

A Treasury of
HORSE
STORIES



Margaret Cabell Self
Illustrated by Edwin Megargee

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A Treasury of
HORSE STORIES

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A Treasury of
**HORSE
STORIES**

Selected and edited by
MARGARET CABELL SELF

Illustrated by Edwin Megargee



A. S. BARNES & COMPANY, NEW YORK

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Preface

To read and own an anthology in any way comprehensive on almost any subject is both interesting and entertaining, but to compile one is an education. It is natural that people having one particular hobby or sport should gravitate in their reading towards that sport, but they read only for the enjoyment of the moment or for what they may learn, technically, from the text. Each story is accepted for itself alone, there is no comparing it with others of the same subject to see wherein it differs, if more worthy or less so. However, when one starts in to survey as broad a field as this subject of horselore, one which has been a favorite among writers from the earliest times, one does so with the idea of analyzing, catalogueing, and selecting. It is manifestly impossible to include everything of merit that has ever been written about horses, yet is necessary to present examples of the best type of story in the various divisions of horselore. Not only must the stories have literary value, but it is essential that all kinds of horses from all kinds of places and countries which are used for every purpose to which the horse has been put, be included. Also the reader who looks for old favorites, must not be disappointed. A collection which gives only stories from a certain period or of a certain general type is not really an anthology but merely a book of short stories all on the same subject. So one searches and reads and rereads, choosing this and discarding that, picking clean the kernel of each tale, turning it over and over, weighing each against its fellows. In doing so the compiler gains tremendously in the knowledge of what the writers and poets of note have found to be inspirational; and one is sometimes surprised at what one finds.

It is natural, for example, that writers should think all kinds of racing fit material for dramatic stories. But why is there so little that is worthwhile about the Arabian horse, one of the oldest of breeds and surely one of the most romantic and colorful? Hunting stories are nearly all humorous, while hunting poetry tends to be dramatic or tragic. To go back to the racing, be it flat, steeplechase or trotting, prose or poetry, from Ben Hur down, though

6-20-63 Gift W.L. Barber P.E.

the prize may differ, the background and characters vary, the formulae are surprisingly similar. The hero-horse, jockey or driver, as the case may be, always comes up from behind at the last possible moment to win. If a mare is running, the favorite, foredoomed to defeat, is usually a stallion or at least a gelding, if the hero is male the adversary is feminine. Nor must the winner ever be touched with whip or spur whereas the poor challenger is usually beaten until he bleeds! The one exception to the pattern, which after all is a perfectly sound one from a dramatic point of view, seems to be that of John Biggs Jr. who, in Corkran of Clamstretch has his horse lose the race and grow in stature by so doing!

The circus horse, except in juvenile literature, is apparently among the missing, yet what would be more colorful than a good circus story? There have been fine tragedies written about the circus clown, Pagliacci for one, but nothing adult that I have been able to find about the circus horse or his rider.

All horse stories might be roughly classified as follows: those which have to do with the horse himself as a personality, i.e., in which the reader identifies himself with the horse and not with one of the human characters in the story; and those in which the horse is the protagonist, and the real interest lies in the situation, the development of the plot or in one of the human characters portrayed. By far the larger number of stories fall into the latter category. Anna Sewell in Black Beauty [which is primarily a children's story and therefore not suitable for inclusion in a work of this sort] was among the first, exclusive of the poets, who looked on the horse as a creature with a personality worthy of development. Other writers up until then might describe the outside of the animal, particularly if it were humorous, but the horse was seldom the real hero. Even Surtees, whose name comes first to mind when one thinks of riding and hunting, said really very little about the horse himself.

It seems a little odd that this should be so when one remembers what a very important element the horse was in everyday living until the automobile came to usurp his place. Perhaps it was a case of familiarity breeding contempt, for certainly there have been more writers interested in making the horse the real hero of the tale since he became less common on the street.

No one of note seems to have written, except very briefly, about the horse in war, although he was an exceedingly important lethal war-machine up until World War I and still is valuable under certain circumstances and in certain terrain. Poems to do with cavalry, such as the Charge of the Light Brigade have not enough about the horses themselves in them to make it desirable to include them in an anthology of this sort.

Rudyard Kipling's Maltese Cat is almost the only polo story to be found though I am sure there must be others which I was unable to locate. The American Saddler is sadly neglected as a breed perhaps because the show ring is not nearly so popular with writers as either the hunt field or the race track. There are many western stories, and stories of wild horses, but their plots and

characters are so much alike that one can include only a few without fear of repeating, nor are many of them noteworthy from a literary standpoint. Furthermore writers of western stories seem to tend towards sentimentalizing their horse-heroes; only too often they provide them with feelings and characteristics that exist only in the author's mind.

In the following pages will be found stories or poems about thoroughbreds, draft horses, light harness, standard breeds, ponies, high-school, cowponies, wild range horses, flat racers, steeplechasers and trotters; horses that pull hearses and one that pulls a Quaker to church. Some of the famous horses are here, Pegasus and the centaurs among them. The mise en scenes include various parts of the United States, England, Ireland, Mexico, Arabia, India, Spain, Norway, Austria, Greece and the imaginary country of Gulliver. I have tried to vary the mood from the hilarious to the dramatic, from the wonder of a small boy who finds himself in control of a great team to the stark tragedy of another lad in the loss of his pony; and there is one good murder story for addicts of that type of literature. In my opinion there is no story or poem included which has not value as a piece of worthwhile writing in itself and should therefore merit the attention of the reader whether or not he is interested in horses.

I should like to thank Ella H. Stevens, Matilda Z. Offen and Elizabeth Raymond Scott, librarians, for their kindness in helping me search out many of these stories. Had it not been for their help I would have been unable to run to earth certain stories which I had read previously and of which I remembered neither the exact title nor the author. I should also like to thank Mavis McIntosh and Celia Krichmar (as well as my publishers) for so kindly securing the permissions, and Laurice House for her careful reading and checking of proof.

I hope that those whose favorites I have omitted will not be disappointed and that this book will be a source of pleasure to all who love good reading and good horses.

MARGARET CABELL SELF

New Canaan, Connecticut

July, 1945



Dedicated to My Father

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I

Fantasy & Folklore

His screaming stallions
maned with whistling wind

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

And I turned and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came four chariots from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass.

In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses.

And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses.

Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked to me, What are these, my lord?

And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.

—Zechariah 6

CARL R. RASWAN

A Bedouin Conception of the Creation of a Horse

from DRINKERS OF THE WIND

Many early races have, in their folk-lore, tales telling of how the horse was created. I particularly liked the following, taken from Carl Raswan's delightful book, Drinkers of the Wind, because of its characteristically Eastern flavor and the real beauty of the description.

According to the story, the wilderness of Arabia and the Arabic language of the angels were God's gift to Ishmael, son of Abraham and the bondwoman of Egypt. Ishmael became a herdsman and a hunter. He invented the bow and arrow to kill the wolf, the panther, and the antelope.

And Ishmael built an altar of acacia wood to honor his Creator. With the feathers of the black ostrich he decorated it, and he named it the "Ark of the Desert"—the throne of the Spirit of God.

It was in those days, Mnahi said, that God asked Jibrail (the Angel Gabriel) to lend one of his heavenly mounts to Ishmael.

The man of the wilderness was asleep in the red sand desert when the Angel of the Lord descended to his side. A wind whirled toward him, scoring red sand with its feet, scattering the dust with the blast of its nostrils, screaming with ferocity. Jibrail

stayed the thundering cloud with his outstretched arm and grasped the fullness of it with his hands.... The wild element condensed in Jibrail's hand, and by the majesty of the Living God emerged as the steed of the desert—the Drinker of the Wind.

Ishmael arose from sleep to behold, on the crest of a red sand dune, an antelope whose like he had never seen before. He seized his bow to send the fatal arrow.

But Jibrail touched his arm and cried, "Son of Abraham, this creature is a friend of God. I have been sent to bring her to thee because thou hast not defiled thyself with pagan gods. The-one-like-a-she-antelope shall be a mother of bounty and blessings to thee, a destroyer of enemies, a vessel of joy. Light as a panther will she carry thee, and swift as a wolf. With courage will she defend thee and protect thy house. Harkening not to the deceit of the

flatterer, she will share thy simple fare and dwell with thy children in the abode of peace. She is of el-Quwad, of those who are led and yet follow freely.

"And the antimony-painted one shall have a raven-skinned son. Thou shalt find no fault with him."

Jibrail laid his hand upon the neck of the mare and brought her to Ishmael, saying, "Grasp this strand of hair upon her forehead; bless her in the name of thy Creator." And Ishmael blessed the mare, and the Angel vanished.

As Ishmael removed his hand from the brow of the mare, she neighed and pressed her muzzle to his cheek, and the son of the desert knew that she had recognized him, and that her soft voice was the voice of a friend. She followed Ishmael to his tent, and he remembered the words of the Angel and repeated them to his family.

Her features were not inferior in beauty and intelligence to those of man, and Ishmael said of her, "The Living God hath truly given me an inheritance worthy of my father Abraham. Indeed, the Kuhaylah is a heavenly companion!"

The wild hunter and the antelope of the desert became inseparable companions, and Ishmael was called the intrepid Faris (rider of the faras, or mare), the first horseman among the children of men.

He would greet her with these words, "Oh, thou antelope from the Nufud, my future and weal are braided into thy love-lock."

And he spoke thus of her to his neigh-

bors, "She whose uncloven hoof is like onyx, whose skin is painted with antimony, and whose hair is like unto a sun-ripened date, may she scatter peace upon thee, that fear shall conquer us no more."

Ishmael's friends addressed her, "Oh, thou morning star, bright and lustrous, about whom the flower of our youth gathers!"

As the Angel had promised, the day came when a fawn of the desert was born to the Kuhaylah. To protect the foal on his journey, the Ishmaelites placed him in a large camel saddlebag of goathair. All day the little colt was carried by the strong camel, until Ishmael and his children struck camp again.

But when they removed the foal from the huge saddlebag, they found that his spine had been injured and that he was crippled.

Ishmael was about to kill him with a quick blow, but again the Angel of the Lord interfered, saying, "Must man forever doubt the power of his Creator? God will make the despised Kuhaylat-el-A'hwaj—the antimony-painted cripple—the one most honored and noble among all."

The "cripple" became the foundation sire of all true Arabian desert horses, the sire of his mother's and sister's own children.

"There is a truth to encourage all of us," Mnahi said to me, "God can use the despised and broken bits of His creation to glorify the work of His hands."

G. K. CHESTERTON (1874–1936)

In the Beginning

*from THE BALLAD OF
THE WHITE HORSE*

On the chalky cliffs of England is cut the gigantic figure of a white horse. So long ago was the work done that no one can trace its origin. Gilbert Chesterton's famous The Ballad Of The White Horse, whose first four verses follow, was inspired by this horse.

Before the gods that made the gods
Had seen their sunrise pass,
The White Horse of the White Horse Vale
Was cut out of the grass.

Age beyond age on British land,
Æons on æons gone,
Was peace and war in western hills,
And the White Horse looked on.

Before the gods that made the gods
Had drunk at dawn their fill,
The White Horse of the White Horse Vale
Was hoary on the hill.

For the White Horse knew England
When there was none to know;
He saw the first oar break or bend,
He saw heaven fall and the world end,
O God, how long ago!

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804—1864)

The Chimaera

from A WONDER BOOK

In all the wide realm of fact and fiction surely there is no more glamorous and soul-stirring a figure than that of the Winged Horse. What child has not sat astride him in his dreams and hurdled the clouds? Surely Hawthorne's beautiful description of how Pegasus was captured and tamed by Bellerophon is, to all of us, the most familiar and the most loved.

Once, in the old, old times (for all the strange things which I tell you about happened long before anybody can remember), a fountain gushed out of a hill-side, in the marvellous land of Greece. And, for aught I know, after so many thousand years, it is still gushing out of the very self-same spot. At any rate, there was the pleasant fountain, welling freshly forth and sparkling adown the hill-side, in the golden sunset, when a handsome young man named Bellerophon drew near its margin. In his hand he held a bridle studded with brilliant gems, and adorned with a golden bit. Seeing an old man, and another of middle age, and a little boy, near the fountain, and likewise a maiden, who was dipping up some of the water in a pitcher, he paused, and begged that he might refresh himself with a draught.

"This is very delicious water," he said to the maiden as he rinsed and filled her pitcher, after drinking out of it. "Will you be kind enough to tell me whether the fountain has a name?"

"Yes, it is called the Fountain of Pirene," answered the maiden; and then she added, "My grandmother has told me that this clear fountain was once a beautiful woman; and when her son was killed by the arrows of the huntress Diana, she melted all away into tears. And so the water, which you find so cool and sweet, is the sorrow of that poor mother's heart!"

"I should not have dreamed," observed the young stranger, "that so clear a well-spring, with its gush and gurgle, and its cheery dance out of the shade into the sunlight, had so much as one tear-drop in its bosom! And this, then, is Pirene? I thank you, pretty maiden, for telling me

its name. I have come from a far-away country to find this very spot.

A middle-aged country fellow (he had driven his cow to drink out of the spring) stared hard at young Bellerophon, and at the handsome bridle which he carried in his hand.

"The water-courses must be getting low, friend, in your part of the world," remarked he, "if you come so far only to find the Fountain of Pirene. But, pray, have you lost a horse? I see you carry the bridle in your hand; and a pretty one it is, with that double row of bright stones upon it. If the horse was as fine as the bridle, you are much to be pitied for losing him."

"I have lost no horse," said Bellerophon, with a smile. "But I happen to be seeking a very famous one, which, as wise people have informed me, must be found hereabouts, if anywhere. Do you know whether the winged horse Pegasus still haunts the Fountain of Pirene, as he used to do in your forefather's day?"

But then the country fellow laughed.

Some of you, my little friends, have probably heard that this Pegasus was a snow-white steed, with beautiful silvery wings, who spent most of his time on the summit of Mount Helicon. He was as wild, and as swift, and as buoyant, in his flight through the air, as any eagle that ever soared into the clouds. There was nothing else like him in the world. He had no mate; he had never been backed or bridled by a master; and for many a long year, he led a solitary and a happy life.

Oh, how fine a thing it is to be a winged horse! Sleeping at night, as he did, on a lofty mountain-top, and passing the greater part of the day in the air, Pegasus seemed hardly to be a creature of the earth. When-

ever he was seen, up very high above people's heads, with the sunshine on his silvery wings, you would have thought that he belonged to the sky, and that, skimming a little too low, he had got astray among our mists and vapors, and was seeking his way back again. It was very pretty to behold him plunge into the fleecy bosom of a bright cloud, and be lost in it for a moment or two, and then break forth from the other side. Or, in a sullen rain-storm, when there was a grey pavement of clouds over the whole sky, it would sometimes happen that the winged horse descended right through it, and the glad light of the upper region would gleam after him. In another instant, it is true, both Pegasus and the pleasant light would be gone away together. But anyone that was fortunate enough to see this wondrous spectacle felt cheerful the whole day afterwards, and as much longer as the storm lasted.

In the summer-time, and in the beautifullest of weather, Pegasus often alighted on the solid earth, and, closing his silvery wings, would gallop over hill and dale for pastime, as fleetly as the wind. Oftener than in any other place, he had been seen near the Fountain of Pirene, drinking the delicious water, or rolling himself upon the soft grass of the margin. Sometimes, too (but Pegasus was very dainty in his food), he would crop a few of the clover-blossoms that happened to be sweetest.

To the Fountain of Pirene, therefore, people's great-grandfathers had been in the habit of going (as long as they were youthful, and retained their faith in winged horses), in hopes of getting a glimpse at the beautiful Pegasus. But, of late years, he had been very seldom seen. Indeed, there were many of the country folks,

dwelling within half an hour's walk of the fountain, who had never beheld Pegasus, and did not believe that there was any such creature in existence. The country fellow to whom Bellerophon was speaking chanced to be one of those incredulous persons.

And that was the reason he laughed.

"Pegasus indeed!" cried he, turning up his nose as high as such a flat nose could be turned up, "Pegasus, indeed! A winged horse, truly! Why, friend, are you in your senses? Of what use would wings be to a horse? Could he drag the plough so well, think you? To be sure, there might be a little saving in the expense of shoes; but then, how would a man like to see his horse flying out of the stable window?—yes, or whisking him above the clouds, when he only wanted to ride to mill? No, no! I don't believe in Pegasus. There never was such a ridiculous kind of a horse-fowl made!"

"I have some reason to think otherwise," said Bellerophon, quietly.

And then he turned to the old, grey man, who was leaning on a staff, and listening very attentively, with his head stretched forward, and one hand at his ear, because, for the last twenty years, he had been getting rather deaf.

"And what do you say, venerable sir?" inquired he. "In your younger days, I should imagine, you must frequently have seen the winged steed!"

"Ah, young stranger, my memory is very poor!" said the aged man. "When I was a lad, if I remember rightly, I used to believe there was such a horse, and so did everybody else. But, nowadays, I hardly know what to think, and very seldom think about the winged horse at all. If I ever saw the creature, it was a long, long while ago;

and to tell you the truth, I doubt whether I ever did see him. One day, to be sure, when I was quite a youth, I remember seeing some hoof-tramps round about the brink of the fountain. Pegasus might have made those hoof-marks; and so might some other horse."

"And have you never seen him, my fair maiden?" asked Bellerophon of the girl, who stood with the pitcher on her head, while this talk went on. "You certainly could see Pegasus, if anybody can, for your eyes are very bright."

"Once I thought I saw him," replied the maiden, with a smile and a blush. "It was either Pegasus, or a large white bird, a very great way up in the air. And one other time, as I was coming to the fountain with my pitcher, I heard a neigh. Oh, such a brisk and melodious neigh as that was! My very heart leaped with delight at the sound. But it startled me, nevertheless; so that I ran home without filling my pitcher."

"That was truly a pity," said Bellerophon.

And he turned to the child, whom I mentioned at the beginning of the story, and who was gazing at him, as children are apt to gaze at strangers with his rosy mouth wide open.

"Well, my little fellow," cried Bellerophon, playfully pulling one of his curls, "I suppose you have often seen the winged horse."

"That I have," answered the child, very readily. "I saw him yesterday, and many times before."

"You are a fine little man!" said Bellerophon, drawing the child closer to him. "Come, tell me all about it."

"Why," replied the child, "I often come here to sail little boats in the fountain, and to gather pretty pebbles out of its basin. And



Edwin Megaw

sometimes, when I looked down into the water, I see the image of the winged horse, in the picture of the sky that is there. I wish he would come down and take me on his back, and let me ride him up to the moon! But, if I so much as stir to look at him, he flies far away out of sight."

And Bellerophon put his faith in the child, who had seen the image of Pegasus in the water, and in the maiden who had heard him neigh so melodiously, rather than in the middle-aged clown, who believed only in cart-horses, or in the old man who had forgotten the beautiful things of his youth.

Therefore, he haunted about the Fountain of Pirene for a great many days afterwards. He kept continually on the watch, looking upward at the sky, or else down into the water, hoping for ever that he should see either the reflected image of the winged horse, or the marvellous reality. He held the bridle, with its bright gems and golden bit, always ready in his hand. The rustic people, who dwelt in the neighborhood, and drove their cattle to the fountain to drink, would often laugh at poor Bellerophon, and sometimes take him pretty severely to task. They told him that an able-bodied young man, like himself, ought to have better business than to be wasting his time in such idle pursuit. They offered to sell him a horse, if he wanted one; and when Bellerophon declined the purchase, they tried to drive a bargain with him for his fine bridle.

Even the country boys thought him so very foolish that they used to have a great deal of sport about him, and were rude enough not to care a fig, although Bellerophon saw and heard it. One little urchin, for example, would play Pegasus, and cut the oddest imaginable capers, by way of

flying; while one of his schoolfellows would scamper after him holding forth a twist of bulrushes, which was intended to represent Bellerophon's ornamental bridle. But the gentle child, who had seen the picture of Pegasus in the water, comforted the young stranger more than all the naughty boys could torment him. The dear little fellow, in his play-hours, often sat down beside him, and, without speaking a word, would look down into the fountain and up towards the sky, with so innocent a faith, that Bellerophon could not help feeling encouraged.

§ § §

Well was it for Bellerophon that the child had grown so fond of him, and was never weary of keeping him company. Every morning the child gave him a new hope to put in his bosom, instead of yesterday's withered one.

"Dear Bellerophon," he would cry, looking up hopefully into his face, "I think we shall see Pegasus today!"

§ § §

One morning the child spoke to Bellerophon even more hopefully than usual.

"Dear, dear Bellerophon," cried he, "I know not why it is, but I feel as if we should certainly see Pegasus today!"

And all that day he would not stir a step from Bellerophon's side; so they ate a crust of bread together, and drank some of the water of the fountain. In the afternoon, there they sat, and Bellerophon had thrown his arm around the child, who likewise had put one of his little hands into Bellerophon's. The latter was lost in his own thoughts, and was fixing his eyes vacantly on the trunks of the trees that overshadowed the fountain, and on the grapevines that clambered up among the branches. But the gentle child was gazing

down into the water; he was grieved, for Bellerophon's sake, that the hope of another day should be deceived, like so many before it; and two or three quiet tear-drops fell from his eyes, and mingled with what were said to be the many tears of *Pirene*, when she wept for her slain children.

But, when he least thought of it, Bellerophon felt the pressure of the child's little hand, and heard a soft, almost breathless, whisper.

"See there, dear Bellerophon, there is an image in the water!"

The young man looked down into the dimpling mirror of the fountain, and saw what he took to be the reflection of a bird which seemed to be flying at a great height in the air, with a gleam of sunshine on its snowy or silvery wings.

"What a splendid bird it must be!" said he. "And how very large it looks, though it must really be flying higher than the clouds!"

"It makes me tremble!" whispered the child. "I am afraid to look up into the air! It is very beautiful, and yet I dare only look at its image in the water. Dear Bellerophon, do you not see that it is no bird? It is the winged horse *Pegasus*!"

Bellerophon's heart began to throb! He gazed keenly upward, but could not see the winged creature, whether bird or horse; because, just then, it had plunged into the fleecy depths of a summer cloud. It was but a moment, however, before the object reappeared, sinking lightly down out of the cloud, although still at a vast distance from the earth. Bellerophon caught the child in his arms, and shrank back with him, so that they were both hidden among the thick shrubbery which grew all around the fountain. Not that he was afraid of any harm, but he dreaded lest, if *Pegasus*

caught a glimpse of them, he would fly far away, and alight in some inaccessible mountain-top. For it really was the winged horse. After they had expected him so long, he was coming to quench his thirst with the water of *Pirene*.

Nearer and nearer came the aerial wonder, flying in great circles, as you may have seen a dove when about to alight. Downward came *Pegasus*, in those wide, sweeping circles, which grew narrower, and narrower still, as he gradually approached the earth. The nigher the view of him, the more beautiful he was, and the more marvellous the sweep of his silvery wings. At last, with so slight a pressure as hardly to bend the grass about the fountain, or imprint a hoof-tramp in the sand of its margin, he alighted, and, stooping his wild head, began to drink. He drew in the water, with long and pleasant sighs, and tranquil pauses of enjoyment; and then another draught, and another, and another. For, nowhere in the world, or up among the clouds, did *Pegasus* love any water as he loved this of *Pirene*. And when his thirst was slaked, he cropped a few of the honey-blossoms of the clover, delicately tasting them, but not caring to make a hearty meal, because the herbage, just beneath the clouds, on the lofty sides of *Mount Helicon*, suited his palate better than this ordinary grass.

After thus drinking to his heart's content, and in his dainty fashion, condescending to take a little food, the winged horse began to caper to and fro, and dance as it were out, of mere idleness and sport. There was never a more playful creature made than this very *Pegasus*. So there he frisked, in a way that it delights me to think about, fluttering his great wings as lightly as ever did a linnet, and running little races, half on earth and half in air, and which I know

not whether to call a flight or a gallop. When a creature is perfectly able to fly, he sometimes chooses to run, just for the pastime of the thing; and so did Pegasus, although it cost him some little trouble to keep his hoofs so near the ground. Bellerophon, meanwhile, holding the child's hand, peeped forth from the shrubbery, and thought that never was any sight so beautiful as this, nor ever a horse's eyes so wild and spirited as those of Pegasus. It seemed a sin to think of bridling him and riding on his back.

Once or twice, Pegasus stopped, and snuffed the air, pricking up his ears, tossing his head, and turning it on all sides, as if he partly suspected some mischief or other. Seeing nothing, however, and hearing no sound, he soon began his antics again.

At length,—not that he was weary, but only idle and luxurious,—Pegasus folded his wings, and lay down on the soft green turf. But, being too full of aerial life to remain quiet for many moments together, he soon rolled over on his back, with his four slender legs in the air. It was beautiful to see him, this one solitary creature, whose mate had never been created, but who needed no companion, and, living a great many hundred years, was as happy as the centuries were long. The more he did such things as mortal horses are accustomed to do, the less earthly and the more wonderful he seemed. Bellerophon and the child almost held their breath, partly from a delightful awe, but still more because they dreaded lest the slightest stir or murmur should send him up, with the speed of an arrow-flight, into the farthest blue of the sky.

Finally, when he had had enough of rolling over and over, Pegasus turned him-

self about, and, indolently, like any other horse, put out his fore legs, in order to rise from the ground; and Bellerophon, who had guessed that he would do so, darted suddenly from the thicket, and leaped astride of his back.

Yes, there he sat, on the back of the winged horse!

But what a bound did Pegasus make, when, for the first time, he felt the weight of a mortal man upon his loins! A bound, indeed! Before he had time to draw a breath, Bellerophon found himself five hundred feet aloft, and still shooting upward, while the winged horse snorted and trembled with terror and anger. Upward he went, up, up, up, until he plunged into the cold misty bosom of a cloud, at which, only a little while before, Bellerophon had been gazing, and fancying it a very pleasant spot. Then again, out of the heart of the cloud, Pegasus shot down like a thunderbolt, as if he meant to dash both himself and his rider headlong against a rock. Then he went through about a thousand of the wildest caprioles that had ever been performed either by a bird or a horse.

I cannot tell you half that he did. He skimmed straight-forward, and sideways, and backward. He reared himself erect, with his fore legs on a wreath of mist and his hind legs on nothing at all. He flung his heels behind, and put down his head between his legs, with his wings pointing right upward. At about two miles' height above the earth, he turned a somerset, so that Bellerophon's heels were where his head should have been, and he seemed to look down into the sky, instead of up. He twisted his head about, and looking Bellerophon in the face, with fire flashing from his eyes, made a terrible attempt to bite him. He fluttered his pinions so wildly that

one of the silver feathers was shaken out, and, floating earthward, was picked up by the child, who kept it as long as he lived, in memory of Pegasus and Bellerophon.

But the latter (who, as you may judge, was as good a horseman as ever galloped) had been watching his opportunity, and at last clapped the golden bit of the enchanted bridle between the winged steed's jaws. No sooner was this done, than Pegasus became as manageable as if he had taken food all his life out of Bellerophon's hand. To speak what I really feel, it was almost a sadness to see so wild a creature grow suddenly

so tame. And Pegasus seemed to feel it so, likewise. He looked round to Bellerophon with tears in his beautiful eyes instead of the fire that so recently flashed from them. But when Bellerophon patted his head, and spoke a few authoritative, yet kind and soothing words, another look came into the eyes of Pegasus; for he was glad at heart, after so many lonely centuries, to have found a companion and a master.

Thus it always is with winged horses, and with all such wild and solitary creatures. If you can catch and overcome them, it is the surest way to win their love.

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667–1745)

The Country of the Houyhnhnms

from GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

Most of us read Gulliver's Travels as children, relishing the fantasy and the adventure, not understanding the satire. The inhabitants of the land of the Houyhnhnms represented our ideas of what horses might, in fact should, be like. The mature reader realizes the satire intended and finds the renewal of his acquaintance with the wise and gentle talking horses a pleasure.

After having travelled about three miles, we came to a long kind of building, made of timber stuck in the ground, and wattled across; the roof was low, and covered with straw. I now began to be a little comforted; and took out some toys, which travellers usually carry for presents to the savage Indians of America, and other parts, in hopes the people of the house would be thereby encouraged to receive me kindly. The horse made me a sign to go in first; it was a large room with a smooth clay floor, and a rack and manger, extending the whole length of one side. There were three nags and two mares, not eating, but some of them sitting down upon their hams, which I very much wondered at; but wondered more to see the rest employed in domestic business; these seemed but ordinary cattle; however, this confirmed my first opinion, that a people who could

so far civilize brute animals must needs excel in wisdom all the nations of the world. The gray came in just after, and thereby prevented any ill-treatment which the others might have given me. He neighed to them several times in a style of authority, and received answers.

Beyond this room there were three others, reaching the length of the house, to which you passed through three doors, opposite to each other, in the manner of a vista; we went through the second room towards the third. Here the gray walked in first, beckoning me to attend; I waited in the second room, and got ready my presents for the master and mistress of the house: they were two knives, three bracelets of false pearls, a small looking-glass, and a bead necklace. The horse neighed three or four times, and I waited to hear some answers in a human voice, but I heard no other returns than in

the same dialect, only one or two a little shriller than his. I began to think that this house must belong to some person of great note among them, because there appeared so much ceremony before I could gain admittance. But, that a man of quality should be served all by horses was beyond my comprehension: I feared my brain was disturbed by my suffering and misfortunes: I roused myself, and looked about me in the room where I was left alone: this was furnished like the first, only after a more elegant manner. I rubbed my eyes often, but the same objects still occurred. I pinched my arms and sides to awake myself, hoping I might be in a dream. I then absolutely concluded that all these appearances could be nothing else but necromancy and magic. But I had no time to pursue these reflections, for the gray horse came to the door, and made me a sign to follow him into the third room, where I saw a very comely mare, together with a colt and foal, sitting on their haunches upon mats of straw, not unartfully made, and perfectly neat and clean.

The mare soon after my entrance rose from her mat, and coming up close, after having nicely observed my hands and face, gave me a most contemptuous look, and turning to the horse, I heard the word *Yahoo* often repeated betwixt them; the meaning of which I could not then comprehend; al-

though it was the first I had learned to pronounce; but I was soon better informed, to my everlasting mortification; for the horse beckoning to me with his head, and repeating the *hhuun, hhuun*, as he did upon the road, which I understood was to attend him, led me out into a kind of court, where was another building, at some distance from the house. Here we entered, and I saw three of those detestable creatures, which I first met after my landing, feeding upon roots, and the flesh of some animals, which I afterwards found to be that of asses and dogs, and now and then a cow, dead by accident or disease. They were all tied by the neck with strong withes fastened to a beam; they held their food between the claws of their forefeet, and tore it with their teeth.

The master horse ordered a sorrel nag, one of his servants, to untie the largest of these animals, and take him into the yard. The beast and I were brought close together, and our countenances diligently compared both by master and servant, who thereupon repeated several times the word *Yahoo*. My horror and astonishment are not to be described, when I observed, in this abominable animal, a perfect human figure: the face of it indeed was flat and broad, the nose depressed, the lips large, and the mouth wide....

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT (1886—)

The Horse Thief

*from THE BURGLAR OF THE
ZODIAC, AND OTHER POEMS*

Not only the beauty of the images and the wonderful rolling rhythm but the unusual conception, tying the wild west with mythology, makes this poem of William Rose Benét a masterpiece never to be forgotten.

There he moved, cropping the grass at the
purple canyon's lip.

His mane was mixed with the moonlight that
silvered his snow-white side,

For the moon sailed out of a cloud with the
wake of a spectral ship.

I crouched and I crawled on my belly, my
lariat coil looped wide.

Dimly and dark the mesas broke on the starry
sky.

A pall covered every color of their gorgeous
glory at noon.

I smelt the yucca and mesquite, and stifled my
heart's quick cry,

And wormed and crawled on my belly to
where he moved against the moon.

Some Moorish barb was that mustang's sire.
His lines were beyond all wonder.

From the prick of his ears to the flow of his
tail he ached in my throat and eyes.

Steel and velvet grace! As the prophet says,
God had "clothed his neck with thun-
der."

Oh, marvelous with the drifting cloud he
drifted across the skies!

And then I was near at hand—crouched, and
balanced, and cast the coil;

And the moon was smothered in cloud, and
the rope through my hands with a rip!

But somehow I gripped and clung, with the
blood in my brain a-boil—

With a turn round the rugged tree-stump
there on the purple canyon's lip.

Right into the stars he reared aloft, his red eye
rolling and raging.

He whirled and sunfished and lashed, and
rocked the earth to thunder and flame.

He squealed like a regular devil horse. I was
haggard and spent and aging—

Roped clean, but almost storming clear, his
fury too fierce to tame.

And I cursed myself for a tenderfoot, moon-
dazzled to play the part,

But I was doubly desperate then, with the
posse pulled out from town,

Or I'd never have tried it. I only knew I must
get a mount and a start.

The filly had snapped her foreleg short. I
had had to shoot her down.

So there he struggled and strangled, and I
 snubbed him around a tree.
 Nearer, a little nearer—hoofs planted, and
 lolling tongue—
 Till a sudden slack pitched me backward. He
 reared right on top of me.
 Mother of God—that moment! He missed
 me . . . and up I swung.

Somehow, gone daft completely and clawing
 a bunch of his mane,
 As he stumbled and tripped in the lariat,
 there I was—up and astride
 And cursing for seven counties! And the mus-
 tang? *Just insane!*
 Crack-bang! went the rope; we cannoned off
 the tree—then—gods, that ride!

A rocket—that's all, a rocket! I dug with my
 teeth and nails.
 Why, we never hit even the high spots
 (though I hardly remember things),
 But I heard a monstrous booming like a thun-
 der of flapping sails
 When he spread—well, *call* me a liar!—
 when he spread those wings, those
 wings!

So white that my eyes were blinded, thick-
 feathered and wide unfurled,
 They beat the air into billows. We sailed and
 the earth was gone.
 Canyon and desert and mesa withered below,
 with the world.
 And then I knew that mustang; for I—was
 Bellerophon!

Yes, glad as the Greek, and mounted on a
 horse of the elder gods,
 With never a magic bridle or a fountain-
 mirror nigh!
*My chaps and spurs and holster must have
 looked it!* What's the odds?
 I'd a leg over lightning and thunder, careering
 across the sky!

And forever streaming before me, fanning my
 forehead cool,
 Flowed a mane of molten silver; and just
 before my thighs

(As I gripped his velvet-muscled ribs, while
 I cursed myself for a fool)
 The steady pulse of those pinions—their
 wonderful fall and rise!

The bandanna I bought in Bowie blew loose
 and whipped from my neck.
 My shirt was stuck to my shoulders and rib-
 boning out behind.
 The stars were dancing, wheeling and glanc-
 ing, dipping with smirk and beck.
 The clouds were flowing, dusking and glow-
 ing. We rode a roaring wind.

We soared through the silver starlight to
 knock at the planets' gates.
 New shimmering constellations came whirl-
 ing into our ken.
 Red stars and green and golden swung out of
 the void that waits
 For man's great last adventure; the Signs
 took shape—and then

I knew the lines of that Centaur the moment
 I saw him come!
 The musical box of the heavens all around
 us rolled to a tune
 That tinkled and chimed and trilled with sil-
 ver sounds that struck you dumb,
 As if some archangel were grinding out the
 music of the moon.

Melody-drunk on the Milky Way, as we swept
 and soared hilarious,
 Full in our pathway he stood—the Centaur
 of the Stars,
 Flashing from head and hoofs and breast! I
 knew him for Sagittarius.
 He reared, and bent and drew his bow. He
 crouched as a boxer spars.

Flung back on his haunches, weird he loomed;
 then leapt—and the dim void lightened.
 Old White Wings shied and swerved aside,
 and fled from the splendor-shod.
 Through the flashing welter of worlds we
 charged. I knew why my horse was
 frightened.
 He *had* two faces—a dog's and a man's—
 that Babylonian god!

Also, he followed us real as fear. Ping! went an
arrow past.

My broncho buck-jumped, humping high.

We plunged... I guess that's all!

I lay on the purple canyon's lip, when I opened
my eyes at last—

Stiff and sore and my head like a drum, but
I broke no bones in the fall.

So you know—and now you may string me
up. Such was the way you caught me.

Thank you for letting me tell it straight,
though you never could greatly care.

For I took a horse that wasn't mine!... But
there's one the heavens brought me,

And I'll hang right happy, because I know
he is waiting for me up there.

From creamy muzzle to cannon-bone, by God,
he's a peerless wonder!

He is steel and velvet and furnace-fire, and
death's supremest prize,

And never again shall be roped on earth that
neck that is "clothed in thunder"...

String me up, Dave! Go dig my grave! *I
rode him across the skies!*

WASHINGTON IRVING (1783—1859)

Governor Manco and the Soldier

from THE ALHAMBRA

The legend of a vast cave where knights and their horses sleep, waiting for the signal to awake and conquer the earth, crops up in the folklore of many lands. Washington Irving uses it here for a most amusing story that will always be a living part of our literature.

When Governor Manco, or the one-armed, kept up a show of military state in the Alhambra, he became nettled at the reproaches continually cast upon his fortress of being a nestling place of rogues and contrabandistas. On a sudden, the old potentate determined on reform, and setting vigorously to work, ejected whole nests of vagabonds out of the fortress, and the gypsy caves with which the surrounding hills are honey-combed. He sent out soldiers, also, to patrol the avenues and footpaths, with orders to take up all suspicious persons.

One bright summer morning, a patrol consisting of the testy old corporal who had distinguished himself in the affair of the notary, a trumpeter and two privates were seated under the garden wall of the Generaliffe, beside the road which leads down from the mountain of the Sun, when they heard the tramp of a horse, and a male

voice singing in rough, though not unmusical tones, an old Castilian campaigning song.

Presently they beheld a sturdy, sun-burnt fellow clad in the ragged garb of a foot-soldier, leading a powerful Arabian horse caparisoned in the ancient Morisco fashion.

Astonished at the sight of a strange soldier, descending, steed in hand, from that solitary mountain, the corporal stepped forth and challenged him.

“Who goes there?”

“A friend.”

“Who, and what are you?”

“A poor soldier, just from the wars, with a cracked crown and empty purse for a reward.”

By this time they were enabled to view him more narrowly. He had a black patch across his forehead, which, with a grizzled beard, added to a certain dare-devil cast of countenance, while a slight squint threw

into the whole an occasional gleam of roguish good-humor.

Having answered the questions of the patrol, the soldier seemed to consider himself entitled to make others in return.

"May I ask," said he, "what city is this which I see at the foot of the hill?"

"What city!" cried the trumpeter; "come, that's too bad. Here's a fellow lurking about the mountain of the Sun, and demands the name of the great city of Granada."

"Granada! Madre de Dios! can it be possible!"

"Perhaps not!" rejoined the trumpeter, "and perhaps you have no idea that yonder are the towers of the Alhambra?"

"Son of a trumpet," replied the stranger, "do not trifle with me; if this be indeed the Alhambra, I have some strange matters to reveal to the governor."

"You will have an opportunity," said the corporal, "for we mean to take you before him."

By this time the trumpeter had seized the bridle of the steed, the two privates had each secured an arm of the soldier, the corporal put himself in front, gave the word, "forward, march!" and away they marched for the Alhambra.

The sight of a ragged foot-soldier and a fine Arabian horse brought in captive by the patrol, attracted the attention of all the idlers of the fortress, and of those gossip groups that generally assemble about wells and fountains at early dawn. The wheel of the cistern paused in its rotations; the slipshod servant-maid stood gaping with pitcher in hand, as the corporal passed by with his prize. A motley train gradually gathered in the rear of the escort. Knowing nods, and winks, and conjectures passed from one to another. It is a deserter, said one; a contrabandista, said another; a

bandalero, said a third, until it was affirmed that a captain of a desperate band of robbers had been captured by the prowess of the corporal and his patrol. "Well, well," said the old crones one to another, "captain or not, let him get out of the grasp of old Governor Manco if he can, though he is but one-handed."

Governor Manco was seated in one of the inner halls of the Alhambra, taking his morning's cup of chocolate in company with his confessor, a fat Franciscan friar from the neighbouring convent. A demure, dark-eyed damsel of Malaga, the daughter of his housekeeper, was attending upon him.

The world hinted that the damsel, who, with all her demureness, was a sly, buxom baggage, had found out a soft spot in the iron heart of the old governor, and held complete control over him,—but let that pass; the domestic affairs of these mighty potentates of the earth should not be too narrowly scrutinized.

When word was brought that a suspicious stranger had been taken lurking about the fortress, and was actually in the outer court, in durance of the corporal, waiting the pleasure of his excellency, the pride and stateliness of office swelled the bosom of the governor. Giving back his chocolate cup into the hands of the demure damsel, he called for his basket-hilted sword, girded it to his side, twirled up his mustachios, took his seat in a large high-backed chair, assumed a bitter and forbidding aspect, and ordered the prisoner into his presence. The soldier was brought in, still closely pinioned by his captors, and guarded by the corporal. He maintained, however, a resolute, self-confident air, and returned the sharp, scrutinizing look of the governor with an easy

squint, which by no means pleased the punctilious old potentate.

"Well, culprit!" said the governor, after he had regarded him for a moment in silence, "what have you to say for yourself? who are you?"

"A soldier, just from the wars, who has brought away nothing but scars and bruises."

"A soldier? humph! a foot-soldier by your garb. I understand you have a fine Arabian horse. I presume you brought him too from the wars, besides your scars and bruises."

"May it please your excellency, I have something strange to tell about that horse. Indeed, I have one of the most wonderful things to relate—something too that concerns the security of this fortress, indeed, of all Granada. But it is a matter to be imparted only to your private ear, or in presence of such only as are in your confidence."

The governor considered for a moment, and then directed the corporal and his men to withdraw, but to post themselves outside of the door, and be ready at call. "This holy friar," said he, "is my confessor, you may say anything in his presence—and this damsel," nodding towards the handmaid, who had loitered with an air of great curiosity, "this damsel is of great secrecy and discretion, and to be trusted with any thing."

The soldier gave a glance between a squint and a leer at the demure handmaid. "I am perfectly willing," said he, "that the damsel should remain."

When all the rest had withdrawn, the soldier commenced his story. He was a fluent, smooth-tongued varlet, and had a command of language above his apparent rank.

"May it please your excellency," said he, "I am, as I before observed, a soldier, and have seen some hard service, but my term of enlistment being expired, I was discharged not long since from the army at Valladolid, and set out on foot for my native village in Andalusia. Yesterday evening the sun went down as I was traversing a great dry plain of old Castile."

"Hold!" cried the governor, "what is this you say? Old Castile is some two or three hundred miles from this."

"Even so," replied the soldier, coolly, "I told your excellency I had strange things to relate—but not more strange than true—as your excellency will find, if you will deign me a patient hearing."

"Proceed, culprit," said the governor, twirling up his mustachios.

"As the sun went down," continued the soldier, "I cast my eyes about in search of some quarters for the night, but far as my sight could reach, there were no signs of habitation. I saw that I should have to make my bed on the naked plain, with my knapsack for a pillow; but your excellency is an old soldier, and knows that to one who has been in the wars, such a night's lodging is no great hardship."

The governor nodded assent, as he drew his pocket-handkerchief out of the basket-hilt of his sword, to drive away a fly that buzzed about his nose.

"Well, to make a long story short," continued the soldier, "I trudged forward for several miles, until I came to a bridge over a deep ravine, through which ran a little thread of water, almost dried up by the summer heat. At one end of the bridge was a Moorish tower, the upper part all in ruins, but a vault in the foundations quite entire. Here, thinks I, is a good place to

make a halt. So I went down to the stream, took a hearty drink, for the water was pure and sweet, and I was parched with thirst, then opening my wallet, I took out an onion and a few crusts, which were all my provisions, and seating myself on a stone on the margin of the stream, began to make my supper; intending afterwards to quarter myself for the night in the vault of the tower, and capital quarters they would have been for a campaigner just from the wars, as your excellency, who is an old soldier, may suppose."

"I have put up gladly with worse in my time," said the governor, returning his pocket-handkerchief into the hilt of his sword.

"While I was quietly crunching my crust," pursued the soldier, "I heard something stir within the vault; I listened: it was the tramp of a horse. By and by a man came forth from a door in the foundation of the tower, close by the water's edge, leading a powerful horse by the bridle. I could not well make out what he was by the starlight. It had a suspicious look to be lurking among the ruins of a tower in that wild solitary place. He might be a mere wayfarer like myself; he might be a *contrabandista*; he might be a *bandalero*! What of that,—thank heaven and my poverty, I had nothing to lose,—so I sat still and crunched my crusts.

"He led his horse to the water close by where I was sitting, so that I had a fair opportunity of reconnoitring him. To my surprise, he was dressed in a Moorish garb, with a cuirass of steel, and a polished skull-cap, that I distinguished by the reflection of the stars upon it. His horse, too, was harnessed in the *Morisco* fashion, with great shovel stirrups. He led him, as I said, to the side of the stream, into which

the animal plunged his head almost to the eyes, and drank until I thought he would have burst.

