-hand of the colt are confined to the withers, and to the part of the neck next to them ; those on the filly cover nearly the whole of the neck and the back, as far as the flanks. The colour of her coat on the neck adjoining to the mane is pale, and approaching to dun, rendering the stripes there more conspicuous than those on the colt. The same pale tint appears in a less degree on the rump ; and in this circumstance of the dun tint also she resembles the quagga.

The colt and filly were taken up from grass for my inspection, and, owing to the present state of their coats, I could not ascertain whether they bear any indications of the spots on the rump, the dark pasterns, or the narrow stripes on the forehead, with which the quagga is marked. They have no appearance of the dark line along the belly, or of the white tufts on the sides of the mane. Both their manes are black ; that of the filly is short, stiff, and stands upright, and Sir GORE OUSELEY's stud groom alleged that it never was otherwise. That of the colt is long, but so stiff as to arch upwards, and to hang clear of the sides of the neck ; in which circumstance it resembles that of the hybrid. This is the more remarkable, as the manes of the Arabian breed hang lank, and closer to the neck than those of most others. The bars across the legs, both of the hybrid and of the colt and filly, are more strongly defined, and darker than those on the legs of the quagga, which are very slightly marked ; and though the hybrid has several quagga marks, which the colt and filly have not, yet the most striking, namely, the

stripes on the fore-hand, are fewer and less apparent than those on the colt and filly. These circumstances may appear singular; but I think you will agree with me, that they are trifles compared with the extraordinary fact of so many striking features, which do not belong to the dam, being in two successive instances, communicated through her to the progeny, not only of another sire, who also has them not, but of a sire belonging probably to another species; for such we have very strong reason for supposing the quagga to be.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

Dr. W. H. Wollaston.

MORTON.

P. S. I have requested Sir GORE OUSELEY to send me some specimens of hair from the manes of the sire, dam, colt, and filly; and I shall write to Scotland for specimens from those of the quagga and of the hybrid.

I am not apt to build hypotheses in a hurry, and have no predilection either for or against the old doctrine of impressions produced by the imagination; but I can hardly suppose that the imagination could pass by the white tufts on the quagga's mane, and attach itself to the coarseness of its hair.

Wimpole Street, August 12th, 1820

Note by Dr. Wollaston.

By the kindness of Sir GORE OUSELEY, I had an opportunity of seeing the mare, the Arabian horse, the filly, and the colt, and of witnessing how correctly they agreed with the description given of them by Lord MORTON.

Having shortly afterwards described the circumstances to my friend Mr. GILES, I found that he had observed some facts of nearly equal interest, of which, at my request, he has since sent me the following account.