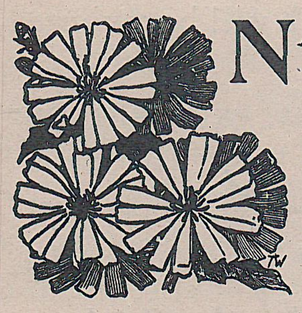
THE HISTORY OF FLORA TEMPLE.

[Compiled from an old file of *Porter's Spirit.*]



NANCY HANKS in 1892, with her performances less than half a dozen seconds' distance from the two-minute mark, created but a fraction of the sensation Flora Temple, "the little bob-tail mare," made in the last half of the fifties. A history of Flora Temple, from the day she was discovered in June, 1850, in Duchess county, N. Y., tied to a drover's wagon, fills 20 columns of *Porter's Spirit*, running through half a dozen numbers. The drover knew nothing about the pedigree. He had purchased her not long before for $80 from a young man near Utica who sold her on account of her "crazy disposition." A wealthy farmer, Jonathan V———y, saw the drover passing with a drove of cattle. The historian says:

"There was something which invited the attention of Mr. V——y. It was a little, rough-coated bay mare not over 14 hands 2 inches high, tied to the tail-board of the wagon by a rope halter. There certainly was nothing in the conduct of the little bay mare to deserve this attention from the practiced eye of Mr. V———y. But he had a sharp eye for the points of a horse. He had dealt a great deal in that way, and so he gazed on the little mare's blood-like head, traced her fine well-set neck, firm shoulders, strong straight back, long barrel well ribbed up, powerful forearms, fine pasterns, cannon bones, and general display of muscle, he thought he would like to enquire into her mouth and take a peep or two at her feet. All the drover could say about her was that she was about five years old and was too foolish and flighty to ever make a square trot in her life. Mr. V———y purchased her for $175 and soon afterward sold her to Geo. E. Perrin, of New York for $350.

In the hands of Mr. Perrin the little mare, which had proved so intractable, so flighty, so harum-scarum and, to come down to the true term, so worthless to her original owners, was favored with more advantages than she had enjoyed before. She was not only introduced to the very best society of fast-goers on the Bloomingdale and Long Island roads, but she was taught, when "flinging herself out" with exuberant and abundant spirit, all over the road, as it were, to play her limbs to a true line, and gave her extraordinary qualities a chance to show their true actual worth. If she ever made a skip a quick admonition and a steady check brought her to her senses, and when in her frenzy of excitement at being challenged by some tip-top goer she would, to use a sportsman's phrase, "travel over herself" and go "up" into the air, she was steadied and settled down by a firm rein into solid trotting and good behavior in an instant. The crazy, flighty, half racking and half trotting little mare became a true stepper and very luckily passed out ef her confused "rip-i-ty clip-i-ty" sort of a going into a clean, even, long, low, locomotive trotting stroke."

The first season, 1851, that she started in races an accident which caused the shafts of a sulky to strike her heels rendered her again apprehensive and flighty and it was found necessary to take her out of training and put her on the road. Her biographer continuing says:

"In that position she remained until the following summer, when her owner, finding she had gained her feet and steadiness again by beating with great ease the bay mare Philadelphia Sal round the Red House track for a stake of $200, made a match with Young Dutchman for $250 a side, mile heats, best three in five, in harness, to come off on the Union course on Nov. 10. The mare won in three heats, placing herself indisputably "up ahead" among the first-class horses by recording the time 2:40, 2:39 and 2:36. She was then taken out of training and put in winter quarters, and as we have given her an opportunity to express herself in thought once or twice before we may be allowed to imagine that when she left the course at the close of the last contest she might have meant to say in her low neigh of triumph, "As little as I am, I am now mistress of the trotting course, and let no one henceforth value me at less than $2,000."

In the next two years she successively defeated the cracks of the trotting turf, Green Mountain Maid, Centreville, Black Douglass, Highland Maid, Lady Brook and Mac. A report of her race with Tacona Sept. 2, 1856, reads:

"FASTEST TIME ON RECORD! 2:24½ IN HARNESS!!! FLORA, THE QUEEN OF THE TROT.—Another inroad into the tough and reluctant table of racing time was made on Tuesday last on the Union by the queen of the trotting course and winner of innumerable glorious fields—Flora Temple. This was a race of mile heats for $500 a side, Flora to go to harness and Tacony under saddle. A great deal of expectation had been invested in this contest, and to judge from the expressions of partisans on either side both were equally, reliant upon the success of their favorite. The betting, however, showed a little different state of things from the general talk and $100 to $30 was offered on Flora just before the start. What made things look more "towards her" was the fact that Hiram Woodruff—the great Hiram—sat in the little cup behind her tail.

"Fortune commenced to favor Flora and she won the inside. But one ineffectual attempt was made to get off, and on the second away they went, the mare flying out of hand, and leading by three or four lengths on the upper turn, making the first quarter in 37 seconds. It was now necessary that Tacony should come out, for the glistening, rattling little mare was not a competitor to be trusted with the margin of an inch, so he summoned his