"'Comrade,' said I, 'your steed drinks well: it's a good sign when a horse plunges his muzzle bravely into the water.'

"'He may well drink,' said the stranger, speaking with a Moorish accent; 'it is a good year since he had his last draught.'

"'By Santiago,' said I, 'that beats even the camels that I have seen in Africa. But come, you seem to be something of a soldier, won't you sit down, and take part of a soldier's fare?'—In fact, I felt the want of a companion in this lonely place, and was willing to put up with an infidel. Besides, as your excellency well knows, a soldier is never very particular about the faith of his company, and soldiers of all countries are comrades on peaceable ground."

The governor again nodded assent.

"Well, as I was saying, I invited him to share my supper, such as it was, for I could not do less in common hospitality.

"'I have no time to pause for meat or drink,' said he, 'I have a long journey to make before morning.'

"'In which direction?' said I.

"'Andalusia,' said he.

"'Exactly my route,' said I. 'So as you won't stop and eat with me, perhaps you'll let me mount and ride with you. I see your horse is of a powerful frame: I'll warrant he'll carry double.'

"'Agreed,' said the trooper; and it would not have been civil and soldierlike to refuse, especially as I had offered to share my supper with him. So up he mounted, and up I mounted behind him.

"'Hold fast,' said he, 'my steed goes like the wind.'

“‘Never fear me,’ said I, and so off we set.

“From a walk the horse soon passed to a trot, from a trot to a gallop, and from a gallop to a harum-scarum scamper. It seemed as if rocks, trees, houses, everything, flew hurry-scurry behind us.

“‘What town is this?’ said I.

“‘Segovia,’ said he; and before the words were out of his mouth, the towers of Segovia were out of sight. We swept up the Guadarama mountains, and down by the Escorial; and we skirted the walls of Madrid, and we scoured away across the plains of La Mancha. In this way we went up hill and down dale, by towns and cities all buried in deep sleep, and across mountains, and plains, and rivers, just glimmering in the starlight.

“To make a long story short, and not to fatigue your excellency, the trooper suddenly pulled up on the side of a mountain. ‘Here we are,’ said he, ‘at the end of our journey.’

“I looked about but could see no signs of habitation: nothing but the mouth of a cavern: while I looked, I saw multitudes of people in Moorish dresses, some on horseback, some on foot, arriving as if borne by the wind from all points of the compass, and hurrying into the mouth of the cavern like bees into a hive. Before I could ask a question, the trooper struck his long Moorish spurs into the horse’s flanks, and dashed in with the throng. We passed along a steep winding way that descended into the very bowels of the mountain. As we pushed on, a light began to glimmer up by little and little, like the first glimmerings of day, but what caused it, I could not discover. It grew stronger and stronger, and enabled me to see everything around. I now noticed as we passed along, great caverns opening

to the right and left, like halls in an arsenal. In some there were shields, and helmets, and cuirasses, and lances, and scimitars hanging against the walls; in others, there were great heaps of warlike munitions and camp equipage lying upon the ground.

“It would have done your excellency’s heart good, being an old soldier, to have seen such grand provision for war. Then in other caverns there were long rows of horsemen, armed to the teeth, with lances raised and banners unfurled, all ready for the field; but they all sat motionless in their saddles like so many statues. In other halls, were warriors sleeping on the ground beside their horses, and foot soldiers in groups, ready to fall into the ranks. All were in old-fashioned Moorish dresses and armour.

“Well, your excellency, to cut a long story short, we at length entered an immense cavern, or I might say palace, of grotto work, the walls of which seemed to be veined with gold and silver, and to sparkle with diamonds and sapphires, and all kinds of precious stones. At the upper end sat a Moorish king on a golden throne, with his nobles on each side, and a guard of African blacks with drawn scimitars. All the crowd that continued to flock in, and amounted to thousands and thousands, passed one by one before his throne, each paying homage as he passed. Some of the multitude were dressed in magnificent robes, without stain or blemish, and sparkling with jewels; others in burnished and enamelled armour; while others were in mouldered and mildewed garments, and in armour all battered and dented, and covered with rust.

“I had hitherto held my tongue, for your excellency well knows, it is not for a soldier to ask many questions when on duty, but I could keep silence no longer.

“‘Pr’ythee, comrade,’ said I, ‘what is the meaning of all this?’

“‘This,’ said the trooper, ‘is a great and powerful mystery. Know, O Christian, that you see before you the court and army of Boabdil, the last king of Granada.’

“‘What is this you tell me!’ cried I. ‘Boabdil and his court were exiled from the land hundreds of years ago, and all died in Africa.’

“‘So it is recorded in your lying chronicles,’ replied the Moor, ‘but know that Boabdil and the warriors who made the last struggle for Granada were all shut up in this mountain by powerful enchantment. As to the king and army that marched forth from Granada at the time of the surrender, they were a mere phantom train, or spirits and demons permitted to assume those shapes to deceive the Christian sovereigns. And furthermore let me tell you, friend, that all Spain is a country under the power of enchantment. There is not a mountain-cave, not a lonely watch-tower in the plains, nor ruined castle on the hills, but has some spell-bound warriors sleeping from age to age within its vaults, until the sins are expiated for which Allah permitted the dominion to pass for a time out of the hands of the faithful. Once every year, on the eve of St. John, they are released from enchantment from sunset to sunrise, and permitted to repair here to pay homage to their sovereign; and the crowds which you beheld swarming into the cavern are Moslem warriors from their haunts in all parts of Spain; for my own part, you saw the ruined tower of the bridge in old Castile, where I have now wintered and summered for many hundred years, and where I must be back again by day-break. As to the battalions of horse and foot which you beheld drawn up in array in the neigh-

bouring caverns, they are the spell-bound warriors of Granada. It is written in the book of fate, that when the enchantment is broken, Boabdil will descend from the mountains at the head of this army, resume his throne in the Alhambra and his sway of Granada, and gathering together the enchanted warriors from all parts of Spain, will reconquer the peninsula, and restore it to Moslem rule.’

“‘And when shall this happen?’ said I.

“‘Allah alone knows. We had hoped the day of deliverance was at hand; but there reigns at present a vigilant governor in Alhambra, a staunch old soldier, the same called Governor Manco; while such a warrior holds command of the very outpost, and stands ready to check the first irruption from the mountain, I fear Boabdil and his soldiery must be content to rest upon their arms.’”

Here the governor raised himself somewhat perpendicularly, adjusted his sword, and twirled up his mustachios.

“To make a long story short, and not fatigue your excellency, the trooper having given me this account, dismounted from his steed.

“‘Tarry here,’ said he, ‘and guard my steed, while I go and bow the knee to Boabdil.’ So saying, he strode away among the throng that pressed forward to the throne.

“‘What’s to be done?’ thought I, when thus left to myself. Shall I wait here until this infidel returns to whisk me off on his goblin steed, the Lord knows where? or shall I make the most of my time, and beat a retreat from this hobgoblin community?—A soldier’s mind is soon made up, as your excellency well knows. As to the horse, he belonged to an avowed enemy of the faith and the realm, and was a fair

prize according to the rules of war. So hoisting myself from the crupper into the saddle, I turned the reins, struck the Moorish stirrups into the sides of the steed, and put him to make the best of his way out of the passage by which we had entered. As we scoured by the halls where the Moslem horsemen sat in motionless battalions, I thought I heard the clang of armour, and a hollow murmur of voices. I gave the steed another taste of the stirrups, and doubled my speed. There was now a sound behind me like a rushing blast; I heard the clatter of a thousand hoofs; a countless throng overtook me; I was borne along in the press, and hurled forth from the mouth of the cavern, while thousands of shadowy forms were swept off in every direction by the four winds of heaven.

"In the whirl and confusion of the scene, I was thrown from the saddle, and fell senseless to the earth. When I came to myself I was lying on the brow of a hill, with the Arabian steed standing beside me, for in falling my arm had slipped within the bridle, which, I presume, prevented his whisking off to old Castile.

"Your excellency may easily judge of my surprise on looking round, to behold hedges of aloes and Indian figs, and other proofs of a southern climate, and see a great city below me with towers and palaces, and a grand cathedral. I descended the hill cautiously, leading my steed, for I was afraid to mount him again, lest he should play me some slippery trick. As I descended, I met with your patrol, who let me into the secret that it was Granada that lay before me: and that I was actually under the walls of the Alhambra, the fortress of the redoubted Governor Manco, the terror of all enchanted Moslems. When I heard this, I determined at once to seek your excellency, to inform

you of all that I had seen, and to warn you of the perils that surround and undermine you, that you may take measures in time to guard your fortress, and the kingdom itself, from this intestine army that lurks in the very bowels of the land."

"And pr'ythee, friend, you who are a veteran campaigner, and have seen so much service," said the governor, "how would you advise me to go about to prevent this evil?"

"It is not for an humble private of the ranks," said the soldier modestly, "to pretend to instruct a commander of your excellency's sagacity; but it appears to me that your excellency might cause all the caves and entrances into the mountain to be walled up with solid mason-work, so that Boabdil and his army might be completely corked up in their subterranean habitation. If the good father too," added the soldier, reverently bowing to the friar, and devoutly crossing himself, "would consecrate the barricadoes with his blessing, and put up a few crosses and reliques, and images of saints, I think they might withstand all the power of infidel enchantments."

"They doubtless would be of great avail," said the friar.

The governor now placed his arm a-kimbo, with his hand resting on the hilt of his toledo, fixed his eye upon the soldier, and gently wagging his head from one side to the other:

"So, friend," said he, "then you really suppose I am to be gulled with this cock-and-bull story about enchanted mountains, and enchanted Moors. Hark ye, culprit!—not another word.—An old soldier you may be, but you'll find you have an old soldier to deal with; and one not easily outgeneralled. Ho! guard there!—put this fellow in irons."

The demure handmaid would have put

in a word in favour of the prisoner, but the governor silenced her with a look.

As they were pinioning the soldier, one of the guards felt something of bulk in his pocket, and drawing it forth, found a long leathern purse that appeared to be well filled. Holding it by one corner, he turned out the contents on the table before the governor, and never did freebooter's bag make more gorgeous delivery. Out tumbled rings and jewels, and rosaries of pearls, and sparkling diamond crosses, and a profusion of ancient golden coin, some of which fell jingling to the floor, and rolled away to the uttermost parts of the chamber.

For a time the functions of justice were suspended: there was a universal scramble after the glittering fugitives. The governor alone, who was imbued with true Spanish pride, maintained his stately decorum, though his eye betrayed a little anxiety until the last coin and jewel was restored to the sack.

The friar was not so calm; his whole face glowed like a furnace, and his eyes twinkled and flashed at sight of the rosaries and crosses.

"Sacriligious wretch that thou art," exclaimed he, "what church or sanctuary hast thou been plundering of these sacred reliques?"

"Neither one nor the other, holy father. If they be sacriligious spoils, they must have been taken in times long past by the infidel trooper I have mentioned. I was just going to tell his excellency, when he interrupted me, that, on taking possession of the trooper's horse, I unhooked a leathern sack which hung at the saddle bow, and which, I presume, contained the plunder of his campaignings in days of old, when the Moors overran the country."

"Mighty well,—at present you will make up your mind to take up your quarters in a chamber of the Vermilion towers, which, though not under a magic spell, will hold you as safe as any cave of your enchanted Moors."

"Your excellency will do as you think proper," said the prisoner coolly. "I shall be thankful to your excellency for any accommodation in the fortress. A soldier who has been in the wars, as your excellency well knows, is not particular about his lodgings; and provided I have a snug dungeon and regular rations, I shall manage to make myself comfortable. I would only entreat, that while your excellency is so careful about me, you would have an eye to your fortress, and think on the hint I dropped about stopping up the entrances to the mountain."

Here ended the scene. The prisoner was conducted to a strong dungeon in the Vermilion towers, the Arabian steed was led to his excellency's stable, and the trooper's sack was deposited in his excellency's strong box. To the latter, it is true, the friar made some demur, questioning whether the sacred reliques, which were evidently sacriligious spoils, should not be placed in custody of the church; but as the governor was peremptory on the subject, and was absolute lord in the Alhambra, the friar discreetly dropped the discussion, but determined to convey intelligence of the fact to the church dignitaries in Granada.

To explain these prompt and rigid measures on the part of old Governor Manco, it is proper to observe, that about this time the Alpuxarra mountains in the neighborhood of Granada were terribly infected by a gang of robbers, under the command of a daring chief named Manuel Borasco, who were accustomed to prowl about the

country, and even to enter the city in various disguises to gain intelligence of the departure of convoys of merchandise, or travellers with well-lined purses, whom they took care to waylay in distant and solitary passes of their road. These repeated and daring outrages had awakened the attention of government, and the commanders of the various posts had received instructions to be on the alert, and to take up all suspicious stragglers. Governor Manco was particularly zealous, in consequence of the various stigmas that had been cast upon his fortress, and he now doubted not that he had entrapped some formidable desperado of this gang.

In the mean time the story took wind, and became the talk not merely of the fortress, but of the whole city of Granada. It was said that the noted robber, Manuel Borasco, the terror of the Alpuxarras, had fallen into the clutches of old Governor Manco, and been cooped up by him in a dungeon of the Vermilion towers, and every one who had been robbed by him flocked to recognize the marauder. The Vermilion towers, as is well known, stand apart from the Alhambra, on a sister hill separated from the main fortress by the ravine, down which passes the main avenue. There were no outer walls, but a sentinel patrolled before the tower. The window of the chamber in which the soldier was confined was strongly grated, and looked upon a small esplanade. Here the good folks of Granada repaired to gaze at him, as they would at a laughing hyena grinning through the cage of a menagerie. Nobody, however, recognized him for Manuel Borasco, for that terrible robber was noted for a ferocious physiognomy, and had by no means the good-humored squint of the prisoner. Visitors came not merely from

the city, but from all parts of the country, but nobody knew him, and there began to be doubts in the minds of the common people, whether there might not be some truth in his story. That Boabdil and his army were shut up in the mountain, was an old tradition which many of the ancient inhabitants had heard from their fathers. Numbers went up to the mountain of the Sun, or rather of St. Elena, in search of the cave mentioned by the soldier; and saw and peeped into the deep dark pit, descending, no one knows how far, into the mountain, and which remains there to this day, the fabled entrance to the subterranean abode of Boabdil.

By degrees, the soldier became popular with the common people. A freebooter of the mountains is by no means the opprobrious character in Spain that a robber is in any other country; on the contrary, he is a kind of chivalrous personage in the eyes of the lower classes. There is always a disposition, also, to cavil at the conduct of those in command, and many began to murmur at the high-handed measures of old Governor Manco, and to look upon the prisoner in the light of a martyr.

The soldier, moreover, was a merry, waggish fellow, that had a joke for every one who came near his window, and a soft speech for every female. He had procured an old guitar also, and would sit by his window and sing ballads and love-ditties to the delight of the women of the neighbourhood, who would assemble on the esplanade in the evenings, and dance boleros to his music. Having trimmed off his rough beard, his sunburnt face found favour in the eyes of the fair, and the demure handmaid of the governor declared that his squint was perfectly irresistible. This kind-hearted damsel had, from the first, evinced

a deep sympathy in his fortunes, and having in vain tried to mollify the governor, had set to work privately to mitigate the rigour of his dispensations. Every day she brought the prisoner some crumbs of comfort which had fallen from the governor's table, or been abstracted from his larder, together with, now and then, a consoling bottle of choice Val de Peñas, or rich Malaga.

While this petty treason was going on in the very centre of the old governor's citadel, a storm of open war was brewing up among his external foes. The circumstance of a bag of gold and jewels having been found upon the person of the supposed robber, had been reported with many exaggerations in Granada. A question of territorial jurisdiction was immediately started by the governor's inveterate rival, the captain-general. He insisted that the prisoner had been captured without the precincts of the Alhambra, and within the rules of his authority. He demanded his body, therefore, and the spolia opima taken with him. Due information having been carried likewise by the friar to the grand Inquisitor, of the crosses, and the rosaries, and other reliques contained in the bag, he claimed the culprit, as having been guilty of sacrilege, and insisted that his plunder was due to the church, and his body to the next Auto da Fe. The feuds ran high; the governor was furious, and swore, rather than surrender his captive, he would hang him up within the Alhambra, as a spy caught within the purlieus of the fortress.

The captain-general threatened to send a body of soldiers to transfer the prisoner from the Vermilion towers to the city. The grand Inquisitor was equally bent upon despatching a number of the familiars of

the holy office. Word was brought late at night to the governor, of these machinations. "Let them come," said he, "they'll find me beforehand with them. He must rise bright and early who would take in an old soldier." He accordingly issued orders to have the prisoner removed at day-break to the Donjon Keep within the walls of the Alhambra: "And d'ye hear, child," said he to his demure handmaid, "tap at my door, and wake me before cock-crowing, that I may see to the matter myself."

The day dawned, the cock crowed, but nobody tapped at the door of the governor. The sun rose high above the mountaintops, and glittered in at his casement ere the governor was awakened from his morning dreams by his veteran corporal, who stood before him with terror stamped upon his iron visage.

"He's off! he's gone!" cried the corporal, gasping for breath.

"Who's off?—who's gone?"

"The soldier—the robber—the devil, for aught I know. His dungeon is empty, but the door locked. No one knows how he has escaped out of it."

"Who saw him last?"

"Your handmaid,—she brought him his supper."

"Let her be called instantly."

Here was new matter of confusion. The chamber of the demure damsel was likewise empty; her bed had not been slept in; she had doubtless gone off with the culprit, as she had appeared, for some days past, to have frequent conversations with him.

This was wounding the old governor in a tender part, but he had scarce time to wince at it, when new misfortunes broke upon his view. On going into his cabinet, he found his strong box open, the leathern

purse of the trooper extracted, and with it a couple of corpulent bags of doubloons.

But how, and which way had the fugitives escaped? A peasant who lived in a cottage by the road-side leading up into the Sierra, declared that he had heard the tramp of a powerful steed, just before day-break, passing up into the mountains. He had looked out at his casement, and could

just distinguish a horseman, with a female seated before him.

“Search the stables,” cried Governor Manco. The stables were searched; all the horses were in their stalls, excepting the Arabian steed. In his place was a stout cudgel tied to the manger, and on it a label bearing these words, “A gift to Governor Manco, from an old soldier.”

RUDOLPH ERICK RASPE (1737–1794)
(Edited by William Rose)

Baron Munchausen Acquires a Horse

*from THE TRAVELS
OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN*

Baron Munchausen and his horse may have been superseded in late years by Paul Bunyan and his blue ox, but he will never die in the hearts of those of us to whom he was a familiar character in our days of growing up. Notice how the good Baron first performs feats, incredible to one who knows horses, but perhaps possible to the tyro, then goes on, when he has gotten his reader's confidence and interest, to the completely ludicrous.

I was at Count Przobosky's noble country-seat in Lithuania, and remained with the ladies at tea in the drawing-room, while the gentlemen were down in the yard, to see a young horse of blood which had just arrived from the stud. We suddenly heard a noise of distress; I hastened down-stairs, and found the horse so unruly, that nobody durst approach or mount him. The most resolute horsemen stood dismayed and aghast; despondency was expressed in every countenance, when, in one leap, I was on his back, took him by surprise, and worked him quite into gentleness and obedience, with the best display of horsemanship I was master of. Fully to show this to the ladies, and save them unnecessary trouble, I forced him to leap in at one of the open windows of the tea-room, walked round several times, pace,

trot and gallop, and at last made him mount the tea-table, there to repeat his lessons, in a pretty style of miniature—which was exceedingly pleasing to the ladies, for he performed them amazingly well, and did not break either cup or saucer. It placed me so high in their opinion, and so well in that of the noble lord, that, with his usual politeness, he begged I would accept of this young horse, and ride him full career to conquest and honor in the campaign against the Turks, which was soon to be opened, under the command of Count Munich.

I could not indeed have received a more agreeable present, nor a more ominous one at the opening of that campaign, in which I made my apprenticeship as a soldier. A horse so gentle, so spirited, and so fierce—at once a lamb and a Bucephalus—

put me always in mind of the soldier's and the gentleman's duty! of young Alexander, and of the astonishing things he performed in the field.

We took the field, among several other reasons, it seems, with an intention to retrieve the character of the Russian arms, which had been blemished a little by Czar Peter's last campaign on the Pruth; and this we fully accomplished by several very fatiguing and glorious campaigns under the command of that great general I mentioned before.

Modesty forbids individuals to arrogate to themselves great successes or victories, the glory of which is generally engrossed by the commander, nay, which is rather awkward, by kings and queens who never smelt gunpowder but at the field-days and reviews of their troops; never saw a field of battle, or an enemy in battle array.

Nor do I claim any particular share of glory in the great engagements with the enemy.—We all did our duty, which, in the patriot's, soldier's, and gentleman's language, is a very comprehensive word, of great honor, meaning, and import, and of which the generality of idle quidnuncs and coffee-house politicians can hardly form any but a very mean and contemptible idea. However, having had the command of a body of hussars, I went upon several expeditions, with discretionary powers; and the success I then met with is, I think, fairly and only to be placed to my account, and to that of the brave fellows whom I led on to conquest and to victory. We had very hot work once in the van of the army, when we drove the Turks into Oczakow. My spirited Lithuanian had almost brought me into a scrape: I had an advanced fore-post, and saw the enemy coming against me in a cloud of dust, which left me rather uncer-

tain about their actual numbers and real intentions; to wrap myself up in a similar cloud was common prudence, but would not have much advanced my knowledge, or answered the end for which I had been sent out; therefore I let my flankers on both wings spread to the right and left, and make what dust they could, and I myself led on straight upon the enemy, to have a nearer sight of them; in this I was gratified, for they stood and fought, till, for fear of my flankers, they began to move off rather disorderly. This was the moment to fall upon them with spirit;—we broke them entirely—made a terrible havoc amongst them and drove them not only back to a walled town in their rear, but even through it, contrary to our most sanguine expectation.

The swiftness of my Lithuanian enabled me to be foremost in the pursuit; and seeing the enemy fairly flying through the opposite gate, I thought it would be prudent to stop in the market-place, to order the men to rendezvous. I stopped, gentlemen; but judge of my astonishment when in this market-place I saw not one of my hussars about me! Are they scouring the other streets? or what is become of them? They could not be far off, and must, at all events, soon join me. In that expectation I walked my panting Lithuanian to a spring in this market-place, and let him drink. He drank uncommonly, with an eagerness not to be satisfied, but natural enough, for when I looked round for my men, what should I see, gentlemen—the hind part of the poor creature, croup and legs, were missing, as if he had been cut in two, and the water ran out as it came in, without refreshing or doing him any good! How it could have happened was quite a mystery to me, till I returned with him to the town-gate.

There I saw, that when I rushed in pell-mell with the flying enemy, they had dropped the portcullis (a heavy falling door, with sharp spikes at the bottom, let down suddenly to prevent the entrance of an enemy into a fortified town) unperceived by me, which had totally cut off his hind part, that still lay quivering on the outside of the gate. It would have been an irreparable loss, had not our farrier con-

trived to bring both parts together while hot. He sewed them up with sprigs and young shoots of laurels that were at hand. The wound healed; and, what could not have happened but to so glorious a horse, the sprigs took root in his body, grew up and formed a bower over me; so that afterwards I could go upon many other expeditions in the shade of my own and my horses's laurels.

LUIGI PIRANDELLO (1867—1936)

Black Horses

from BETTER THINK TWICE ABOUT IT

The unusual subject of this story would be sufficient reason for including it in this anthology and its writing makes it doubly desirable, but it is not until the very last paragraph that one realizes the theme of the story.

No sooner had the head-groom left, cursing even louder than usual, than Fofo turned to the new arrival—his stable companion, Nero—and remarked with a sigh:—

“I’ve got the hang of it! Velvets, tassels and plumes. You’re starting well, old fellow. Today’s a first-class job.”

Nero turned his head away. Being a well-bred horse, he did not snort, but he had no wish to become too intimate with that Fofo.

He had come there from a princely stable—a stable where one saw one’s reflection in the polished walls, where the stalls were separated by leather-padded partitions, and each had a hay-rack made of beech-wood, rings of gun-metal, and posts with bright shining nobs on top of them.

But alas! the young prince was mad on those noisy carriages, foul things which belch out smoke behind and run along of themselves. Three times he had nearly

broken his neck in one of them. The old princess—the dear lady—would never have anything to do with those devil-carriages; but, as soon as she was struck down by paralysis, the prince had hastened to dispose of both Nero and Corbino—the last remnants of the stable, hitherto retained to take the mother out for a quiet drive in her landau.

Poor Corbino! Who could tell where he had gone to end his days, after long years of dignified service?

Giuseppe, the good old coachman, had promised them that when he went with the other faithful old retainers to kiss the hand of the princess—now restricted permanently to her arm-chair—he would intercede for them. But it was of no avail: from the way the old man had stroked their necks and flanks, on his return soon afterwards, they both understood at once that all hope was lost, that their fate was settled—they were to be sold.

And so it had come about and Nero did not yet grasp what kind of a place he had found. Bad?—no, one couldn't say that it was really bad. Of course, it was not like the princess' stable. Yet this stable also was a good one. It had more than a score of horses, all black and all rather old, but fine-looking animals, dignified and quite sedate—for that matter, rather too sedate.

Nero doubted whether his companions had any clear idea as to the work on which they were engaged. They seemed to be constantly pondering over it without ever being able to come to any conclusion: the slow swish of their bushy tails, with an occasional scraping of hoofs showed clearly that they were engaged in thinking deeply over something.

Foyo was the only one who was certain—a good deal too certain—that he knew all about it.

A common, presumptuous animal!

Once a regimental charger, cast out after three years' service, because—according to his own story—a brute of a cavalryman from the Abruzzi had broken his wind, he spent his whole time talking and gossiping. Nero, who was still very sad at the parting from his old friend Corbino, could not stand his new acquaintance, whose confidential manner and habit of making nasty remarks about his stable companions jarred upon him horribly.

Heavens! what a tongue he had! Not one of the twenty escaped from it—there was always some fault to find.

“Look at his tail, do look! Fancy calling that a tail! And what a way to swish it! He thinks that's very dashing, you know. I don't mind betting he's been a doctor's horse.

“And just look over there at that Calabrian nag. D'you see how gracefully he

pricks up his pig's ears... look at his fine mane and his chin! He's a showy beast, too, don't you think?

“Every now and then he forgets that he's a gelding and wants to make love to that mare over there, three stalls to the right—d'you see her?—the one whose face looks so old, who's low in the fore-quarters and has her belly on the ground.

“Is she a mare, that thing? She's a cow, I assure you. If you could only see how she moves—regular riding-school style! You'd think she was walking on hot cinders, the way she puts her hoofs down. And a mouth as hard as iron, my dear fellow!”

§ § §

In vain did Nero intimate to Foyo in every possible manner that he did not wish to listen to him. Foyo overwhelmed him with incessant chatter.

“D'you know where we are? We're with a firm of carriers. There are many different sorts of carriers—ours are called undertakers.

“Do you know what it means to be an undertaker's horse? It means that your job is to pull a strange-looking black carriage that has four pillars supporting the roof and is all decked out grand with gilding and a curtain and fringes—in fact a handsome carriage *de luxe*. But it's sheer waste—you'd hardly believe it—sheer waste, 'cause no one ever comes and sits inside it.

“There's only the coachman on the box, looking as solemn as can be.

“And we go slowly, always at a walk. No risk of your ever getting into a muck of sweat and having to be rubbed down on your return, nor of the coachman giving you a cut of the whip or anything else to hurry you up.

“But slowly... slowly... slowly...

"And the place we go to—our destination—we always seem to be there in time.

"You know the carriage I described to you. Well, I've noticed, by the way, that human beings seem to look upon it as an object of peculiar reverence.

"As I told you before, no one ever dares to sit inside it, and, as soon as people see it stop in front of a house, they all stand still and stare at it with long faces, looking quite frightened; and they all surround it, holding lighted candles, and, as soon as it starts again, they follow after it, walking very quietly.

"Quite often, too, there's a band playing in front of us—a band, my dear fellow, which plays a particular kind of music that makes you feel all funny in your bowels.

"Now you mark my words! You've got a nasty habit of shaking your head and snorting. Well, you'll have to drop those tricks. If you snort for nothing at all, what d'you think you'll be doing when you have to listen to that music?

"Ours is a soft enough job, I don't deny; but it does call for composure and solemnity. No snorting or jerking your head up and down! The very most we're allowed is to swish our tails, quite, quite gently, because the carriage we pull—I tell you once again—is highly venerated. You'll notice that all the men take off their hats when they see us pass.

"D'you know how I discovered that we're working for a firm of carriers? It was this way:—

"About two years ago, I was standing harnessed to one of our canopied carriages, in front of the big gateway leading to the building which is our regular goal.

"You'll see it, that big gateway. Behind the railings are any number of dark trees

growing up to a sharp point: they're planted in two rows, forming a long straight avenue. Here and there, between them, there are some fine, green meadows full of good, luscious grass; but that's all sheer waste, too, for one's not allowed to eat it. Woe betide you if you put your lips to it.

"Well—as I was saying—I was standing there, when an old pal of mine from the regimental days came up to me. The poor fellow had come down in the world terribly and was reduced to drawing a waggon—one of those long, low ones, without any springs.

"He said to me:—

"'Hallo, Fofu! D'you see the state I'm in? I'm quite done for!'

"'What work are you on?' I asked.

"'Transporting boxes!' he replied.—'All day long, from a carrier's office to the custom house.'

"'Boxes?' I said. 'What kind of boxes?'

"'Heavy!' he answered. 'Frightfully heavy!—full of merchandise to be forwarded.'

"Then the light dawned on me, for I may as well tell you that we also transport a kind of very long box. They put it inside our carriage from the back, as gently as can be; while that's being done, with tremendous care, the people standing round all take off their hats and watch, with a sort of frightened look. Why they do that I really can't say, but it's obvious that, as our business also is to take boxes, we must be working for a carrier, don't you think so?

"What the devil can be in those boxes? They're heavy—you can't think how heavy they are. Luckily we only convey one at a time.

"We're carriers employed for the trans-

port of goods, that's certain; but what goods I don't know. They seem to be very valuable, because the transport's always carried out with much pomp and accompanied by a number of persons.

"At a certain point we usually, but not always, stop in front of a splendid edifice, which may perhaps be the custom house for our line of transport. This building has a great door-way. Out of this door-way there come men dressed in black gowns, with shirts worn outside them—I suppose they're the customs officials. The box is removed from the carriage, all heads being bared again; then those men mark on the box the permit to proceed with it.

"Where all these valuable goods that we transport go to, I really don't now. I must admit that's something I don't understand. But I'm not at all sure that the human beings know much about that—so I console myself with that thought.

"Indeed the magnificence of the boxes and the solemnity of the ceremony might lead one to suppose that men must know something about this transport business of theirs. But I notice that they're often filled with doubt and fear; and from the long dealings I've had with them for many years, I have come to this conclusion—that human beings do many things, my dear chap, without having any idea at all why they are doing them!"

§ § §

That morning, as Fofu had already guessed from the head-groom's curses, the preparations included velvets, tassels, and plumes, and four horses to the carriage—evidently a first-class affair.

"You see! What did I tell you?"

Nero found himself harnessed to the shaft, with Fofu as his partner. To his an-

noyance there was no escape from his companion's ceaseless explanations.

Fofu was also annoyed that morning, on account of the unfairness of the head-groom, who, when arranging a four-in-hand, always took him as a wheeler, never as one of the leaders.

"The dirty dog! You can see for yourself that pair in front of us is only for show. What are they pulling? Nothing at all! We go so slowly that all the pull falls upon us wheelers. The other pair are merely out for a pleasant walk, to stretch their legs, dressed up to the nines.... And just look at the kind of animals that are given the preference over me, and I've got to put up with it! D'you recognise them?"

They were the two black horses whom Fofu had described as the doctor's horse and the Calabrian nag.

"That foul Calabrian beast! I'm glad he's in front of you, not of me. You'll get a whiff from him, my dear fellow! You'll soon find that it isn't only in the ears that he's like a pig. Won't you just be grateful to the head-groom for making a pet of him and giving him double rations!... If you want to get on in this line of work, don't start snorting.... Hallo! You're beginning it already. Keep your head still. Look here, old chap, if you go on like that, you'll find the reins jerked so hard that your mouth will bleed, I assure you. Because to-day we're going to have speeches, you know.... You'll see what a cheery show it's going to be—one speech, two speeches—three speeches.... I've even had one first-class affair which had five speeches! It was enough to drive one mad—having to stand still for three hours on end, decked out with all this finery so that one could hardly breathe—one's legs shackled, tail imprisoned and ears in two

sheaths. . . . A jolly time, with the flies biting one under the tail! You want to know what speeches are? Oh, just rot! To tell you the truth I haven't got the hang of it, not altogether. . . . These first-class shows must be cases where there's a lot of complication about the transport. Perhaps they have to make those speeches to give the necessary explanations. One isn't enough, so they make a second one. Two aren't enough, so they make a third. They may even run to five, as I told you before. There have been times when I've gone so far as to start kicking to right and left and finished by rolling on the ground like a lunatic. . . . Perhaps it'll be the same to-day. . . . It's a swagger affair, I tell you! Have you seen the coachman—doesn't he look grand? There come the servants and the candle-sticks. . . . I say, are you apt to shy?"

"I don't understand."

"Don't you? I mean do you take fright easily? Because, you see, in a short time they'll be shoving their lighted candles almost under your nose. . . . Steady! oh, steady! What's come over you? There, you see, you've had a jerk at your mouth. . . . Did it hurt? Well, you'll get many more like it to-day, I warn you, if. . . . What are you up to? What's the matter? Have you gone mad? Don't stretch your neck out like that! (What a funny old chap he is!—does he fancy he's swimming? Or is he starting a game of *mora*?) Stand still, I say! . . . There! You've had some more jerks with the reins. . . . Here, stop it! You're making him hurt my mouth too. . . . (Oh, he's mad! . . . Good God! He's gone clean crazy! He's panting and neighing and snorting and plunging and kicking up a row! My God! what a row! He's mad, quite mad! Fancy doing a kick-up when one's drawing a carriage in a first-class show!)"

Nero did indeed appear to have gone quite mad; he panted and quivered and pawed the ground, neighing and squealing. The lackeys sprang hastily down from their carriage to hold him—they had just reached the door of the palace where they were due to halt, where they were received by a large company of gentlemen, all very trim, in frock-coats and silk hats.

"What's happened?" everyone was asking. "Oh, look! look! One of the horses is playing up!"

They rushed up, surrounding the hearse in a jostling crowd and watching the proceedings with interest and surprise, some of them shocked and frightened. The servants were unable to control Nero. The coachman stood up and tugged furiously at the reins, but all in vain. The horse continued to paw the ground, neighing and trembling violently, with his head turned towards the door-way of the palace.

He only quieted down when an aged servant in livery emerged from that door-way, pushed the lackeys on one side and caught hold of the reins. Recognising the animal at once, he cried out with tears in his eyes:—

"Why, it's Nero! it's Nero! Poor old Nero! Of course he is excited. . . . he was our dear mistress' horse! The horse of the poor princess! He recognises the palace, you know. . . . he smells his stable. Poor Nero! . . . come, be good. Yes, you can see, it's me, your old Giuseppe. . . . Now stand still! . . . that's better. . . . Poor old Nero, you have the task of taking her away—d'you see?—your old mistress, whom you still remember. . . . it's your duty to convey her. She'll be glad it's you who are to take her for her last drive."

Furious at the discredit brought upon the undertaker's firm—with all those

gentlefolk present, too—the driver was still pulling savagely at the reins and threatening to flog the horse, but Giuseppe called out to him:—

“That’ll do! That’ll do! Stop it! I’ll look after him...he’s as quiet as a lamb.... Sit down. I’ll lead him the whole way.... We’ll go together—eh, Nero?—taking our kind mistress, very quietly, as we always did, eh? You’ll be good, so’s not to hurt her, won’t you?...Poor old Nero! You still remember her, don’t you? They’ve shut her up in the big box and now they’re just carrying her down....”

At this point Fofò, who had been listening from the other side of the shaft, was so astonished that he broke in with the inquiry:—

“Inside the box!—your mistress?”

Nero launched a kick sideways at him. But Fofò was too excited by his new discovery to resent the attack:—

“Oh! I see! Now I see! so we...” he went on to himself, “so we...I mean to say...Yes, of course, I’ve got it now!... That old man’s weeping....I’ve often before seen lots of others weep on similar occasions...so often seen long faces, sad faces...and heard sad music...just like now....Yes, now I know all about it.... That’s why our job’s such a soft one! It’s only when men must weep, that we horses can be happy and have a restful time....”

He felt strongly tempted to do some kicking and prancing on his own account.

AESOP (6th Century B. C.)

The Horse and His Rider

As there is nothing like Aesop's Fables to be found anywhere in literature, so an anthology of this sort would be incomplete without a quotation from the Greek slave's book of etiquette.

A horse soldier took the utmost care of his charger. As long as the war lasted, he looked upon him as his fellow-helper in all emergencies, and fed him carefully with hay and corn. When the war was over, he only allowed him chaff to eat, and made him carry heavy loads of wood, and subjected him to much slavish drudgery and ill treatment. War, however, being again proclaimed, and the trumpet summoning him to his standard, the Soldier put on his charger its military

trappings, and mounted, being clad in his heavy coat of mail. The Horse fell down straightway under the weight, no longer equal to the burden, and said to his master, "You must now e'en go to war on foot, for you have transformed me from a Horse into an Ass; and how can you expect that I can again turn in a moment from an Ass to a Horse?"

§ § §

Damage is slow to mend.

WALTER de la MARE (1873—)

Suppose

De la Mare's ability to portray for the reader the wishful dreams of a child gives us this charming little poem.

Suppose . . . and suppose that a wild little Horse of Magic
Came cantering out of the sky,
With bridle of silver and into the saddle I mounted
To fly—and to fly.

And we stretched up into the air, fleeting on in the sunshine,
A speck in the gleam
On galloping hoofs, his mane in the wind out-flowing,
As if in a dream.

Suppose and suppose, when the gentle star of evening
Came crinkling into the blue,
A magical castle we saw in the air, like a cloud of moonlight
As onward we flew.

And across the green moat on the drawbridge we foamed and we snorted,
And there was a beautiful queen
Who smiled at me strangely; and spoke to my wild little Horse, too—
A lovely and beautiful Queen.

Suppose and suppose she cried to her delicate maidens,
“Behold my daughter—my dear!”
And they crowned me with flowers, and then on their harps sate playing,
Solemn and clear.

And magical cakes and goblets were spread on the table;
And at the window the birds came in;
Hopping along with bright eyes, pecking the crumbs from the platters,
And sipped of the wine.

Walter de la Mare

And splashing up—up on the roof, tossed fountains of crystal;
And Princes in scarlet and green
Shot with their bows and arrows, and kneeled with their dishes
Of fruits for the Queen.

And we walked in a magical garden with rivers and bowers,
And my bed was of ivory and gold;
And the Queen breathed soft in my ear a song of enchantment,
And I never grew old.

And I never came back to the earth, oh never and never,
How mother would cry and cry.
There'd be snow on the fields then, and all these sweet flowers in winter
Would wither and die....
Suppose . . . and suppose

LORD DUNSANY (1878—)

The Bride of the Man-Horse

from THE BOOK OF WONDER

The centaur, though not strictly a horse, is surely the result of man's desire to be one with his mount. As such, and because of its prominence in fable and legend, this anthology would not be complete without one story of the miraculous Man-Horse. Lord Dunsany's love of the fantastic, and his wonderfully beautiful descriptions, make this tale unforgettable.

On the morning of his two hundred and fiftieth year Shepperalk the centaur went to the golden coffer, wherein the treasure of the centaurs was, and taking from it the hoarded amulet that his father, Jyshak, in the years of his prime, had hammered from mountain gold and set with opals bartered from the gnomes, he put it upon his wrist, and said no word, but walked from his mother's cavern.

And he took with him too that clarion of the centaurs, that famous silver horn, that in its time had summoned to surrender seventeen cities of Man, and for twenty years had brayed at star-girt walls in the Siege of Tholdenblarna, the citadel of the gods, what time the centaurs waged their fabulous war and were not broken by any force of arms, but retreated slowly in a cloud of dust before the final miracle of

the gods that They brought in Their desperate need from Their ultimate armoury. He took it and strode away, and his mother only sighed and let him go.

She knew that to-day he would not drink at the stream coming down from the terraces of Varpa Niger, the inner land of the mountains, that today he would not wonder awhile at the sunset and afterwards trot back to the cavern again to sleep on rushes pulled by rivers that know not Man. She knew that it was with him as it had been of old with his father, and with Goom the father of Jyshak, and long ago with the gods. Therefore she only sighed and let him go.

But he, coming out from the cavern that was his home, went for the first time over the little stream, and going round the corner of the crags saw glittering beneath him the mundane plain. And the wind of the

autumn that was gilding the world, rushing up the slopes of the mountain, beat cold on his naked flanks. He raised his head and snorted.

"I am a man-horse now!" he shouted aloud; and leaping from crag to crag he galloped by valley and chasm, by torrent-bed and scar of avalanche, until he came to the wandering leagues of the plain, and left behind him for ever the Athraminaurian mountains.

His goal was Zretazoola, the city of Sombelenë. What legend of Sombelenë's inhuman beauty or of the wonder of her mystery had ever floated over the mundane plain to the fabulous cradle of the centaur's race, the Athraminaurian mountains, I do not know. Yet in the blood of man there is a tide, an old sea-current, rather, that is somehow akin to the twilight, which brings him rumours of beauty from however far away, as driftwood is found at sea from islands not yet discovered: and this spring-tide or current that visits the blood of man comes from the fabulous quarter of his lineage, from the legendary, the old; it takes him out to the woodlands, out to the hills; he listens to ancient song. So it may be that Shepperalk's fabulous blood stirred in those lonely mountains away at the edge of the world to rumors that only the airy twilight knew and only confided secretly to the bat, for Shepperalk was more legendary even than man. Certain it was that he headed from the first for the city of Zretazoola, where Sombelenë in her temple dwelt; though all the mundane plain, its rivers and mountains, lay between Shepperalk's home and the city he sought.

When first the feet of the centaur touched the grass of that soft alluvial earth he blew for joy upon the silver horn, he pranced and caracoled, he gambolled over the

leagues; pace came to him like a maiden with a lamp, a new and beautiful wonder; the wind laughed as it passed him. He put his head down low to the scent of the flowers, he lifted it up to be nearer the unseen stars, he revelled through kingdoms, took rivers in his stride; how can I tell you, ye that dwell in cities, how shall I tell you what he felt as he galloped? He felt for strength like the towers of Bel-Narāna; for lightness like those gossamer palaces that the fairy-spider builds 'twixt heaven and sea along the coasts of Zith; for swiftness like some bird racing up from the morning to sing in some city's spires before daylight comes. He was the sworn companion of the wind. For joy he was as a song; the lightnings of his legendary sires, the earlier gods, began to mix with his blood; his hooves thundered. He came to the cities of men, and all men trembled, for they remembered the ancient mythical wars, and now they dreaded new battles and feared for the race of man. Not by Clio are these wars recorded, history does not know them, but what of that? Not all of us have sat at historians' feet, but all have learned fable and myth at their mothers' knees. And there were none that did not fear strange wars when they saw Shepperalk swerve and leap along the public ways. So he passed from city to city.

By night he lay down unpanting in the reeds of some marsh or a forest; before dawn he rose triumphant, and hugely drank of some river in the dark, and splashing out of it would trot to some high place to find the sunrise, and to send echoing eastwards the exultant greetings of his jubilant horn. And lo! the sunrise coming up from the echoes, and the plains new-lit by the day, and the leagues spinning by like water flung from a top, and that gay com-

panion, the loudly laughing wind, and men and the fears of men and their little cities; and, after that, great rivers and waste spaces and huge new hills, and then new lands beyond them, and more cities of men, and always the old companion the glorious wind. Kingdom by kingdom slipt by, and still his breath was even. "It is a golden thing to gallop on good turf in one's youth," said the young man-horse, the centaur. "Ha, ha," said the wind of the hills, and the winds of the plain answered.

Bells pealed in frantic towers, wise men consulted parchments, astrologers sought of the portent from the stars, the aged made subtle prophecies. "Is he not swift?" said the young. "How glad he is," said children.

Night after night brought him sleep, and day after day lit his gallop, till he came to the lands of the Athalonian men who live by the edges of the mundane plain, and from them he came to the lands of legend again such as those in which he was cradled on the other side of the world, and which fringe the marge of the world and mix with the twilight. And there a mighty thought came into his untired heart, for he knew that he neared Zretazoola now, the city of Sombelenë.

