

that feels comfortable is easier to ride on a long journey, isn't it, my friend?' he said and patted my back.

He was a careful rider and reminded me of John Manly and this made me happy.

The gentleman came back to the stables several times and always asked for me to be his horse. At the end of summer, the gentleman convinced the master of the livery stables to sell me to a friend of his. And so I was sold to Mr Barry.

Mr Barry didn't know much about horses but he was a kind man and gave me a good place to live. His groom, Filcher, looked after me well and at first I was comfortable. But one day, Filcher stopped giving me the good oats that Mr Barry was paying for and instead, he put bran in my food. He did the same thing the next day and the next.

This went on for about two months during which time I began to feel weaker and weaker.

One day, Mr Barry visited an old farmer friend of his. 'What's wrong with your horse?' asked the man when he saw me. 'His skin isn't as shiny as it was, and he looks skinny.'

'I don't know,' said Mr Barry. 'I give him the best oats!'

'Are you sure?' asked the farmer, and that made Mr Barry very suspicious.

He decided to hide and see what Mr Filcher was feeding me. When he realised that he had been tricked, he was very angry.

A few days later, a new groom came, Alfred Smirk. But he was not much better. Smirk was lazy and didn't do much work; he preferred to look in the mirror all day and comb his hair instead of cleaning the stables. My hooves began to hurt from all the dirt and I stumbled all the time.

'Alfred, these stables are smelly,' said Mr Barry one day. 'Do something about it, please.'

'Well, sir, I clean them all the time, but there may be something wrong with the drains,' said Mr Smirk.

Workers came to fix the drains, but of course they found nothing wrong.

Then one morning as we were going to the city, I almost fell twice. My master took me to the vet to have a look at me. When he

