

The ass varies greatly in colour; and its legs, especially the fore-legs, both in England and other countries—for instance, in China—are occasionally barred more plainly than those of dun-coloured horses. Thirteen or fourteen transverse stripes have been counted on both the fore and hind legs. With the horse the occasional appearance of leg-stripes was accounted for by reversion to a supposed parent-form, and in the case of the ass we may confidently believe in this explanation, as *E. tæniopus* is known to be barred, though only in a slight degree, and not quite invariably. The stripes are believed to occur most frequently and to be plainest on the legs of the domestic ass during early youth,⁴⁶ as likewise occurs with the horse. The shoulder-stripe, which is so eminently characteristic of the species, is nevertheless variable in breadth, length, and manner of termination. I have measured one four times as broad as another, and some more than twice as long as others. In one light-grey ass the shoulder-stripe was only six inches in length, and as thin as a piece of string; and in another animal of the same colour there was only a dusky shade representing a stripe. I have heard of three white asses, not albinos, with no trace of shoulder or spinal stripes;⁴⁷ and I have seen nine other asses with no shoulder-stripe, and some of them had no spinal stripe. Three of the nine were light-greys, one a dark-grey, another grey passing into reddish-roan, and the others were brown, two being tinted on parts of their bodies with a reddish or bay shade. If therefore grey and reddish-brown asses had been steadily selected and bred from, the shoulder stripe would probably have been lost almost as generally and completely as in the case of the horse.

The shoulder stripe on the ass is sometimes double, and Mr. Blyth has seen even three or four parallel stripes.⁴⁸ I have observed in ten cases shoulder-stripes abruptly truncated at the lower end, with the anterior angle produced into a tapering point, precisely as in the above dun Devonshire

⁴⁶ Blyth, in 'Charlesworth's Mag. of Nat. Hist.,' vol iv., 1840, p. 83. I have also been assured by a breeder that this is the case.

⁴⁷ One case is given by Martin,

'The Horse,' p. 205.

⁴⁸ 'Journal As. Soc. of Bengal.' vol. xxviii. 1860, p. 231. Martin on the Horse, p. 205