It was late in the day when he neared it, and clouds coloured with evening rolled low on the plain before him; he galloped on into their golden mist, and when it hid from his eyes the sight of things, the dreams in his heart awoke and romantically he pondered all those rumours that used to come to him from Sombelenë, because of the fellowship of fabulous things. She dwelt (said evening secretly to the bat) in a little temple by a lone lake-shore. A grove of cypresses screened her from the city, from Zretazoola of the climbing ways. And opposite her temple stood her tomb, her sad

lake-sepulchre with open door, lest her amazing beauty and the centuries of her youth should ever give rise to the heresy among men that lovely Sombelenë was immortal: for only her beauty and her lineage were divine.

Her father had been half centaur and half god; her mother was the child of a desert lion and that sphinx that watches the pyramids;—she was more mystical than Woman.

Her beauty was as a dream, was as a song; the one dream of a lifetime dreamed on enchanted dews, the one song sung to some city by a deathless bird blown far from his native coasts by storm in Paradise. Dawn after dawn on mountains of romance or twilight after twilight could never equal her beauty; all the glow-worms had not the secret among them nor all the stars of night; poets had never sung it nor even guessed its meaning; the morning envied it, it was hidden from lovers.

She was unwed, unwooed.

The lions came not to woo her because they feared her strength, and the gods dared not love her because they knew she must die.

This was what evening had whispered to the bat, this was the dream in the heart of Shepperalk as he cantered blind through the mist. And suddenly there at his hooves in the dark of the plain appeared the cleft in the legendary lands, and Zretazoola sheltering in the cleft, and sunning herself in the evening.

Swiftly and craftily he bounded down by the upper end of the cleft, and entering Zretazoola by the outer gate which looks out sheer on the stars, he galloped suddenly down the narrow streets. Many that rushed out on to the balconies as he went clattering by, many that put their heads

from glittering windows, are told of in olden song. Shepperalk did not tarry to give greetings or to answer challenges from martial towers, he was down through the earthward gateway like the thunderbolt of his sires, and, like Leviathan who has leapt at an eagle, he surged into the water between temple and tomb.

He galloped with half-shut eyes up the temple steps, and, only seeing dimly through his lashes, seized Sombelenë by the

hair, undazzled as yet by her beauty, and so haled her away; and leaping with her over the floorless chasm where the waters of the lake fall unremembered away into a hole in the world, took her we know not where, to be her slave for all those centuries that are allowed to his race.

Three blasts he gave as he went upon that silver horn that is the world-old treasure of the centaurs. These were his wedding bells.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

The Stallion of Adonis

from VENUS AND ADONIS

Venus and Adonis was the earliest of Shakespeare's works to be published, being first issued in quarto in 1593. The following verses come very early in the poem and set the stage for the love-making of the Goddess and her lover. Never has this description of the physical beauty and passion of a stallion, as expressed in his appearance and movements, been surpassed either in its loveliness or its accuracy.

But, lo, from forth a copse that neighbours by,
A breeding jennet, lusty, young and proud,
Adonis' trampling courser doth espy,
And forth she rushes, snorts and neighs aloud:
The strong-neck'd steed, being tied unto a
tree,
Breaketh his rein and to her straight goes he.

Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
And now his woven girths he breaks asunder;
The bearing earth with his hard hoof he
wounds,
Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's
thunder;
The iron bit he crusheth 'tween his teeth,
Controlling what he was controlled with.

His ears up-prick'd; his braided hanging
mane
Upon his compass'd crest now stand on end;
His nostrils drink the air, and forth again,
As from a furnace, vapours doth he send:
His eye which scornfully glisters like fire,
Shows his hot courage and his high desire.

Sometimes he trots, as if he told the steps,
With gentle majesty and modest pride;
Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,
As who should say, "Lo, thus my strength is
tried;
And this I do to captivate the eye
Of the fair breeder that is standing by."

What reckoneth he his rider's angry stir,
His flattering "Holla" or his "Stand, I say"?
What cares he now for curb or pricking spur?
For rich caparisons or trappings gay?
He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,
For nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

Sometimes he scuds far off, and there he
stares;
Anon he starts at stirring of a feather;
To bid the wind a base he now prepares,
And whether he run or fly they know not
whether;
For through his mane and tail the high wind
sings,
Fanning the hairs, who wave like feather'd
wings.

William Shakespeare

He looks upon his love and neighs unto her;
She answers him, as if she knew his mind:
Being proud, as females are, to see him woo
her,
She puts on outward strangeness, seems un-
kind,
Spurns at his love and scorns the heat he
feels,

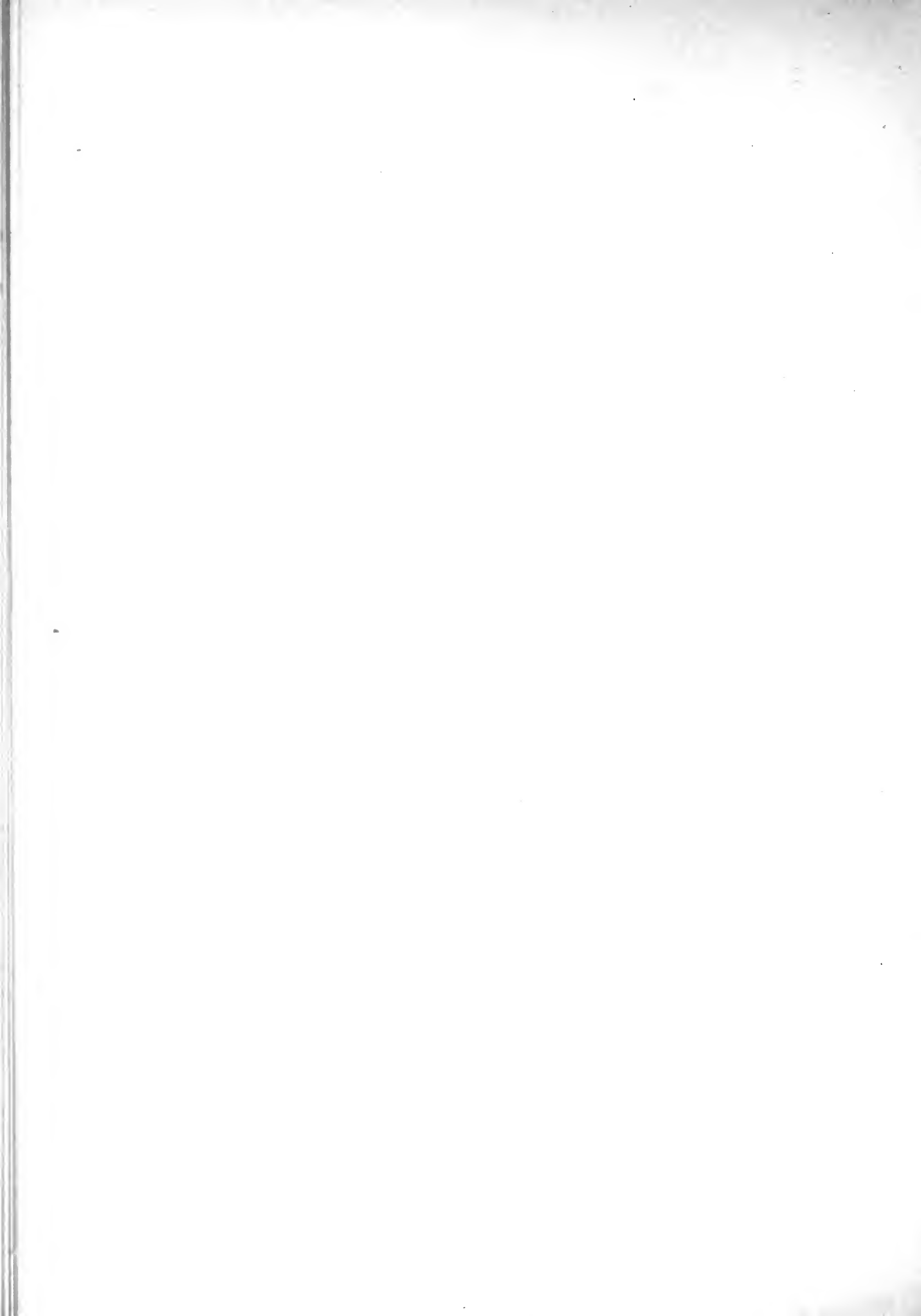
Beating his kind embracement with her
heels.
Then, like a melancholy malcontent,
He veils his tail, that, like a falling plume,
Cool shadow to his melting buttock lent:
He stamps, and bites the poor flies in his fume.
His love perceiving how he was enraged,
Grew kinder and his fury was assuaged.

II

Hunting & Polo

“The 'orse and 'ound were made for each other, and natur threw in the fox as a connecting link between the two.”

—JORROCKS



JOHN MASEFIELD (1875—)

the FIND from

REYNARD THE FOX

Every page of Masefield's magnificent poem, Reynard the Fox, contains passages which are quotable; the description of the members of the Field and their mounts as they collect, which precedes the one I have quoted, so vivid, yet so simple and sparing in its choice of words and metaphor that one wants to read and reread it; the beautiful descriptions of the English countryside; the transformation of the fox from a jaunty, cocksure fellow who enjoys the beginnings of the chase to a frantic, harried, desperate creature, seeking sanctuary behind every clump; all are quotable, all are dramatic, all are impressive. After long consideration I chose the stanzas which follow because of the completeness of the picture they lay before us, "the hunt has been, and found, and gone."

The hunt
Followed down hill to race with him,
White Rabbit with his swallow's skim,
Drew within hail, "Quick burst, Sir Peter."
"A traveller. Nothing could be neater.
Making for Godsdow clumps, I take it?"
"Lark's Leybourne, sir, if he can make it.
Forrard."

Bill Ridden thundered down;
His big mouth grinned beneath his frown,
The hounds were going away from horses.

He saw the glint of water-courses,
Yell Brook and Wittold's Dyke ahead,
His horse shoes sliced the green turf red.
Young Cothill's chaser rushed and past him,
Nob Manor, running next, said "Blast him,
That poet chap who thinks he rides."
Hugh Colway's mare made straking strides
Across the grass, the Colonel next:
Then Squire volleying oaths and vext,
Fighting his hunter for refusing:

Bell Ridden like a cutter cruising
Sailing the grass, then Cob on Warder
The Minton Price upon Marauder;
Ock Gurney with his eyes intense,
Burning as with a different sense,
His big mouth muttering glad "by damns";
Then Pete crouched down from head to hams,
Rapt like a saint, bright focussed flame.
Bennett with devils in his wame
Chewing black cud and spitting slanting;
Copse scattering jests and Stukely ranting;
Sal Ridden taking line from Dansey;
Long Robert forcing Necromancy;
A dozen more with bad beginnings;
Myngs riding hard to snatch an innings,
A wild last hound with high shrill yelps,
Smacked forrard with some whip-thong
skelps.
Then last of all, at top of rise,
The crowd on foot all gasps and eyes
The run up hill had winded them.

John Masefield

They saw the Yell Brook like a gem
Blue in the grass a short mile on;
They heard faint cries, but hounds were
gone

A good eight fields and out of sight
Except a rippled glimmer white
Going away with dying cheering,
And scarlet flappings disappearing,
And scattering horses going, going,
Going like mad, White Rabbit snowing
Far on ahead, a loose horse taking,

Fence after fence with stirrups shaking,
And scarlet specks and dark specks dwindling.

Nearer, were twigs knocked into kindling,
A much bashed fence still dropping stick,
Flung clods, still quivering from the kick,
Cut hoof-marks pale in cheesy clay,
The horse-smell blowing clean away.
Birds flitting back into the cover.
One last faint cry, then all was over.
The hunt had been, and found, and gone.

E. Æ SOMERVILLE (1861—)
AND MARTIN ROSS (1862—1915)

Philippa's Fox-Hunt

*from SOME EXPERIENCES
OF AN IRISH R.M.*

No fox-hunter or lover of Irish tales need be introduced to the stories of that magnificent team of writers, E. Æ Somerville and Martin Ross, for they are revered and loved by all such. And deservedly so; where will you find characters which are more vivid or alive, humor which is more keen and sharp and yet good-tempered and sympathetic, and situations which bring to mind images which are more excruciatingly funny? It is hard indeed to choose from the several volumes which Somerville and Ross have given us, but, if a vote were taken, probably the story which follows would receive as many plaudits as any.

"It isn't the 'unting as 'urts the horse's 'oofs,
It's the 'ammer, 'ammer, 'ammer on the 'ard
'igh road!"

—OLD ENGLISH ADAGE.

No one can accuse Philippa and me of having married in haste. As a matter of fact, it was but little under five years from that autumn evening on the river when I had said what is called in Ireland "the hard word," to the day in August when I was led to the altar by my best man, and was subsequently led away from it by Mrs. Sinclair Yeates. About two years out of the five had been spent by me at Shreelane in ceaseless warfare with drains, eaveshoots, chimneys, pumps; all those fundamentals, in short, that the

ingenuous and improving tenant expects to find established as a basis from which to rise to higher things. As far as rising to higher things went, frequent ascents to the roof to search for leaks summed up my achievements; in fact, I suffered so general a shrinkage of my ideals that the triumph of making the hall-door bell ring blinded me to the fact that the rat-holes in the hall floor were nailed up with pieces of tin biscuit boxes, and that the casual visitor could, instead of leaving a card, have easily written his name in the damp on the walls.

Philippa, however, proved adorably callous to these and similar shortcomings. She regarded Shreelane and its floundering, foundering ménage of incapables in the light of a gigantic picnic in a foreign land; she held long conversations daily with Mrs. Cadogan, in order, as she informed me, to acquire the language; without any ulterior domestic intention she engaged kitchen-maids because of the beauty of their eyes, and housemaids because they had such delightfully picturesque old mothers, and she declined to correct the phraseology of the parlour-maid, whose painful habit it was to whisper "Do ye choose cherry or clarry?" when proffering the wine. Fast-days, perhaps, afforded my wife her first insight into the sterner realities of Irish housekeeping. Philippa had what are known as High Church proclivities, and took the matter seriously.

"I don't know how we are to manage for the servants' dinner to-morrow, Sinclair," she said, coming in to my office one Thursday morning; "Julia says she 'promised God this long time that she wouldn't eat an egg on a fast-day,' and the kitchen-maid says she won't eat herrings 'without they're fried with onions,' and Mrs. Cadogan says she will 'not go to them extremes for servants.'"

"I should let Mrs. Cadogan settle the menu herself," I suggested.

"I asked her to do that," replied Philippa, "and she only said she 'thanked God *she* had no appetite!'"

The lady of the house here fell away into unseasonable laughter.

I made the demoralising suggestion that, as we were going away for a couple of nights, we might safely leave them to fight it out, and the problem was abandoned.

Philippa had been much called on by the

neighbourhood in all its shades and grades, and daily she and her trousseau frocks presented themselves at hall-doors of varying dimensions in due acknowledgment of civilities. In Ireland, it may be noted, the process known in England as "summering and wintering" a newcomer does not obtain; sociability and curiosity alike forbid delay. The visit to which we owed our escape from the intricacies of the fast-day was to the Knoxes of Castle Knox, relations in some remote and tribal way of my landlord, Mr. Flurry of that ilk. It involved a short journey by train, and my wife's longest basket-trunk; it also, which was more serious, involved my being lent a horse to go out cubbing the following morning.

At Castle Knox we sank into an almost forgotten environment of draught-proof windows and doors, of deep carpets, of silent servants instead of clattering belligerents. Philippa told me afterwards that it had only been by an effort that she had restrained herself from snatching up the train of her wedding-gown as she paced across the wide hall on little Sir Valentine's arm. After three weeks at Shreelane she found it difficult to remember that the floor was neither damp nor dusty.

I had the good fortune to be of the limited number of those who got on with Lady Knox, chiefly, I imagine, because I was as a worm before her, and thankfully permitted her to do all the talking.

"Your wife is extremely pretty," she pronounced autocratically, surveying Philippa between the candle-shades; "does she ride?"

Lady Knox was a short square lady, with a weather-beaten face, and an eye decisive from long habit of taking her own line across country and elsewhere. She would have made a very imposing little coachman, and would have caused her stable helpers

to rue the day they had the presumption to be born; it struck me that Sir Valentine sometimes did so.

"I'm glad you like her looks," I replied, "as I fear you will find her thoroughly despicable otherwise; for one thing, she not only can't ride, but she believes that I can!"

"Oh come, you're not as bad as all that!" my hostess was good enough to say; "I'm going to put you up on Sorcerer to-morrow, and we'll see you at the top of the hunt—if there is one. That young Knox hasn't a notion how to draw these woods."

"Well, the best run we had last year out of this place was with Flurry's hounds," struck in Miss Sally, sole daughter of Sir Valentine's house, and home, from her place half-way down the table. It was not difficult to see that she and her mother held different views on the subject of Mr. Flurry Knox.

"I call it a criminal thing in any one's great-great-grandfather to rear up a preposterous troop of sons and plant them all out in his own country," Lady Knox said to me with apparent irrelevance. "I detest collaterals. Blood may be thicker than water, but it is also a great deal nastier. In this country I find that fifteenth cousins consider themselves near relations if they live within twenty miles of one!"

Having before now taken in the position with regard to Flurry Knox, I took care to accept these remarks as generalities, and turned the conversation to other themes.

"I see Mrs. Yeates is doing wonders with Mr. Hamilton," said Lady Knox presently, following the direction of my eyes, which had strayed away to where Philippa was beaming upon her left-hand neighbour, a mildewed-looking old clergyman, who was

delivering a long dissertation, the purport of which we were happily unable to catch.

"She has always had a gift for the Church," I said.

"Not curates?" said Lady Knox, in her deep voice.

I made haste to reply that it was the elders of the Church who were venerated by my wife.

"Well, she has her fancy in old Eustace Hamilton; he's elderly enough!" said Lady Knox. "I wonder if she'd venerate him as much if she knew that he had fought with his sister-in-law, and they haven't spoken for thirty years! though for the matter of that," she added, "I think it shows his good sense!"

"Mrs. Knox is rather a friend of mine," I ventured.

"Is she? H'm! Well, she's not one of mine!" replied my hostess, with her usual definiteness. "I'll say one thing for her, I believe she's always been a sportswoman. She's very rich, you know, and they say she only married old Badger Knox to save his hounds from being sold to pay his debts, and then she took the horn from him and hunted them herself. Has she been rude to your wife yet? No? Oh, well, she will. It's a mere question of time. She hates all English people. You know the story they tell of her? She was coming home from London, and when she was getting her ticket the man asked if she had said a ticket for York. 'No, thank God, Cork!' says Mrs. Knox."

"Well, I rather agree with her!" said I; "but why did she fight with Mr. Hamilton?"

"Oh, nobody knows. I don't believe they know themselves! Whatever it was, the old lady drives five miles to Fortwilliam every Sunday, rather than go to his church,

just outside her own back gates," Lady Knox said with a laugh like a terrier's bark. "I wish I'd fought with him myself," she said; "he gives us forty minutes every Sunday."

As I struggled into my boots the following morning, I felt that Sir Valentine's acid confidences on cub-hunting, bestowed on me at midnight, did credit to his judgment. "A very moderate amusement, my dear Major," he had said, in his dry little voice; "you should stick to shooting. No one expects you to shoot before daybreak."

It was six o'clock as I crept downstairs, and found Lady Knox and Miss Sally at breakfast, with two lamps on the table, and a foggy daylight oozing in from under the half-raised blinds. Philippa was already in the hall, pumping up her bicycle, in a state of excitement at the prospect of her first experience of hunting that would have been more comprehensible to me had she been going to ride a strange horse, as I was. As I bolted my food I saw the horses being led past the windows, and a faint twang of a horn told that Flurry Knox and his hounds were not far off.

Miss Sally jumped up.

"If I'm not on the Cockatoo before the hounds come up, I shall never get there!" she said, hobbling out of the room in the toils of her safety habit. Her small, alert face looked very childish under her riding-hat; the lamp-light struck sparks out of her thick coil of golden-red hair: I wondered how I had ever thought her like her prim little father.

She was already on her white cob when I got to the hall-door, and Flurry Knox was riding over the glistening wet grass with his hounds, while his whip, Dr. Jerome Hickey, was having a stirring time with the young entry and the rabbit-holes.

They moved on without stopping, up a back avenue, under tall and dripping trees, to a thick laurel covert, at some little distance from the house. Into this the hounds were thrown, and the usual period of fidgety inaction set in for the riders, of whom, all told, there were about half-a-dozen. Lady Knox, square and solid, on her big, confidential iron-grey, was near me, and her eyes were on me and my mount; with her rubicund face and white collar she was more than ever like a coachman.

"Sorcerer looks as if he suited you well," she said, after a few minutes of silence, during which the hounds rustled and crackled steadily through the laurels; "he's a little high on the leg, and so are you, you know, so you show each other off."

Sorcerer was standing like a rock, with his good-looking head in the air and his eyes fastened on the covert. His manners, so far, had been those of a perfect gentleman, and were in marked contrast to those of Miss Sally's cob, who was sidling, hopping, and snatching unappeasably at his bit. Philippa had disappeared from view down the avenue ahead. The fog was melting, and the sun threw long blades of light through the trees; everything was quiet, and in the distance the curtained windows of the house marked the warm repose of Sir Valentine, and those of the party who shared his opinion of cubbing.

"Hark! hark to cry there!"

It was Flurry's voice, away at the other side of the covert. The rustling and brushing through the laurels became more vehement, then passed out of hearing.

"He never will leave his hounds alone," said Lady Knox disapprovingly.

Miss Sally and the Cockatoo moved away in a series of heraldic capers towards the end of the laurel plantation, and at the

same moment I saw Philippa on her bicycle shoot into view on the drive ahead of us.

"I've seen a fox!" she screamed, white with what I believe to have been personal terror, though she says it was excitement; "it passed quite close to me!"

"What way did he go?" bellowed a voice which I recognised as Dr. Hickey's, somewhere in the deep of the laurels.

"Down the drive!" returned Philippa, with a pea-hen quality in her tones with which I was quite unacquainted.

An electrifying screech of "Gone away!" was projected from the laurels by Dr. Hickey.

"Gone away!" chanted Flurry's horn at the top of the covert.

"This is what he calls cubbing!" said Lady Knox, "a mere farce!" but none the less she loosed her sedate monster into a canter.

Sorcerer got his hind-legs under him, and hardened his crest against the bit, as we all hustled along the drive after the flying figure of my wife. I knew very little about horses, but I realised that even with the hounds tumbling hysterically out of the covert, and the Cockatoo kicking the gravel into his face, Sorcerer comported himself with the manners of the best society. Up a side road I saw Flurry Knox opening half of a gate and cramming through it; in a moment we also had crammed through, and the turf of a pasture field was under our feet. Dr. Hickey leaned forward and took hold of his horse; I did likewise, with the trifling difference that my horse took hold of me, and I steered for Flurry Knox with single-hearted purpose, the hounds, already a field ahead, being merely an exciting and noisy accompaniment of this endeavour. A heavy stone wall was the first occurrence of note. Flurry chose a place

where the top was loose, and his clumsy-looking brown mare changed feet on the rattling stones like a fairy. Sorcerer came at it, tense and collected as a bow at full stretch, and sailed steeply into the air; I saw the wall far beneath me, with an unsuspected ditch on the far side, and I felt my hat following me at the full stretch of its guard as we swept over it, then, with a long slant, we descended to earth some sixteen feet from where we had left it, and I was possessor of the gratifying fact that I had achieved a good-sized "fly," and had not perceptibly moved in my saddle. Subsequent disillusioning experience has taught me that but few horses jump like Sorcerer, so gallantly, so sympathetically, and with such supreme mastery of the subject; but none the less the enthusiasm that he imparted to me has never been extinguished, and that October morning ride revealed to me the unsuspected intoxication of fox-hunting.

Behind me I heard the scrabbling of the Cockatoo's little hoofs among the loose stones, and Lady Knox, galloping on my left, jerked a maternal chin over her shoulder to mark her daughter's progress. For my part, had there been an entire circus behind me, I was far too much occupied with ramming on my hat and trying to hold Sorcerer, to have looked round, and all my spare faculties were devoted to steering for Flurry, who had taken a right-handed turn, and was at that moment surmounting a bank of uncertain and briary aspect. I surmounted it also, with the swiftness and simplicity for which the Quaker's methods of bank jumping had not prepared me, and two or three fields, traversed at the same steeplechase pace, brought us to a road and to an abrupt check. There, suddenly, were the hounds, scrambling in

baffled silence down into the road from the opposite bank, to look for the line they had overrun, and there, amazingly, was Philippa, engaged in excited converse with several men with spades over their shoulders.

"Did ye see the fox, boys?" shouted Flurry, addressing the group.

"We did! we did!" cried my wife and her friends in chorus; "he ran up the road!"

"We'd be badly off without Mrs. Yeates!" said Flurry, as he whirled his mare round and clattered up the road with a hustle of hounds after him.

It occurred to me as forcibly as any mere earthly thing can occur to those who are wrapped in the sublimities of a run, that, for a young woman who had never before seen a fox out of a cage at the Zoo, Philippa was taking to hunting very kindly. Her cheeks were a most brilliant pink, her blue eyes shone.

"Oh, Sinclair!" she exclaimed, "they say he's going for Aussolas, and there's a road I can ride all the way!"

"Ye can, Miss! Sure we'll show you!" chorussed her *cortège*.

Her foot was on the pedal ready to mount. Decidedly my wife was in no need of assistance from me.

Up the road a hound gave a yelp of discovery, and flung himself over a stile into the fields; the rest of the pack went squealing and jostling after him, and I followed Flurry over one of those infinitely varied erections, pleasantly termed "gaps" in Ireland. On this occasion the gap was made of three razor-edged slabs of slate leaning against an iron bar, and Sorcerer conveyed to me his thorough knowledge of the matter by a lift of his hind-quarters that made me feel as if I were being skilfully kicked downstairs. To what extent I looked it, I

cannot say, nor providentially can Philippa, as she had already started. I only know that undeserved good luck restored to me my stirrup before Sorcerer got away with me in the next field.

What followed was, I am told, a very fast fifteen minutes; for me time was not; the empty fields rushed past uncounted, fences came and went in a flash, while the wind sang in my ears, and the dazzle of the early sun was in my eyes. I saw the hounds occasionally, sometimes pouring over a green bank, as the charging breaker lifts and flings itself, sometimes driving across a field, as the white tongues of foam slide racing over the sand; and always ahead of me was Flurry Knox, going as a man goes who knows his country, who knows his horse, and whose heart is wholly and absolutely in the right place.

Do what I would, Sorcerer's implacable stride carried me closer and closer to the brown mare, till, as I thundered down the slope of a long field, I was not twenty yards behind Flurry. Sorcerer had stiffened his neck to iron, and to slow him down was beyond me; but I fought his head away to the right, and found myself coming hard and steady at a stonefaced bank with broken ground in front of it. Flurry bore away to the left, shouting something that I did not understand. That Sorcerer shortened his stride at the right moment was entirely due to his own judgment; standing well away from the jump, he rose like a stag out of the tussocky ground, and as he swung my twelve stone six into the air the obstacle revealed itself to him and me as consisting not of one bank but of two, and between the two lay a deep grassy lane, half choked with furze. I have often been asked to state the width of the bohereen, and can only reply that in my opinion it was at least

eighteen feet; Flurry Knox and Dr. Hickey, who did not jump it, say that it is not more than five. What Sorcerer did with it I cannot say; the sensation was of a towering flight with a kick back in it, a biggish drop, and a landing on cee-springs, still on the downhill grade. That was how one of the best horses in Ireland took one of Ireland's most ignorant riders over a very nasty place.

A sombre line of fir-wood lay ahead, rimmed with a grey wall, and in another couple of minutes we had pulled up on the Aussolas road, and were watching the hounds struggling over the wall into Aussolas demesne.

"No hurry now," said Flurry, turning in his saddle to watch the Cockatoo jump into the road, "he's to ground in the big earth inside. Well, Major, it's well for you that's a big-jumped horse. I thought you were a dead man a while ago when you faced him at the bohereen!"

I was disclaiming intention in the matter when Lady Knox and the others joined us.

"I thought you told me your wife was no sportswoman," she said to me, critically scanning Sorcerer's legs for cuts the while, "but when I saw her a minute ago she had abandoned her bicycle and was running across country like——"

"Look at her now!" interrupted Miss Sally. "Oh!—oh!" In the interval between these exclamations my incredulous eyes beheld my wife in mid-air, hand in hand with a couple of stalwart country boys, with whom she was leaping in unison from the top of a bank on to the road.

Every one, even the saturnine Dr. Hickey, began to laugh; I rode back to Philippa, who was exchanging compliments and congratulations with her escort.

"Oh, Sinclair!" she cried, "wasn't it splen-

did? I saw you jumping, and everything! Where are they going now?"

"My dear girl," I said, with marital disapproval, "you're killing yourself. Where's your bicycle?"

"Oh, it's punctured in a sort of lane, back there. It's all right; and then they"—she breathlessly waved her hand at her attendants—"they showed me the way."

"Begor! you proved very good, Miss!" said a grinning cavalier.

"Faith she did!" said another, polishing his shining brow with his white flannel coat-sleeve, "she lepped like a haarse!"

"And may I ask how you propose to go home?" said I.

"I don't know and I don't care! I'm not going home!" She cast an entirely disobedient eye at me. "And your eye-glass is hanging down your back and your tie is bulging out over your waistcoat!"

The little group of riders had begun to move away.

"We're going on into Aussolas," called out Flurry; "come on, and make my grandmother give you some breakfast, Mrs. Yeates; she always has it at eight o'clock."

The front gates were close at hand, and we turned in under the tall beech-trees, with the unswept leaves rustling round the horses' feet, and the lovely blue of the October morning sky filling the spaces between smooth grey branches and golden leaves. The woods rang with the voices of the hounds, enjoying an untrammelled rabbit hunt, while the Master and the Whip, both on foot, strolled along unconcernedly with their bridles over their arms, making themselves agreeable to my wife, an occasional touch of Flurry's horn, or a crack of Dr. Hickey's whip, just indicating to the pack that the authorities still took a friendly interest in their doings.

Down a grassy glade in the wood a party of old Mrs. Knox's young horses suddenly swept into view, headed by an old mare, who, with her tail over her back, stampeded ponderously past our cavalcade, shaking and swinging her handsome old head, while her youthful friends bucked and kicked and snapped at each other round her with the ferocious humor of their kind.

"Here, Jerome, take the horn," said Flurry to Dr. Hickey; "I'm going to see Mrs. Yeates up to the house, the way these tomfools won't gallop on top of her."

From this point it seems to me that Philippa's adventures are more worthy of record than mine, and as she has favoured me with a full account of them, I venture to think my version may be relied on.

Mrs. Knox was already at breakfast when Philippa was led, quaking, into her formidable presence. My wife's acquaintance with Mrs. Knox was, so far, limited to a state visit on either side, and she found but little comfort in Flurry's assurances that his grandmother wouldn't mind if he brought all the hounds in to breakfast, coupled with the statement that she would put her eyes on sticks for the Major.

Whatever the truth of this may have been, Mrs. Knox received her guest with an equanimity quite unshaken by the fact that her boots were in the fender instead of on her feet, and that a couple of shawls of varying dimensions and degrees of age did not conceal the inner presence of a magenta flannel dressing-jacket. She installed Philippa at the table and plied her with food, oblivious as to whether the needful implements with which to eat it were forthcoming or no. She told Flurry where a vixen had reared her family, and she watched him ride away, with some biting comments on

his mare's hocks screamed after him from the window.

The dining-room at Aussolas Castle is one of the many rooms in Ireland in which Cromwell is said to have stabled his horse (and probably no one would have objected less than Mrs. Knox had she been consulted in the matter). Philippa questions if the room had ever been tidied up since, and she endorses Flurry's observation that "there wasn't a day in the year you wouldn't get feeding for a hen and chickens on the floor." Opposite to Philippa, on a Louis Quinze chair, sat Mrs. Knox's woolly dog, its suspicious little eyes peering at her out of their setting of pink lids and dirty white wool. A couple of young horses outside the windows tore at the matted creepers on the walls, or thrust faces that were half-shy, half-impudent, into the room. Portly pigeons waddled to and fro on the broad window-sill, sometimes flying in to perch on the picture-frames, while they kept up incessantly a hoarse and pompous cooing.

Animals and children are, as a rule, alike destructive to conversation; but Mrs. Knox, when she chose, *bien entendu*, could have made herself agreeable in a Noah's ark, and Philippa has a gift of sympathetic attention that personal experience has taught me to regard with distrust as well as respect, while it has often made me realise the worldly wisdom of Kingsley's injunction:

"Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever."

Family prayers, declaimed by Mrs. Knox with alarming austerity, followed close on breakfast, Philippa and a vinegar-faced henchwoman forming the family. The prayers were long, and through the open window as they progressed came distantly a whoop or two; the declamatory tones stag-

gered a little, and then continued at a distinctly higher rate of speed.

"Ma'am! Ma'am!" whispered a small voice at the window.

Mrs. Knox made a repressive gesture and held on her way. A sudden outcry of hounds followed, and the owner of the whisper, a small boy with a face freckled like a turkey's egg, darted from the window and dragged a donkey and bath-chair into view. Philippa admits to having lost the thread of the discourse, but she thinks that the "Amen" that immediately ensued can hardly have come in its usual place. Mrs. Knox shut the book abruptly, scrambled up from her knees, and said, "They've found!"

In a surprisingly short space of time she had added to her attire her boots, a fur cape, and a garden hat, and was in the bath-chair, the small boy stimulating the donkey with the success peculiar to his class, while Philippa hung on behind.

The woods of Aussolas are hilly and extensive, and on that particular morning it seemed that they held as many foxes as hounds. In vain was the horn blown and the whips cracked, small rejoicing parties of hounds, each with a fox of its own, scoured to and fro; every labourer in the vicinity had left his work, and was sedulously heading every fox with yells that would have befitted a tiger hunt, and sticks and stones when occasion served.

"Will I pull out as far as the big rosy-dandhrum, ma'am?" inquired the small boy; "I seen three of the dogs go in it, and they yowling."

"You will," said Mrs. Knox, thumping the donkey on the back with her umbrella; "here! Jeremiah Regan! Come down out of that with that pitchfork! Do you want to kill the fox, you fool?"

"I do not, your honour, ma'am," responded Jeremiah Regan, a tall young countryman, emerging from a bramble brake.

"Did you see him?" said Mrs. Knox eagerly.

"I seen himself and his ten pups drinking below at the lake ere yestherday, your honour, ma'am, and he as big as a chestnut horse!" said Jeremiah.

"Faugh! Yesterday!" snorted Mrs. Knox; "go on to the rhododendrons, Johnny!"

The party, reinforced by Jeremiah and the pitchfork, progressed at a high rate of speed along the shrubbery path, encountering *en route* Lady Knox, stooping on to her horse's neck under the sweeping branches of the laurels.

"Your horse is too high for my coverts, Lady Knox," said the Lady of the Manor, with a malicious eye at Lady Knox's flushed face and dinged hat; "I'm afraid you will be left behind like Absalom when the hounds go away!"

"As they never do anything here but hunt rabbits," retorted her ladyship, "I don't think that's likely."

Mrs. Knox gave her donkey another whack, and passed on.

"Rabbits, my dear!" she said scornfully to Philippa. "That's all she knows about it. I declare it disgusts me to see a woman of that age making such a Judy of herself! Rabbits indeed!"

Down in the thicket of rhododendron everything was very quiet for a time. Philippa strained her eyes in vain to see any of the riders; the horn blowing and the whip cracking passed on almost out of hearing. Once or twice a hound worked through the rhododendrons, glanced at the party, and hurried on, immersed in business. All

at once Johnny, the donkey-boy, whispered excitedly:

"Look at he! Look at he!" and pointed to a boulder of grey rock that stood out among the dark evergreens. A big yellow cub was crouching on it; he instantly slid into the shelter of the bushes, and the irrepressible Jeremiah, uttering a rending shriek, plunged into the thicket after him. Two or three hounds came rushing at the sound, and after this Philippa says she finds some difficulty in recalling the proper order of events; chiefly, she confesses, because of the wholly ridiculous tears of excitement that blurred her eyes.

"We ran," she said, "we simply tore, and the donkey galloped, and as for that old Mrs. Knox, she was giving cracked screams to the hounds all the time, and they were screaming too; and then somehow we were all out on the road!"

What seems to have occurred was that three couple of hounds, Jeremiah Regan, and Mrs. Knox's equipage, amongst them somehow hustled the cub out of Aussolas demesne and up on to a hill on the farther side of the road. Jeremiah was sent back by his mistress to fetch Flurry, and the rest of the party pursued a thrilling course along the road, parallel with that of the hounds, who were hunting slowly through the gorse on the hillside.

"Upon my honour and word, Mrs. Yeates, my dear, we have the hunt to ourselves!" said Mrs. Knox to the panting Philippa, as they pounded along the road. "Johnny, d'ye see the fox?"

"I do, ma'am!" shrieked Johnny, who possessed the usual field-glass vision bestowed upon his kind. "Look at him over-right us on the hill above! Hi! The spotty dog have him! No, he's gone from him! *Gwan out o' that!*" This to the donkey,

with blows that sounded like the beating of carpets, and produced rather more dust.

They had left Aussolas some half a mile behind, when, from a strip of wood on their right, the fox suddenly slipped over the bank on to the road just ahead of them, ran up it for a few yards and whisked in at a small entrance gate, with the three couple of hounds yelling on a red-hot scent, not thirty yards behind. The bath-chair party whirled in at their heels, Philippa and the donkey considerably blown, Johnny scarlet through his freckles, but as fresh as paint, the old lady blind and deaf to all things save the chase. The hounds went raging through the shrubs beside the drive, and away down a grassy slope towards a shallow glen, in the bottom of which ran a little stream, and after them over the grass bumped the bath-chair. At the stream they turned sharply and ran up the glen towards the avenue, which crossed it by means of a rough stone viaduct.

"'Pon me conscience, he's into the old culvert!" exclaimed Mrs. Knox; "there was one of my hounds choked there once, long ago! Beat on the donkey, Johnny!"

At this juncture Philippa's narrative again becomes incoherent, not to say breathless. She is, however, positive that it was somewhere about here that the upset of the bath-chair occurred, but she cannot be clear as to whether she picked up the donkey or Mrs. Knox, or whether she herself was picked up by Johnny while Mrs. Knox picked up the donkey. From my knowledge of Mrs. Knox I should say she picked up herself and no one else. At all events, the next salient point is the palpitating moment when Mrs. Knox, Johnny, and Philippa successively applying an eye to the opening of the culvert by which the stream trickled under the viaduct, while five dripping

hounds bayed and leaped around them, discovered by more senses than that of sight that the fox was in it, and furthermore that one of the hounds was in it too.

"There's a strong grating before him at the far end," said Johnny, his head in at the mouth of the hole, his voice sounding as if he were talking into a jug, "the two of them's fighting in it; they'll be choked surely!"

"Then don't stand gabbling there, you little fool, but get in and pull the hound out!" exclaimed Mrs. Knox, who was balancing herself on a stone in the stream.

"I'd be in dread, ma'am," whined Johnny.

"Balderdash!" said the implacable Mrs. Knox. "In with you!"

I understand that Philippa assisted Johnny into the culvert, and presume that it was in so doing that she acquired the two Robinson Crusoe bare footprints which decorated her jacket when I next met her.

"Have you got hold of him yet, Johnny?" cried Mrs. Knox up the culvert.

"I have, ma'am, by the tail," responded Johnny's voice, sepulchral in the depths.

"Can you stir him, Johnny?"

"I cannot, ma'am, and the wather is rising in it."

"Well, please God, they'll not open the mill dam!" remarked Mrs. Knox philosophically to Philippa, as she caught hold of Johnny's dirty ankles. "Hold on to the tail, Johnny!"

She hauled, with, as might be expected, no appreciable result. "Run, my dear, and look for somebody, and we'll have that fox yet!"

Philippa ran, whither she knew not, pursued by fearful visions of bursting mill-dams, and maddened foxes at bay. As she

sped up the avenue she heard voices, robust male voices, in a shrubbery, and made for them. Advancing along an embowered walk towards her was what she took for one wild instant to be a funeral; a second glance showed her that it was a party of clergymen of all ages, walking by twos and threes in the dappled shade of the over-arching trees. Obviously she had intruded her sacrilegious presence into a Clerical Meeting. She acknowledges that at this awe-inspiring spectacle she faltered, but the thought of Johnny, the hound, and the fox, suffocating, possibly drowning together in the culvert, nerved her. She does not remember what she said or how she said it, but I fancy she must have conveyed to them the impression that old Mrs. Knox was being drowned, as she immediately found herself heading a charge of the Irish Church towards the scene of disaster.

Fate has not always used me well, but on this occasion it was mercifully decreed that I and the other members of the hunt should be privileged to arrive in time to see my wife and her rescue party precipitating themselves down the glen.

"Holy Biddy!" ejaculated Flurry, "is she running a paper-chase with all the parsons? But look! For pity's sake will you look at my grandmother and my Uncle Eustace?"

Mrs. Knox and her sworn enemy the old clergyman, whom I had met at dinner the night before, were standing, apparently in the stream, tugging at two bare legs that projected from a hole in the viaduct, and arguing at the top of their voices. The bath-chair lay on its side with the donkey grazing beside it, on the bank a stout Archdeacon was tendering advice, and the hounds danced and howled round the entire group.

"I tell you, Eliza, you had better let the Archdeacon try," thundered Mr. Hamilton.

"Then I tell you I will not!" vociferated Mrs. Knox, with a tug at the end of the sentence that elicited a subterranean lament from Johnny. "Now who was right about the second grating? I told you so twenty years ago!"

Exactly as Philippa and her rescue party arrived, the efforts of Mrs. Knox and her

brother-in-law triumphed. The struggling, sopping form of Johnny was slowly drawn from the hole, drenched, speechless, but clinging to the stern of a hound, who, in its turn, had its jaws fast in the hind-quarters of a limp, yellow cub.

"Oh, it's dead! wailed Philippa, "I *did* think I should have been in time to save it!"

"Well, if that doesn't beat all!" said Dr. Hickey.

SAKI (H. H. MUNRO 1870—1916)

Esmé

from THE SHORT STORIES OF SAKI

Certainly no writer can be so sadistic with such complete nonchalance as H. H. Munro. The reader, horrified by the situations laid before him, is, at the same time, so amused by the inanity of the dialogue and the lampooning of familiar types of British society, that he forgets his horror in laughter. Esmé, strictly speaking, isn't about horses at all, but it is a fox-hunting story and, as Saki himself says, "it isn't a bit like any you've ever heard!"

"'Unting is the sport of kings, the image of war without its guilt and only five and twenty percent of its danger!"

—JORROCKS

All hunting stories are the same," said Clovis; "just as all Turf stories are the same, and all—"

"My hunting story isn't a bit like any you've ever heard," said the Baroness. "It happened quite a while ago, when I was about twenty-three. I wasn't living apart from my husband then; you see, neither of us could afford to make the other a separate allowance. In spite of everything that proverbs may say, poverty keeps together more homes than it breaks up. But we always hunted with different packs. All this has nothing to do with the story."

"We haven't arrived at the meet yet. I suppose there was a meet," said Clovis.

"Of course there was a meet," said the Baroness; "all the usual crowd were there, especially Constance Broddle. Constance is one of those strapping florid girls that go so well with autumn scenery or Christmas decorations in church. 'I feel a presentiment that something dreadful is going to happen,' she said to me; 'am I looking pale?'"

"She was looking about as pale as a beetroot that has suddenly heard bad news.

"'You're looking nicer than usual,' I said, 'but that's so easy for you.' Before she had got the right bearings of this remark we had settled down to business; hounds

had found a fox lying out in some gorse-bushes."

"I knew it," said Clovis; "in every fox-hunting story that I've ever heard there's been a fox and some gorse-bushes."

"Constance and I were well mounted," continued the Baroness serenely, "and we had no difficulty in keeping ourselves in the first flight, though it was a fairly stiff run. Towards the finish, however, we must have held rather too independent a line, for we lost the hounds, and found ourselves plodding aimlessly along miles away from anywhere. It was fairly exasperating, and my temper was beginning to let itself go by inches, when on pushing our way through an accommodating hedge we were gladdened by the sight of hounds in full cry in a hollow just beneath us.

"There they go," cried Constance, and then added in a gasp, "In Heaven's name, what are they hunting?"

"It was certainly no mortal fox. It stood more than twice as high, had a short, ugly head, and an enormous thick neck.

"It's a hyæna," I cried; "it must have escaped from Lord Pabham's Park."

"At that moment the hunted beast turned and faced its pursuers, and the hounds (there were only about six couple then) stood round in a half-circle and looked foolish. Evidently they had broken away from the rest of the pack on the trail of this alien scent, and were not quite sure how to treat their quarry now they had got him.

"The hyæna hailed our approach with unmistakable relief and demonstrations of friendliness. It had probably been accustomed to uniform kindness from humans, while its first experience of a pack of hounds had left a bad impression. The hounds looked more than ever embar-

rassed as their quarry paraded its sudden intimacy with us, and the faint toot of a horn in the distance was seized on as a welcome signal for unobtrusive departure. Constance and I and the hyæna were left alone in the gathering twilight.

"What are we to do?" asked Constance.

"What a person you are for questions," I said.

"Well, we can't stay here all night with a hyæna," she retorted.

"I don't know what your ideas of comfort are," I said; "But I shouldn't think of staying here all night even without a hyæna. My home may be an unhappy one, but at least it has hot and cold water laid on, and domestic service, and other conveniences which we shouldn't find here. We had better make for that ridge of trees to the right; I imagine the Crowley road is just beyond."

"We trotted off slowly along a faintly marked cart-track, with the beast following cheerfully at our heels.

"What on earth are we to do with the hyæna?" came the inevitable question.

"What does one generally do with hyænas?" I asked crossly.

"I've never had anything to do with one before," said Constance.

"Well, neither have I. If we even knew its sex we might give it a name. Perhaps we might call it Esmé. That would do in either case."

"There was still sufficient daylight for us to distinguish wayside objects, and our listless spirits gave an upward perk as we came upon a small half-naked gipsy brat picking blackberries from a low-growing bush. The sudden apparition of two horsewomen and a hyæna set it off crying, and in any case we should scarcely have gleaned any useful geographical information from

that source; but there was a probability that we might strike a gipsy encampment somewhere along our route. We rode on hopefully but uneventfully for another mile or so.

"'I wonder what that child was doing there,' said Constance presently.

"'Picking blackberries, obviously.'

"'I don't like the way it cried,' pursued Constance; 'somehow its wail keeps ringing in my ears.'

"I did not chide Constance for her morbid fancies; as a matter of fact the same sensation, of being pursued by a persistent fretful wail, had been forcing itself on my rather overtired nerves. For company's sake I hulloed to Esmé, who had lagged somewhat behind. With a few springy bounds he drew up level, and then shot past us.

"The wailing accompaniment was explained. The gipsy child was firmly, and I expect painfully, held in his jaws.

"'Merciful Heaven!' screamed Constance, 'what on earth shall we do? What are we to do?'

"I am perfectly certain that at the Last Judgment Constance will ask more questions than any of the examining Seraphs.

"'Can't we do something?' she persisted tearfully, as Esmé cantered easily along in front of our tired horses.

"Personally I was doing everything that occurred to me at the moment. I stormed and scolded and coaxed in English and French and gamekeeper language; I made absurd, ineffectual cuts in the air with my thongless hunting-crop; I hurled my sandwich case at the brute; in fact, I really don't know what more I could have done. And still we lumbered on through the deepening dusk, with that dark uncouth shape lumbering ahead of us, and a drone

of lugubrious music floating in our ears. Suddenly Esmé bounded aside into some thick bushes, where we could not follow; the wail rose to a shriek and then stopped altogether. This part of the story I always hurry over, because it is really rather horrible. When the beast joined us again, after an absence of a few minutes, there was an air of patient understanding about him, as though he knew that he had done something of which we disapproved, but which he felt to be thoroughly justifiable.

"'How can you let that ravening beast trot by your side?' asked Constance. She was looking more than ever like an albino beetroot.

"'In the first place, I can't prevent it,' I said, 'and in the second place, whatever else he may be, I doubt if he's ravening at the present moment.'

"Constance shuddered. 'Do you think the poor little thing suffered much?' came another of her futile questions.

"'The indications were all that way,' I said; 'on the other hand, of course, it may have been crying from sheer temper. Children sometimes do.'

"It was nearly pitch-dark when we emerged suddenly into the high road. A flash of lights and the whir of a motor went past us at the same moment at uncomfortably close quarters. A thud and a sharp screeching yell followed a second later. The car drew up, and when I had ridden back to the spot I found a young man bending over a dark motionless mass lying by the roadside.

"'You have killed my Esmé,' I exclaimed bitterly.

"'I'm so awfully sorry,' said the young man; 'I keep dogs myself, so I know what you must feel about it. I'll do anything I can in reparation.'

“‘Please bury him at once,’ I said; ‘that much I think I may ask of you.’

“‘Bring the spade, William,’ he called to the chauffeur. Evidently hasty roadside interments were contingencies that had been provided against.

“The digging of a sufficiently large grave took some little time. ‘I say, what a magnificent fellow,’ said the motorist as the corpse was rolled over into the trench. ‘I’m afraid he must have been rather a valuable animal.’

“‘He took second in the puppy class at Birmingham last year,’ I said resolutely.

“Constance snorted loudly.

“‘Don’t cry, dear,’ I said brokenly; ‘it was all over in a moment. He couldn’t have suffered much.’

“‘Look here,’ said the young fellow desperately, ‘you simply must let me do something by way of reparation.’

“I refused sweetly, but as he persisted I let him have my address.

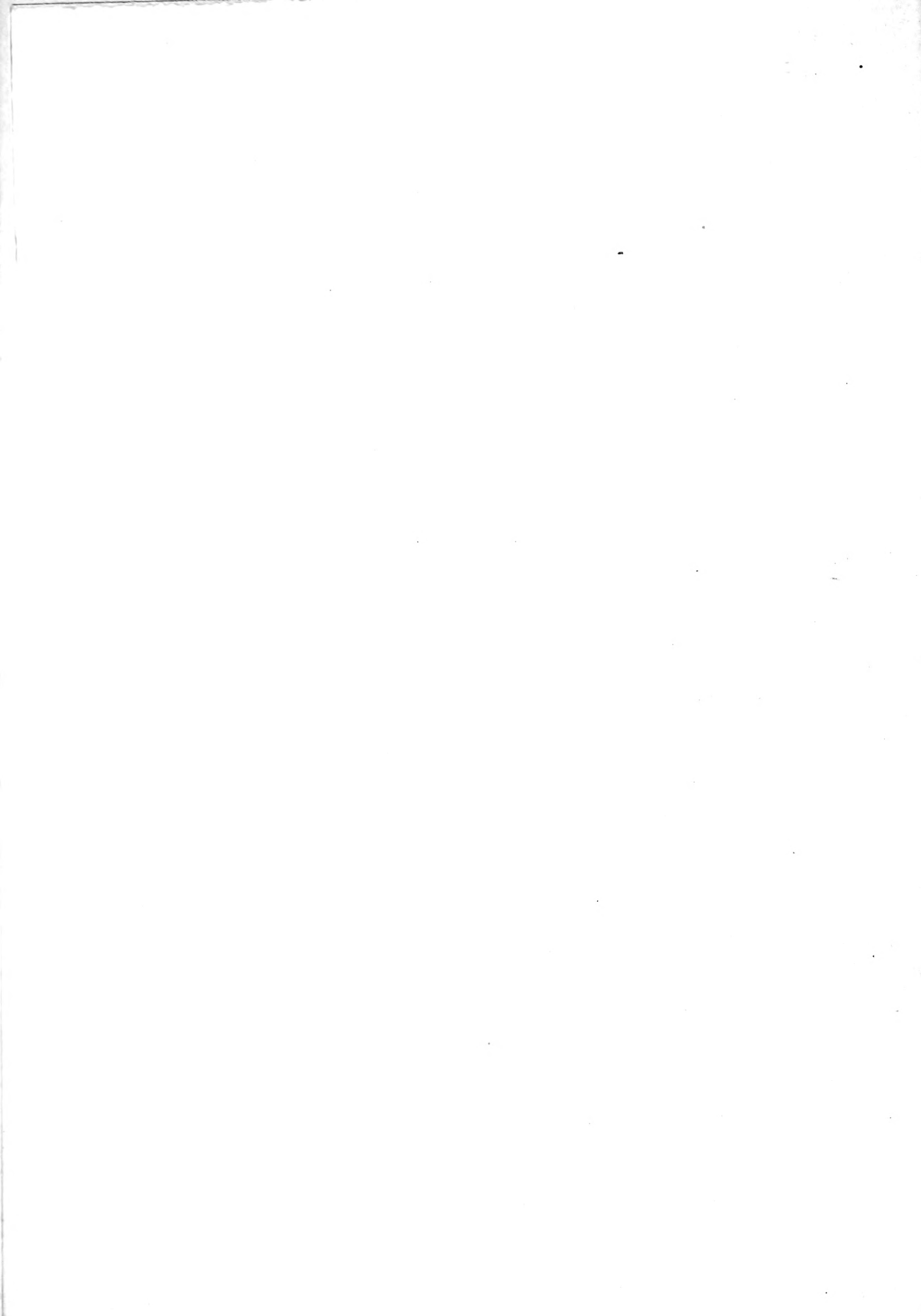
“Of course, we kept our own counsel as to the earlier episodes of the evening. Lord Pabham never advertised the loss of his

hyæna; when a strictly fruit-eating animal strayed from his park a year or two previously he was called upon to give compensation in eleven cases of sheep-worrying and practically to re-stock his neighbours’ poultry-yards, and an escaped hyæna would have mounted up to something on the scale of a Government grant. The gipsies were equally unobtrusive over their missing offspring; I don’t suppose in large encampments they really know to a child or two how many they’ve got.”

The Baroness paused reflectively, and then continued:

“There was a sequel to the adventure, though. I got through the post a charming little diamond brooch, with the name Esmé set in a sprig of rosemary. Incidentally, too, I lost the friendship of Constance Broddle. You see, when I sold the brooch I quite properly refused to give her any share of the proceeds. I pointed out that the Esmé part of the affair was my own invention, and the hyæna part of it belonged to Lord Pabham, if it really was his hyæna, of which, of course, I’ve no proof.”





JOHN WOODCOCK GRAVES (1795–1886)

John Peel

Surely this is the best known as well as the most loved of all hunting songs. It has become a part of the folklore not only of England, but also of America. Our schoolchildren in dusty classrooms, who would be hard put to say what is meant by "view-hollo," shout it forth with as much gusto as though the sound of a hunting-horn were commonplace in the busy city streets. Fox-hunting, for the moment, is much curtailed, but John Peel winds his horn as lustily as ever and will continue to do so.

D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay?
D'ye ken John Peel at the break of day?
D'ye ken John Peel when he's far, far away,
With his hounds and his horn in the morning?
*'Twas the sound of his horn called me from
my bed,
And the cry of his hounds has me oft-times
led,
For Peel's View-hollo would waken the
dead,
Or a fox from his lair in the morning.*

D'ye ken that bitch whose tongue is death?
D'ye ken her sons of peerless faith?
D'ye ken that fox with his last breath
Cursed them all as he died in the morning?

Yes, I ken John Peel and Ruby too
Ranter and Royal and Bellman as true;
From the drag to the chase, from the chase to
the view,
From a view to the death in the morning.

And I've followed John Peel both often and
far
O'er the rasper-fence and the gate and the bar,
From Low Denton Holme up to Scratchmere
Scar,
When we vied for the brush in the morning.

Then here's to John Peel with my heart and
soul,
Come fill—fill to him another strong bowl:
And we'll follow John Peel through fair and
through foul,
While we're waked by his horn in the morn-
ing.

*'Twas the sound of his horn called me from
my bed,
And the cry of his hounds has me oft-times
led,
For Peel's View-hollo would waken the
dead
Or a fox from his lair in the morning.*

GORDON GRAND (contemporary)

Cub Hunting en Famille

from THE SILVER HORN

With some writers one feels that their love of or interest in horses is from the outside, but with Gordon Grand one knows that horses and hunting must be a very integral part of his everyday life. I chose Cub Hunting en Famille because it has to do with a little discussed phase of the hunting world, the making, not of the horse, but of the rider and to what agony the bystanders are put during this making! Let no fond parent, lacking a sense of humor, read this tale!

“Your head and your heart . . . keep up!
Your hands and your heels . . . keep down!
Your knees press into your horse’s sides,
Your elbows into your own!”

—OLD ENGLISH ADAGE

Seeing the Colonel’s horse van going out of his driveway, I asked him whether he was acquiring a new horse or shipping one away. “It’s going over to Pettibone Lithgow’s,” he said. Pettibone is one of the best-hearted people alive and we are deservedly fond of him but he does not possess a vestige of horse sense.

“Pendleton, have you ever stopped to consider what a mass of detailed information one acquires pertaining to horses? Why even were I able to extract it I couldn’t reduce within the covers of ten

volumes the sum total of what any one of a thousand knowledgeable horsemen knows. Such information is only released from the confines of one’s memory when a situation develops requiring its use. And no man knows more than an infinitesimal part of what is to be learned.

“Yet here is our friend Pettibone good naturedly smiling and romping along, endangering his family and his friends and not knowing what it’s all about. It is common knowledge that he is going to hurt, kill or maim one or both of these children of his if he continues in over-mounting

them on over-fed, over-bred, under-worked and under-schooled horses.

"Mrs. Lithgow came over to see me about it. She says they haven't a horse on the place fit for the children to ride, although Pettibone has spent a pot of money trying to mount them. She is fairly distraught about that play-boy husband of hers.

"I have loaned them *Lord Autumn* for one of the children. I think the old fellow will enjoy the job.

"What a time Pettibone must have had two weeks ago on the morning we started cubbing. Enid Ashley has pieced her interpretation of the events together. Wait until I read her account to you."

CUB HUNTING EN FAMILLE

CHAPTER I

An opulent office at 14 Wall Street, New York. A conference of people of importance. It is four o'clock on a Friday afternoon in early September.

J. Pettibone Lithgow: "Gentlemen, I must ask you to excuse me. I must run for my train. Tomorrow is the opening of our cubbing season. It is an event I look forward to with keen relish. We are taking our children for their first hunt, and we all place great import on the occasion. It is indeed many years since I have looked forward to anything with such genuine relish. I return to town on Monday morning, and will meet with you any time during the week. Good day, gentlemen."

CHAPTER II

A so-called simple hunting lodge with eleven bathrooms, and service and embellishments to match. Dinner is being served.

J. Pettibone Lithgow: "Well, children, tomorrow will be the big day. I feel just as I did when I was your age and it was the night before Christmas. Now, then, what are we all going to ride? First, there is Mother. What about *Big Brother*?"

Chorus: "Yes, yes. He's an old dear. He's top hole."

Pettibone Lithgow: "Well, how about it, Mother?"

Mrs. J. Pettibone Lithgow: "I love to ride the old fellow, but do so dislike bustling him up and down these rocky wood rides in the cubbing country. They are abominable coverts."

Pettibone Lithgow: "That's all right. We won't go hard. Remember this is the children's first day to hounds. What for Lillian? Withington says that *Lady Conna* and *Shinto* are going perfectly, and Lillian has been riding both of them. Which one will it be, old girl?"

Lillian Lithgow (aged 12): "Oh, Dad, I want *Shinto*. He is so cute over his fences."

Pettibone Lithgow: "Then that leaves Pettibone and the Old Man. My boy, what do you think will carry you to fame and honor tomorrow?"

Pettibone Lithgow, Jr. (aged 14): "I would like very much to try *Aunt Agnes*. I have been jumping her a lot and we get on fine."

Pettibone Lithgow: "Well, I will ride *Hecanhopit*. This will be our tenth season together." (To Butler) "Ask Withington to see me in the library in half an hour. It's time you kiddies turned in. All hands up at 4:45. No stealing of cat naps, remember." (Children leave the room. To Wife) "My dear, this is an event I have been looking forward to ever since the children were born. My day dreams have centered on pictures of us all spending long

days together in the hunting field. Countless times I have pictured you and the two kiddies mounted on truly confidential horses drifting across an autumn landscape. You know, dear, I have worked pretty hard in a highly competitive field, and this thing tomorrow morning is one of my major rewards."

CHAPTER III

4:55 a.m.

Pettibone, Jr.: "Mother, I can't find my jodhpurs, and Mary is not awake so I can't ask her, and Lillie says one of her riding shoes is gone, and she says she remembers the puppy was playing with it, and do you think he could have run off with it?"

Mrs. Lithgow: "It's too bad you children could not have found your things before you went to bed. I will be there in a minute."

Mr. Lithgow: "My dear, I wonder where those special hunting spectacles could be. I haven't seen them since last fall. It is getting late. We must hurry."

Pettibone, Jr.: "Moth-er (louder) Moth-er—(louder still) MOTH-ER—Where is the hunting crop Uncle Harry gave me for Christmas?"

Mr. Pettibone Lithgow (calling from the dining room): "We must hurry. Breakfast is on the table."

Mrs. Lithgow: "John, I can't hurry. The children can't find half their things, and I'm not nearly ready. Such an hour to get children up."

(Mr. L. drinks his coffee and fidgets. Family assembles in the breakfast room, Mrs. L. looking a bit frayed and distraught.)

Mr. L.: "I will hack to the Meet with

the children, and Mother, you come in the car. Come along, children."

(They go out to the stable, mount and start. An exceedingly warm sultry morning. *Shinto*, feeling high, makes a modest buck.

Mr. L.: "There now Lillie, there goes your hat the first thing. Don't dismount. That horse is so high—you will have trouble remounting. Pettibone, pop off and yet your sister's hat. That's a good chap. I'll hold *Aunt Agnes*." (Holds horse which dribbles and slobbers half-consumed sugar on the knee of a new pair of fawn breeches. They walk up on the side of a cement road. At the corner they meet other riders. Lillie permits *Shinto* to walk up on the heels of a fidgety mare who lets fly, just missing Lillie's leg.)

Mr. L.: "Lillie for gracious sake keep your horse back. You should know better than that. Pray excuse my daughter, Mrs. Turnturtle. She has been told not to ride on top of people. Pettibone, will you keep off that slippery cement! How many times have you been told to keep on the side of the road. Press your *Aunt Agnes* on the ribs with your left heel and bring her over."

(A particularly noisy truck approaches from the rear. Horses in front commence to fidget. Truck passes with a roar. *Aunt Agnes* make a moderate flying jump to the right. Steps in hidden ditch and pecks. J. Pettibone Lithgow, Jr. topples over her shoulder and lets go of reins. A groom catches mare, puts boy up and receives a dollar. Pettibone's face and collar are smeared. Mr. Lithgow is hot and becoming twitchy. Arrive at Meet. Renews many old acquaintanceships. Introduces children. Rather proud of them, but wishes boy did not look so mussy. Spirits temporarily revived. Mrs. L. arrives. Finds her horse for

her. Puts her up. No coördination. Starts to count three. She does not wait for count. Never will for some reason. Comes near throwing her clean over the side saddle. Mob of people looking on. Mrs. L. a bit peeved. Busies himself adjusting balance strap. Hounds move off. Wishes all members of the family would stay together. There is Lillie away up in front, riding with loose reins and letting her horse crowd upon everybody. May get kicked. Would like to call out to her, but hates to bellow like that.)

Mrs. L.: "I'm sorry, John, but the saddle is resting right on *Big Brother's* withers. I really should have a sheepskin."

Mr. L.: "Well, *Shinto* is the only horse out with a sheepskin. I will get it for you." (Weaves way up front. Locates Lillie and pulls to side of road. When the field has passed, he takes sheepskin from *Shinto* and puts it on *Big Brother*. Gets very warm and feels mussy.)

(Family jiggle jaggles down the road. *Aunt Agnes* determined to catch up with field, commences to yaw, and it is evident boy cannot hold her. Gets horse stopped, dismounts and starts to tighten curb. Mare makes quick turn of head and breaks brim of new hunting derby. Mounts and they proceed. Footprints show that field has entered a meadow. Wishes they might have been with the field so that some one else might have slipped the rails. Dismounts and slips three obdurate chestnut rails. *Shinto* in exuberance jumps three feet over the bars and bucks on landing. Lillie loses hat and one stirrup but stays on. Picks up hat and tries to hand it to daughter, but horse will not let him approach. With mounting irritation crams hat in pocket and goes back to build up barway. Mounts and they start across meadow. Feels in

pocket for gloves. Can only find one, new pair, hates riding without gloves. Goes back to barway but can't find other glove. Begins to feel all on edge. Sees the field at end of meadow against fringe of woods. Hears hounds open and sees field disappear up wood ride. Suggest they all jog. Try to jog but horses very keen and start cantering and continually going faster in spite of his protests and volley of instructions. They start up wood road, turn corner, and come upon whole field galloping towards them. A moment of awful suspense—Exhorts family to do this and that. Pulls *Hecanhopit* up so short that Mrs. L. plows into him. Bellows to Lillie to stop her horse which she does with horse standing clear across the ride. Huntsman forces his way between *Shinto's* quarters and oak tree by lifting both legs high in air. Entire field stewing, mulling, steaming, and trying to get by and on. L. gets excited and says, "Pettibone, I wish you would kick your *Aunt Agnes* in the ribs, and make her move over," upon which a passing wag mutters something which irritates yet emphasizes the inappropriateness of the horse's name. The field passes on. Family reorganizes and follows on. Upon reaching meadow they turn right-handed and start up another ride. Set of bars just ahead. Mrs. L. charges. *Big Brother* refuses. Mrs. L. within an ace of flopping off on near side. The affair gives him quite a turn. Pettibone, Jr. pleads to give Mother a lead. Charges. Mare stands away and makes an unexpectedly big jump. Pettibone Jr. lands on rear of saddle, losing left stirrup and reins, and so disappears round turn. What in the world will happen to the boy? He tells wife and daughter to wait. Sends *Hecanhopit* along at fence. Overtakes boy

who is quite intact. Boy tries to explain. L. very short with his heir. Returns to barway. Mrs. L. and daughter navigate jump very creditably. All hands hasten up the ride. Can hear hounds away up towards top of ridge. They keep plugging along, turning now right, now left, through a maze of paths. They can detect no footprints. Which way *has* field gone? Mounting a slight swale they hear hounds coming right at them. Stop their horses. Know only too well that Huntsman, M.F.H., and field will be along directly, and they will be accused of heinous crimes. Hounds come on with a gorgeous burst of voice and come right up to where they are all huddled. Their horses must be standing on and soiling the very line of the hunted fox. Mr. Pettibone Lithgow would give half he possessed to be any place else in the world. Hounds' heads go up. There is not a whimper to be heard. If only one hound would go over them, under them, around them, and find the line and go on. Would he dare exhort them and try and cast them? Takes a chance—removes new hat with broken rim—waves hounds on—Hoick—Hoick—Hoick forrard, indicating the supposed line. His voice sounds odd

and unfamiliar. Hears horses galloping back of him. Looks. Huntsman appears, closely followed by M.F.H. and entire field. The family completely surrounded by hounds. Mr. L. starts to move away.)

M.F.H.: "Hold hard, Sir, hold hard. You have either turned this fox, or at least have all heads in the air. Let the hounds hunt the fox. That's what they are for. You can't catch him with your hands."

(Whole family upset. Children take it very seriously. Mr. L. believes the worst is over—when the wood resounds with pitiful lamentations. *Aunt Agnes* has kicked a hound.)

The M.F.H.: "What horse has kicked that hound?"

Mr. L.: "It was my son's mare. She is an experienced hunter and never did such a thing before."

(M.F.H. says nothing and rides on. A hound feathers a short way down the slope—opens—is honored by the pack, and the field moves on.)

Mrs. L.: "John, I really have quite a headache. If you don't mind I think I will pull out."

Mr. L.: "Well, my dear, I think we have had enough for our first day out."

ISABEL SCOTT RORICK (contemporary)

Just Cause

from MR. AND MRS. CUGAT

What Mr. Munro does to the "English Hunting Set" in Esmé, Isabel Scott Rorick takes pleasure in doing to their American counterparts, though in a much less malicious fashion. Just Cause will appeal even more strongly to the "non-horsey" audience than to those who may find the portrait a little too real to be funny! This is also one of the very few stories concerning horses in which "love" plays a part!

Did Cory get home today as planned?" asked Mrs. Cugat, as she and Mr. Cugat sat down to dinner one early spring evening.

"My, yes," replied Mr. Cugat in the fond, indulgent tone which any reference to this Damon to his Pythias invariably provoked. "And is he full of himself! If the trip did old Lady Bonbright half the good it did him—she's good for another twenty years."

"Well, I'm glad he got something out of it," Mrs. Cugat said tenderly. "Not many men, who like a good time as much as he does, would be willing to spend a whole month taking a cruise with a sick old aunt—particularly a poor aunt. It was the sweetest thing I ever heard of! Did he have any fun at all?"

"I don't know—he's brown as a berry and beaming all over." Then he added

thoughtfully, "He's coming over after dinner—he says he's got something to tell us."

"Something to tell us?"

"Yes," said Mr. Cugat uneasily. "You don't suppose, do you—?"

"Good Heavens—of course! He's got himself engaged again!"

"He shows all the regular symptoms," admitted Mr. Cugat somberly.

Cory, arriving immediately at the conclusion of dinner, came in almost bashfully. He showed all the regular symptoms, Mrs. Cugat thought wryly, and then a few. He positively shone, and had a smily, secret look that could have been spotted across the street.

"Darling, how well you look!" she exclaimed, kissing him warmly. "Sit down and tell us everything—we want to hear it all."

"Well," said Mr. Cartwright, clearing his throat and beginning to tuck nervously back and forth across the room with his hands in his pockets, "it was pretty swell."

"What's she look like?" offered Mrs. Cugat helpfully.

He turned a deep garnet and grinned gratefully. "Like a goddess," he said huskily.

"Not old Liberty?" flippantly interposed Mr. Cugat to cover his anxiety. "Myself, I think the type a little heavy—"

"No, seriously, you two," said Cory, "this is the *real* thing at last. I want you to be the first to know. Look!" And with trembling fingers he produced a white velvet, gold-tooled box from his coat pocket, which he opened to display a really superb ruby.

"Why, Cory, it's lovely!" breathed Mrs. Cugat in actual awe. "What a lucky girl she is! Now stop fooling and answer a few questions." But she could not begin her catechism, of course, until Mr. Cugat had got through devoutly voiced congratulations; they had each taken a good poke at the other to clear the air, and then Mr. Cugat exclaimed, "How about a drink to the bride!" This had all happened once or twice before, so she waited patiently.

"Now, then, tell me!" she demanded, as Mr. Cugat hastened to the pantry.

"Well, her name's Claiborne Calhoun and I met her on the boat and she's a blonde and from Virginia and she was taking the cruise to get over a fall she had off a horse," replied Cory, making an obvious effort to stick to bare informative facts and not panegyricize any more than he could help. "She looks sort of like you, Liz—aristocratic-like—only she's taller and more wholesome-looking—I mean, you know—a little more the athletic type."

"Why, darling, she sounds lovely!" Mrs. Cugat exclaimed generously; "just the kind I'd always hoped you'd find. Did you meet the family?"

"No, she had only 'Birdie' along to look after her—'Birdie's' sort of an ex-governess. But I'm going down there this weekend.—It's marvelous at this time of year and we're going to announce it on a hunt or something. Claiborne's joint master of the Old Commonwealth."

They proceeded to drink toasts: to the bride and to the Old Commonwealth and to the *S.S. American Manufacturer* and to Cape Hatteras—off which, in a severe blow, realization of Cory's worth had come to Claiborne—and to "Birdie" and to old lady Bonbright, who, fortuitously, had remained bedded with lumbago from the second day out.

"Well," said Mrs. Cugat, as they finally closed the front door on Cory's by then, dreamy countenance, "I really believe she's very suitable."

"She sounds all right, at that," acknowledged Mr. Cugat. Then he added anxiously, "I hope you two get on."

"Oh, we will," Mrs. Cugat yawned, "don't worry about that. I'd do anything to see Cory settled down and happy with the right girl, and this time I have a feeling everything's going to turn out well." Mr. Cugat kissed her tenderly and they climbed the stairs, rather spent.

A week later they got a midnight telegram. "Announcing it Saturday. Need you, Cory," it said tersely. Mr. Cugat, huddled in his bathrobe, read it frowning and rubbed his chin.

"He sounds sort of desperate," Mrs. Cugat commented, peering out anxiously from under her quilt. "Do you suppose everything's all right?"

"I don't know. Would you like to go? We could drive down for the week-end. It might be a pretty nice trip."

"Oh, I'd love it!" she cried. "What fun!" and dove beneath the quilt again to begin planning her clothes.

It *was* a nice trip. They left on Thursday—unprecedented for Mr. Cugat, who was wont to say that *his* week-ends began Saturday noon—stayed the night at a country hotel and drove leisurely on the next morning over clear sunny roads through snow-patched mountains.

"What a lovely part of the country to live in," murmured Mrs. Cugat, smiling in pleasure as they passed a rolling field dappled with horses, a sun-splashed ravine, and a tiny brass-knocked house behind an old stone wall. "Maybe, since Claiborne likes to hunt, Cory will have a place down here and we can come to visit often."

"Maybe," said Mr. Cugat, committing himself to nothing yet. "You know, we ought to be almost there—the Calhoun place should be just east of that last town we came through. We'd better stop and ask."

"All right," she said, "the next man we see—" and then: "Oh, darling, be careful! Those sweet dogs—" They had rounded a turn in the narrow road and come abruptly upon a small meandering pack of hounds in the charge of a shambling individual in a long white coat. He carried a hunting-whip which he was flicking with all the unconcern possible, but, as the lash seemed possessed to wrap itself around his neck, the effect lacked nonchalance. Hearing the Cugats' car, he tucked the whip hastily underneath his arm and shooed the pack off the road with the long skirts of the coat—like an old woman shooing chickens with her apron.

"Can you tell us the way to the Calhoun place?" called Mr. Cugat, drawing to a stop, and the figure turned. "Cory, you old son-of-a-gun!"

It was, in truth, Mr. Cartwright, but Mrs. Cugat was shocked at the change in him. His face looked drawn and actually surly. This expression, however, as he looked up was washed away almost immediately by one of clear and touching joy.

"Hello!" he yelped, dropping the whip at the bottom of the ditch and scrambling up the bank to the car. "I'd hardly dared hope for you before dinnertime!"

"There go your dogs!" exclaimed Mr. Cugat, pointing to a mass of wriggling sterna disappearing over a wall.

"Let 'em go; they know their way home better than I do, anyway. Move over, let me in—Gosh, but it's good to see you two!"

"Where's Claiborne?" queried Mrs. Cugat, "and what are you doing mooching along 'way out here with all those dogs?"

"Hounds, pet, call them hounds. *Never* dogs. These are the lady hounds, and all about to become mothers. I have to take them for a damned walk every morning!" Then he added shortly, "Claiborne's at the kennels."

He settled down between them and, lighting a cigarette, relaxed gratefully. "Turn to the left at the next crossroads," he said; "and don't hurry."

They drove along, happy together in the sharp, misty morning, but Cory seemed to have very little to say. Pretty soon they turned through wide gates and wound between rail fences. A fat white horse rolled and kicked in the sun; a brown mare with her leggy black baby trotted over to watch them pass; Mrs. Cugat was enchanted.

"Oh, Cory," she exclaimed, "what a perfectly beautiful place! Don't you love it?"

When I think of the country around home! Nothing but tractors, signboards, barbed wire, hot-dog stands—”

“Uh-huh,” said Cory.

The house, when they reached it, sent Mrs. Cugat into further transports. Its porches were traditionally pillared, and vine-fringed balconies hung from upper windows; the door stood hospitably open to reveal delicate soaring stairs and a bright fire; an old colored man in a plum-colored coat with flat silver buttons hobbled down to open the luggage compartment.

“Make yourselves at home,” said Cory when they’d reached their charming be-ruffled bedroom. “I’m going to take a bath and get this stink off.”

“What’s the matter with him?” asked Mrs. Cugat when the door had closed. “He seems sort of grouchy.”

“I don’t know,” said Mr. Cugat slowly.

Miss Claiborne Calhoun looked exactly like a goddess—one of those blonde north-country ones. She came striding up from the direction of the kennels, expertly cracking her hunting-whip, just as Mr. and Mrs. Cugat emerged onto the porch after unpacking and changing into their best country clothes. Not once did the lash wind round her neck. She was dressed in breeches and canvas leggings and had on a filthy long white coat like Cory’s, but Mrs. Cugat could notice nothing but her head, which was small and gilt and superbly set on her boyishly broad shoulders. Her eyes were the color of larkspur and had a level look, and her brown forehead was not femininely rounded but in beautifully modeled planes like a man’s. She looked very wholesome. She made Mrs. Cugat, in spite of her new tweed suit, feel like a nasty, curvesome little Dresden shepherdess.

“Welcome to Green Trees,” she said in a clear light voice and a buttoned-up British accent. “Have you managed to make yourselves comfortable?” She gripped their hands with cool, strong fingers and then called through the front door: “Enos! Enos! Where’s Mr. Clay?”

“Yes’m, Miz Claiborne. Mist’ Clay, he’s out in the dinin’-room fixin’ a toddy,” gobbled the old negro with the plum coat, hastening into view. “Mistuh Cartwright, tho’, he just took himself a stiff peg and went right back up to his room ag’in.”

Miss Calhoun laughed lightly. “Take a toddy up to him, Enos,” she said amusedly; “he doesn’t think he wants lunch.” At that moment a long-nosed young man in a sagging and sun-faded tweed coat and worn breeches and boots emerged from the dining-room carrying five toddies on a tray. “The Cugats, Clay. This is Clay Lowrie, the better half of the Old Commonwealth.”

Mr. Lowrie acknowledged the introductions and put the tray down. “What was the matter with Cartwright, Cal?” he asked curiously. “He looked like he was goin’ to be sick.”

“He *was* sick,” she replied, with a little underlying scorn in her tone, “on the pumphouse floor.” Then she went on, laughing: “Melody whelped last night—ten—and all rather small—and Cory and I had just looked them over and gone out on the stoop to sit in the sun when out came Leighton after us with the runt and two others he didn’t want and snapped their heads against a wheelbarrow. Poor Cory; after all, he *had* only just left off mooing and poking at the runt because he thought it showed personality or something. Leighton ought, really, be a little more considerate of guests, I think.”

Mr. Lowrie smiled thinly. “Cartwright

will have to get used to our li'l' ways," he said.

Mrs. Cugat drank deeply of her toddy.

"I think I'll go take a look at him," said Mr. Cugat, getting up abruptly.

Cory appeared for lunch, looking pale, but dressed in extremely beautiful and very new riding-clothes. "Your boot garters are on backwards, my love," Miss Calhoun remarked, giving him a cool glance over her soup. Then she went on to explain to Mrs. Cugat about her mother and father. They lived in Washington, she said, when they weren't in London, but, as for her, she couldn't swallow New Deal Washington. She and "Birdie," when they weren't in London, lived here at Green Trees. "Birdie's somewhere about," Miss Calhoun said carelessly. "Probably fussing over the announcement party tonight. I left it all to her—I can't think of anything but My Lady Satin. Clay, I've decided to breed her!"

"Well! You came to it at last, eh? That mare's been navicular for six months, but you just wouldn't admit she was through."

"I know—I couldn't bear to—my own lovely Satin—" Miss Calhoun's clear, crisp voice had taken on an entirely new note—roughened and warm.

"What are you sendin' her to?" Mr. Lowrie inquired interestedly.

"Well," she hesitated, "Randolph's got Chance Gallant still standing at Foxes' Hole—"

Mr. Lowrie hooted. "Chance Gallant! My Lord, baby, you haven't a hope!"

"Oh, I knew you'd laugh," she said wistfully. "Leighton did too—but I've got my heart set on him—*nothing's* too good for my Satin."

"Chance Gallant is, honey," he said gently. "In the first place, the fee is 'way over your head; in the second place, his

book is full until year after next; and in the third place, 'No maidens need apply.'" Miss Calhoun looked disconsolate. Then he added, "Besides, he isn't still standin' at Foxes' Hole—they shipped to Kentucky yesterday."

"Oh, they did!" her voice sounded small and squeezed now, but she lifted her proud little head gamely. "Well, I guess that's that. I kept hoping like a fool that as long as he was still in the neighborhood I might work it somehow."

"Plenty of good stallions around within reason," comforted Mr. Lowrie. "Take my Null and Void, for instance—"

Mr. and Mrs. Cugat nodded and smiled and clucked in polite sympathy throughout this, but Cory, usually the most responsive of guests, ate on stolidly.

"Now we'll *all* go out and look at the horses," he said suddenly as they finally pushed back their chairs.

"That's right, darling," said Miss Calhoun in a surprised voice. "I was just going to suggest it!" and she gave him the first nice look that the Cugats had seen sent in his direction all day. Its effect was pathetic—he bounded to meet it like an ecstatic spaniel. If Miss Calhoun had said, "Down, Cory-boy, *down*, I say!" Mrs. Cugat would not have been in the least surprised.

The stables were extensive. Mrs. Cugat was impressed. They idled along past box after box, stopping a little before each one to discuss and pat its occupant. A bow-legged, monosyllabic man in high-waisted breeches accompanied them, as well as the murderer, Leighton. Miss Calhoun and Mr. Lowrie made assertions and disagreed and disputed amiably at every stall; Leighton diplomatically siding first with one and then with the other. The high-waisted man spat philosophically and

opened and closed doors and produced sugar. The horses leaned out sociably. Mrs. Cugat wondered how, with so many horses, they ever remembered which was which, and halfway through stopped paying much attention and simply gave herself up to enjoying her surroundings. The stable was very pleasant—it had a nice smell—not ammoniac like the livery stable at home, but clean and pungent and leathery. The stalls had beautifully stained doors with wrought-iron hinges and brass nameplates (that's how they told!), and in the tack room hung row upon row of shining saddles and ribbony bridles.

Mr. Cugat asked intelligent questions and appeared vastly interested—she was proud of him—but Cory lounged along looking half asleep and ventured little. Once he did timidly tweak a curl behind his beloved's ear, when he apparently thought Mr. Lowrie wasn't looking, but Miss Calhoun was at the time asserting witheringly that, as everybody knew, some old crotch of Mr. Lowrie's had been gone in the wind for a year and he was a perfect ass to hold out for two hundred. She, though, might give him one-seventy-five, she let fall craftily—and brushed at the curl with impatience.

In the last and largest box with the biggest and shiniest nameplate lived My Lady Satin. "Lovely-Lovely," crooned Miss Calhoun, stepping into the stall and rubbing her clear brown cheek against the shining neck. My Lady Satin pawed the floor and bunted Miss Calhoun around affectionately. Cory looked out the window. "Come, darling, and show the lady and gentleman what a Beautiful you are! Come on, girl—come, Gorgeous." My Lady Satin tossed her head and rolled her eyes, but was finally prevailed upon to put her head in a

halter and emerge. She looked just like any other horse to Mrs. Cugat, only bigger and nearer. Mrs. Cugat grasped Mr. Cugat's arm and held on tight, and My Lady Satin swished her tail and whinnied.

"Did you ever," asked Miss Calhoun of Mr. Cugat, with a misty, love-clouded look, "see anything more perfect than this?"

"She's a beauty, all right!" said Mr. Cugat enthusiastically, and ran a professional-looking eye over My Lady Satin and stroked her neck fearlessly. Mrs. Cugat watched him in admiration; then, for some reason, she looked at Mr. Lowrie—he was watching Miss Calhoun, and with a surprising expression on his sharp face. He looked tender. Cory continued to gaze dully out the window.

However, this rapt though disparate atmosphere was suddenly shattered; from outside came rapidly approaching sounds of tumult. My Lady Satin was turned over to the high-waisted man summarily and they all rushed to the door. The stable yard was full of hounds and, bounding up the path from the gate, came an apoplectic young man in a coverall, whipping and slashing the rear rank mercilessly and blistering the air with oaths. A few of the hounds were coupled together, but on most the couples dangled broken. Some still held on to what may, at one time, have been a white chicken, and all were splashed with blood. One proudly lugged along a large gray gander—very dead.

"Why, Patton, what is it? Clay, *look!* They're the bitches in whelp!" exclaimed Miss Calhoun. Then she turned to Cory: "How did this happen? What have you done? Didn't you put them *in* when you brought them back this morning?"

"Lord," said Cory, "that's right. They beat it off over a stone wall when Liz and

George drove along, but I was so tickled I just let 'em go. I figured they'd get home all right, knowing the country so well. Of course I meant to tell you, but, with one thing and another, I forgot."

"They done a good two hundred dollars' worth of damage to me," snarled the man named Patton. "Rioted all over my young box, killed a dozen or more hens, two shoats, and that gander."

Mr. Lowrie and Leighton took immediate and admirable charge.

"Wait here, Patton," said Miss Calhoun curtly, "while I go down to the kennels with them and see how many are missing."

Mr. and Mrs. Cugat and Cory waited with Mr. Patton and heard again, and with embellishment, this frightful tale of pillage. Mr. Cugat looked grave, and Cory stricken. Mrs. Cugat patted Cory's hand comfortingly, but could think of nothing much to say.

"Mr. Lowrie will see you the first thing in the morning, Patton," Miss Calhoun said, coming back up the path with Leighton. "Figure it all up and we'll make it right. We're both very sorry. Such things don't happen often with this pack, you know."

Mr. Patton departed, looking vindictive.

"God, Leighton, it would be Patton, wouldn't it!" exclaimed Miss Calhoun, slapping agitatedly at her boot with her crop. "Now he'll probably take down our post and rail, and put up an electric fence or something. He's one of those progressive farmer boys," she explained to Mr. Cugat, "who went to agricultural school in Nebraska or somewhere—we've been handling him with kid gloves. Now this!" She turned on her heel and stalked into the house. Not once had she directed her ire at, or even looked upon, Cory. Mrs.

Cugat watched her retreating figure in some admiration.

She appeared again almost immediately, however, well in hand, and proceeded to arrange the afternoon for the pleasure of her guests. She and Cory and Mr. Cugat could exercise some horses, she said; Mr. Lowrie, in the car, could go and look at fences with Mrs. Cugat, who—wasn't she correct—hadn't sat on a horse for some time? She was correct. Mrs. Cugat hadn't sat on anything even resembling a horse since she'd been led around the park on a Shetland pony, screaming, at the age of six. Mrs. Cugat didn't think looking at fences (of all things) with the sardonic Mr. Lowrie sounded much fun, but she was politely anxious to fall in with any plans.

They were, however, some time getting started because of Mr. Cugat's calves. Not booted since he was a polo-playing strippling, they had apparently muscled up and his boots wouldn't go on. A pair of Mr. Lowrie's were tried and a pair of Leighton's, and then a pair produced by Miss Calhoun which belonged to her father. These, at last, he managed to squeeze into.

"They're rather nice ones," Miss Calhoun commented. "Pa won them in a crap game off the Duke of Windsor."

There was more to looking at fences with Mr. Lowrie than Mrs. Cugat had expected. True, they bumped up one lane and down another and Mr. Lowrie scanned fences on both sides with a sharp eye while she drove; sometimes even getting out to shake a post or rattle a bar or stamp on the ground in front of a fence; but they also paid a lot of calls. As soon as they'd come to a farmhouse, however small, he'd tell her to turn in. The dour Mr. Lowrie, paying calls on farmers, waxed almost genial. Mrs. Cugat was surprised—he

seemed very popular. He'd ask about new babies, chronic ailments, and the state of crops; graciously sample drinks, pipe tobacco, and baked goods, and always, and without fail, look at a horse.

This last was hard on Mrs. Cugat, who had to get quite close to a number of horses with no Mr. Cugat there to cling to. But she covered her terror as best she could.

"Are you trying to buy a horse?" she asked curiously, after a particularly long and footling discussion as to the merits of a shaggy flea-bitten gray, which had been proudly led out and trotted around a barnyard.

"No, they're tryin' to sell me a horse," Mr. Lowrie replied—almost happily.

"Why are they trying to sell you a horse?" she queried.

"There's not a person in Virginia won't try to sell you a horse," he said. "It's in 'em."

"Why do we keep looking at their horses, then?" asked Mrs. Cugat, determined to get to the bottom of this.

"My dear young lady, I'm a master of hounds," he replied with dignity. "And," he went on, "I flatter myself—rather a good one. That is, in so far as lookin' after the country and keepin' in with the farmers goes. We ride over some of their land, you see. It takes a lot of time, but it's my job and I like it—and them."

Mrs. Cugat subsided, somewhat squelched. "Besides," he added, "I just might run into a bargain."

"There's Foxes' Hole," he said a few minutes later, pointing with his ever-in-hand hunting-whip to an imposing white house with innumerable green-roofed outbuildings and sweeping gravelled drives. "That's the Randolph place. Randolph's the owner of Chance Gallant, you know."

Then, as Mrs. Cugat looked unimpressed, "The stallion Cal was talkin' about at lunch. He *is* a horse, I will say, and between you and me is bringin' a higher stud fee now than Man O' War in his best days. Cal's had her heart set on a Chance Gallant foal out of Satin ever since the mare went lame, but of course she'd be a fool to risk the price even if they'd consent to take her. Satin's a beauty, but hardly in that class. Cal, though, is crazier about that mare than anything—or anybody—in the world. It's too bad the stallion's gone—I'd take you in to see him."

They drove on, Mrs. Cugat giving silent thanks that there was one less horse in Virginia to look at, especially one less stallion—the word sounded fire-breathing.

"One more stop, straight down this road and then home," said Mr. Lowrie. "This won't take long, it's just old Lecorn—I want to speak to him about haulin' some rails for me."

Old Lecorn was almost the unpleasantest-looking man she had ever seen. One side of his face was sort of hooked up, which stretched the eye shut; besides which he seemed slightly half-witted. Terms were discussed over the front gate anent the hauling of a load of rails by Lecorn's team of mules, and then, as usual, they repaired to the barn.

"That's a cute horse," said Mrs. Cugat, still politely determined to keep up her end.

"That's a jackass, mam," said Lecorn with a crooked, squinting smile.

"Oh, it *is*!" exclaimed Mrs. Cugat. "Well! What do you do with jackasses, now?"

"Jackass on a mare gets a mule," Mr. Lowrie put in briefly.

"Oh, I see! Oh." Would she, Mrs. Cugat

wondered, after a little more time in Virginia—?

They arrived home to find Mr. Cugat prostrate and pale in a porch chair, several people working over him anxiously. The Duke of Windsor's boots would not come off.

"A li'l tight, eh?" said Mr. Lowrie, sauntering up the steps.

"What do *you* think!" barked Cory, tenderly holding a brimming straightshot to Mr. Cugat's lips.

"Ah knowed a man once't who hadda have both laigs sawed off," old Enos reminisced. "His boots stuck tight an' the blud all stopped an' his laigs jus' died."

"I'm really afraid they'll have to be cut, Clay," Miss Calhoun said sadly, and Mrs. Cugat paled. "The boots, I mean," she added patiently. "We've worked and worked, but his legs have swollen now, and you know how that feels. He's about all in."

Mr. Lowrie gave her a long sympathetic look and then set to work with his knife. The Duke of Windsor's boots, evidently considered rather in the light of a museum piece, were not cut without a pang. Mr. Cugat, finally released, was helped wobbling up the stairs. It was time to dress for the announcement party.

The party was lovely. "Birdie" (a Miss Byrd, lacking none of the Admiral's talents for accomplishment) must have felt amply repaid by the results of her "fussing." The drawing-room was candlelit, the stairway hung with green; beaming negroes ladled champagne cup from burnished bowls, and the guests looked beautiful and distinguished. Women wore their grandmothers' jewelry—men, pink evening coats. Mr. Cugat and Cory, honest in tuxedos, looked a little like somebody got in to keep an eye on the flat silver.

Intuition, however, had told Mrs. Cugat to bring her off-the-shoulder black lace, and she looked lovely. So, in white tulle, did Miss Calhoun. Miss Calhoun looked radiant. There were only a chosen few, however, who knew that this radiance was not altogether induced by joy in her own betrothal—Mr. Randolph of Foxes' Hole was among those present! And it was not to be bruited about, but he was *not* sending Chance Gallant to Kentucky until *next* week! Furthermore, by way of an engagement present to the daughter of his oldest friend, he had expansively promised that Chance Gallant would be at home to My Lady Satin at *any* time and on a purely social footing. (For an *engagement* present! thought Mr. and Mrs. Cugat, strangers in a strange land.) Mr. Lowrie congratulated Miss Calhoun on her extraordinary good luck. Cory remained apathetic.

The party waxed gayer and gayer and the drawing-room floor was cleared for dancing. Mrs. Cugat found herself in great demand, and Mr. Cugat, gradually regaining the use of his legs, trod a careful measure. Virginians were nice, they confided to each other, if caught singly. Two Virginians, of course, talked horse.

At the height of the gaiety, however, the little high-waisted man from the stables appeared in the door, beckoning urgently. "Mis Claiborne, Miss Claiborne," he whispered, "you'd better come. Merry Margaret looks like foalin'."

"Right away, Reagan," she said quickly and, without hesitation, left the arms of a pink-coated gallant who waltzed liked a dream and slipped briskly into the dirty white coat held for her.

"Don't you want me to come with you?" offered Mr. Lowrie.

"No," she replied lightly. "Cory will. It will be tremendously interesting for him—"

believe it or not, he's never seen a foal born! Carry on here, Clay, as host. You know Merry Margaret—it may be hours." Cory gave Mr. Lowrie a triumphant look and with a springy step followed his betrothed out into the night.

It was early in the following rosy dawn that Mrs. Cugat woke suddenly to hear him come in. She sat up in bed and listened. He was being sick in the bathroom.

"Darling, what do you really think about this engagement?" Mrs. Cugat whispered worriedly, as she and Mr. Cugat dressed next morning.

"He's done it this time," Mr. Cugat said, leaning over with a groan to tie his shoe.

"George, he doesn't fit in down here and he never will," persisted Mrs. Cugat. "I want to cry every time I look at him—cute, funny Cory, who's never at a loss and the life of every party—Why, he's miserable! He can have pretty near any girl in the world he wants and goes and picks one like Claiborne. I can't imagine what she'll do at home—none of us ever breed anything!"

"I know," said Mr. Cugat slowly. "That's the trouble with a shipboard romance—everybody's out of his true environment and bathed in tropical moonlight—The trouble is now that Claiborne and Cory are both too gentlemanly to break it up."

"Well, I'm not," said Mrs. Cugat, fluffing out her hair spiritedly. "I never did like fine gentlemanly women, anyway!"

"Now, Liz," warned Mr. Cugat anxiously, "remember it's none of your business."

"None of my business! If that's not just like a man—you feel much worse about it than I do, but you'd just sit by and watch him ruin his life and not raise a finger!"

"There's nothing in the world I wouldn't do for Cory," declaimed Mr. Cugat heatedly, "but some things are taboo. Women don't understand."

"I'll say they don't!" retorted Mrs. Cugat in scorn, and they descended to the dining-room.

A number of people were there—everyone dressed in hunting-clothes. Claiborne looked like a slim young English prince. Mr. Lowrie, Mrs. Cugat thought, was the only man she had ever seen on whom a pink coat did not look like fancy dress. It looked as if it grew on him. Poor Cory, though, evidently at the mercy of some cruel custom which Mrs. Cugat decided was probably designed to put probationary hunters at the biggest disadvantage possible, was unbecomingly garbed in a senatorial-looking black coat, a wispy white stock, and a somewhat low derby, locked on with a cord. He looked like a lugubrious monkey on a stick.

"Tie his stock for him, will you, Clay?" Miss Calhoun begged in passing. "He's got it right over left again."

Mrs. Cugat simmered.

Mr. and Mrs. Cugat watched the hunt from a car. What they could see of it. And what they could see of it, Mrs. Cugat didn't think much of—little mechanical-looking figures moving across a hillside or standing interminably about against a dark mass of trees. Only once did Mr. Cugat exclaim, "By George, there he goes! Close along that fence!" and train his glasses on a near-by hill.

Mrs. Cugat bounced with excitement. "He's winning, he's winning!" she cried as the field thundered by and sailed a stone wall, Cory back in his saddle and well in the lead of everybody, including hounds.

They drove back to Green Trees after a

time and ate luncheon alone with "Birdie." There was no tellin' when the hunters would come in, she said. She herself was goin' to take a nap. Mr. Cugat thought this an excellent idea and repaired to his room. Mrs. Cugat wandered into the drawing-room and sank into a high-backed chair with a copy of *Blood Horse*, which she thought might prove instructive. It didn't, for she dozed off, and only woke with a start to find it dusk and herself an embarrassed eavesdropper.

"Cal, honey, are you still goin' through with this ridiculous engagement business?" asked Mr. Lowrie's drawling voice behind her with an almost appealing note of pleading.

"Certainly," came Miss Calhoun's clipped accents; "and why not, may I ask?" She was apparently slapping at her boot with her whip again.

"Why not, Cal! You ask that! You must have had your eyes shut all day."

"Yes?"

"Yes, you know what I'm talkin' about. Your hero not only kept well out in front of the huntsman all the time, but he trampled Bugler, Dido, and Merrylegs in a lane, galloped over Patton's crocus bed and cut in on Mrs. Fairchild at a five-barred gate that she was goin' at like a train. He refused the gate, of course."

"He couldn't hold his horse," said Miss Calhoun shortly.

"Exactly," said Mr. Lowrie, "and what was his horse? None other than old Snowball, who carried your eight-year-old cousin all last season without a mistake. I did what I could for him."

"Oh, you know Snowball, Clay. She's got a mouth of iron if you take hold of it."

"Well, that lad takes a nice hold, all right. To think of a *Calhoun* marryin' a man with bad hands!"

Miss Calhoun said nothing.

"Furthermore," said Mr. Lowrie disgustedly, "he'd get lonesome or somethin' and ride up to pass the time o' day every time hounds were findin'—but to top all, after the kill he went behind a tree and was sick."

"Not again!" she sighed.

"Oh, Cal, look at this thing sensibly. They're nice enough fellows, both of them—a couple of weanlin' financiers. But what do *you* want with a man like that? You won't even need his fortune after he's made it. And what are you goin' to do for huntin'? Cugat says in their country they hunt wolves—from Lincoln Zephyrs—with automatic shotguns!"

Mrs. Cugat's eyes widened—Mr. Cugat's ways were devious!

"Oh shut up!" Miss Calhoun's voice sounded strained.

"That's right, take it out on me. You've got the worst temper of any woman I ever saw and you haven't let fly at him once, although he's done enough to drive you off your head."

"I know, Clay," she said huskily, "but you don't understand. You just can't get mad at him. He's one of those people that nobody's ever been mad at, I believe. He's really a darling—but not himself down here, somehow. On the boat he was wonderful."

"Maybe I'm wonderful on a boat, too; you've never seen me." Mr. Lowrie's voice was getting husky too. Mrs. Cugat hunched in her chair uncomfortably.

"I've seen you on a horse, dear," Miss Calhoun said gently. "You don't have to show me how wonderful you are."

"I'd like to try showin' you on a boat," Mr. Lowrie said wistfully, and Mrs. Cugat's heart went suddenly out to him. Poor Mr. Lowrie, only known to be won-

derful on a horse—he'd never get anywhere. Whereas Cory—But there were Claiborne and Cory—both gentlemen and helpless. Claiborne herself had admitted—almost tearfully—that nobody could get mad at Cory. If only someone could just make her get mad at him! Mrs. Cugat, who was no gentleman, huddled thoughtfully down in her chair.

"Shall we go look at the horses?" said Miss Calhoun brightly as they arose that evening from an early supper.

"I saw the horses yesterday," said Mr. Cugat innocently, and sauntered out into the hall to look for the New York papers.

"So did I," muttered Cory, hobbling painfully after him, "but haven't you found out yet that in Virginia we look at the damned horses after every damned meal!"

Miss Calhoun blinked—surprised and hurt. "Darling, I didn't know you felt that way about it," she remonstrated. "Of course we do! My poor Lady Satin! She'd be heart-broken if I didn't come to see her."

"Lady Satin, faugh!" exploded Cory in magnificent contempt. "I wish that big Spark Plug'd never been born!"

"Why, Cory," said Mrs. Cugat, in an anxious endeavor to dispel tension. "I believe you're jealous."

"That's me, all right," he snorted. "Jealous of a three-legged horse!" and limped sputtering out of sight.

"I'll go with you, Claiborne," Mrs. Cugat said valiantly. "I love looking at those beautiful horses."

Fortunately for her, Leighton was waiting in the yard. "Miss Claiborne," he said, "I made a mistake about that Upperville sale; it's Monday instead of Tuesday. We'll have to go over tomorrow."

"That's bad—I'll have to leave a houseful of guests—"

"Please don't worry about us, Claiborne," protested Mrs. Cugat. "We'll get along all right. If it's something important—"

"It is," Miss Calhoun said thoughtfully. "There's a chance to pick up something pretty good in brood mares at that sale. Lord! and I wanted to send Satin to Foxes' Hole tomorrow too, before Randolph changes his mind. But if you and I and Ned go with the van, Leighton, that leaves nobody on the place but the kennel boy or Reagan to drive her over in the trailer, and I don't trust either one of them with it on these hills. I have it, though!"—she turned to Mrs. Cugat—"Cory's good with cars. Why can't Reagan load her and then George and Cory run her down—if they will? I could phone Foxes' Hole tonight that she's coming, and then all they'll have to do is wait while she's unloaded and drive the trailer back."

Mr. Cugat and Cory appeared, strolling together through the dusk, and the subject was tactfully broached. Both said sure and that they'd drive *very* carefully.

"How far is it—dear?" asked Cory, sounding timid.

"Just up the road," said Leighton, "you can't miss it. Big trees, white gate, green mailbox, and they'll be expecting you."

Mr. Cugat and Cory lit their pipes and strolled away—in the opposite direction, however, from the stables.

"May I borrow the station wagon?" asked Mrs. Cugat suddenly. "I want to send a telegram."

"Phone it," said Miss Calhoun.

"I'll go, I believe—there's something I want to get. The stores are open on Saturday night, aren't they?" She was halfway to the garage.

"What in time are you doing?" Mr.

Cugat muttered, sticking his head out of the covers at five o'clock the next morning.

"Shhh!" whispered Mrs. Cugat. "I woke up, so I just thought I'd go out and help poor Cory with those hounds. I don't want him to get in any worse than he is! You go back to sleep."

"I certainly will!" sputtered Mr. Cugat. "*Hounds!*"

Mrs. Cugat slipped back into the bedroom several hours later, disheveled and weary. Mr. Cugat was not there. She could hear him and Cory and Reagan out in the yard loading My Lady Satin into the trailer. Miss Calhoun, Leighton, and Ned had left at daybreak, as planned, in a van that looked like the club car on a transcontinental streamliner. Mrs. Cugat had seen them go from a crouching position under a lilac bush. She stretched and yawned now, and then went into the bathroom to draw a bath. When Mr. Cugat came in an hour later, she was dozing across the foot of the bed.

"Oh hello, you back?" she said, and sat up eagerly.

"Back again," said Mr. Cugat, whistling cheerily. "Where you been? Cory said you weren't—"

"Tell me *all* about it!" Mrs. Cugat interrupted.

"Liz!" expostulated Mr. Cugat, scandalized.

"Oh—I mean did you find the place all right? And did you and Cory get 'Precious' safely unloaded and so forth?"

"Sure," he said. "We didn't have to do a thing; there was a fella there waiting for us who was very handy getting her out."

"What'd he look like?" Mrs. Cugat asked breathlessly.

"Sort of half-witted. One side of his face all squinted up."

Mrs. Cugat had hopped off the bed. "Come on and pack, George. I think you and I better be getting out of here."

"Getting out—why?"

"I think Cory's engagement is about to be broken."

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"Claiborne's going to get mad at him this time—he's just taken 'Beautiful' to be bred to a jackass!"

"What?"

"Accidentally, of course—but she'll never believe it."

"What do you mean?"

"'Jackass on a mare gets a mule,'" recited Mrs. Cugat glibly, "and you took 'Lovely-Lovely' where a jackass lives."

"We did not!" Mr. Cugat protested. "We went to the place they told us—right up the road, big trees, white gate, green mailbox, looked like a fox's hole, and the man was expecting us."

"I know," said Mrs. Cugat, piling clothes into her suitcase. "I was up there this morning, paid him a thirty-dollar stud fee and told him Lady Satin was on the way—then I went out and painted his mail-box green. Get going, darling—we've got to hurry."

"Ah," exclaimed Mrs. Cugat, from behind the evening paper, ten days later and safe at home, "here we are! 'Sailing tonight aboard the *S.S. Mariposa* for an extended cruise of the South Seas will be Mr. Cory Cartwright of this city. Mr. Cartwright plans to spend some time on the island of Bali. Accompanying him is his great-aunt, Miss Lydia Bonbright of Four Forks, Iowa.'—Darling, it worked!"

Mr. Cugat raised his eyes. "Have you thought how we'll look in sarongs?" he asked gravely.

DAVID GRAY (1870—)

Mr. Carteret and His Fellow Americans Abroad

from MR. CARTERET

Although this story is not quite as well known as Gallops, surely, of all the hilarious tales that David Gray has given us, this is both hilarious and original! No one but an American who had visited much in England could have written this story, and no one but an American who has bearded the hunting Englishman in his den can really appreciate the picture as the author draws it!

It must have been highly interesting," observed Mrs. Archie Brawle; "so much pleasanter than a concert."

"Rather!" replied Lord Frederic. "It was ripping!"

Mrs. Ascott-Smith turned to Mr. Carteret. She had been listening to Lord Frederic Westcote, who had just come down from town where he had seen the Wild West show. "Is it so?" she asked. "Have you ever seen them?" By "them" she meant the Indians.

Mr. Carteret nodded.

"It seems so odd," continued Mrs. Archie Brawle, "that they should ride without saddles, is it a pose?"

"No, I fancy not," replied Lord Frederic.

"They must get very tired without stirrups," insisted Mrs. Archie. "But perhaps they never ride very long at a time."

"That is possible," said Lord Frederic doubtfully. "They are only on about twenty minutes in the show."

Mr. Pringle, the curate, who had happened in to pay his monthly call upon Mrs. Ascott-Smith, took advantage of the pause. "Of course, I am no horse-man," he began apprehensively, "and I have never seen the red Indians, either in their native wilds or in a show, but I have read not a little about them, and I have gathered that they almost live on horseback."

Major Hammerslea reached toward the tea table for another muffin and hemmed. "It is a very different thing," he said with heavy impressiveness. "It is a very different thing."

The curate looked expectant, as if believing that his remarks were going to be

noticed. But nothing was farther from the Major's mind.

"What is so very different?" inquired Mrs. Ascott-Smith, after a pause had made it clear that the Major had ignored Pringle.

"It is one thing, my dear Madame, to ride a stunted, half-starved pony, as you say, 'bareback' and another to ride a conditioned British hunter (he pronounced it huntaw) without a saddle. I must say that the latter is an impossibility." The oracle came to an end and the material Major began on a muffin.

There was an approving murmur of assent. The Major was the author of "Schooling and Riding British Hunters"; however, it was not only his authority which swayed the company, but individual conviction. Of the dozen people in the room, excepting Pringle, all rode to hounds with more or less enthusiasm, and no one had ever seen any one hunting without a saddle, and no one had ever experienced any desire to try the experiment.

"Nevertheless," observed Lord Frederic, "I must say their riding is very creditable—quite as good as one sees on any polo field in England."

Major Hammerslea looked at him severely, as if his youth were not wholly an excuse. "It is, as I said," he observed. "It is one thing to ride an American pony and another to ride a British hunter. One requires horsemanship, the other does not. And horsemanship," he continued, "which properly is the guiding of a horse across country, requires years of study and experience."

Lord Frederic looked somewhat unconvinced, but he said nothing.

"Of course the dear Major (she called it deah Majaw) is quite right," said Mrs. Ascott-Smith.

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Carteret. "I suppose that he has often seen these Indians ride?"

"Have you often seen these Indians ride?" inquired Mrs. Ascott-Smith of the Major.

"Do you mean Indians or the Red Men of North America?" replied the Major. "And do you mean ride upon ponies in a show or ride upon British hunters?"

"Which do you mean?" asked Mrs. Ascott-Smith.

"I suppose that I mean American Indians," said Mr. Carteret, "and either upon ponies or upon British hunters."

"No," said the Major. "I have not. Have you?"

"Not upon British hunters," said Mr. Carteret.

"But do you think that they could?" inquired Lord Frederic.

"It would be foolish of me to express an opinion," replied Mr. Carteret, "because, in the first place, I have never seen them ride British hunters over fences—"

"They would come off at the first obstacle," observed the Major, more in sorrow than in anger.

"And in the second place," continued Mr. Carteret, "I am perhaps naturally prejudiced in behalf of my fellow countrymen."

Mrs. Ascott-Smith looked at him anxiously. His sister had married a British peer. "But you Americans are quite distinct from the Red Indians," she said. "We quite understand that nowadays. To be sure, my dear Aunt—" she stopped.

"Rather!" said Mrs. Archie Brawle. "You don't even intermarry with them, do you?"

"That is a matter of personal taste," said Mr. Carteret. "There is no law against it."

"But nobody that one knows—" began Mrs. Ascott-Smith.

"There was John Rolfe," said Mr. Carteret; "he was a very well known chap."

"Do you know him?" asked Mrs. Brawle.

The curate sniggered. His hour of triumph had come. "Rolfe is dead," he said.

"Really!" said Mrs. Brawle, coldly. "It had quite slipped my mind. You see I never read the papers during hunting. But is his wife received?"

"I believe that she was," said Mr. Carteret.

The curate was still sniggering and Mrs. Brawle put her glass in her eye and looked at him. Then she turned to Mr. Carteret. "But all this," she said, "of course has nothing to do with the question. Do you think that these red Indians could ride bareback across our country?"

"As I said before," replied Mr. Carteret, "It would be silly of me to express an opinion, but I should be interested in seeing them try it."

"I have a topping idea!" cried Lord Frederic. He was an enthusiastic, simple-minded fellow.

"You must tell us," exclaimed Mrs. Ascott-Smith.

"Let us have them down, and take them hunting!"

"How exciting!" exclaimed Mrs. Ascott-Smith. "What sport!"

The Major looked at her reprovingly. "It would be as I said," he observed.

"But it would be rather interesting," said Mrs. Brawle.

"It might," said the Major, "it might be interesting."

"It would be ripping!" said Lord Frederic. "But how can we manage it?"

"I'll mount them," said the Major with a grim smile. "My word! They shall have the pick of my stable though I have to spend a month rebreaking horses that have run away."

"But it isn't the difficulty of mounting them," said Lord Frederic. "You see I've never met any of these chaps." He turned to Mr. Carteret with a sudden inspiration. "Are any of them friends of yours?" he asked.

Mrs. Ascott-Smith looked anxiously at Mr. Carteret as if she feared that it would develop that some of the people in the show were his cousins.

"No," he replied, "I don't think so, although I may have met some of them in crossing reservations. But I once went shooting with Grady, one of the managers of the show."

"Better yet!" said Lord Frederic. "Do you think that he would come and bring some of them down?" he asked.

"I think he would," said Mr. Carteret. He knew that the showman was strong in Grady—as well as the sportsman.

The Major rose to go to the billiard room. "I have one piece of advice to give you," he said. "This prank is harmless enough, but establish a definite understanding with this fellow that you are not to be liable in damages for personal injuries which his Indians may receive. Explain to him that it is not child's play and have him put it in writing."

"You mean have him execute a kind of release?"

"Precisely that," said the Major. "I was once sued for twenty pounds by a groom that fell off my best horse and let him run away, and damme, the fellow recovered." He bowed to the ladies and left the room.

"Of course we can fix all that up," said

Lord Frederic. "The old chap is a bit over-cautious nowadays, but how can we get hold of this fellow Grady?"

"I'll wire him at once, if you wish," said Mr. Carteret, and he went to the writing table. "When do you want him to come down?" he asked as he began to write.

"We might take them out with the Quorn on Saturday," said Lord Frederic, "but the meet is rather far for us. Perhaps it would be better to have them on Thursday with Charley Ploversdale's hounds."

Mr. Carteret hesitated a moment. "Wouldn't Ploversdale be apt to be fussy about experiments? He's rather conservative, you know, about the way people are turned out. I saw him send a man home one day who was out without a hat. It was an American who was afraid that hats made his hair come out."

"Pish," said Lord Frederic. "Charley Ploversdale is as mild as a dove."

"Suit yourself," said Mr. Carteret. "I'll make it Thursday. One more question," he added. "How many shall I ask him to bring down?" At this moment the Major came into the room again. He had mislaid his eyeglasses.

"I should think that a dozen would be about the right number," said Lord Frederic, replying to Mr. Carteret. "It would be very imposing."

"Too many!" said the Major. "We must mount them on good horses and I don't want my entire stable ruined by men who have never lepped a fence."

"I think the Major is right about the matter of numbers," said Mr. Carteret, "how would three do?"

"Make it three," said the Major.

Before dinner was over a reply came from Grady saying that he and three bucks

would be pleased to arrive Thursday morning prepared for a hunting party.

This took place on Monday, and at various times during Tuesday and Wednesday Mr. Carteret gave the subject thought. By Thursday morning his views had ripened. He ordered his tea and eggs to be served in his room and came down a little past ten dressed in knickerbockers and an old shooting coat. He wandered into the dining-room and found Mrs. Ascott-Smith sitting by the fire entertaining Lord Frederic, as he went to and from the sideboard in search of things to eat.

"Good morning," said Mr. Carteret, hoarsely.

Lord Frederic looked around and as he noticed Mr. Carteret's clothes his face showed surprise.

"Hello!" he said. "You had better hurry and change, or you'll be late. We have to start in half an hour to meet Grady."

Mr. Carteret coughed. "I don't think that I can go out today. It is a great disappointment."

"Not going hunting?" exclaimed Mrs. Ascott-Smith. "What is the matter?"

"I have a bad cold," said Mr. Carteret miserably.

"But, my dear fellow," exclaimed Lord Frederic, "it will do your cold a world of good!"

"Not a cold like mine," said Mr. Carteret.

"But this the day, don't you know?" said Lord Frederic. "How am I going to manage things without you?"

"All that you have to do is to meet them at the station and take them to the meet," said Mr. Carteret. "Everything else has been arranged."

"But I'm awfully disappointed," said Lord Frederic. "I had counted on you to

help, don't you see, and introduce them to Ploversdale. It would be more graceful for an American to do it than for me. You understand?"

"Yes," said Mr. Carteret, "I understand. It's a great disappointment, but I must bear it philosophically."

Mrs. Ascott-Smith looked at him sympathetically, and he coughed twice. "You must be suffering," she said. "Freddy, you really must not urge him to expose himself. Have you a pain here?" she inquired, touching herself in the region of the pleura.

"Yes," said Mr. Carteret, "it is just there, but I daresay it will soon be better."

"I am afraid not," said his hostess. "This is the way pneumonia begins. You must take a medicine that I have. They say it is quite wonderful for inflammatory colds. I'll send Hodgson for it," and she touched the bell.

"Please, please don't take that trouble," entreated Mr. Carteret.

"But you must take it," said Mrs. Ascott-Smith. "They call it Broncholine. You pour it in a tin and inhale it or swallow it, I forget which, but it's very efficacious. They used it on Teddy's pony when it was sick. The little creature died, but that was because they gave it too much, or not enough, I forget which.

Hodgson appeared and Mrs. Ascott-Smith gave directions about the Broncholine.

"I thank you very much," said Mr. Carteret humbly, "I'll go to my room and try it at once."

"That's a good chap!" said Lord Frederic, "perhaps you will feel so much better that you can join us."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Carteret gloomily, "or it may work as it did on the pony," and he left the room.

After Hodgson had departed from his chamber leaving explicit directions as to how and how not to use the excellent Broncholine, Mr. Carteret poured a quantity of it from the bottle and threw it out of the window, resolving to be on the safe side. Then he looked at his boots and his pink coat and his white leathers, which were laid out upon the bed. "I don't think there can be any danger," he thought, "if I turn up after they have started. I loathe stopping in all day." He dressed leisurely, ordered his second horse to be sent on, and some time after the rest of the household had gone to the meet he sallied forth. As he knew the country and the coverts which Lord Ploversdale would draw, he counted on joining the tail of the hunt, thus keeping out of sight. He inquired of a rustic if he had seen hounds pass and receiving a "no" for an answer, he jogged on at a faster trot, fearing that the hunt might have gone away in some other direction.

As he came around a bend in the road, he saw four women riding toward him, and as they drew near he saw that they were Lady Violet Weatherbone and her three daughters. These young ladies were known as the Three Guardsmen, a sobriquet not wholly inappropriate; for, as Lord Frederic described them, they were "big-boned, up-standing fillies," between twenty-five and thirty, and very hard goers across any country, and always together.

"Good morning," said Mr. Carteret, bowing. "I suppose the hounds are close by?" It was a natural assumption, as Lady Violet, on hunting days, was never very far from hounds.

"I do not know," she responded, and her tone further implied that she did not care. Mr. Carteret hesitated a moment. "Is

anything the matter?" he asked. "Has anything happened?"

"Yes," said Lady Violet frankly, "something has happened." Here the daughters modestly turned their horses away.

"Some one," continued Lady Violet, "brought savages to the meet." She paused impressively.

"Not really!" said Mr. Carteret. It was all that he could think of to say.

"Yes," said Lady Violet, "and while it would have mattered little to me, it was impossible—" she motioned her head toward the three maidens, and paused.

"Forgive me," said Mr. Carteret, "but do I quite understand?"

"At the first I thought," said Lady Violet, "that they were attired in painted fleshings, but upon using my glass, it was clear that I was mistaken. Otherwise, I should have brought them away at the first moment."

"I see," said Mr. Carteret. "It is most unfortunate!"

"It is indeed!" said Lady Violet; "but the matter will not be allowed to drop. They were brought to the meet by that young profligate, Lord Frederic Westcote."

"You amaze me," said Mr. Carteret. He bowed, started his horse, and jogged along for five minutes, then he turned to the right upon a crossroad and suddenly found himself with hounds. They were feathering excitedly about the mouth of a tile drain into which the fox had evidently gone. No master, huntsmen or whips were in sight, but sitting wet and mud-daubed upon horses dripping with muddy water were Grady dressed in cowboy costume and three naked Indians. Mr. Carteret glanced about over the country and understood. They had swum the brook at the place where it ran between steep clay banks and the rest of the field had gone around

to the bridge. As he looked toward the south, he saw Lord Ploversdale riding furiously toward him followed by Smith, the huntsman. Grady had not recognized Mr. Carteret turned out in pink as he was, and for the moment the latter decided to remain incognito.

Before Lord Ploversdale, Master of Foxhounds, reached the road, he began waving his whip. He appeared excited. "What do you mean by riding upon my hounds?" he shouted. He said this in several ways with various accompanying phrases, but neither the Indians nor Grady seemed to notice him. It occurred to Mr. Carteret that, although Lord Ploversdale's power of expression was wonderful for England, it nevertheless fell short of Arizona standards. Then, however, he noticed that Grady was absorbed in adjusting a kodak camera, with which he was evidently about to take a picture of the Indians alone with the hounds. He drew back in order both to avoid being in the field of the picture and to avoid too close proximity with Lord Ploversdale as he came over the fence into the road.

"What do you mean, sir!" shouted the enraged Master of Foxhounds, as he pulled up his horse.

"A little more in the middle," replied Grady, still absorbed in taking the picture.

Lord Ploversdale hesitated. He was speechless with surprise for the moment.

Grady pressed the button and began putting up the machine.

"What do you mean by riding on my hounds, you and these persons?" demanded Lord Ploversdale.

"We didn't," said Grady amicably, "but if your bunch of dogs don't know enough to keep out of the way of a horse, they ought to learn."

Lord Ploversdale looked aghast and Smith, the huntsman, pinched himself to make sure that he was not dreaming.

"Many thanks for your advice," said Lord Ploversdale. "May I inquire who you and your friends may be?"

"I'm James Grady," said that gentleman. "This," he said pointing to the Indian nearest, "is Chief Hole-in-the-Ground of the Ogallala Sious. Him in the middle is Mr. Jim Snake, and the one beyond is Chief Skytail, a Pawnee."

"Thank you, that is very interesting," said Lord Ploversdale, with polite irony. "Now will you kindly take them home?"

"See here," said Grady, strapping the camera to his saddle, "I was invited to this hunt, regular, and if you hand me out any more hostile talk—" He paused.

"Who invited you?" inquired Lord Ploversdale.

"One of your own bunch," said Grady, "Lord Frederic Westcote, I'm no butter-in."

"Your language is difficult to understand," said Lord Ploversdale. "Where is Lord Frederic Westcote?"

Mr. Carteret had watched the field approaching as fast as whip and spur could drive them, and in the first flight he noticed Lord Frederic and the Major. For this reason he still hesitated about thrusting himself into the discussion. It seemed that the interference of a third party could only complicate matters, inasmuch as Lord Frederic would so soon be upon the spot.

Lord Ploversdale looked across the field impatiently. "I've no doubt, my good fellow, that Lord Frederic Westcote brought you here, and I'll see him about it, but kindly take these fellows home. They'll kill all my hounds."

"Now you're beginning to talk reasonable," said Grady, "I'll discuss with you."

The words were hardly out of his mouth before hounds gave tongue riotously and went off. The fox had slipped out of the other end of the drain, and old Archer had found the line.

As if shot out of a gun the three Indians dashed at the stake-and-bound fence on the farther side of the road, joyously using their heavy quirts on the Major's thoroughbreds. Skytail's horse, being hurried too much, blundered his take-off, hit above the knees and rolled over on the Chief who was sitting tight. There was a stifled grunt and then the Pawnee word, "Go-dam!"

Hole-in-the-Ground looked back and laughed one of the few laughs of his life. It was a joke which he could understand. Then he used the quirt again to make the most of his advantage.

"That one is finished," said Lord Ploversdale gratefully. But as the words were in his mouth, Skytail rose with his horse, vaulted up and was away.

The M.F.H. followed over the fence shouting at Smith to whip off the hounds. But the hounds were going too fast. They had got a view of the fox and three whooping horsemen were behind them driving them on.

The first flight of the field followed the M.F.H. out of the road and so did Mr. Carteret, and presently he found himself riding between Lord Frederic and the Major. They were both a bit winded and had evidently come fast.

"I say," exclaimed Lord Frederic, "where did you come from?"

"I was cured by the Broncholine," said Mr. Carteret, "amazing stuff!"

"Is your horse fresh?" asked Lord Frederic.

"Yes," replied Mr. Carteret, "I happened upon them at the road."

"Then go after that man Grady," said Lord Frederic, "and beg him to take those beggars home. They have been riding on hounds for twenty minutes."

"Were they able," asked Mr. Carteret, "to stay with their horses at the fences?"

"Stay with their horses!" puffed the Major.

"Go on, like a good chap," said Lord Frederic, "stop that fellow or I shall be expelled from the hunt; perhaps put in jail. Was Ploversdale vexed?" he added.

"I should judge by his language," said Mr. Carteret, "that he was vexed."

"Hurry on," said Lord Frederic. "Put your spurs in."

Mr. Carteret gave his horse its head and he shot to the front, but Grady was nearly a field in the lead and it promised to be a long chase as he was on the Major's black thoroughbred. The cowboy rode along with a loose rein and an easy balance seat. At his fences he swung his hat and cheered. He seemed to be enjoying himself and Mr. Carteret was anxious lest he might begin to shoot from pure delight. Such a demonstration would have been misconstrued. Nearly two hundred yards ahead at the heels of the pack galloped the Indians, and in the middle distance between them and Grady rode Lord Ploversdale and Smith vainly trying to overtake the hounds and whip them off. Behind and trailing over a mile or more came the field and the rest of the hunt servants in little groups, all awestruck at what had happened. It was unspeakable that Lord Ploversdale's hounds which had been hunted by his father and his grandfather should be so scandalized.

Mr. Carteret finally got within a length of Grady and hailed him.

"Hello, Carty," said Grady, "glad to see you. I thought you were sick. What can I

do? They've stampeded. But it's a great ad. for the show, isn't it? I've got four reporters in a hack on the road."

"Forget about the show," said Mr. Carteret. "This isn't any laughing matter. Ploversdale's hounds are one of the smartest packs in England. You don't understand."

"It will make all the better story in the papers," said Grady.

"No, it won't," said Mr. Carteret. "They won't print it. It's like blasphemy upon the Church."

"Whoop!" yelled Grady, as they tore through a bullfinch.

"Call them off," said Mr. Carteret, straightening his hat.

"But I can't catch 'em," said Grady, and that was the truth.

Lord Ploversdale, however, had been gaining on the Indians, and by the way in which he clubbed his heavy crop, loaded at the butt, it was apparent that he meant to put an end to the proceedings if he could.

Just then hounds swept over the crest of a green hill and as they went down the other side, they viewed the fox in the field beyond. He was in distress, and it looked as if the pack would kill in the open. They were running wonderfully together, the traditional blanket would have covered them, and in the natural glow of pride which came over the M.F.H., he loosened his grip upon the crop. But as the hounds viewed the fox so did the three sons of the wilderness who were following close behind. From the hill-top fifty of the hardest going men in England saw Hole-in-the-Ground flogging his horse with the heavy quirt which hung from his wrist. The outraged British hunter shot forward scattering hounds to right and left, flew a ditch and hedge and was close on the fox who had stopped to make a last stand. Without

drawing rein, the astonished onlookers saw the lean Indian suddenly disappear under the neck of his horse and almost instantly swing back into his seat swinging a brown thing above his head. *Hole-in-the-Ground had caught the fox!*

"Most unprecedented!" Mr. Carteret heard the Major exclaim. He pulled up his horse, as the field did theirs, and waited apprehensively. He saw Hole-in-the-Ground circle around, jerk the Major's five hundred guinea hunter to a standstill close to Lord Ploversdale and address him. He was speaking in his own language.

As the Chief went on, he saw Grady smile.

"He says," said Grady translating, "that the white chief can eat the fox if he wants him. He's proud himself bein' packed with store grub."

The English onlookers heard and beheld with blank faces. It was beyond them.

The M.F.H. bowed stiffly as Hole-in-the-Ground's offer was made known to him. He regarded them a moment in thought. A vague light was breaking in upon him. "Aw, thank you," he said, "thanks awfully. Smith, take the fox. Good afternoon!"

Then he wheeled his horse, called the hounds in with his horn and trotted out to the road that led to the kennels. Lord

Ploversdale, though he had never been out of England, was cast in a large mold.

The three Indians sat on their panting horses, motionless, stolidly facing the curious gaze of the crowd; or rather they looked through the crowd, as the lion with the high breeding of the desert looks through and beyond the faces that stare and gape before the bars of his cage.

"Most amazing! Most amazing!" muttered the Major.

"It is," said Mr. Carteret, "if you have never been away from this." He made a sweeping gesture over the restricted English scenery, pampered and brought up by hand.

"Been away from this?" repeated the Major. "I don't understand."

Mr. Carteret turned to him. How could he explain it?

"With us," he began, laying emphasis on the "us." Then he stopped. "Look into their eyes," he said hopelessly.

The Major looked at him blankly. How could he, Major Hammerslea of "The Blues," tell what those inexplicable dark eyes saw beyond the fenced tillage! What did he know of the brown, bare, illimitable range under the noonday sun, the evening light on far, silent mountains, the starlit desert!

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865–1936)

The Maltese Cat

from THE DAY'S WORK

No anthology such as this would be complete without Kipling's famous tale. Furthermore, the story is unusual in many ways. The real hero is the horse, not the rider; and the horses talk together in a convincing, and not sentimental, manner. One of the few stories written about polo, it tells of the little-publicized Mongolian pony—that runty, scrubby, homely pony with the courage of a lion and a heart as big as all outdoors.

They had good reason to be proud, and better reason to be afraid, all twelve of them; for though they had fought their way, game by game, up the teams entered for the polo tournament, they were meeting the Archangels that afternoon in the final match; and the Archangels men were playing with half a dozen ponies apiece. As the game was divided into six quarters of eight minutes each, that meant a fresh pony after every halt. The Skidars' team, even supposing there were no accidents, could only supply one pony for every other change; and two to one is heavy odds. Again as Shiraz, the grey Syrian, pointed out, they were meeting the pink and pick of the polo-ponies of Upper India, ponies that had cost from a thousand rupees each, while they themselves were a cheap lot gathered often from

country-carts, by their masters, who belonged to a poor but honest native infantry regiment.

"Money means pace and weight," said Shiraz, rubbing his black-silk nose dolefully along his neat-fitting boot, "and by the maxims of the game as I know it—"

"Ah, but we aren't playing the maxims," said The Maltese Cat. "We're playing the game; and we've the great advantage of knowing the game. Just think a stride, Shiraz! We've pulled up from bottom to second place in two weeks against all those fellows on the ground here. That's because we play with our heads as well as our feet."

"It makes me feel undersized and unhappy all the same," said Kittiwynk, a mouse-coloured mare with a red brow-band and the cleanest pair of legs that ever an

aged pony owned. "They've twice our style, these others."

Kittiwynk looked at the gathering and sighed. The hard, dusty polo-ground was lined with thousands of soldiers, black and white, not counting hundreds and hundreds of carriages and drags and dog-carts, and ladies with brilliant-coloured parasols, and officers in uniform and out of it and crowds of natives behind them; and orderlies on camels, who had halted to watch the game, instead of carrying letters up and down the station; and native horse-dealers running about on thineared Biluchi mares, looking for a chance to sell a few first-class polo-ponies. Then there were the ponies of thirty teams that had entered for the Upper India Free-for-All Cup—nearly every pony of worth and dignity, from Mhow to Peshawar, from Allahabad to Multan; prize ponies, Arabs, Syrian, Barb, Country-bred, Deccanee, Waziri, and Kabul ponies of every colour and shape and temper that you could imagine. Some of them were in mat-roofed stables, close to the polo-ground, but most were under saddle, while their masters, who had been defeated in the earlier games, trotted in and out and told the world exactly how the game should be played.

It was a glorious sight, and the come and go of the little, quick hooves, and the incessant salutations of ponies that had met before on other polo-grounds or race-courses were enough to drive a four-footed thing wild.

But the Skidars' team were careful not to know their neighbours, though half the ponies on the ground were anxious to scrape acquaintance with the little fellows that had come from the North, and, so far, had swept the board.

"Let's see," said a soft gold-coloured

Arab, who had been playing very badly the day before, to the Maltese Cat; "didn't we meet in Abdul Rahman's stable in Bombay, four seasons ago? I won the Paikpattan Cup next season, you may remember?"

"Not me," said The Maltese Cat, politely. "I was at Malta then, pulling a vegetable-cart. I don't race. I play the game."

"Oh!" said the Arab, cocking his tail and swaggering off.

"Keep yourselves to yourselves," said The Maltese Cat to his companions. "We don't want to rub noses with all those goose-rumped half-breeds of Upper India. When we've won this Cup they'll give their shoes to know *us*."

"We sha'n't win the Cup," said Shiraz. "How do you feel?"

"Stale as last night's feed when a muskrat has run over it," said Polaris, a rather heavy-shouldered grey; and the rest of the team agreed with him.

"The sooner you forget that the better," said The Maltese Cat, cheerfully. "They've finished tiffin in the big tent. We shall be wanted now. If your saddles are not comfy, kick. If your bits aren't easy, rear, and let the *saises* know whether your boots are tight."

Each pony had his *sais*, his groom, who lived and ate and slept with the animal, and had betted a good deal more than he could afford on the result of the game. There was no chance of anything going wrong, but to make sure, each *sais* was shampooing the legs of his pony to the last minute. Behind the *saises* sat as many of the Skidars' regiment as had leave to attend the match—about half the native officers, and a hundred or two dark, black-bearded men with the regimental pipers nervously fingering the big, beribboned bagpipes. The Skidars were what they call a Pioneer

regiment, and the bagpipes made the national music of half their men. The native officers held bundles of polo-sticks, long cane-handled mallets, and as the grand stand filled after lunch they arranged themselves by ones and twos at different points round the ground, so that if a stick were broken the player would not have far to ride for a new one. An impatient British Cavalry Band struck up "If you want to know the time, ask a p'leeceman!" and the two umpires in light dust-coats danced out on two little excited ponies. The four players of the Archangels' team followed, and the sight of their beautiful mounts made Shiraz groan again.

"Wait till we know," said The Maltese Cat. "Two of 'em are playing in blinkers, and that means they can't see to get out of the way of their own side, or they *may* shy at the umpires' ponies. They've *all* got white web-reins that are sure to stretch or slip!"

"And," said Kittiwynk, dancing to take the stiffness out of her, "they carry their whips in their hands instead of on their wrists. Hah!"

"True enough. No man can manage his stick and his reins and his whip that way," said The Maltese Cat. "I've fallen over every square yard of the Malta ground, and I ought to know."

He quivered his little, flea-bitten withers just to show how satisfied he felt; but his heart was not so light. Ever since he had drifted into India on a troop-ship, taken, with an old rifle, as part payment for a racing debt, The Maltese Cat had played and preached polo to the Skidars' team on the Skidars' stony polo-ground. Now a polo-pony is like a poet. If he is born with a love for the game, he can be made. The Maltese Cat knew that bamboos grew solely

in order that polo-balls might be turned from their roots, that grain was given to ponies to keep them in hard condition, and that ponies were shod to prevent them slipping on a turn. But, besides all these things, he knew every trick and device of the finest game in the world, and for two seasons had been teaching the others all he knew or guessed.

"Remember," he said for the hundredth time, as the riders came up, "you *must* play together, and you *must* play with your heads. Whatever happens, follow the ball. Who goes out first?"

Kittiwynk, Shiraz, Polaris, and a short high little bay fellow with tremendous hocks and no withers worth speaking of (he was called Corks) were being girthed up, and the soldiers in the background stared with all their eyes.

"I want you men to keep quiet," said Lutyens, the captain of the team, "and especially not to blow your pipes."

"Not if we win, Captain Sahib?" asked the piper.

"If we win you can do what you please," said Lutyens, with a smile, as he slipped the loop of his stick over his wrist, and wheeled to canter to his place. The Archangels' ponies were a little bit above themselves on account of the many-coloured crowds so close to the ground. Their riders were excellent players, but they were a team of crack players instead of a crack team; and that made all the difference in the world. They honestly meant to play together, but it is very hard for four men, each the best of the team he is picked from, to remember that in polo no brilliancy in hitting or riding makes up for playing alone. Their captain shouted his orders to them by name, and it is a curious thing that if you call his name aloud in

public after an Englishman you make him hot and fretty. Lutyens said nothing to his men because it had all been said before. He pulled up Shiraz, for he was playing "back," to guard the goal. Powell on Polaris was half-back, and Macnamara and Hughes on Corks and Kittiwynk were forwards. The tough, bamboo ball was set in the middle of the ground, one hundred and fifty yards from the ends, and Hughes crossed sticks, heads up, with the Captain of the Archangels, who saw fit to play forward; that is a place from which you cannot easily control your team. The little click as the cane-shafts met was heard all over the ground, and then Hughes made some sort of quick wrist-stroke that just dribbled the ball a few yards. Kittiwynk knew that stroke of old, and followed as a cat follows a mouse. While the Captain of the Archangels was wrenching his pony round, Hughes struck with all his strength, and next instant Kittiwynk was away, Corks following close behind her, their little feet pattering like raindrops on glass.

"Pull out to the left," said Kittiwynk between her teeth; "it's coming your way, Corks!"

The back and half-back of the Archangels were tearing down on her just as she was within reach of the ball. Hughes leaned forward with a loose rein, and cut it away to the left almost under Kittiwynk's foot, and it hopped and skipped off to Corks, who saw that, if he was not quick it would run beyond the boundaries. That long bouncing drive gave the Archangels time to wheel and send three men across the ground to head off Corks. Kittiwynk stayed where she was; for she knew the game. Corks was on the ball half a fraction of a second before the others came up, and Macnamara, with a backhanded

stroke sent it back across the ground to Hughes, who saw the way clear to the Archangels' goal, and smacked the ball in before any one quite knew what had happened.

"That's luck," said Corks, as they changed ends. "A goal in three minutes for three hits, and no riding to speak of."

"Don't know," said Polaris. "We've made them angry too soon. Shouldn't wonder if they tried to rush us off our feet next time."

"Keep the ball hanging, then," said Shiraz. "That wears out every pony that is not used to it."

Next time there was no easy galloping across the ground. All the Archangels closed up as one man, but there they stayed, for Corks, Kittiwynk, and Polaris were somewhere on the top of the ball marking time among the rattling sticks, while Shiraz circled about outside, waiting for a chance.

"We can do this all day," said Polaris, ramming his quarters into the side of another pony. "Where do you think you're shoving to?"

"I'll—I'll be driven in an *ekka* if I know," was the gasping reply, "and I'd give a week's feed to get my blinkers off. I can't see anything."

"The dust is rather bad. Whew! That was one for my off-hock. Where's the ball, Corks?"

"Under my tail. At least the man's looking for it there! This is beautiful. They can't use their sticks, and it's driving 'em wild. Give old Blinkers a push and then he'll go over."

"Here, don't touch me! I can't see. I'll—I'll back out, I think," said the pony in blinkers, who knew that if you can't see

all round your head, you cannot prop yourself against the shock.

Corks was watching the ball where it lay in the dust, close to his near fore-leg, with Macnamara's shortened stick tap-tapping it from time to time. Kittiwynk was edging her way out of the scrimmage, whisking her stump of a tail with nervous excitement.

"Ho! They've got it," she snorted. "Let me out!" and she galloped like a rifle-bullet just behind a tall lanky pony of the Archangels, whose rider was swinging up his stick for a stroke.

"Not today, thank you," said Hughes, as the blow slid off his raised stick, and Kittiwynk laid her shoulder to the tall pony's quarters, and shoved him aside just as Lutyens on Shiraz sent the ball where it had come from, and the tall pony went skating and slipping away to the left. Kittiwynk, seeing that Polaris had joined Corks in the chase for the ball up the ground, dropped into Polaris' place, and then "time" was called.

The Skidars' ponies wasted no time in kicking or fuming. They knew that each minute's rest meant so much gain, and trotted off to the rails, and their *saises* began to scrape and blanket and rub them at once.

"Whew!" said Corks, stiffening up to get all the tickle of the big vulcanite scraper. "If we were playing pony for pony, we would bend those Archangels double in half an hour. But they'll bring up fresh ones and fresh ones and fresh ones after that—you see."

"Who cares?" said Polaris. "We've drawn first blood. Is my hock swelling?"

"Looks puffy," said Corks. "You must have had rather a wipe. Don't let it stiffen. You'll be wanted again in half an hour."

"What's the game like?" said the Maltese Cat.

"'Ground's like your shoe, except where they put too much water on it," said Kittiwynk. "Then it's slippery. Don't play in the centre. There's a bog there. I don't know how their next four are going to behave, but we kept the ball hanging, and made 'em lather for nothing. Who goes out? Two Arabs and a couple of country-breds! That's bad. What a comfort it is to wash your mouth out!"

Kitty was talking with a neck of a lather-covered soda-water bottle between her teeth, and trying to look over withers at the same time. This gave her a very coquettish air.

"What's bad?" said Grey Dawn, giving to the girth and admiring his well-set shoulders.

"You Arabs can't gallop fast enough to keep yourselves warm—that's what Kitty means," said Polaris, limping to show that his hock needed attention. "Are you playing back, Grey Dawn?"

"Looks like it," said Grey Dawn, as Lutyens swung himself up. Powell mounted The Rabbit, a plain bay country-bred much like Corks, but with mulish ears. Macnamara took Faiz-Ullah, a handy, short-backed little red Arab with a long tail, and Hughes mounted Benami, an old and sullen brown beast, who stood over in front more than a polo-pony should.

"Benami looks like business," said Shiraz. "How's your temper, Ben?" The old campaigner hobbled off without answering, and The Maltese Cat looked at the new Archangel ponies prancing about on the ground. They were four beautiful blacks, and they saddled big enough and strong enough to eat the Skidar's team and gallop away with the meal inside them.

"Blinkers again," said The Maltese Cat. "Good enough!"

"They're chargers—cavalry chargers!" said Kittiwynk, indignantly. "*They'll* never see thirteen-three again."

"They've all been fairly measured, and they've all got their certificates," said The Maltese Cat, "or they wouldn't be here. We must take things as they come along, and keep your eyes on the ball."

The game began, but this time the Skidars were penned to their own end of the ground, and the watching ponies did not approve of that.

"Faiz-Ullah is shirking—as usual," said Polaris, with a scornful grunt.

"Faiz-Ullah is eating whip," said Corks. They could hear the leather-thonged polo-quirt lacing the little fellow's well-rounded barrel. Then The Rabbit's shrill neigh came across the ground.

"I can't do all the work," he cried, desperately.

"Play the game—don't talk." The Maltese Cat whickered; and all the ponies wriggled with excitement, and the soldiers and the grooms gripped the railings and shouted. A black pony with blinkers had singled out old Benami, and was interfering with him in every possible way. They could see Benami shaking his head up and down and flapping his under lip.

"There'll be a fall in a minute," said Polaris. "Benami is getting stuffy."

The game flickered up and down between goal-post and goal-post, and the black ponies were getting more confident as they felt they had the legs of the others. The ball was hit out of a little scrimmage, and Benami and The Rabbit followed it, Faiz-Ullah only too glad to be quiet for an instant.

The blinkered black pony came up like

a hawk, with two of his own side behind him, and Benami's eye glittered as he raced. The question was which pony should make way for the other, for each rider was perfectly willing to risk a fall in a good cause. The black, who had been driven nearly crazy by his blinkers, trusted to his weight and his temper; but Benami knew how to apply his weight and how to keep his temper. They met, and there was a cloud of dust. The black was lying on his side, all the breath knocked out of his body. The Rabbit was a hundred yards up the ground with the ball, and Benami was sitting down. He had slid nearly ten yards on his tail, but he had had his revenge and sat cracking his nostrils till the black pony rose.

"That's what you get for interfering. Do you want any more?" said Benami, and he plunged into the game. Nothing was done that quarter, because Faiz-Ullah would not gallop, though Macnamara beat him whenever he could spare a second. The fall of the black pony had impressed his companions tremendously, and so the Archangels could not profit by Faiz-Ullah's bad behaviour.

But as The Maltese Cat said when "time" was called, and the four came back blowing and dripping, Faiz-Ullah ought to have been kicked all round Umballa. If he did not behave better next time The Maltese Cat promised to pull out his Arab tail by the roots and—eat it.

There was no time to talk, for the third four were ordered out.

The third quarter of a game is generally the hottest for each side thinks that the others must be pumped; and most of the winning play in a game is made about that time.

Lutyens took over The Maltese Cat with

a pat and a hug, for Lutyens valued him more than anything else in the world; Powell had Shikast, a little grey rat with no pedigree and no manners outside polo; Macnamara mounted Bamboo, the largest of the team; and Hughes Who's Who, alias The Animal. He was supposed to have Australian blood in his veins, but he looked like a clothes-horse and you could whack his legs with an iron crow-bar without hurting him.

They went out to meet the very flower of the Archangels' team; and when Who's Who saw their elegantly booted legs and their beautiful satin skins, he grinned a grin through his light, well-worn bridle.

"My word!" said Who's Who. "We must give 'em a little football. These gentlemen need a rubbing down."

"No biting," said The Maltese Cat, warningly; for once or twice in his career Who's Who had been known to forget himself in that way.

"Who said anything about biting? I'm not playing tiddly-winks. I'm playing the game."

The Archangels came down like a wolf on the fold, for they were tired of football, and they wanted polo. They got it more and more. Just after the game began, Lutyens hit a ball that was coming towards him rapidly, and it rolled in the air, as a ball sometimes will, with the whirl of a frightened partridge. Shikast heard but could not see it for the minute though he looked everywhere and up into the air as The Maltese Cat had taught him. When he saw it ahead and overhead he went forward with Powell, as fast as he could put foot to ground. It was then that Powell, a quiet and level-headed man as a rule, became inspired, and played a stroke that sometimes comes off successfully after long

practice. He took his stick in both hands, and, standing up in his stirrups, swiped at the ball in the air, Munipore fashion. There was one second of paralysed astonishment, and then all four sides of the ground went up in a yell of applause and delight as the ball flew true (you could see the amazed Archangels ducking in their saddles to dodge the line of flight, and looking at it with open mouths), and the regimental pipes of the Skidars squealed from the railings as long as the pipers had breath.

Shikast heard the stroke; but he heard the head of the stick fly off at the same time. Nine hundred and ninety-nine ponies out of a thousand would have gone tearing on after the ball with a useless player pulling at their heads; but Powell knew him, and he knew Powell; and the instant he felt Powell's right leg shift a trifle on the saddle-flap, he headed to the boundary, where a native officer was frantically waving a new stick. Before the shouts had ended, Powell was armed again.

Once before in his life The Maltese Cat had heard that very same stroke played off his own back, and had profited by the confusion it wrought. This time he acted on experience, and leaving Bamboo to guard the goal in case of accidents, came through the others like a flash, head and tail low—Lutyens standing up to ease him—swept on and on before the other side knew what was the matter, and nearly pitched on his head between the Archangels' goal-post as Lutyens kicked the ball in after a straight scurry of a hundred and fifty yards. If there was one thing more than another upon which The Maltese Cat prided himself, it was on this quick, streaking kind of run half across the ground. He did not believe in taking balls round the field unless you were clearly overmatched. After this they

gave the Archangels five-minutes of football; and an expensive fast pony hates football because it rumples his temper.

Who's Who showed himself even better than Polaris in this game. He did not permit any wriggling away, but bored joyfully into the scrimmage as if he had his nose in a feed-box and was looking for something nice. Little Shikast jumped on the ball the minute it got clear, and every time an Archangel pony followed it, he found Shikast standing over it, asking what was the matter.

"If we can live through this quarter," said The Maltese Cat, "I sha'n't care. Don't take it out of yourselves. Let them do the lathering."

So the ponies, as their riders explained afterwards, "shut-up." The Archangels kept them tied fast in front of their goal, but it cost the Archangels' ponies all that was left of their tempers; and ponies began to kick, and men began to repeat compliments, and they chopped at the legs of Who's Who, and he set his teeth and stayed where he was, and the dust stood up like a tree over the scrimmage until that hot quarter ended.

They found the ponies very excited and confident when they went to their *saises*; and The Maltese Cat had to warn them that the worst of the game was coming.

"Now *we* are all going in for the second time," said he, "and *they* are trotting out fresh ponies. You think you can gallop, but you'll find you can't; and then you'll be sorry."

"But two goals to nothing is a halter-long lead," said Kittiwynk, prancing.

"How long does it take to get a goal?" The Maltese Cat answered. "For pity's sake, don't run away with a notion that the game is half-won just because we hap-

pen to be in luck *now!* They'll ride you into the grand stand, if they can; you must not give 'em a chance. Follow the ball."

"Football, as usual?" said Polaris. "My hock's half as big as a nose-bag."

"Don't let them have a look at the ball, if you can help it. Now leave me alone. I must get all the rest I can before the last quarter."

He hung down his head and let all his muscles go slack, Shikast, Bamboo, and Who's Who copying his example.

"Better not watch the game," he said. "We aren't playing, and we shall only take it out of ourselves if we grow anxious. Look at the ground and pretend it's fly-time."

They did their best, but it was hard advice to follow. The hooves were drumming and the sticks were rattling all up and down the ground, and yells of applause from the English troops told that the Archangels were pressing the Skidars hard. The native soldiers behind the ponies groaned and grunted, and said things in undertones, and presently they heard a long-drawn shout and a clatter of hurrahs.

"One to the Archangels," said Shikast, without raising his head. "Time's nearly up. Oh, my sire—and dam!"

"Faiz-Ullah," said The Maltese Cast, "if you don't play to the last nail in your shoes this time, I'll kick you on the ground before all the other ponies."

"I'll do my best when the time comes," said the little Arab sturdily.

The *saises* looked at each other gravely as they rubbed their ponies' legs. This was the time when long purses began to tell, and everybody knew it. Kittiwynk and the others came back, the sweat dripping over their hooves and their tails telling sad stories.

"They're better than we are," said Shiraz. "I knew how it would be."

"Shut your big head," said The Maltese Cat; "we've one goal to the good yet."

"Yes; but it's two Arabs and two country-breds to play now," said Corks. "Faiz-Ullah, remember!" He spoke in a biting voice.

As Lutyens mounted Grey Dawn he looked at his men, and they did not look pretty. They were covered with dust and sweat in streaks. Their yellow boots were almost black, their wrists were red and lumpy, and their eyes seemed two inches deep in their heads; but the expression in the eyes was satisfactory.

"Did you take anything at tiffin?" said Lutyens; and the team shook their heads. They were too dry to talk.

"All right. The Archangels did. They are worse pumped than we are."

"They've got the better ponies," said Powell. "I sha'n't be sorry when this business is over."

That fifth quarter was a painful one in every way. Faiz-Ullah played like a little red demon, and The Rabbit seemed to be everywhere at once, and Benami rode straight at anything and everything that came in his way; while the umpires on their ponies wheeled like gulls outside the shifting game. But the Archangels had the better mounts,—they had kept their racers till late in the game,—and never allowed the Skidars to play football. They hit the ball up and down the width of the ground till Benami and the rest were outpaced. Then they went forward, and time and again Lutyens and Grey Dawn were just, and only just, able to send the ball away with a long, spitting backhand. Grey Dawn forgot that he was an Arab; and turned from grey to blue as he galloped.

Indeed, he forgot too well, for he did not keep his eyes on the ground as an Arab should, but stuck out his nose and scuttled for the dear honour of the game. They had watered the ground once or twice between the quarters, and a careless waterman had emptied the last of his skinful all in one place near the Skidars' goal. It was close to the end of the play, and for the tenth time Grey Dawn was bolting after the ball, when his near hind-foot slipped on the greasy mud, and he rolled over and over, pitching Lutyens just clear of the goal-post; and the triumphant Archangels made their goal. Then "time" was called—two goals all; but Lutyens had to be helped up, and Grey Dawn rose with his near hind-leg strained somewhere.

"What's the damage?" said Powell, his arm around Lutyens.

"Collar-bone, *of course*," said Lutyens, between his teeth. It was the third time he had broken it in two years, and it hurt him.

Powell and the others whistled.

"Game's up," said Hughes.

"Hold on. We've five good minutes yet, and it isn't my right hand. We'll stick it out."

"I say," said the Captain of the Archangels, trotting up, "are you hurt, Lutyens? We'll wait if you care to put in a substitute. I wish—I mean—the fact is, you fellows deserve this game if any team does. 'Wish we could give you a man, or some of our ponies—or something."

"You're awfully good, but we'll play it to a finish, I think."

The captain of the Archangels stared for a little. "That's not half bad," he said, and went back to his own side, while Lutyens borrowed a scarf from one of his native officers and made a sling of it. Then an Archangel galloped up with a big bath-

sponge, and advised Lutyens to put it under his armpit to ease his shoulder and between them they tied up his left arm scientifically; and one of the native officers leaped forward with four long glasses that fizzed and bubbled.

The team looked at Lutyens piteously, and he nodded. It was the last quarter, and nothing would matter after that. They drank out the dark golden drink, and wiped their moustaches, and things looked more hopeful.

The Maltese Cat had put his nose into the front of Lutyens' shirt and was trying to say how sorry he was.

"He knows," said Lutyens, proudly. "The beggar knows. I've played him without a bridle before now—for fun."

"It's no fun now," said Powell. "But we haven't a decent substitute."

"No," said Lutyens. "It's the last quarter, and we've got to make our goal and win. I'll trust The Cat."

"If you fall this time, you'll suffer a little," said Macnamara.

"I'll trust The Cat," said Lutyens.

"You hear that?" said The Maltese Cat, proudly, to the others. "It's worth while playing polo for ten years to have that said of you. Now then, my sons, come along. We'll kick up a little bit, just to show the Archangels this team haven't suffered."

And, sure enough, as they went on to the ground, The Maltese Cat, after satisfying himself that Lutyens was home in the saddle, kicked out three or four times, and Lutyens laughed. The reins were caught up anyhow in the tips of his strapped left hand, and he never pretended to rely on them. He knew The Cat would answer to the least pressure of the leg, and by way of showing off—for his shoulder hurt him very much—he bent the little fel-

low in a close figure-of-eight in and out between the goal-posts. There was a roar from the native officers and men, who dearly loved a piece of *dugabashi* (horse-trick work), as they called it, and the pipes very quietly and scornfully droned out the first bars of a common bazaar tune called "Freshly Fresh and Newly New," just as a warning to the other regiments that the Skidars were fit. All the natives laughed.

"And now," said The Maltese Cat, as they took their place, "remember that this is the last quarter, and follow the ball!"

"Don't need to be told," said Who's Who.

"Let me go on. All those people on all four sides will begin to crowd in—just as they did at Malta. You'll hear people calling out, and moving forward and being pushed back; and that is going to make the Archangel ponies very unhappy. But if a ball is struck to the boundary, you go after it, and let the people get out of your way. I went over the pole of a four-in-hand once, and picked a game out of the dust by it. Back me up when I run, and follow the ball."

There was a sort of an all-round sound of sympathy and wonder as the last quarter opened, and then there began exactly what The Maltese Cat had foreseen. People crowded in close to the boundaries, and the Archangels' ponies kept looking sideways at the narrowing space. If you know how a man feels to be cramped at tennis—not because he wants to run out of the court, but because he likes to know that he can at a pinch—you will guess how ponies must feel when they are playing in a box of human beings.

"I'll bend some of those men if I can get away," said Who's Who, as he rocketed behind the ball; and Bamboo nodded with-

out speaking. They were playing the last ounce in them, and The Maltese Cat had left the goal undefended to join them. Lutyens gave him every order that he could to bring him back, but this was the first time in his career that the little wise grey had ever played polo on his own responsibility, and he was going to make the most of it.

"What are you doing here?" said Hughes, as The Cat crossed in front of him and rode off an Archangel.

"The Cat's in charge—mind the goal!" shouted Lutyens, and bowing forward hit the ball full, and followed on, forcing the Archangels towards their own goal.

"No football," said The Maltese Cat. "Keep the ball by the boundaries and cramp 'em. Play open order, and drive 'em to the boundaries."

Across and across the ground in big diagonals flew the ball, and whenever it came to a flying rush and a stroke close to the boundaries the Archangel ponies moved stiffly. They did not care to go headlong at a wall of men and carriages, though if the ground had been open they could have turned on a sixpence.

"Wriggle her up the sides," said The Cat. "Keep her close to the crowd. They hate the carriages. Shikast, keep her up this side."

Shikast and Powell lay left and right behind the uneasy scuffle of an open scrimmage, and every time the ball was hit away Shikast galloped on it at such an angle that Powell was forced to hit it towards the boundary; and when the crowd had been driven away from that side, Lutyens would send the ball over to the other, and Shikast would slide desperately after it till his friends came down to help. It was billiards, and no football, this time—

billiards in a corner pocket; and the cues were not well chalked.

"If they get us out in the middle of the ground they'll walk away from us. Dribble her along the sides," cried The Maltese Cat.

So they dribbled all along the boundary, where a pony could not come on their right-hand side; and the Archangels were furious and the umpires had to neglect the game to shout at the people to get back, and several blundering mounted policemen tried to restore order, all close to the scrimmage, and the nerves of the Archangels' ponies stretched and broke like cob-webs.

Five or six times an Archangel hit the ball up into the middle of the ground, and each time the watchful Shikast gave Powell his chance to send it back, and after each return, when the dust had settled, men could see that the Skidars had gained a few yards.

Every now and again there were shouts of "Side! Off side!" from the spectators; but the teams were too busy to care, and the umpires had all they could do to keep their maddened ponies clear of the scuffle.

At last Lutyens missed a short easy stroke, and the Skidars had to fly back helter-skelter to protect their own goal, Shikast leading. Powell stopped the ball with a backhander when it was not fifty yards from the goal-posts, and Shikast spun round with a wrench that nearly hoisted Powell out of his saddle.

"Now's our last chance," said The Cat, wheeling like a cockchafer on a pin. "We've got to ride it out. Come along."

Lutyens felt the little chap take a deep breath, and, as it were, crouch under his rider. The ball was hopping towards the right-hand boundary, an Archangel riding for it with both spurs and a whip; but

neither spur nor whip would make his pony stretch himself as he neared the crowd. The Maltese Cat glided under his very nose, picking up his hind legs sharp, for there was not a foot to spare between his quarters and the other pony's bit. It was as neat an exhibition as fancy figure-skating. Lutyens hit with all the strength he had left, but the stick slipped a little in his hand, and the fall flew off to the left instead of keeping close to the boundary. Who's Who was far across the ground, thinking hard as he galloped. He repeated stride for stride The Cat's manoeuvres with another Archangel pony, nipping the ball away from under his bridle, and clearing his opponent by half a fraction of an inch, for Who's Who was clumsy behind. Then he drove away towards the right as The Maltese Cat came up from the left; and Bamboo held a middle course exactly between them. The three were making a sort of Government-broad-arrow-shaped attack; and there was only the Archangels' back to guard the goal; but immediately behind them were three Archangels racing all they knew, and mixed up with them was Powell sending Shikast along on what he felt was their last hope. It takes a very good man to stand up to the rush of seven crazy ponies in the last quarters of a Cup game, when men are riding with their necks for sale, and the ponies are delirious. The Archangels' back missed his stroke and pulled aside just in time to let the rush go by. Bamboo and Who's Who shortened stride to give The Cat room, and Lutyens got the goal with a clean, smooth, smacking stroke that was heard all over the field. But there was no stopping the ponies. They poured through the goal-posts in one mixed mob, winners and losers together, for the pace had been terrific. The Maltese

Cat knew by experience what would happen, and, to save Lutyens, turned to the right with one last effort, that strained a back-sinew beyond hope of repair. As he did so he heard the right-hand goal-post crack as a pony cannoned into it—crack, splinter and fall like a mast. It had been sawed three parts through in cases of accidents, but it upset the pony nevertheless, and he blundered into another, who blundered into the left-hand post, and then there was confusion and dust and wood. Bamboo was lying on the ground seeing stars; an Archangel pony rolled beside him, breathless and angry; Shikast had sat down dog-fashion to avoid falling over the others, and was sliding along on his little bobtail in a cloud of dust; and Powell was sitting on the ground hammering with his stick and trying to cheer. All the others were shouting at the top of what was left of their voices, and the men who had been spilt were shouting too. As soon as the people saw no one was hurt, ten thousand natives and English shouted and clapped and yelled, and before any one could stop them the pipers of the Skidars broke on to the ground, with all the native officers and men behind them, and marched up and down, playing a wild Northern tune called "Zakhme Bagán," and through the insolent blaring of the pipes and the high-pitched native yells you could hear the Archangels' band hammering, "For they are all jolly good fellows," and then reproachfully to the losing team, "Ooh, Kafoozalum! Kafoozalum! Kafoozalum!"

Besides all these things and many more, there was a Commander-in-chief, and an Inspector-General of Cavalry, and the principal veterinary officer of all India standing on the top of a regimental coach, yelling like school-boys; and brigadiers and col-

onels and commissioners, and hundreds of pretty ladies joined the chorus. But The Maltese Cat stood with his head down, wondering how many legs were left to him; and Lutyens watched the men and ponies pick themselves out of the wreck of the two goal-posts, and he patted The Maltese Cat very tenderly.

"I say," said the Captain of the Archangels, spitting a pebble out of his mouth, "will you take three thousand for that pony—as he stands?"

"No thank you. I've an idea he's saved my life," said Lutyens, getting off and lying down at full length. Both teams were on the ground too, waving their boots in the air, and coughing and drawing deep breaths, as the *saises* ran up to take away the ponies, and an officious water-carrier sprinkled the players with dirty water till they sat up.

"My aunt!" said Powell, rubbing his back, and looking at the stumps of the goal-posts. "That was a game!"

They played it over again, every stroke of it, that night at the big dinner, when the Free-for-All Cup was filled and passed down the table, and emptied and filled again, and everybody made most eloquent speeches. About two in the morning, when

there might have been some singing, a wise little, plain little, grey little head looked in through the open door.

"Hurrah! Bring him in," said the Archangels; and his *sais*, who was very happy indeed, patted The Maltese Cat on the flank, and he limped in to the blaze of light and the glittering uniforms looking for Lutyens. He was used to messes, and men's bedrooms, and places where ponies are not usually encouraged, and in his youth had jumped on and off a mess-table for a bet. So he behaved himself very politely, and ate bread dipped in salt, and was petted all round the table, moving gingerly; and they drank his health, because he had done more to win the Cup than any man or horse on the ground.

That was glory and honour enough for the rest of his days, and The Maltese Cat did not complain much when the veterinary surgeon said that he would be no good for polo any more. When Lutyens married, his wife did not allow him to play, so he was forced to be an umpire; and his pony on these occasions was a flea-bitten grey with a neat polo-tail, lame all round, but desperately quick on his feet, and, as everybody knew, Past Pluperfect Prestissimo Player of the Game.

W. B. YEATS (1865–1939)

The Ballad of The Foxhunter

from COLLECTED POEMS

Although perhaps a little on the sentimental side, the following ballad seemed to me eminently suitable to end the hunting section of this book.

“Now lay me in a cushioned chair
And carry me, you four,
With cushions here and cushions there,
To see the world once more.
And some one from the stables bring
My Dermot dear and brown,
And lead him gently in a ring,
And gently up and down.

“Now leave the chair upon the grass:
Bring hound and huntsman here,
And I on this strange road will pass,
Filled full of ancient cheer.”
His eyelids droop, his head falls low,
His old eyes cloud with dreams;
The sun upon all things that grow
Pours round in sleepy streams.

Brown Dermot treads upon the lawn,
And to the armchair goes,
And now the old man’s dreams are gone,
He smooths the long brown nose.

And now moves many a pleasant tongue
Upon his wasted hands,
For leading aged hounds and young
The huntsman near him stands.

“My huntsman, Rody, blow the horn,
And make the hills reply.”
The huntsman loosens on the morn
A gay and wandering cry.

A fire is in the old man’s eyes,
His fingers move and sway,
And when the wandering music dies
They hear him feebly say,

“My huntsman, Rody, blow the horn,
And make the hills reply,
I cannot blow upon my horn,
I can but weep and sigh.”

The servants round his cushioned place
Are with new sorrow rung;
And hounds are gazing on his face,
Both aged hounds and young.

One blind hound only lies apart
On the sun-smitten grass;
He holds deep commune in his heart:
The moments pass and pass.

The blind hound with a mournful din
Lifts slow his wintry head;
The servants bear the body in;
The hounds wail for the dead.

III

Three Famous Rides

Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross,
To see a fine lady ride on a white horse.

*T*here are many other famous rides, of course: The Highwayman of Alfred Noyes, The Last Ride Together of Browning, for example, but it did not seem to me that any except these placed enough emphasis on either the horse or the rider himself to make them appropriate enough for this book.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812—1889)

“How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix”

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris and he:
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all
three;
“Good speed!” cried the watch as the gate-
bolts undrew,
“Speed!” echoed the wall to us galloping
through,
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great
pace—
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing
our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths
tight,
Then shortened each stirrup and set the pique
right,
Rebuckled the check-strap, chained slacker the
bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas a moonset at starting; but while we
drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned
clear;
At Boom a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld 'twas morning as plain as could
be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard
the half chime,
So Joris broke silence with, “Yet there is time!”

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every
one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its
spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp
ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on
his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that
glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master,
askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes, which aye
and anon
His fierce lips shook upward in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris,
“Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in
her;
We'll remember at Aix”—for one heard the
quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck, and stag-
gering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and
sank.

Robert Browning

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the
sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless
laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle, bright stub-
ble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang
white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in
sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment
his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a
stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole
weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from
her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the
brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim,

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let
fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and
all,
Stood up in the stirrups, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse
without peer—
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any
noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and
stood.

And all I remember is—friends flocking
round,
As I sate with his head 'twixt my knees on the
ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of
mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure
of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common
consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good
news from Ghent.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW (1807—1882)

Paul Revere's Ride

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One if by land, and two if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said "Good-night!" and with muffled
oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The *Somerset*, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend through alley and street
Wanders and watches, with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North
Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret
dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now he gazed at the landscape far and near,

Henry W. Longfellow

Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns.

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a
spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and
the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his
flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and
deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock,
When he crossed the bridge into Medford
town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.

He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, black and
bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadow brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the redcoats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of
alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo for evermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

WILLIAM COWPER (1731–1800)

The Diverting History of John Gilpin

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band Captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister and my sister's child,
Myself and children three,
Will fill the chaise, so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied,—“I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the Calender
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin,—“That's well said,
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find
That though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side,
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'T was long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming, came downstairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he, "yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

Now mistress Gilpin, careful soul!
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones
With caution and good heed.

But, finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat,

So "Fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought,
Away went hat and wig!
He little dreamt when he set out
Of running such a rig!

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

'Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all,
And ev'ry soul cried out, "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around—
"He carries weight!" "He rides a race!"
" 'T is for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'T was wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced,
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild-goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wond'ring much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house!"
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits and we are tired:"
Said Gilpin—"So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware,

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the Calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The Calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:—

"What news? what news? your tidings tell,
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bare-headed you are come,
Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke,
And thus unto the Calender
In merry guise he spoke:—

"I came because your horse would come;
And if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road."

The Calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit:—
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John—"It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So, turning to his horse, he said—
"I am in haste to dine;
'T was for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig!
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?—they were too big!

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half-a-crown;

William Cowper

And thus unto the youth she said
That drove them to the Bell—
“This shall be yours when you bring back
My husband safe and well.”

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went post-boy at his heels!—
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
The lumb'ring of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,

With post-boy scamp'ring in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:—

“Stop thief! stop thief—a highwayman!”
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that pass'd that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

IV

Horse Trading

One white leg—buy him,
Two white legs—try him,
Three white legs—deny him,
Four white legs and a white nose,
Take off his hide and throw him to the crows!

—OLD PROVERB.

*T*here are probably as many different conceptions of the perfect horse as there are types of horses. The horseman of experience knows that in horses, as in men, there is no such thing as absolute perfection; in every horse one meets there is invariably some way, no matter how trivial, in which it might be improved. "That horse is perfect," one says, "if only he had better stable manners," or "had a faster walk," or "stronger hocks." Think over your stable, you horseman, remember all the horses you have ever ridden, and see if this not so—yet we constantly go on looking for the ideal. In the following pages are three measuring rods to help us in our search.

ANONYMOUS ARABIAN POET (ca. 400 A. D.)

The Ideal Horse

Sparse is her head and lean her head, and lean her ears pricked close together,
Her fetlock is a net, her forehead a lamp lighted
Illumining the tribe; her neck curves like a palm branch
Her withers sharp and clean. Upon her chest and throttle
An amulet hangs of gold. Her forelegs are twin lances
Her hoofs fly faster even than flies the whirlwind.
Her tail-bone borne aloft, yet the hairs sweep the gravel.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564—1616)

The Ideal Horse

from VENUS AND ADONIS

Round hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:
Look, what a horse should have, he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

JOHN JORROCKS (ROBERT SMITH SURTEES
1803—1864)

The Ideal Horse

from HANDLEY CROSS

There is a wast of fancy about dealin'—far more than relates to the mere colour; indeed, some say that the colour is immaterial, and there is an old saw about a good 'oss never being of a bad colour, but the first question a green-'orn asks is the colour of the prad. Old Steropes says, if you have no predilection that way, choose a mouse-coloured dun, for it has the peculiar adwantage of lookin' equally well all the year round. A black list down the back makes it still more desirable, as the bystanders will suppose you are ridin' with a crupper, a practice no finished 'ossmen ought to neglect. This latter point, however, is confuted by Gambado, who says, 'be werry shy of a crupper if your 'oss naturally throws his saddle forward. It will certainlie make his tail sore, set him a-kickin', and werry likely bring you into trouble.'

"How perplexin' must all this be to a beginner," exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, throwing up his hands.

"The height of an 'oss, Gambado says, is perfectly immaterial, provided he is higher behind than before. Nothin' is more pleasin' to a traveller than the sensation of

continually gettin' forward; whereas the ridin' of an 'oss of a contrary make is like swarmin' the bannisters of a staircase, when, though perhaps you really advance, you feel as if you were goin' backwards.

"Gambado says nothin' about the size of an 'oss's 'ead, but he says he should carry it low, that he may have an eye to the ground and see the better where he steps. Some say the 'ead should be as large as possible, inasmuch as the weight tends to prevent the 'oss from rearin', which is a wice dangerous in the highest degree; my idea is, that the size of the 'ead is immaterial, for the 'oss doesn't go on it, at least he didn't ought to do I know.

"The ears cannot well be too long, Gambado says, for a judicious rider steers his course by fixin' his eyes between them. This, however, is a disputed point, and old Dicky Lawrence recommends that they should be large and loppin' in a horizomal direction, by which position no rain can possibly enter, and the 'oss will have no occasion to shake 'is 'ead, a habit which he says not only disturbs the brain but frequently brings on the mad staggers.

"Here again the doctors differ!

"It seems agreed on all hands that the less a 'oss lifts his fore legs, the easier he will move for his rider, and he will likewise brush all the stones out of his way, which might otherwise throw him down. Gambado thinks if he turns his toes well out, he will disperse them right and left, and not have the trouble of kickin' the same stone a second time, but I don't see much advantage in this, and think he might as well be kickin' the same stone as a fresh one.

"There can be no doubt that a Roman nose like Arterxerxes's adds greatly to the gravity of an 'oss's countenance. It has a fine substantial yeoman-like appearance, and well becomes the father of a family, a church dignitary, or a man in easy circumstances.—A Roman nose and a shovel hat are quite unique.—Some think a small eye a recommendation, as they are less exposed to injuries than large ones, but that is matter of fancy. The nostrils, Lawrence says, should be small, and the lips thick and leathery, which latter property aids the sensibility of the mouth werry considerably.—Some prefer an arched neck to a ewe, but the latter has a fine consequential hair, and ought not to be slighted.

"It may be prejudice, but I confess I likes an 'oss's back wot inclines to a hog bend.—Your slack backs are all werry well for carryin' millers' sacks, but rely upon it there's nothin' like the outward bow for makin' them date their leaps properly. Many men in the Surrey remember my

famous 'oss Star-gazer. He was made in that form, and in his leaps threw an arch like the dome of St. Paul's. A long back is a grand thing for a family 'oss.—I've seen my cousin Joe clap six of his brats and his light porter on the back of the old Crockerdile, and the old nag would have carried another if his tail had been tied up.—In the 'unting field, however, one seldom sees more than one man on an 'oss, at a time. *Two* don't look sportin' and the world's governed by appearances.

"Some people object to high-blowers, that is, 'osses wot make a noise like steam-engines as they go. I don't see no great objection to them myself, and think the use they are of clearin' the way in crowded thoroughfares, and the protection they afford in dark nights by preventin' people ridn' against you, more than counterbalance any disconvenience.—Gambado says, a ball face, wall eyes, and white legs, answer the same purpose, but if you can get all four, it will be so much the better.

"There is an author who says the hip-bones should project well beyond the ribs, which form will be found werry convenient in 'ot weather, as the rider may hang his hat on them occasionally, whilst he wipes the perspiration from his brow, addin' that that form gives the hannimal greater facility in passin' through stable-doors, but I am inclined to think that the advice is a little of what the French call *pleasantre*, and we call gammon; at all events, I don't follow it."

EDWARD NOYES WESTCOTT (1847—1898)

David Harum's Balky Horse

from DAVID HARUM

David Harum is, of course, the original horse trader. It is his character alone that one remembers or wants to remember in the book that bears his name. This yarn, about how he bamboozled the deacon, opens the book, and is the best known of any of his deals. Those who have not read it for years will be glad of a chance to laugh again at David and his balky horse that would "stand without hitchin'."

Mrs. Bixbee went on with her needlework, with an occasional side glance at her brother, who was immersed in the gospel of his politics. Twice or thrice she opened her lips as if to address him, but apparently some restraining thought interposed. Finally, the impulse to utter her mind culminated. "Dave," she said, "d' you know what Deakin Perkins is sayin' about ye?"

David opened his paper so as to hide his face, and the corners of his mouth twitched as he asked in return, "Wa'al, what's the deakin sayin' now?"

"He's sayin'," she replied, in a voice mixed of indignation and apprehension "thet you sold him a balky horse, an' he's goin' to hev the law on ye."

David's shoulders shook behind the shel-

tering page, and his mouth expanded in a grin.

"Wa'al," he replied after a moment, lowering the paper and looking gravely at his companion over his glasses, "next to the deakin's religious experience, them of lawin' an' horse-tradin' air his strongest p'int, an' he works the hull on 'em to once sometimes."

The evasiveness of this generality was not lost on Mrs. Bixbee, and she pressed the point with, "Did ye? an' will he?"

"Yes, an' no, an' mebbe, an' mebbe not," was the categorical reply.

"Wa'al," she answered with a snap, "mebbe you call that an answer. I s'pose if you don't want to let on you won't, but I do believe you've ben playin' some trick on the deakin, an' won't own up. I do

wish," she added, "that if you hed to git rid of a balky horse onto somebody you'd hev picked out somebody else."

"When you got a balker to dispose of," said David gravely, "you can't alvus pick an' choose. Fust come, fust served." Then he went on more seriously: "Now I'll tell ye. Quite a while ago—in fact, not long after I come to enjoy the priv'lidge of the deakin's acquaintance—we hed a deal. I wa'n't jest on my guard, knowin' him to be a deakin an' all that, an' he lied to me so splendid that I was took in, clean over my head. He done me so brown I was burnt in places, an' you c'd smell smoke 'round me fer some time."

"Was it a horse?" asked Mrs. Bixbee gratuitously.

"Wa'al," David replied, "mebbe it *had* ben some time, but at that partic'lar time the only thing to determine that fact was that it wa'n't nothin' else."

"Wa'al, I declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Bixbee, wondering not more at the deacon's turpitude than at the lapse in David's acuteness, of which she had an immense opinion, but commenting only on the former. "I'm 'mazed at the deakin."

"Yes'm," said David with a grin, "I'm quite a liar myself when it comes right down to the hoss bus'nis, but the deakin c'n give me both bowers ev'ry hand. He done it so slick that I had to laugh when I come to think it over—an' I had witnesses to the hull confab, too, that he didn't know of, an' I c'd 've showed him up in great shape if I'd a mind to."

"Why didn't ye?" said Aunt Polly, whose feelings about the deacon were undergoing a revulsion.

"Wa'al, to tell ye the truth, I was so completely skunked that I hadn't a word

to say. I got rid o' the thing fer what it was wuth fer hide an' taller, an' stid of squealin' 'round the way you say he's doin', like a stuck pig, I kep' my tongue between my teeth an' laid to git even some time."

"You ort to 've hed the law on him," declared Mrs. Bixbee, now fully converted. "The old scamp!"

"Wa'al," was the reply, "I gen'ally prefer to settle out of court, an' in this partic'lar case, while I might 'a' ben willin' t' admit that I hed ben did up, I didn't feel much like swearin' to it. I reckoned the time 'd come when mebbe I'd git the laugh on the deakin, an' it did, an' we're putty well settled now in full."

"You mean this last pufformance?" asked Mrs. Bixbee. "I wish you'd quit beatin' about the bush, an' tell me the hull story."

"Wa'al, it's like this, then, if you *will* hev it. I was over to Whiteboro a while ago on a little matter of worldly bus'nis, an' I seen a couple of fellers halter-exercisin' a hoss in the tavern yard. I stood 'round a spell watchin' 'em, an' when he come to a standstill I went an' looked him over, an' I liked his looks fust rate.

"'Fer sale?' I says.

"'Wa'al,' says the chap that was leadin' him, 'I never see the hoss that wa'n't if the price was right.'

"'Your'n?' I says.

"'Mine an' his'n,' he says, noddin' his head at the other feller.

"'What ye askin' fer him?' I says.

"'One-fifty,' he says.

"I looked him all over agin putty careful, an' once or twice I kind o' shook my head 's if I didn't quite like what I seen, an' when I got through I sort o' half turned away without sayin' anythin', 's if I'd seen enough.

"The' ain't a scratch ner a pimple on him,' says the feller, kind o' resentin' my looks. 'He's sound an' kind, an' 'll stand without hitchin', an' a lady c'n drive him 's well 's a man.'

"I ain't got anythin' agin him,' I says, 'an' prob'ly that's all true, ev'ry word on't; but one-fifty's a consid'able price fer a hoss these days. I hain't no pressin' use fer another hoss, an', in fact,' I says, 'I've got one or two fer sale myself.'

"He's wuth two hunderd jest as he stands,' the feller says, 'He hain't had no trainin', an' he c'n draw two men in a road-wagin better'n fifty.'

"Wa'al, the more I looked at him the better I liked him, but I only says, 'Jes' so, jes' so, he may be wuth the money, but jest as I'm fixed now he ain't wuth it to *me*, an' I hain't got that much money with me if he was,' I says. The other feller hadn't said nothin' up to that time, an' he broke in now. 'I s'pose you'd take him fer a gift, wouldn't ye?' he says, kind o' sneerin'.

"Wa'al, yes,' I says, 'I dunno but I would if you'd throw in a pound of tea an' a halter.'

"He kind o' laughed an' says, 'Wa'al, this ain't no gift enterprise, an' I guess we ain't goin' to trade, but I'd like to know,' he says, 'jest as a matter of curios'ty, what you'd say he *was* wuth to ye?'

"Wa'al,' I says, 'I come over this mornin' to see a feller that owed me a trifle o' money. Exceptin' of some loose change, what he paid me 's all I got with me,' I says, takin' out my wallet. 'That wad's got a hunderd an' twenty-five into it, an' if you'd sooner have your hoss an' halter than the wad,' I says, 'why, I'll bid ye good-day.'

"You're offerin' one-twenty-five fer the hoss an' halter?' he says.

"That's what I'm doin',' I says.

"You've made a trade,' he says, puttin' out his hand fer the money an' handin' the halter over to me."

"An' didn't ye suspicion nuthin' when he took ye up like that?" asked Mrs. Bixbee.

"I did smell woolen some," said David, "but I had the *hoss* an' they had the *money*, an', as fur 's I c'd see, the critter was all right. Howsomever, I says to 'em: 'This here's all right, fur 's it's gone, but you've talked putty strong 'bout this hoss. I don't know who you fellers be, but I c'n find out, I says. Then the fust feller that done the talkin' 'bout the hoss put in an' says, 'The' hain't ben one word said to you about this hoss that wa'n't gospel truth, not one word.' An' when I come to think on't afterward," said David with a half laugh, "it mebbe wa'n't *gospel* truth, but it was good enough *jury* truth. I guess this ain't over 'n' above int'restin' to ye, is it?" he asked after a pause, looking doubtfully at his sister.

"Yes, 'tis," she asserted. "I'm lookin' forrered to where the deakin comes in, but you jes' tell it your own way."

"I'll git there all in good time," said David, "but some of the point of the story'll be lost if I don't tell ye what come fust."

"I allow to stan' it 's long 's you can," she said encouragingly, "seein' what work I had gettin' ye started. Did ye find out anythin' 'bout them fellers?'"

"I ast the barn man if he knowed who they was, and' he said he never seen 'em till the yestiddy before, an' didn't know 'em f'm Adam. They come along with a couple of hosses, one drivin' an' t'other leadin'—the one I bought. I ast him if he knowed who I was, an' he said one on 'em ast him, an' he told him. The feller said to him, seein' me drive up: 'That's a putty likely-lookin' hoss. Who's drivin' him?' An'

he says to the feller: 'That's Dave Harum, f'm over to Homeville. He's a great feller fer hosses,' he says."

"Dave," said Mrs. Bixbee, "them chaps jest laid fer ye, didn't they?"

"I reckon they did," he admitted; "an' they was as slick a pair as was ever drawed to," which expression was lost upon his sister. David rubbed the fringe of yellowish-gray hair which encircled his bald pate for a moment.

"Wa'al," he resumed, "after the talk with the barn man, I smelt woolen stronger'n ever, but I didn't say nothin', an' had the mare hitched an' started back. Old Jinny drives with one hand, an' I c'd watch the new one all right, an' as we come along I begun to think I wa'n't stuck after all. I never see a hoss travel evener an' nicer, an' when we come to a good level place I sent the old mare along the best she knew, an' the new one never broke his gait, an' kep' right up 'ithout 'par'ntly half tryin'; an' Jinny don't take most folks' dust neither. I swan! 'fore I got home I reckoned I'd jest as good as made seventy-five anyway."

"Then the' wa'n't nothin' the matter with him, after all," commented Mrs. Bixbee in rather a disappointed tone.

"The meanest thing top of the earth was the matter with him," declared David, "but I didn't find it out till the next afternoon, an' then I found it out good. I hitched him to the open buggy an' went 'round by the East road, 'cause that ain't so much travelled. He went along all right till we got a mile or so out of the village, an' then I slowed him down to a walk. Wa'al, sir, scat my ——! He hadn't walked more'n a rod 'fore he come to a dead stan'still. I clucked an' gitapp'd, an' finely took the gad to him

a little; but he only jes' kind o' humped up a little, an' stood like he'd took root."

"Wa'al, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Bixbee.

"Yes'm," said David; "I was stuck in ev'ry sense of the word."

"What d'ye do?"

"Wa'al, I tried all the tricks I knowed—an' I could lead him—but when I was in the buggy he wouldn't stir till he got good an' ready; 'n' then he'd start of his own accord an' go on a spell, an'—"

"Did he keep it up?" Mrs. Bixbee interrupted.

"Wa'al, I s'd say he did. I finely got home with the critter, but I thought one time I'd either hev to lead him or spend the night on the East road. He balked five sep'rate times, varyin' in length, an' it was dark when we struck the barn."

"I should hev thought you'd a wanted to kill him," said Mrs. Bixbee; "an' the fellers that sold him to ye, too."

"The' *was* times," David replied, with a nod of his head, "when if he'd a fell down dead I wouldn't hev figured on puttin' a band on my hat, but it don't never pay to git mad with a hoss; an' as fur 's the feller I bought him of, when I remembered how he told me he'd stand without hitchin', I swan! I had to laugh. I did, fer a fact. 'Stand without hitchin'!' He, he, he!"

"I guess you wouldn't think it was so awful funny if you hadn't gone an' stuck that horse onto Deakin Perkins—an' I don't see how you done it."

"Mebbe that *is* part of the joke," David allowed, "an' I'll tell ye th' rest on't. Th' next day I hitched the new one to th' dem'crat wagin an' put in a lot of straps an' rope, an' started off fer the East road agin. He went fust rate till we come to about the place where we had the fust trouble, an', sure enough, he balked agin. I leaned over

an' hit him a smart cut on the off shoulder, but he only humped a little, an' never lifted a foot. I hit him another lick, with the self-same result. Then I got down an' I strapped that animal so't he couldn't move nothin' but his head an' tail, an' got back into the buggy. Wa'al, bomby, it may 'a' ben ten minutes, or it may 'a' ben more or less—it's slow work settin' still behind a balkin' horse—he was ready to go on his own account, but he couldn't budge. He kind o' looked around, much as to say, 'What on earth's the matter?' an' then he tried another move, an' then another, but no go. Then I got down an' took the hopples off an' then climbed back into the buggy, an' says 'Cluck,' to him, an' off he stepped as chipper as could be, an' we went joggin' along all right mebbe two mile, an' when I slowed up, up he come agin. I gin him another clip in the same place on the shoulder, an' I got down an' tied him up agin, an' the same thing happened as before, on'y it didn't take him quite so long to make up his mind about startin', an' we went some further without a hitch. But I had to go through the pufformance the third time before he got it into his head that if he didn't go when *I* wanted he couldn't go when *he* wanted, an' that didn't suit him; an' when he felt the whip on his shoulder it meant bus'nis."

"Was that the end of his balkin'?" asked Mrs. Bixbee.

"I had to give him one more go-round," said David, "an' after that I didn't have no more trouble with him. He showed symptoms at times, but a touch of the whip on the shoulder alwus fetched him. I alwus carried them straps, though, till the last two three times."

"Wa'al, what's the deakin kickin' about,

then?" asked Aunt Polly. "You're jes' sayin' you broke him of balkin'."

"Wa'al," said David slowly, "some hosses will balk with some folks an' not with others. You can't most alwus gen'ally tell."

"Didn't the deakin have a chance to try him?"

"He had all the chance he ast fer," replied David. "Fact is, he done most of the sellin', as well 's the buyin', himself."

"How's that?"

"Wa'al," said David, "it come about like this: After I'd got the hoss where I c'd handle him I begun to think I'd had some int'restin' an' valu'ble experience, an' it wa'n't scurcely fair to keep it all to myself. I didn't want no patent on't, an' I was willin' to let some other feller git a piece. So one mornin', week before last—let's see, week ago Tuesday it was, an' a mighty nice mornin' it was, too—one o' them days that kind o' lib'ral up your mind—I allowed to hitch an' drive up past the deakin's an' back, an' mebbe git somethin' to strengthen my faith, et cetera, in case I run acrost him. Wa'al, 's I come along I seen the deakin putterin' 'round, an' I waved my hand to him an' went by a-kitin'. I went up the road a ways an' killed a little time, an' when I come back there was the deakin, as I expected. He was leanin' over the fence, an' as I jogged up he hailed me, an' I pulled up.

"'Mornin', Mr. Harum,' he says.

"'Mornin', deakin,' I says. 'How are ye? an' how's Mis' Perkins these days?'"

"'I'm fair,' he says; 'fair to middlin', but Mis' Perkins is ailin' some—as *usyul*,' he says."

"They do say," put in Mrs. Bixbee, "thet Mis' Perkins don't hev much of a time herself."

"Guess she hez all the time the' is,"

answered David. "Wa'al," he went on, "we passed the time o' day, an' talked a spell about the weather an' all that, an' finely I straightened up the lines as if I was goin' on, an' then I says: 'Oh, by the way,' I says, 'I jest thought on't. I heard Dominie White was lookin' fer a hoss that'd suit him.' 'I hain't heard,' he says; but I see in a minute he had—an' it really was a fact—an' I says: 'I've got a roan colt risin' five, that I took on a debt a spell ago, that I'll sell reasonable, that's as likely an' nice ev'ry way a young hoss as ever I owned. I don't need him,' I says, 'an' didn't want to take him, but it was that or nothin' at the time an' glad to git it, an' I'll sell him a barg'in. Now what I want to say to you, deakin, is this: That hoss 'd suit the dominie to a tee in my opinion, but the dominie won't come to me. Now if *you* was to say to him—bein' in his church an' all thet,' I says, 'that you c'd git him the right kind of a hoss, he'd believe you, an' you an' me 'd be doin' a little stroke of bus'nis, an' a favor to the dominie into the bargain. The dominie's well off,' I says, 'an' c'n afford to drive a good hoss.'"

"What did the deakin say?" asked Aunt Polly as David stopped for breath.

"I didn't expect him to jump down my throat," he answered; "but I seen him prick up his ears, an' all the time I was talkin' I noticed him lookin' my hoss over, head an' foot. 'Now I 'member,' he says, 'hearin' sunthin' 'bout Mr. White's lookin' fer a hoss, though when you fust spoke on't it had slipped my mind. Of course,' he says, 'the' ain't any real reason why Mr. White shouldn't deal with you direct, an' yit mebbe I *could* do more with him 'n you could. But,' he says, 'I wa'n't cal'latin' to go t' the village this mornin', an' I sent my hired

man off with my drivin' horse. Mebbe I'll drop 'round in a day or two,' he says, 'an' look at the roan.'

"'You mightn't ketch me,' I says, 'an' I want to show him myself; an' more'n that,' I says, 'Dug Robinson's after the dominie. I'll tell ye,' I says, 'you jest git in 'ith me an' go down an' look at him, an' I'll send ye back or drive ye back, an' if you've got anythin' special on hand you needn't be gone three quarters of an hour,' I says."

"He come, did he?" inquired Mrs. Bixbee.

"He done *so*," said David sententiously. "Jest as I knowed he would, after he'd hem'd an' haw'd about so much, an' he rode a mile an' a half livelier 'n he done in a good while, I reckon. He had to pull that old broadbrim of his'n down to his ears, an' don't you fergit it. He, he, he, he! The road was jest *full* o' hosses. Wa'al, we drove into the yard, an' I told the hired man to unhitch the bay hoss an' fetch out the roan, an' while he was bein' unhitched the deakin stood 'round an' never took his eyes off'n him, an' I knowed I wouldn't sell the deakin no roan hoss *that* day, even if I wanted to. But when he come out I begun to crack him up, an' I talked hoss fer all I was wuth. The deakin looked him over in a don't-care kind of a way, an' didn't 'parently give much heed to what I was sayin'. Finely I says, 'Wa'al, what do you think of him?' 'Wa'al,' he says, 'he seems to be a likely enough critter, but I don't believe he'd suit Mr. White—'fraid not,' he says. 'What you askin' fer him?' he says. 'One-fifty,' I says, 'an' he's a cheap hoss at the money'; but," added the speaker with a laugh, "I knowed I might 's well of said a thousan'. The deakin wa'n't buyin' no roan colts that mornin'."

"What did he say?" asked Mrs. Bixbee.

"'Wa'al,' he says, 'wa'al, I guess you ought to git that much fer him, but I'm 'fraid he ain't what Mr. White wants.' An' then, 'That's quite a hoss we come down with,' he says. 'Had him long?' 'Jes long 'nough to git 'quainted with him,' I says. 'Don't you want the roan fer your own use?' I says. 'Mebbe we c'd shade the price a little.' 'No,' he says, 'I guess not. I don't need another hoss jes' now.' An' then, after a minute he says: 'Say, mebbe the bay hoss we drove 'd come nearer the mark fer White, if he's all right. Jest as soon I'd look at him?' he says. 'Wa'al, I hain't no objections, but I guess he's more of a hoss than the dominie 'd care for, but I'll go an' fetch him out,' I says. So I brought him out, an' the deakin looked him all over. I see it was a case of love at fust sight, as the story-books says. 'Looks all right,' he says. 'I'll tell ye, I says, 'what the feller I bought him of told me.' 'What's that?' says the deakin. 'He said to me,' I says, 'that hoss hain't got a scratch ner a pimple on him. He's sound an' kind, an' 'll stand without hitchin', an' a lady c'd drive him as well 's a man.'"

"'That's what he said to me,' I says, 'an' it's every word on't true. You've seen whether or not he c'n travel,' I says, 'an', so fur 's I've seen, he ain't 'fraid of nothin'.' 'D'ye want to sell him?' the deakin says. 'Wa'al,' I says 'I ain't offerin' him fer sale. You'll go a good ways,' I says, 'fore you'll strike such another; but, of course, he ain't the only hoss in the world, an' I never had anythin' in the hoss line I wouldn't sell at *some* price.' 'Wa'al,' he says, 'what d' ye ask fer him?' 'Wa'al,' I says, 'if my own brother was to ask me that question I'd say to him two hunderd dollars, cash down, an' I wouldn't hold the offer open an hour,' I says."

"My!" ejaculated Aunt Polly. "Did he take you up?"

"'That's more'n I give fer a hoss 'n a good while,' he says, shakin' his head, 'an more'n I c'n afford, I'm 'fraid.' 'All right,' I says; 'I c'n afford to keep him'; but I knew I had the deakin same as the woodchuck had Skip. 'Hitch up the roan,' I says to Mike; 'the deakin wants to be took up to his house. 'Is that your last word?' he says. 'That's what it is,' I says. 'Two hunderd, cash down.'"

"'Didn't ye dast to trust the deakin?'" asked Mrs. Bixbee.

"Polly," said David, "the's a number of holes in a ten-foot ladder." Mrs. Bixbee seemed to understand this rather ambiguous rejoinder.

"He must 'a' squirmed some," she remarked. David laughed.

"The deakin ain't much used to payin' the other feller's price," he said, "an' it was like pullin' teeth; but he wanted that hoss more'n a cow wants a calf, an' after a little more squimmidgin' he hauled out his wallet an' forked over. Mike come out with the roan, an' off the deakin went, leadin' the bay hoss."

"I don't see," said Mrs. Bixbee, looking up at her brother, "thet after all the' was anythin' you said to the deakin thet he could ketch holt on."

"The' wa'n't nothin'," he replied. "The only thing he c'n complain about's what I *didn't* say to him."

"Hain't he said anythin' to ye?" Mrs. Bixbee inquired.

"He, he, he, he! He hain't but once, an' the' wa'n't but little of it then."

"How?"

"Wa'al, the day but one after the deakin sold himself Mr. Stickin'-Plaster I had an arrant three four mile or so up past his

place, an' when I was comin' back, along 'bout four or half past, it come on to rain like all possessed. I had my old umbrel'—though it didn't hender me f'm gettin' more or less wet—an' I sent the old mare along fer all she knew. As I come along to within a mile f'm the deakin's house I seen somebody in the road, an' when I come up closter I see it was the deakin himself, in trouble, an' I kind o' slowed up to see what was goin' on. There he was, settin' all humped up with his old broad-brim hat slopin' down his back, a'sheddin' water like a roof. Then I seen him lean over an' larrup the hoss with the ends of the lines fer all he was wuth. It appeared he hadn't no whip, an' it wouldn't done him no good if he'd had. Wa'al, sir, rain or no rain, I jest pulled up to watch him. He'd larrup a spell, an' then he'd set back; an' then he'd lean over an' try it agin, harder'n ever. Scat my—! I thought I'd die a-laughin'. I couldn't hardly cluck to the mare when I got ready to move on. I drove alongside an' pulled up. 'Hullo, deakin,' I says, 'what's the matter?' He looked up at me, an' I won't say he was the maddest man I ever see, but he was long ways the maddest-lookin' man, an' he shook his fist at me jes' like one o' the unregen'rit. 'Consarn ye, Dave Harum!' he says, 'I'll hev the law on ye fer this.' 'What fer?' I says. 'I didn't make it come on to rain, did I?' I says. 'You know mighty well what fer,' he says. 'You sold me this *damned beast*,' he says, 'an' he's balked with me *nine* times this afternoon, an' I'll fix ye for 't,' he says. 'Wa'al, deakin,' I says, 'I'm 'fraid the squire's office 'll be shut up 'fore you *git* there, but I'll take any word you'd like to send. You know I told ye,' I says, 'that he'd stand 'ithout hitchin'.' An' at that he only jest kind o' choked an' sputtered. He was so mad he couldn't say nothin', an'

on I drove, an' when I got about forty rod or so I looked back, an' there was the deakin a-comin' along the road with as much of his shoulders as he could git under his hat an' *leadin'* his new hoss. He, he, he, he! Oh, my stars an' garters! Say, Polly, it paid me fer bein' born into this vale o' tears. It did, I declare for't!"

Aunt Polly wiped her eyes on her apron.

"But, Dave," she said, "did the deakin really say—*that word*?"

"Wa'al," he replied, "if 'twa'n't that it was the puttiest imitation on't that ever I heard."

"David," she continued, "don't you think it putty mean to badger the deakin so't he swore, an' then laugh 'bout it? An' I s'pose you've told the story all over."

"Mis' Bixbee," said David emphatically, "if I'd paid good money to see a funny show I'd be a blamed fool if I didn't laugh, wouldn't I? That specticle of the deakin cost me consid'able, but it was more'n wuth it. But," he added, "I guess, the way the thing stands now, I ain't so much out on the hull."

Mrs. Bixbee looked at him inquiringly.

"Of course, you know Dick Larrabee?" he asked.

She nodded.

"Wa'al, three four days after the shower, an' the story 'd got aroun' some—as *you* say, the deakin *is* consid'able of a talker—I got holt of Dick—I've done him some favors an' he natur'ly expects more—an' I says to him: 'Dick,' I says, 'I hear 't Deakin Perkins has got a hoss that don't jest suit him—hain't got knee-action enough at times, I says, 'an' mebbe he'll sell him reasonable.' 'I've heerd somethin' about it,' says Dick, laughin'. 'One of them kind o' hosses 't you don't like to git ketched out

in the rain with,' he says. 'Jes' so,' I says. 'Now,' I says, 'I've got a notion 't I'd like to own that hoss at a price, an' that mebber I c'd git him home even if it did rain. Here's a hundred an' ten,' I says, 'an' I want you to see how fur it'll go to buyin' him. If you git me the hoss you needn't bring none on't back. Want to try?' I says. 'All right,' he says, an' took the money. 'But,' he says, 'won't the deakin suspicion that it comes

from you?' 'Wa'al,' I says, 'my portrit ain't on none o' the bills, an' I reckon *you* won't tell him so, out an' out,' an' off he went. Yistidy he come in, an' I says, 'Wa'al, done anythin'?' 'The hoss is in your barn,' he says. 'Good fer you!' I says. 'Did you make anythin'?' 'I'm satisfied,' he says. 'I made a ten-dollar note.' An' that's the net results on't," concluded David, "that I've got the hoss, an' he's cost me jest thirty-five dollars."

DAVID GRAY (1870—)

The Parish of St. Thomas Equinus

from GALLOPS

David Gray's two volumes of Gallops are too well known and loved to require comment. I chose this tale because to my mind it is the most ludicrous and the most rib-tickling of all. Furthermore, it gives what is supposedly an accurate picture of the same type of "horse-minded" society that Mr. Munro characterizes with such satirical force in Esmé. And the difference between the satire and the serious is so little as to be almost non-existent!

The bishop settled himself in an armchair, crossed his short legs, and gave a sigh of relief and comfort. Through the open window he could see the hills across the valley and the two spires of Oakdale village. There was a gleam of silver in the bottom-lands where a bend of the river revealed itself. Out of doors the air was hot with the afternoon sun and murmurous with insect noises, but the large drawingroom was pleasantly darkened and cool. The bishop felt that he had earned peace, and meant to enjoy it. With half-closed eyes he watched the tea-things brought in and the two slender young women seat themselves by the table. Mrs. Alden Adams began to make the tea.

"Did you have a good time?" she asked the bishop.

"Yes," said the bishop; "I suppose so. It was rather extraordinary, however.—Two lumps and a little cream," he added.

"Extraordinary?" Mrs. Adams echoed inquiringly as she passed the cup.

"I think I may say *very* extraordinary," he replied in an injured tone.

Miss Colfax stopped in the middle of a stitch—she was embroidering something.

"I suppose the rector bored you to death," she said. "I hope you ordered him to stop advising the farmers to put up wire."

"Wire? Wire what?" asked the prelate, as if he were hearing of a new heresy.

"Wire fences, of course," the girl replied. "You can't jump wire."

The bishop seemed at a loss. "No," he said, "I suppose not. I don't want to. But,

my dear young woman, I haven't seen the rector."

"Why," said Mrs. Adams, who was trying to snuff the lamp under the kettle, "I thought you and Willie had gone to the rectory in the victoria."

"That's what we were going to do," the bishop answered, with a resentful note in his voice; "but we gave up the victoria and your horses. The ones we did take made other arrangements."

The girl looked up from her work. "An accident?" she inquired.

The bishop hemmed. "I should hardly call it an accident. An accident is something contrary to probabilities." Both women looked puzzled. "My young friend, Mr. William Colfax," he went on, "informed me, as we were about to start, that the horses harnessed to the victoria were such 'rum skates'—pardon me, those were *his* words—that he would prefer to take me with some of his own.

"I am glad he was so thoughtful," observed his sister; "it isn't often that he is."

The bishop scrutinized the girl. She was earnestly embroidering. The corners of his mouth twitched.

"It *was* thoughtful," he continued. "He had a high red cart and a tandem. Two grooms held the horse in front, and there was another at the head of the wheeler."

The girl dropped the work in her lap. "I think Willie's manners are improving," she said simply. "He hasn't been so civil to anybody stopping in the house since he let Carty Carteret ride Manslaughter. He must like you."

"But I don't think," Mrs. Adams objected, "that a tandem is the proper thing for a bishop to visit one of his rectors in—not the first time, anyway."

"I may say," observed the bishop, "that this thought occurred to me also."

"Oh, stuff, Kate!" the girl interposed. "We're not in town. You're ruffled because Willie said your victoria horses were skates—and they are."

The bishop avoided a discussion of this question. "It may be," he said, "but I should have preferred them to the tandem. William said that he believed his horses were safe, or if they were not we should find it out. Before I was quite in the cart the front one pawed one of the men, and they let go of him."

"What could you expect?" said the girl. "He'd never been put to harness before."

"William mentioned that fact after we had started," the bishop continued. "At the Four Corners we met a steam threshing-machine, and the leader took the road in the opposite direction from the village. Then they both ran away." He paused to allow his words to take effect. The bare fact seemed to him impressive enough. He reflected what a terrible picture the newspapers might make of Bishop Cunningham in a runaway, and he considered how he could soften the information for his wife.

"They must have taken the Hemlock Hill road," Miss Colfax said thoughtfully. "How far did they run?"

The prelate looked annoyed. "Really I can't say," he replied. "I don't know the country, you know. At first your brother thought we'd stop for the groom—we had lost him at the threshing-machine. But the horses pulled so that he asked me if I didn't think we would better let them go and enjoy it while it lasted." He swallowed some tea, and glanced from one to the other of the women.

"You couldn't have been very far from

the Galloways,'” Mrs. Adams suggested uncertainly, as though she were expected to say something. “We dine there tonight, you know. Pretty road, isn't it?”

“Is it?” said the bishop, dryly. Both women laughed. “I dare say, I dare say,” he went on; “but I was thinking of something else than the scenery. We stopped the horses at the foot of the hill, and William said that if I didn't mind putting off going to the rectory he would go in and trade the leader to Mr. Galloway. He said that it was no use bothering with such a puller; and I quite agreed with him, though I wished he had come to that conclusion sooner.”

“Willie had promised to let me hunt Albion,” said the girl, regretfully.

“Never mind, dear,” exclaimed her aunt; “you can have Alden's Thunder. I think he's afraid to ride him himself. But you missed seeing the rector,” she added, turning to the bishop; “that was too bad.”

Miss Colfax laughed. “You didn't miss much, and you did have a good drive. Of course it wasn't very long, but while it lasted it must have been rare. I've never had a tandem run with me.” The prelate looked at her wonderingly. “But,” she continued, “I don't see how Willie could have made much of a trade, with Albion so wet and hot.”

The bishop's eye lighted up. “Yes; that was rather extraordinary.”

“Extraordinary?” his companions repeated together.

“How, extraordinary?” Eleanor asked. “And you said you had an extraordinary afternoon, too. I don't see anything extraordinary about it.” Sitting erect, with her hands in her lap, and a shaft of sunlight burnishing her hair, she was very beautiful, and as the bishop looked upon her his expression softened.

“My dear young lady,” he explained, “I am a stout, elderly person, and for twenty years I have gone about in a brougham drawn, I may say, by a confidential horse. I have had to do only with the things which are the duties of a city clergyman. I have been a bishop but six months, and this is my first introduction to Oakdale, which my venerable predecessor sometimes alluded to as the parish of St. Thomas Equinus. Some things about it seem a little new, you know—yes, I may even say extraordinary.”

The girl looked at him reprovingly, as if she suspected him of joking.

“I suppose,” said Mrs. Adams, “that you are not much interested in hunting, and all that. I know a man—Mr. Fairfield, the architect—who feels just as you do about it. He says this is the dullest place he ever got into.”

“I shouldn't call it dull,” protested the bishop.

“Well, I'm glad of that,” she replied gratefully. “I should hate to have you bored. I hate being bored myself.”

Miss Colfax yawned as if at the mention of the word, and put a slim and very white hand to her mouth. “You haven't told us yet what Willie got for Albion,” she said lazily.

“I am not quite certain whether I know,” the bishop replied. “It was somewhat complicated.”

“Why? Wasn't Charley Galloway at home?” asked Mrs. Adams.

“Oh, yes. We met him in the drive and William asked him at once if he could detect anything wrong in the leader's wind. He said he had galloped him six miles to find out. That was one of the things which struck me as extraordinary.”

“You didn't think Willie was so clever, did you?” asked the girl.

"No; I didn't," said the bishop. "There were several other interesting occurrences, however, before the bargain was concluded. Mr. Galloway offered us refreshments, and then invited me out to see his horses jump."

"Only his green ones, I suppose," said the girl, with a shade of contempt—"lunged in the runway."

"Was that it? There was a kind of lane with high fence on both sides, and barriers erected at intervals. The stablemen shooed the horses over without anyone on them. Then, for my particular benefit, Mr. Galloway ended by sending a Jersey cow over. You know I am the president of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals!"

"Really!" exclaimed Mrs. Adams, as though she found it hard to believe.

"It's odd the way he loves that cow," observed Miss Colfax. "He says he'll match her against any cow in America."

The bishop nervously gulped down his tea, and set the cup on the table. "I think," he said, "that if you will allow me, I must call Mr. Galloway a very extraordinary young man."

Mrs. Adams laughed. "He must have had that waistcoat on," she said meaningly to her niece.

The ghost of a smile softened the bishop's mouth. "I think it likely," he said. "It was red, yellow, and black."

"There's blue in it, too," Miss Colfax added. "I made it myself. Kate is a little envious because it's more effective than the one she made for Willie. But please tell us how the trade came out."

"At first it seemed as though there wasn't going to be one. Mr. Galloway wasn't sure that he cared for a steeplechaser, or that he had anything to barter."

"Yes, of course!" the girl exclaimed. "It's always that way. Go on, please."

"But finally he brought out a big sorrel horse which he called Lorelei."

"Lorelei? Lorelei?" repeated Miss Colfax. "How was she bred?" The bishop sat up with a start. "Oh, never mind!" she continued. "Probably you didn't ask. What cut of horse was it?"

The bishop shut his lips tight, settled himself again, and folded his hands.

"I mean," said the girl, "was it a harness horse or a jumper?"

A mental conflict was going on inside the prelate. Was it meet for a bishop of the Church to submit to all this? But the tea and the easy-chair and the girl's gray eyes were mollifying his indignation, and his sense of humor was reasserting itself.

"A jumper, I think," he answered in a resigned way. "Mr. Galloway said she could jump an enormous height—ten feet, if I remember correctly." The aunt and niece exchanged glances. "He said he had just got her from Long Island, and didn't want to part with her, only she was too slow to race, and he had plenty of hunters."

"What did Willie think of her?"

"He asked me if it didn't look as though her front legs had been fired—I think it was fired."

"Probably had been," Mrs. Adams interpolated.

"Well, Mr. Galloway was indignant about it; and I said I shouldn't venture any opinion—in fact, I said I hadn't any, which was the truth."

"How odd!" said Miss Colfax, looking at him suspiciously.

"Not at all," her aunt objected. "Sometimes even a veterinary can't tell."

"They examined Albion after that," continued the bishop. "William—very honorably, I thought—admitted that he pulled a little." There was a twinkle in the pre-

latical eye. "But he expatiated on his wind and his endurance, and recited his pedigree."

"War-cry out of a Lapidist mare, second dam by True Blue, third by Longfellow," the girl repeated. "It's very good, isn't it?"

The bishop looked appealingly at Mrs. Adams.

"Yes; it's capital," she said reassuringly.

"Do you mind giving me a little more tea?" inquired the bishop. "But," he went on, "Mr. Galloway said that he couldn't think of exchanging on even terms. He suggested that William should throw in a dun-colored pony and some kind of a cart."

"The pig!" exclaimed Miss Colfax.

The bishop laughed. "William seemed to be of that opinion. He intimated that if I wanted to convert a Jew I had the opportunity. I thought it was wiser for me to withdraw, so I went to see the Jersey cow."

"Well, how did they settle it?" asked the girl.

"As far as I could understand, they arranged a balance by extending the scope of the negotiations. Your brother secured Lorelei, a pair of cobs,—cobs, I believe,—a brood mare, and some chickens."

"Charley's game Japs, of course," said the girl, half to herself. The bishop looked puzzled, but disregarded the interruption.

"Mr. Galloway got Albion," he explained, "another horse named Jupiter, the cart, the dun-colored pony, a foxterrier, and a lady's bicycle. It was very ridiculous; don't you think so?"

The women seemed not to hear the question. They were considering the terms of the trade.

"It was characteristic of Willie to trade your bicycle," said Mrs. Adams to her niece.

"I don't care," the girl replied; "I never

use it. Did he tell Charley about Albion running away?"

"Well," said the bishop, slowly, "as we drove off he did tell him that the horse pulled a good deal."

"And that was the second time he had told him," said Mrs. Adams.

"Yes. And Mr. Galloway advised your nephew to keep the mare's legs in bandages for a few days. He explained that they might be stiff after her journey on the cars.

"I have my suspicions about those legs," Miss Colfax remarked. "Charley is a bit too keen for a gentleman." She moved idly to the piano, and began to play. The bishop watched her with growing amazement. She played on, perhaps for ten minutes.

"That was very beautiful—wonderful!" he exclaimed when she stopped. She nodded, and swung herself around on the piano-stool.

"Do you remember whether the cobs were light chestnut?" she asked.

"I do not," said the bishop; and muttering to himself, he left the room.

The Alden Adamases, their niece, and Bishop Cunningham found the usual party at the Galloways' that evening; but young Colfax sent word that he was indisposed. At the last moment the tip had come that there was to be a quiet cocking-main in the village. He considered the advisability of taking the bishop, who seemed to him to have possibilities worth cultivating, but decided that it might cause talk.

The bishop was rather confused by the fashion in which the people at the dinner addressed each other by their Christian names, or even more informally; but he sat next to Mrs. Galloway, who impressed him favorably. She was the daughter of a Philadelphia millionaire who was a pillar of the Presbyterian faith, and she had been

married only a year. It was her first season at Oakdale, and the bishop experienced a certain feeling of relief in her company. The dinner was good, if the guests were somewhat noisy; and the bishop adapted himself to the conditions with the cheerfulness of a liberal churchman and a man of culture. Mrs. Galloway, he found, although a dissenter by birth, adopted her husband's religious preferences in the country; and she was so much interested in the bishop's project for a boys' gild in the village that he was encouraged to believe his first impression of Oakdale incorrect. He felt again as though he were in a society which he understood; and, furthermore, the reliable victoria horses were in the stable waiting to take him home.

Miss Colfax, who sat on his right, appeared content with the occasional remarks which served her other neighbor, Jimmy Braybrooke, in the stead of conversation, and left the prelate for the most part to his hostess. As the dessert was served, however, he became aware that Miss Colfax was talking down the table to Galloway about the afternoon's horse-trade; and this conversation attracted Mrs. Galloway's attention also.

She heard her husband say, "Oh, yes, Lorelei will jump anything." There was a lull in the talk, and the words came distinctly. She looked up.

"Lorelei?" she repeated half aloud. Then, raising her voice: "Charley Galloway, you don't mean to tell me you traded that horse to Mr. Colfax? If you did, you will take her back. You told me yesterday she was broken down and not worth twenty-five cents."

A roar of laughter broke from the men—all except the bishop. He was regarding Mrs. Galloway with silent admiration. Yet, as Varick said afterward, he must have

missed half the joke, because he was unaware that the lady spoke with the authority which clothes the bank-account of an establishment.

Galloway, the unblushing, was for once discomfited, and the laughter rose again. Just then the footman whispered something in his ear, and he hastily left the room.

"I trust there has been some mistake about this," remarked the bishop, benevolently.

"He ought to be ashamed of himself," said Miss Colfax. "Willie would never have done such a thing. It's dishonorable."

"Excuse me, Miss Colfax!" said Mrs. Galloway, flushing.

"Goodness me!" the bishop murmured. Then in his professional voice he began an anecdote that figured in his favorite sermon; but, to his relief, Galloway entered the room again, and all eyes were turned upon him.

"He's been writing Willie a check," Varick suggested in a loud whisper. But he took no notice of Varick. He remained standing, one hand on the back of his chair, his napkin in the other. A smile puckered the corners of his mouth.

"I am informed," he said pleasantly, "that Tim, my stable-boy has broken two legs, and that Albion, the horse I got from my friend Colfax today, has broken one. I ordered him tried on the steeplechase course, and he ran through the liverpool. They shot him. And Tim's mother, who is Mrs. Galloway's laundress, is going to prosecute me. She says I had no business to put the boy on such a horse."

"Albion? Albion?" said Captain Forbes. "Is that the horse? Well, he *has* rather an ugly reputation. He ran through a jump over in Canada last year, and killed his jockey."

Another burst of laughter made the candle-flames tremble, and an unholy smile grew upon Mrs. Galloway's meek little mouth. It was a smile that made the bishop shudder and turn away his head. He glanced at Eleanor Colfax. Her face was expressionless. Her lips moved, but in the hubbub only he and Braybrooke heard.

"I am very sorry," she said, "that the little idiot broke his legs; but he probably pulled the horse into the jump. He can't ride, and never will be able to learn. Mr. Galloway should have known better than to trust him with the horse."

"That's exactly it," Braybrooke assented, while the laughter of the others still rippled on.

"Bless me!" said the bishop to himself, "this is extraordinary—most extraordinary! I beg pardon!" he exclaimed, recovering his senses and rising hastily, for the ladies were leaving the room.

During the rest of the evening Bishop Cunningham, the practised diner-out, opened not his mouth. When he eventually reached the haven of his bedchamber, he took up his dairy, as he had done nightly for fifty years. Then he paused. Then events of the day passed before his mind's eye like the unordered memories of a play: the red dog-cart, the tandem, the foppish youth who calmly guided the runaway horses and proposed they should enjoy it while it lasted; Mr. Galloway, his waistcoat, the jumping cow, and the peculiar incidents of the horse-trade; the tea-table, and the two fair young women.

The bishop had come to know many curious things about women for he had known many women as the father confessor does; but he said to himself that these were a new sort. The picture of the girl rose before him as she looked when she stopped her wonderful playing to ask about the chestnut cobs. He thought of her gentle gray eyes, and then of her words at the dinner-table when she heard about the boy's accident. "Has she two souls," he murmured, "or none?" From Eleanor Colfax his mind turned to Mrs. Galloway and the way she had smiled and to her guests, —gentlefolk,—who talked of broken bones as one might talk of buttered muffins, and seemed to consider the legal doctrine of *caveat emptor* a pleasant matter of course in horse-trading. According to his habit, he labored to classify his impressions in the pigeonholes of his mind, and to index them, so to say, in his diary. How long he labored he knew not, but his efforts were vain. His thoughts came and went in a hopeless jumble, and the page lay blank before him. Suddenly he heard the tall clock in the lower hallway sound its prelude of muffled arpeggios, and then two low, throbbing strokes. He dipped his pen in the ink, and wrote hastily:

*Oakdale, October the Twenty-fourth.—
A most extraordinary day!*

And below, as if in afterthought:

*"Hast thou given the horse strength?
hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?"*
(Job xxxix. 19.)

Then, with a sigh, he closed the book.

V

Races & Runaways

With doubt and dismay you are smitten,
You think there's no chance for you, son?
Why, the best books haven't been written,
The best race hasn't been run.

—BERTON BRALEY



LEW WALLACE (1827—1905)

The Chariot Race

from BEN-HUR

It is unfortunate that most of us first read such books as Ben-Hur in early high-school days when we were interested in the excitement of the plot alone and missed the magnificent strength of the writing. All too often we do not return to these books again. But where, on any page, will you find as dramatic and colorful a picture as the one which is here presented?

When the dash for position began, Ben-Hur, as we have seen, was on the extreme left of the six. For a moment, like the others, he was half blinded by the light in the arena; yet he managed to catch sight of his antagonists and divine their purpose. At Messala, who was more than an antagonist to him, he gave one searching look. The air of passionless hauteur characteristic of the fine patrician face was there as of old, and so was the Italian beauty, which the helmet rather increased; but more—it may have been a jealous fancy, or the effect of the brassy shadow in which the features were at the moment cast, still the Israelite thought he saw the soul of the man as through a glass, darkly: cruel, cunning, desperate; not so excited as determined—a soul in a tension of watchfulness and fierce resolve.

In a time not longer than was required to turn to his four again, Ben-Hur felt his own resolution harden to a like temper. At whatever cost, at all hazards, he would humble this enemy! Prize, friends, wagers, honor—everything that can be thought of as a possible interest in the race was lost in the one deliberate purpose. Regard for life even should not hold him back. Yet there was no passion, on his part; no blinding rush of heated blood from heart to brain, and back again; no impulse to fling himself upon Fortune: he did not believe in Fortune; far otherwise. He had his plan, and, confiding in himself, he settled to the task never more observant, never more capable. The air about him seemed aglow with a renewed and perfect transparency.

When not half-way across the arena, he saw that Messala's rush would, if there was

no collision, and the rope fell, give him the wall; that the rope would fall, he ceased as soon to doubt; and, further, it came to him, a sudden, flash-like insight, that Messala knew it was to be let drop at the last moment (prearrangement with the editor could safely reach that point in the contest); and it suggested, what more Roman-like than for the official to lend himself to a countryman who, besides being so popular, had also so much at stake? There could be no other accounting for the confidence with which Messala pushed his four forward the instant his competitors were prudentially checking their fours in front of the obstruction—no other except madness.

It is one thing to see a necessity and another to act upon it. Ben-Hur yielded the wall for the time.

The rope fell, and all the fours but his sprang into the course under urgency of voice and lash. He drew head to the right, and, with all the speed of his Arabs, darted across the trails of his opponents, the angle of movement being such as to lose the least time and gain the greatest possible advance. So, while the spectators were shivering at the Athenian's mishap, and the Sidonian, Byzantine, and Corinthian were striving, with such skill as they possessed, to avoid involvement in the ruin, Ben-Hur swept around and took the course neck and neck with Messala, though on the outside. The marvellous skill shown in making the change thus from the extreme left across to the right without appreciable loss did not fail the sharp eyes upon the benches: the Circus seemed to rock and rock again with prolonged applause. Then Esther clasped her hands in glad surprise; then Sanballat, smiling, offered his hundred sestertii a second time without a taker; and then the Romans began to doubt, thinking

Messala might have found an equal, if not a master, and that in an Israelite!

And now, racing together side by side, a narrow interval between them, the two neared the second goal.

The pedestal of the three pillars there, viewed from the west, was a stone wall in the form of a half-circle, around which the course and opposite balcony were bent in exact parallelism. Making this turn was considered in all respects the most telling test of a charioteer; it was, in fact, the very feat in which Orestes failed. As an involuntary admission of interest on the part of the spectators, a hush fell over all the Circus, so that for the first time in the race the rattle and clang of the cars plunging after the tugging steeds were distinctly heard. Then, it would seem, Messala observed Ben-Hur, and recognized him; and at once the audacity of the man flamed out in an astonishing manner.

"Down Eros, up Mars!" he shouted, whirling his lash with practised hand. "Down Eros, up Mars!" he repeated, and caught the well-doing Arabs of Ben-Hur a cut the like of which they had never known.

The blow was seen in every quarter, and the amazement was universal. The silence deepened; up on the benches behind the consul the boldest held his breath, waiting for the outcome. Only a moment thus: then, involuntarily, down from the balcony, as thunder falls, burst the indignant cry of the people.

The four sprang forward affrighted. No hand had ever been laid upon them except in love; they had been nurtured ever so tenderly; and as they grew, their confidence in man became a lesson to men beautiful to see. What should such dainty natures do under such indignity but leap as from death?

Forward they sprang as with one impulse, and forward leaped the car. Past question, every experience is serviceable to us. Where got Ben-Hur the large hand and mighty grip which helped him now so well? Where but from the oar with which so long he fought the sea? And what was this spring of the floor under his feet to the dizzy, eccentric lurch with which in the old time the trembling ship yielded to the beat of staggering billows, drunk with their power? So he kept his place, and gave the four free rein, and called to them in soothing voice, trying merely to guide them round the dangerous turn; and before the fever of the people began to abate he had back the mastery. Nor that only: on approaching the first goal, he was again side by side with Messala, bearing with him the sympathy and admiration of every one not a Roman. So clearly was the feeling shown, so vigorous its manifestation, that Messala, with all his boldness, felt it unsafe to trifle further.

As the cars whirled round the goal, Esther caught sight of Ben-Hur's face—a little pale, a little higher raised, otherwise calm, even placid.

Immediately a man climbed on the entablature at the west end of the division wall, and took down one of the conical wooden balls. A dolphin on the east entablature was taken down at the same time.

In like manner, the second ball and second dolphin disappeared.

And then the third ball and third dolphin.

Three rounds concluded: still Messala held the inside position; still Ben-Hur moved with him side by side; still the other competitors followed as before. The contest began to have the appearance of one

of the double races which became so popular in Rome during the later Cæsarean period—Messala and Ben-Hur in the first, the Corinthian, Sidonian, and Byzantine in the second. Meantime the ushers succeeded in returning the multitude to their seats, though the clamor continued to run the rounds, keeping, as it were, even pace with the rivals in the course below.

In the fifth round the Sidonian succeeded in getting a place outside Ben-Hur, but lost it directly.

The sixth round was entered upon without change of relative position.

Gradually the speed had been quickened—gradually the blood of the competitors warmed with the work. Men and beasts seemed to know alike that the final crisis was near, bringing the time for the winner to assert himself.

The interest which from the beginning had centred chiefly in the struggle between the Roman and the Jew, with an intense and general sympathy for the latter, was fast changing to anxiety on his account. On all the benches the spectators bent forward motionless, except as their faces turned following the contestants. Ilderim quitted combing his beard, and Esther forgot her fears.

"A hundred sestertii on the Jew!" cried Sanballat to the Romans under the consul's awning.

There was no reply.

"A talent—or five talents, or ten; choose ye!"

He shook his tablets at them defiantly.

"I will take thy sestertii," answered a Roman youth, preparing to write.

"Do not so," interposed a friend.

"Why?"

"Messala hath reached his utmost speed.

See him lean over his chariot-rim, the reins loose as flying ribbons. Look then at the Jew."

The first one looked.

"By Hercules!" he replied, his countenance falling. "The dog throws all his weight on the bits. I see, I see! If the gods help not our friend, he will be run away with by the Israelite. No, not yet. Look! Jove with us, Jove with us!"

The cry, swelled by every Latin tongue, shook the *velaria* over the consul's head.

If it were true that Messala had attained his utmost speed, the effort was with effect; slowly but certainly he was beginning to forge ahead. His horses were running with their heads low down; from the balcony their bodies appeared actually to skim the earth; their nostrils showed blood-red in expansion; their eyes seemed straining in their sockets. Certainly the good steeds were doing their best! How long could they keep the pace? It was but the commencement of the sixth round. On they dashed. As they neared the second goal, Ben-Hur turned in behind the Roman's car.

The joy of the Messala faction reached its bound: they screamed and howled, and tossed their colors; and Sanballat filled his tablets with wagers of their tendering.

Malluch, in the lower gallery over the Gate of Triumph, found it hard to keep his cheer. He had cherished the vague hint dropped to him by Ben-Hur of something to happen in the turning of the western pillars. It was the fifth round, yet the something had not come; and he had said to himself, the sixth will bring it; but, lo! Ben-Hur was hardly holding a place at the tail of his enemy's car.

Over in the east end, Simonides' party held their peace. The merchant's head was bent low. Ilderim tugged at his beard, and

dropped his brows till there was nothing of his eyes but an occasional sparkle of light. Esther scarcely breathed. Iras alone appeared glad.

Along the home-stretch—sixth round—Messala leading, next him Ben-Hur, and so close it was the old story:

"First flew Eumelus on Pheretian steeds;
With those of Tros bold Diomed succeeds;
Close on Eumelus' back they puff the wind,
'And seem just mounting on his car behind;
Full on his neck he feels the sultry breeze,
And, hovering o'er, their stretching shadow
sees."

Thus to the first goal, and round it. Messala, fearful of losing his place, hugged the stony wall with perilous clasp; a foot to the left, and he had been dashed to pieces; yet, when the turn was finished, no man, looking at the wheel-tracks of the two cars, could have said, here went Messala, there the Jew. They left but one trace behind them.

As they whirled by, Esther saw Ben-Hur's face again, and it was whiter than before.

Simonides, shrewder than Esther, said to Ilderim, the moment the rivals turned into the course: "I am no judge, good sheik, if Ben-Hur be not about to execute some design. His face hath that look."

To which Ilderim answered: "Saw you how clean they were and fresh? By the splendor of God, friend, they have not been running! But now watch!"

One ball and one dolphin remained on the entablatures; and all the people drew a long breath, for the beginning of the end was at hand.

First, the Sidonian gave the scourge to his four, and, smarting with fear and pain, they dashed desperately forward, promising for a brief time to go to the front. The effort

ended in promise. Next, the Byzantine and Corinthian each made the trial with like result, after which they were practically out of the race. Thereupon, with a readiness perfectly explicable, all the factions except the Romans joined hope in Ben-Hur, and openly indulged their feeling.

"Ben-Hur! Ben-Hur!" they shouted, and the blent voices of the many rolled overwhelmingly against the consular stand.

From the benches above him as he passed, the favor descended in fierce injunctions.

"Speed thee, Jew!"

"Take the wall now!"

"On! loose the Arabs! Give them rein and scourge!"

"Let him not have the turn on thee again. Now or never!"

Over the balustrade they stooped low, stretching their hands imploringly to him.

Either he did not hear, or could not do better, for half-way round the course and he was still following; at the second goal even still no change!

And now, to make the turn, Messala began to draw in his left-hand steeds, an act which necessarily slackened their speed. His spirit was high; more than one altar was richer of his vows; the Roman genius was still president. On the three pillars only six hundred feet away were fame, increase of fortune, promotions, and a triumph ineffably sweetened by hate, all in store for him! That moment Malluch, in the gallery, saw Ben-Hur lean forward over his Arabs, and give them the reins. Out flew the many-folded lash in his hand; over the backs of the startled steeds it writhed and hissed, and hissed and writhed again and again, and though it fell not, there were both sting and menace in its quick report; and as the man passed thus from quiet to resistless action, his face suffused, his eyes gleaming, along

the reins he seemed to flash his will; and instantly not one, but the four as one, answered with a leap that landed them alongside the Roman's car. Messala, on the perilous edge of the goal, heard, but dared not look to see what the awakening portended. From the people he received no sign. Above the noises of the race there was but one voice, and that was Ben-Hur's. In the old Aramaic, as the sheik himself, he called to the Arabs:

"On, Atair! On, Rigel! What, Antares! dost thou linger now? Good horse—oho, Aldebaran! I hear them singing in the tents. I hear the children singing and the women—singing of the stars, of Atair, Antares, Rigel, Aldebaran, victory!—and the song will never end. Well done! Home to-morrow, under the black tent—home! On, Antares! The tribe is waiting for us, and the master is waiting! 'Tis done! 'tis done! Ha, ha! We have overthrown the proud. The hand that smote us is in the dust. Ours the glory! Ha, ha!—steady! The work is done—soho! Rest!"

There had never been anything of the kind more simple; seldom anything so instantaneous.

At the moment chosen for the dash, Messala was moving in a circle round the goal. To pass him, Ben-Hur had to cross the track, and good strategy required the movement to be in a forward direction; that is, on a like circle limited to the least possible increase. The thousands on the benches understood it all: they saw the signal given—the magnificent response; the four close outside Messala's outer wheel, Ben-Hur's inner wheel behind the other's car—all this they saw. Then they heard a crash loud enough to send a thrill through the Circus, and, quicker than thought, out over the course aspray of shining white-and-yellow

finders flew. Down on its right side toppled the bed of the Roman's chariot. There was a rebound as of the axle hitting the hard earth; another and another; then the car went to pieces; and Messala, entangled in the reins, pitched forward headlong.

To increase the horror of the sight by making death certain, the Sidonian, who had the wall next behind, could not stop or turn out. Into the wreck full speed he drove; then over the Roman, and into the latter's four, all mad with fear. Presently, out of the turmoil, the fighting of horses, the resound of blows, the murky cloud of dust and sand, he crawled, in time to see the Corinthian and Byzantine go on down the course after Ben-Hur, who had not been an instant delayed.

The people arose, and leaped upon the benches, and shouted and screamed. Those who looked that way caught glimpses of

Messala, now under the trampling of the fours, now under the abandoned cars. He was still; they thought him dead; but far the greater number followed Ben-Hur in his career. They had not seen the cunning touch of the reins by which, turning a little to the left, he caught Messala's wheel with the iron-shod point of his axle, and crushed it; but they had seen the transformation of the man, and themselves felt the heat and glow of his spirit, the heroic resolution, the maddening energy of action with which, by look, word, and gesture, he so suddenly inspired his Arabs. And such running! It was rather the long leaping of lions in harness; but for the lumbering chariot, it seemed the four were flying. When the Byzantine and Corinthian were half-way down the course, Ben-Hur turned the first goal.

And the race was won!

JOHN BIGGS, JR. (contemporary)

Corkran of Clamstretch

*from SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE
December 1921*

Here is one of the very few racing stories where interest lies in the character of the horse, himself. The writer defies all recognized formulae for racing stories and has his hero lose the race. But not only has Judge Biggs given us an outstanding personality, he has portrayed, most magnificently, the country fair which is the very "mother and father" of the trotting race.

This is a record of genius. I saw him for the first time as he lay beneath an apple-tree, endeavoring by muscular twitchings of his upper lip to grab an apple which lay just beyond the reach of his long black nose. Indisputably it was a game which he played, and he ordered it by set rules of his own devising. It was fundamental that he could not move his body, but he might crane or stretch his neck to any impossible posture. I climbed the paddock fence, and moved the apple an inch toward him. He looked at me reproachfully, but seized it none the less, and devouring it with a single crunching bite, rose to his feet, and proceeded inscrutably to stare.

He was a dumpy little horse, resembling a small fat business man, and as soon to be suspected of immortal speed as a stock-

broker of a sonnet. His torso was a rotund little barrel. From this his legs, heavy and muscular, stuck out at odd angles. A lean neck rose from the mass, and upon this was plastered a head, many sizes too large, which looked as if it had been thrown at him from a distance and had inadvertently stuck.

His gaze mellowed and he regarded me more leniently. A faint smile began to wreath his lips; the smile expanded to soundless tittering. At last, in looking at me, he fairly laughed. This I considered impolite and told him so. He listened courteously, but made no comment other than raising a quizzical hoof. He walked around me and looked carefully at my reverse side. This satisfied him. He returned to the apple-tree, yawned broadly, and lay

down. Richard Thomas Corkran was at rest.

Tentatively I offered him apples, but his ennui was not to be dispelled. Finally, he slept the sleep of a good and honest horse. I retired to the fence lest I disturb the sacred slumbers.

Genius is an unutterable thing. It is a spark flying from no visible flame. It is an excitement of the soul; it is a terrific motivation. It is a vapor that splits the rock of reality.

Richard Thomas Corkran was a strange rhapsody of speed. He was without circumstance, without explanation. No great family had crossed a bar sinister upon his unknown escutcheon. His fathers were indistinguishable clods of work. At the time of his first race his sides were galled from plough harness. Literally he was self-made.

He was possessed of an iron will and intelligence. Consummately he understood his metier; never did his greatness overwhelm him. He remained unmoved, his attitude the epitome of a successful business. Yet he was capable of a cold and dignified fury. Always was it merited, but he worked himself to it, for he had found it to be an efficient symbol. A balanced quietness was his attitude upon the track, and from it he never deviated. He raced without the slightest enthusiasm or excitation. Icy imperturbability marked his technique—an imperturbability that was unaffected. From the tips of his tiny hoofs to his absurd head he was polite, both to his rivals, whom he scorned, and his attendants, whom he considered unworthy of notice, and this politeness proceeded from his conscious known superiority.

One thing of all things aroused his wrath, hot and sincere. He considered himself a

free agent, and any molestation of this right caused anger to boil within him. The hours of his business were those which he spent upon the track; at all other times he came and went as he pleased. He would permit no officious infringement upon his leisure. As to his racing it was indomitably his own. He considered all human aid simply cooperation. If it became direction, no matter how tactfully suggested, he was done. He would not move a hoof toward the track's end. In his maiden race, a whip had been laid, solely as an incentive, upon his muscular little thighs. Richard Thomas Corkran had slid to a stop with stiffened fore feet, and, without heat or expression, but with icy malevolence, had kicked his sulky to fragments of wood and steel. Thereafter his driver, by iron order, sat braced to the sulky, and with loose reins simply fulfilled the requirements of rule. The race and the trotting of it were solely Richard Thomas Corkran's.

It was five o'clock when they came to arouse him, and this partook of a stately, ordered ceremony. There were five men in all, and I presume that he would not have deigned to rise for less. Down the field in careful formation they advanced. First came the head trainer, magnificently unencumbered by blanket, sponge, or curry-comb, the veritable master of the bed-chamber, and flanking him, his subalterns, two graceful yellow boys—this touch exotic—carrying combs and skin-brushes; next came two buckets, marked with the white initials R. T. C., and then his *own* blanket, plaid-striped, refulgent, the one slight vulgarity necessary to all genius. Last of all was a small white dog, like an animated wash-rag, propelling itself forward with staccato bounds and barks.

The process halted; the dog continued

forward, and barked malevolently in the ear of recumbent greatness, which responded with a slow opening of its left eye. The long thin neck rose from the ground at a right angle, and surveyed the halted host. Richard Thomas Corkran got to his feet and shook his rotund little body. He stood waiting.

As they combed and brushed him, he moved no muscle, but placidly chewed a succession of straws that hung pendulous from his lower lip. It was a gesture nonchalant. At length his black coat was sleeked and glossed. The head trainer stepped forward and felt his chest, his hocks, and pasterns. This he endured with kindness, and, inspection over, trotted toward the watering-trough, preceded, however, by the white dog. Pleasurably he played with the water, drinking but little. He blew through his nostrils, causing white bubbles to rise and burst through the turmoil of the surface. The light, finely made racing harness was then put upon him, and adjusted perfectly to each of his expanding muscles, and last the blanket, strapped and belted, making him look like a fat, plaid-cowled monk. The gate was now opened, and he walked gravely from the paddock. Behind him streamed his acolytes in meek procession. Heralding him was the woolly dog. Last was his sulky, wheeled by a negro boy. Past the judge's house he plodded, and I saw the old jurist rise from the porch to greet him.

The discovery of Richard Thomas Corkran, and his relation to Judge Coleman, a famous county story, deserves record.

At dusk one summer evening Judge Coleman, exercising a favorite mare, herself of note, had, on the Clamstretch, come upon a son of a neighboring farmer, atop the height of an old-fashioned racing sulky, a wooden affair with high shaking wheels.

Beneath this relic, for the sulky jutted out almost over his rump, careened an odd little horse, looking in the darkness, so says the judge, like a small, black mouse.

"I'll race you, Tommy," said the judge jokingly to the boy.

"Done," was the reply, and the little horse moved up to the mare's nose.

"Take a handicap, Tommy," said the judge, amused by the boy's confidence.

"*You* take the handicap, judge," said the boy, and the judge, fearful of hurting the boy's feelings, walked his mare some ten yards to the front.

"*Now!*" shouted the boy, and the judge heard with amazement the strong, unbelievably quick beat of the little horse's hoofs as he struck to his stride through the white dust of the road. Past the striving mare he went as if she were haltered to the ground. Three times was this astounding performance repeated, while the straining nostrils of the mare grew red with effort.

The judge pulled to the side of the road.

"What do you use that horse for?" he asked.

"For ploughin'," replied the boy, and he was near tears with pride and rage. "I have to use him for ploughin'."

"What do you call him?" went on the judge.

"Richard Thomas Corkran," replied the boy. "After grandpop."

Then and there, for an adequate price, Richard Thomas Corkran changed hands, and the judge that night examining him by the light of a stable-lantern discovered the marks of plough-galls upon his flanks.

No attempt was made to teach R. T. C. to race; none was ever needed. When the time came for a race he plodded to the track, and from thence to the starting-point, and thereafter at some time favorable to

himself he commenced to trot. No agitation of spectators or contesting horses, no jockeying of drivers, might shake his icy imperturbability, his utter calm. The race done and won, he returned at a walk to his paddock. In two years upon the Grand Circuit he had never missed a meeting nor ever lost a race.

With something of awe I watched him as he passed between the high stone posts of the judge's entrance gate and entered the Clamstretch.

This road is a long white ribbon which runs from the Porter Ferry to the hills. Its crown is covered with clam-shells beaten to a soft imponderable dust, and from this it is known as the Clamstretch. It is agreed by county racing authorities that from the centre of the ferry-gate to the old Weldin Oak is a perfect half-mile, and a horse that covers that distance under two minutes is worthy of notice. Richard Thomas Corkran, when the humor was upon him, had trotted the exact half-mile in one minute and five seconds.

It is a county saying that colts the day they are born are instructed by their mother mares in the trotting of the Clamstretch.

Beneath the old Weldin Oak and lining the road are rough wooden benches, and before them the ground had been worn bare and hard by many feet. At the side of the road sways a decrepit whitewashed stand, as high as a man's chest, and with two cracker-boxes for steps. This is the official stand of the judge of the course when such a formality is necessary.

The customs of the Clamstretch have grown up with time, and are as unbending as bronze. It is decreed that Judge Coleman shall be the ruling authority of the meeting, that the time of trotting shall be from twilight to darkness, and that there shall

be as much racing as the light permits.

First the horsemen gather and solemnly trot practice heats, each driver carefully keeping his animal from showing its true worth, though the exact record of each is known to all. Then, with stable boys at the horses' heads, they collect in little groups about the oak, and with tobacco, portentous silences, and great gravity lay careful bets. But with the entrance of the judge comes drama.

He minces across the bare space before the oak and nods gravely to each friend. From an interior pocket of his immaculate gray coat he draws a small black book, the official record of the Clamstretch. In this book he enters the contesting horses, the names of the owners, and the bets. This finished, the four horsemen selected for the first race pass to the road, briefly inspect their gear, climb to the sulkies, sit magnificently upon the outstretched tails of their horses, and with whips at point, drive slowly toward the gate of the ferry lodge.

The noise of the hoofs dies to abrupt silence as the contestants jockey for position at the start, broken by the sudden thunder of the race. Puffs of white dust, hanging low over the road, rise beneath the drumming hoofs; strained red nostrils flash across the finish. Comes the stentorian voice of the announcer, giving the winner and the time. Gradually the soft light fades; the last race is ended; the judge bids the company a grave good night, and the red point of his cigar disappears in the gloom of the meadow.

There are many names great in the history of racing, whose owners have trotted the broad white road and have been duly inscribed in the black book. From Barnett and Bernetta B., from Almanzer and the Bohemia Girl, forever from R.T.C., the

time of the Clamstretch is set, and it is a point of honor between horse and man that when a great king falls he is brought back to trot his last from the lodge gate to the Weldin Oak. From Clamstretch to Clamstretch, is the saying.

I have often witnessed the custom of the Clamstretch, and this time I entered upon it inconspicuously in the magnificent wake of Richard Thomas Corkran. Upon the bare meadow, around the old oak as a nucleus, were gathered many horses. A wild roan mare led the group, a young untried creature, who kicked and squealed in a nervousness that turned from sudden anger to helpless quaking. A negro at her head, a shining black hand upon her bit, soothed and quieted her with honey upon his tongue and a sturdy desire to thump her in his heart. Her owner, a bewhiskered farmer, stood just beyond the range of her flying heels and looked at her with dismay.

"Now, pettie," he kept saying. "Now, pettie, that ain't no way to behave. That ain't no way."

A hilarious group of friends, in a half-circle behind him, ridiculed his attempts at reconciliation.

"She ain't your pettie," they shouted. "She's some other feller's... Maybe she ain't got none at all... Give her hell, Jim... Soft stuff's no dope."

A large horse, piebald and pretty, looking as if he had been purchased in a toy store, stood next to the virago. Her nervousness was apparently communicated to him, for occasionally he would back and rear. At these times, he raised clouds of dust, which sifted gently over the field, causing a shiver to run down the line of waiting horses.

"Keep 'em horses still," shouted the negro boys. "Hold onto 'em."

One giant black, a colossal hand upon the

muzzle of his horse, a mare as dainty and graceful as a fawn, threw out his great chest with pride.

"My lady's a lady," he crooned softly as the other horses stamped and grew restive. "My lady's a lady." The pretty creature looked at him with wide brown eyes, and shook her head as if softly denying.

An animal at the end of the line held my attention. His hide was the color of running bronze. His head might have been struck for one of the horses of Time, the nostrils flaring and intense, the eyes wild with hint of action. He looked as if he might run with the whirlwind, be bitted to a comet's orbit, and triumph. Sacrilege, it seemed, when I learned that he had never won a race, was quite lacking in the heart that creates a great horse. In him nature was superbly bluffing.

Richard Thomas Corkran stood at some distance from the rank and file. Boredom was unutterably upon him. He seemed looking for a place to lie down and continue his interrupted slumbers, and to be restrained only by the fear that he might be considered *gauche*. Truly there was nothing in which he might be honestly interested. No horse present could give him even the beginnings of a race. His heaviest work had been done upon the grand circuit in the spring and early summer. Vacation and leisure possessed him for this day at least. True, upon the next day he was to trot a race which was, perhaps, the most important of his career. Now, through the courtesy of the judge, he was the *pièce de résistance*, the staple, of the evening. At the end of the racing he would trot a heat in solitary grandeur—one heat, not more, and this heat would be preparation for tomorrow's test. Two horses, strategically placed over the straight half-mile, would pace him,

but they would have as little to do with his trotting as the distance posts upon the track. A little knot of men, gaping and solemn, had already gathered about him, interpreting his every bored motion as proof positive of his phenomenal speed. He accepted this as his due and was in no manner affected by it.

The men, as always, interested me. A few were professional horsemen, so marked and moulded. They were calm persons, who spoke without gesture or facial expression. Thought flowed soundlessly behind their shrewd eyes. Their attitude was one of continual weighing and balancing of mighty points.

The rest were prosperous farmers, country gentlemen, or honest artisans from the near-by village, all pleasure-bent. The regalia of those who were to drive, or hoped to drive, was unique. They seemed to express their personalities best through high black boots, striped trousers, and flaming calico shirts. The climacteric pinnacle was usually reached with an inherited racing-cap, scarlet, ochre, brown, yellow, plaid.

Twilight cupped the world, seeming to grant a hush to earth. The road took on a new whiteness, the meadow gradually darkening, touched by the night and the brooding quietness that comes as the sun goes down.

The first race came to a close—a torrent of young horses. The wild-eyed virago was among them, and she won by a prodigious stretching of the neck. Thereat, totally unable to withstand triumph, she bucked and squealed, dragging her sulky, that tormenting appendage, behind her.

“Shure, it’s temperamental she is,” said a Scotch-Irish farmer standing beside me. “But she might have walked in on her hands and won.”

The spectacle was dramatic. There was a flurry of horse and man as a race was called, a rushing to the track’s edge by the spectators, a happy bustling of self-important officials. From the knots of excited humanity emerged the horses, the drivers with their whips at trail beneath their elbows, their eyes self-consciously upon the ground. Slender sulkies, gossamer-wheeled, were pulled out, tested by heavy thumpings, and attached. Carefully the reins were bitted, run back through the guide-rings, and the drivers swung themselves up. The final touch was the arranging of the horse’s tail, and here technique differed. A good driver must sit upon his horse’s tail. This is beyond question. The mooted point is whether he shall do so spread or flat. Authority as usual holds both sides. Richard Thomas Corkran absolutely dissenting, for he would allow no one to sit on his tail but himself.

The horses dwindle to specks upon the long white road. The sound of hoofs dies to faint pulsing in the ears, a shadow of sound. Silence follows, breathless, expectant, broken by the clarion of the start.

The rhythm becomes a rhapsody of pounding hoofs, quick-timed, staccato. A black swirl up the road falls to detail of straining bodies. A roar crescendoes to high shreds of sound as they flash across the finish. A second of tense silence—pandemonium.

Three races of three heats each were trotted. Darkness was drifting down upon us as the last was finished, and Richard Thomas Corkran walked out upon the track.

His small black body blent with the semi-darkness, rendering him almost indistinguishable. The crowd followed him across the track. There was no preparation, no ceremony. The small figure plodded into

the graying distance. His pace was scarcely above a walk. He might have been a plough-horse returning from a day of labor. The spectators drew back to the road's edge.

The twilight deepened. We waited in silence. A faint drum of hoofs sounded down the wind. Sharper, swifter, it grew. A black line split the darkness, lengthening so quickly as to vanquish eyesight. There was an incredible twinkling of legs as he passed me, a glimpse of square-set methodical shoulders, which moved with the drive of pistons, of a free floating tail spread to the rushing scythe of air. He finished.

Carefully he stopped, not too sharply lest he strain himself. He turned and plodded toward the oak, where hung his blanket, and as its folds fell upon him he returned to peaceful contemplation.

Came the voice of the announcer, a hoarse bellow through the gloom— "Ti-ime by the ha-a-alf. Ooone—five—an'—two—fi-i-ifts!!" A roar of applause broke to scattered clapping. Relaxation from the tension expressed itself in laughter, jest, and play. The crowd prepared to go home. The Clamstretch was for that day done.

After dinner Judge Coleman, whose guest I was, and myself walked down the close-cropped green to the paddock fence. A moon had risen, bathing the land in clear pale yellow. Within the paddock and beneath his apple-tree lay Richard Thomas Corkran. He rested upon his side, his small torso rising and falling gently with the even flow of his breath. From his upper lip protruded a straw which moved gently as the air was expelled from his nostrils. Untroubled by thoughts of to-morrow's race, he was again sound asleep.

The next morning I saw him leave his paddock for the fair grounds. A large truck, whose side just disclosed the upper edge

of his rotund, barrelled little body, held him, his three attendants, and his staccato, white and woolly dog. His placid eye fell upon me as he passed, and I saluted and followed him.

The site of the State Fair was a great fenced field upon the outskirts of a near-by city. Upon one side towered a huge grand stand, facing a broad and dusty half-mile track. In the gigantic oval, thus formed, was a smaller ring, tan-barked and barricaded, used at times as a horse-show ring, across a corner of which was now built a small, precarious wooden platform, where vaudeville teams disported themselves in a bedlam of sound for the free edification of the multitude.

On the outside of the oval of track, stretched the Midway, in parlance "Mighty," a herd of tents and roughboard shacks, a staggering line, running to a quiet negro graveyard, overgrown with yellow grass and flecked with the gray of forgotten tombstones.

Toward the city in larger tents and squat, unsided buildings, were the farming exhibits, and between these and the outer road the racing stables, flanking a hard beaten square, in whose centre leaned a rusty pump, dry for years, and used as a hitching-post. Beyond, in a multiplicity of stalls and sties and bins, uncovered to the air, were huge and blooded bulls, monster hogs, and high-crowing, cackling fowl.

Over the wide field hung a haze of dust that stung the nostrils and soaked into the skin, causing a gray change.

I entered through a choked gate into which people streamed as a river banks against a bulwark, a confusion of carriages and cars, walking women with toddling children, red and blue balloons swaying between the ground and the gateposts,

flying bits of straw and dust, howling hawkers: a high-pitched excitation of mob.

As I passed through the wooden arch came the sleek backs of racing-horses, surging toward the eight's posts, and the wild foreground of waving arms as the spectators beat against the rail.

The crowd was a sluggish, slow-moving monster, that proceeded with sudden aimless stoppings. It was impossible to change or alter its spasmodic pace. It rippled into every corner of the field; it ran over fences and beat down barricades. It possessed an attribute of quicksilver in that it could never be gathered or held.

Its sound was a great crushing. It winnowed the grass beneath its feet, and the beaten odor came freshly to my nostrils. It surged over itself and spun slowly back. It never seemed to break or detach itself into individuals. Its tentacles might loop and cling to various protuberances, but its black bulk moved ever on.

I wandered through the maze of exhibits, stopping and listening where I would. The broad river of crowd divided to smaller eddies that swirled endlessly within and between the long rows of buildings and tents.

I passed glittering rows of farming machinery, red-painted, sturdy, clawed feet hooked into the ground. This bushy-bearded farmers tenderly fingered, and fought biting and ungrammatically with one another as to its merits.

A small tractor crawled upon its belly through the mud, and struggled and puffed its way over impossible obstacles. It was followed by a hysterical herd of small boys, who miraculously escaped destruction under its iron treads.

I crossed the square where the lean, cowed racing-horses were led patiently

back and forth by the stable boys. Always the crowd was with me, beating its endless, monotonous forward path. I grew to hate it, longed to tear apart its slow viscosity, to sweep it away and clear the earth.

Inside the buildings I passed between endless counters piled high with pyramids of jelly, saw the broad smiles of the presiding housewives, smelt brown loaves of prize bread. Baskets of huge fruit were allotted place, red apples succulent and glowing, fuzzy peaches white and yellow. The presiding deity of the place—the veritable mother of all food—I found in the centre of the shack. Her function was the creation of pie, and this of itself seemed to me sufficient. She was a large woman, red-faced, red-handed, and without a curve to her body. She was composed of but two straight lines, and between these lay her solid ample self. Her round fat arms were bare to the elbow and white with flour. On the table before her was an incalculable area of pie-crust, which she kneaded and powdered and cut with deft and stubby fingers. Behind her was a huge charcoal range upon which uncountable pies cooked, and around her were infinite battalions of pies, tremendous legions of pies, gigantic field-armies of pies. Exaggeration itself fell faint.

Before her, in the consummation of a newer miracle, fed the multitude. All men they were, and they ate steadily, unemotionally, as if they might eat eternally. They went from pie to pie to pie. They never ceased, even to wipe their lips. They never stopped to speak. They selected their next pie before they had eaten their last, and reached for it automatically. It was a spectacle so vast as to possess grandeur. Such a woman and such men might have created the world and devoured it in a day.

Around the eaters stood their wives—

certainly none could have dared be sweethearts—gaping with that curious feminine lack of understanding—awed but unreasonable—at such prodigies of feeding.

I came next upon monster hogs, buried deep in the straw. Gruntingly they lifted their battleship bulks and waddled to the walls of the pen in response to the pointed sticks of small boys. The air was permeated with animal odor, occasionally split by the fresh smell of cooking pastry and pungent aromatic spices.

With the Midway, sturdy respectability changed to blowsy, tarnished sin. Gaudy placards in primal colors bellied with the wind. All appeal was sensual, to grotesquerie or chance. From the tent of the "Circassian Syrian Dancing Girls" came the beat of a tom-tom, like that of a heavy pulse. Squarely in the passageway a three-shell merchant had placed his light table and was busily at work.

"Step up, ladies!" he called. "Step up, gents. Th' li'l pea against the world! Match it an' y' win! You take a chance evwry day. When yer born you take a chance, when you marry you take a chance, when you die you take an awful chance. Match me! Match me! Match me!"

His fingers moved like the dartings of a snake's tongue. The tiny pea appeared and disappeared.

"You lost! Poor girl. She lost her quarter. The Lord knows How she got it. Time tells an' you ain't old yet...!"

Beyond, outside a larger tent, sat a mountainous woman, a tiny fringed ballet skirt overhanging her mammoth legs. She was like some giant, jellied organism. To the crowd which gapingly surrounded her she addressed a continual tittering monologue.

"Step up here, baby.... Come up, lady! No, I ain't particular even if I am fat.... I

don't care who looks at me. I'm a lady, I am. Hell, yes! See that man over there?" She swung a monster finger toward a barker. "He keeps me up here.... Sure, he does! You jest let me down an' at him—I'll do him in—I can make twelve of him!"

Further on the crowd clustered thickly around a small tank, from the end of which rose a tall ladder topped by a tiny platform. So high was the ladder that it seemed to melt into a single line. As I watched, a young man climbed upon the edge of the tank. He grimaced and bowed to the crowd.

He stripped off a beflowered green bathrobe, disclosing a body as sleek as a wet seal's and like a slender black monkey, climbed the ladder. Reaching the platform, he posed with outstretched arms. The crowd stiffly craned their necks.

At the side of the tank appeared another man with a flat, pockmarked face. There ensued an extraordinary dialogue.

"Leopold Benofoski!" shouted the man beside the tank to him in the air, "Is there any last word that you would like to leave your wife and family?"

"No," shouted the man upon the platform.

"Leopold Benofoski!" shouted the interlocutor. "Are you prepared to meet your fate?"

"Yes," said the young man.

"Then dive!" shouted the other, "—and God be with you!" He hid his face with a prodigious gesture of despair.

The young man drew back his arms until he was like a tightened bow. For a second he poised upon tensed legs, then, like a plummet, dropped from the edge of the platform. Incredibly, swiftly he flashed down. I caught the glint of his white legs as he hit the water, a high splash, and he

had drawn himself out of the other side. A grimace of shining teeth, and he was gone. The crowd, unmoved, went sluggishly on.

Slowly I worked myself through the area before the grand stand, where the crowd was thickest. There had been an accident upon the track: a young horse, "breaking" because of the hard path worn in the finely combed dirt between the turnstiles of the fence and the grand stand, had reared and flung its fore legs into the air. A débâcle had followed as the animals close in the ruck had plunged into the leader. Three drivers had been thrown into a thresh of horses. Splintered sulkies and broken shafts lay in the débris, hazed by the cloud of dust. One horse, maddened with fear, had run squealing on, not to be stopped until it had completed the mile. One driver was badly injured.

This had had its effect on the crowd. An uneasy ripple ran across the grand stand. There was a tinge of hysteria in the movement, a desire to clutch and shiver. As time passed the tension heightened. In the official's stand I saw the small, staid figure of the judge, peering alertly at the frightened multitude. Then came a consultation of bent heads, and his hand swung up to the cord of the starting bell. The flat clang, for the bell was muffled, beat into the turbulence. A gradual quiet fell.

There followed the announcement of the curtailment of the programme to the immediate race of Richard Thomas Corkran.

I cut my way swiftly through the crowd, back to the stables, for I desired to see the little horse leave the paddock.

I found him firmly braced up on stocky legs as they bound his anklets. His refulgent blanket drooped over his rotund torso, and from the striped folds emerged the long, grotesque neck and the absurd hobby-horse

head. As I approached he eyed me with droll appreciation, for I seemed always subtly to please him.

As the last anklet was buckled he shook himself. It was methodical testing to see that he was entirely in place. Satisfied, he took a few short steps forward, carefully balancing his weight so that no muscle might be strained. At this juncture the white dog, apparently just released from captivity, bounced forward like a lively rubber ball. Fierce was his attack upon the nose of Richard Thomas Corkran. Devious were his advancements and retreatings. Quietly did the little horse receive this adulation. Again he shook himself.

Now was the spider-web tracery of harness put upon him, the silvered racing-bridle and the long thin bit. The blanket readjusted, the paddock-gate was opened, and with the small, white dog surging before him, his attendants following, he plodded toward the arena.

As he emerged into the crowd there beat upon him a roar of sound. Like a great wave it ran down the field and re-echoed back. It split into individual tendrils that were like pointed spears falling harmless from his small unmoved back. Through the path that opened out before him he slowly went, unnoticed and grave. He entered the weighing ring.

Courteously he stood as his blanket was removed, and he stood bared to the gaze of the three inspecting officials. Then the slender spider-wheeled sulky was pulled up and attached. Suddenly I saw his head lift: the contesting horse had entered the arena.

He was like a legged arrow, a magnificent, straight-lined dart. Thin to the point of emaciation, the bones of his body moved like supple reeds beneath a lustrous skin.

Lightly muscled was he, tenuous skeins at his wrists and hocks. He looked as if he might drift before the wind.

He was very nervous. There was a continual thin white line across his nostrils as his high chest took air. A rippling shiver ran through him.

Richard Thomas Corkran was the first to leave the ring. Never had he taken his eyes from his opponent. His small, black muzzle remained fixed, imperturbable. Slowly he plodded out upon the track.

The flat sound of the bell, calling the race, drifted down from above my head. As I fought my way to the rail, the roar of the crowd rose to frenzy. The horses were going by the officials' stand to the starting post.

The challenger went first, his curved neck pulling against the bit, his gait a drifting, slithering stride. After him came Richard Thomas Corkran, a tiny, methodical figure. His head was down. I could see the sulky move gently forward under his easy step.

As they reached the post and turned the tumult died away to a clear and appalling silence. Glancing up the rail, I saw the heads of the crowd leaning forward in motionless expectation.

For an instant they hung unmoving at the post. Then the challenger seemed to lift himself in the air, his fore feet struck out in the beginning of his stride for Richard Thomas Corkran, without warning, had begun to *trot*.

They swept down toward the thin steel wire that overhung the track at the start. In breathless silence they passed, and I heard the shouted—"Go!"

Like a dream of immeasurable transiency, they vanished at the turn. I heard the

staccato beat of hoofs as they went down the backstretch.

The crowd had turned. To the rail beside me leaped a man, balancing himself like a bird.

"He's ahead!" he shouted wildly. "He's ahead!—ahead!"

I swept him from the fence and climbed upon it myself. Above the bodies of the crowd at the far side of the track I saw two plunging heads. For a second only were they visible. Again they vanished.

They came down the stretch in silence, the spectators standing as though struck into stone. At the three-eighths post they seemed to be equal, but as they drew down the track I saw that the challenger led by a fraction of a foot. His flying hoofs seemed never to strike the ground. He was like some advancing shadow of incredible swiftness.

Richard Thomas Corkran raced with all that was in him. His small legs moved like pistons in perfected cadence.

As the challenger passed I could hear the talking of the driver, low-pitched, tense, driving his horse to a frenzy of effort.

"Boy! Boy! Boy! Let him have it! Let him have it! Take it from him! I'm tellin' you. Go it! Go it! Go it!"

Richard Thomas Corkran's driver sat braced to his sulky, the reins loose upon the horse's back. I caught a glimpse of his grim, strained face above the dust of the advance.

Again there was the wild beating of hoofs up the back of the track.

"He's gotta do it now. He can't lose! He can't lose!"

At the seven-eighths post the crowd thrust out its arms and began to implore. The waving arms leaped down with the striving

horses. The challenger was ahead by yards. His red nostrils flared to the wind. Never had I seen such trotting!

He came under the wire in a great plunge, his driver madly whipping him. Richard Thomas Corkran was defeated!

For seconds the crowd hung mute, seemingly afraid to move or speak. Then from the edge of the grand stand came a single shout. It grew and ran around the field, swelling to an uninterrupted roar that seemed to split itself against the heavens—a tribute to the victor, a greater tribute to the vanquished!

Richard Thomas Corkran plodded slowly around the track to the paddock gates. His head was down as before, and his rotund little body moved steadily onward. At the gates he halted and waited as the winner was led through before him. Then he

gravely followed and disappeared into the crowd.

He had met triumph with boredom; he met defeat, as a great gentleman should, with quiet courtesy and good humor. There was nothing of disdain or bitterness upon his small, black muzzle; Richard Thomas Corkran passed to the gods of horse as he had come, imperturbable, alert, sublimely sensible. But in his passing his tiny hoofs were shod with drama. Departing greatness may ask no more!

I saw him later in the paddock. His white, woolly dog was stilled; a negro rubber sobbed as he held a washing bucket. The little horse stood by himself, his feet as ever firm upon the ground, untouched, unmoved, and quietly resting. The thoughts that he possessed he kept, as always to himself. I bowed my head and turned away.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809—1894)

How the Old Horse Won the Bet

Oliver Wendell Holmes herein describes the old-time trotting race, when the horses were ridden, not driven. It is one of the very few humorous things on racing that I was able to find, most writers preferring to stress its dramatic qualities. The use of the abbreviations, "b.g.," "s.h.," always found on race sheet and horse-show program, are particularly amusing to the reader, to say nothing of that most marvelous "cold-in-the-nose" name, "Budd Doble!" Just say it aloud!

'T was on the famous trotting-ground,
The betting men were gathered round
From far and near; the "cracks" were there
Whose deeds the sporting prints declare:
The swift g. m., Old Hiram's nag,
The fleet s. h., Dan Pfeiffer's brag,
With these a third—and who is he
That stands beside his fast b. g.?
Budd Doble, whose catarrhal name
So fills the nasal trump of fame.
There too stood many a noted steed
Of Messenger and Morgan breed;
Green horses also, not a few;
Unknown as yet what they could do;
And all the hacks that know so well
The scourgings of the Sunday swell.

Blue are the skies of opening day;
The bordering turf is green with May;
The sunshine's golden gleam is thrown
On sorrel, chestnut, bay, and roan;
The horses paw and prance and neigh,
Fillies and colts like kittens play,
And dance and toss their rippled manes
Shining and soft as silken skeins;
Wagons and gigs are ranged about,

And fashion flaunts her gay turn-out;
Here stands—each youthful Jehu's dream—
The jointed tandem, ticklish team!
And there in ampler breadth expand
The splendors of the four-in-hand;
On faultless ties and glossy tiles
The lovely bonnets beam their smiles;
(The style's the man, so books avow;
The style's the woman, anyhow);
From flounces frothed with creamy lace
Peeps out the pug-dog's smutty face,
Or spaniel rolls his liquid eye,
Or stares the wiry pet of Skye—
O woman, in your hours of ease
So shy with us, so free with these!

"Come on! I'll bet you two to one
I'll make him do it!" "Will you? Done!"

What was it who was bound to do?
I did not hear and can't tell you,—
Pray listen till my story 's through.

Scarce noticed, back behind the rest,
By cart and wagon rudely prest,
The parson's lean and bony bay

Stood harnessed in his one-horse shay—
Lent to his sexton for the day;
(A funeral—so the sexton said;
His mother's uncle's wife was dead.)

Like Lazarus bid to Dives' feast,
So looked the poor forlorn old beast;
His coat was rough, his tail was bare,
The gray was sprinkled in his hair;
Sportsmen and jockeys knew him not
And yet they say he once could trot
Among the fleetest of the town,
Till something cracked and broke him down,—
The steed's, the stateman's, common lot!
"And are we then so soon forgot?"
Ah me! I doubt if one of you
Has ever heard the name "Old Blue,"
Whose fame through all this region rung
In those old days when I was young!

"Bring forth the horse!" Alas! he showed
Not like the one Mazeppa rode;
Scant-maned, sharp-backed, and shaky-kneed,
The wreck of what was once a steed,
Lips thin, eyes hollow, stiff in joints;
Yet not without his knowing points.
The sexton laughing in his sleeve,
As if 't were all a make-believe,
Led forth the horse, and as he laughed
Unhitched the breeching from a shaft,
Unclasped the rusty belt beneath,
Drew forth the snaffle from his teeth,
Slipped off his head-stall, set him free
From strap and rein,—a sight to see!

So worn, so lean in every limb,
It can't be they are saddling him!
It is! his back the pig-skin strides
And flaps his lank, rheumatic sides;
With look of mingled scorn and mirth
They buckle round the saddle-girth;
With horsey wink and saucy toss
A youngster throws his leg across,
And so, his rider on his back,
They lead him, limping, to the track,
Far up behind the starting-point,
To limber out each stiffened joint.

As through the jeering crowd he past,
One pitying look old Hiram cast;

"Go it, ye cripple, while ye can!"
Cried out unsentimental Dan;
"A Fast-Day dinner for the crows!"
Budd Doble's scoffing shout arose.

Slowly, as when the walking-beam
First feels the gathering head of steam,
With warning cough and threatening wheeze
The stiff old charger crooks his knees;
At first with cautious step sedate,
As if he dragged a coach of state;
He's not a colt; he knows full well
That time is weight and sure to tell;
No horse so sturdy but he fears
The handicap of twenty years.

As through the throng on either hand
The old horse nears the judges' stand,
Beneath his jockey's feather-weight
He warms a little to his gait,
And now and then a step is tried
That hints of something like a stride.

"Go!"—Through his ear the summons stung
As if a battle-trump had rung;
The slumbering instincts long unstirred
Start at the old familiar word;
It thrills like flame through every limb—
What mean his twenty years to him?
The savage blow his rider dealt
Fell on his hollow flanks unfelt;
The spur that pricked his staring hide
Unheeded tore his bleeding side;
Alike to him are spur and rein,—
He steps a five-year-old again!

Before the quarter pole was past,
Old Hiram said, "He's going fast."
Long ere the quarter was a half,
The chuckling crowd had ceased to laugh;
Tighter his frightened jockey clung
As in a mighty stride he swung,
The gravel flying in his track,
His neck stretched out, his ears laid back,
His tail extended all the while
Behind him like a rat-tail file!
Off went a shoe,—away it spun,
Shot like a bullet from a gun;
The quaking jockey shapes a prayer
From scraps of oaths he used to swear;

He drops his whip, he drops his rein,
He clutches fiercely for a mane;

He 'll lose his hold—he sways and reels—
He 'll slide beneath those trampling heels!
The knees of many a horseman quake,
The flowers on many a bonnet shake,
And shouts arise from left and right,
“Stick on! Stick on!” “Hould tight! Hould
tight!”

“Cling round his neck and don't let go—
“That pace can't hold—there! steady! whoa!”
But like the sable steed that bore
The spectral lover of Lenore,
His nostrils snorting foam and fire,
No stretch his bony limbs can tire;
And now the stand he rushes by,
And “Stop him!—stop him!” is the cry.
Stand back! he's only just begun—
He's having out three heats in one!

“Don't rush in front! he'll smash your brains;
But follow up and grab the reins!”
Old Hiram spoke. Dan Pfeiffer heard,
And sprang impatient at the word;
Budd Doble started on his bay,
Old Hiram followed on his gray,
And off they spring, and round they go,
The fast ones doing “all they know.”
Look! twice they follow at his heels,
As round the circling course he wheels,
And whirls with him that clinging boy
Like Hector round the walls of Troy;
Still on, and on, the third time round!
They're tailing off! They're losing ground!
Budd Doble's nag begins to fail!

Dan Pfeiffer's sorrel whisks his tail!
And see! in spite of whip and shout,
Old Hiram's mare is giving out!
Now for the finish! at the turn,
The old horse—all the rest astern—
Comes swinging in, with easy trot;
By Jove! he's distanced all the lot!

That trot no mortal could explain;
Some said, “Old Dutchman come again!”
Some took his time,—at least they tried,
But what it was could none decide;
One said he couldn't understand
What happened to his second hand;
One said 2. 10; *that* could n't be—
More like two twenty two or three;
Old Hiram settled it at last;
“The time was two—too dee-vel-ish fast!”

The parson's horse had won the bet;
It cost him something of a sweat;
Back in the one-horse shay he went;
The parson wondered what it meant,
And murmured, with a mild surprise
And pleasant twinkle of the eyes,
“That funeral must have been a trick,
Or corpses drive at double-quick;
I shouldn't wonder, I declare,
If brother Murray made the prayer!”

And this is all I have to say
About the parson's poor old bay,
The same that drew the one-horse shay.

Moral for which this tale is told:
A horse *can* trot, for all he's old.

JOHN GALSWORTHY (1867–1933)

Had a Horse

from CARAVAN

One seldom meets that well known character, the racing tout, in any but an unsavory situation. But John Galsworthy has made of him a character of strength and nobility, one who, contrary to the rules of his calling, is interested not in the money but in the honor to be won. As far as I know, this is the author's only story about horses or racing. He shows us an angle rarely portrayed, and, at the same time, a good race.

I

Some quarter of a century ago there abode in Oxford a small bookmaker called James Shrewin—or more usually, Jimmy—a run-about and damped-down little man, who made a precarious living out of the effect of horses on undergraduates. He had a so-called office just off the Corn, where he was always open to the patronage of the young bloods of Bullingdon, and other horse-loving coteries, who bestowed on him sufficient money to enable him to live. It was through the conspicuous smash of one of them—young Gardon Colquhoun—that he became the owner of a horse. He had been far from wanting what was in the nature of a white elephant to one of his underground habits, but had taken it in discharge of betting debts, to which, of course, in the event of bank-

ruptcy, he would have no legal claim. She was a three-year-old chestnut filly, by Lopez out of Calendar, bore the name Calliope, and was trained out on the Downs near Wantage. On a Sunday afternoon, then, in late July, Jimmy got his friend George Pulcher, the publican, to drive him out there in his sort of dogcart.

“Must ’ave a look at the bilkin’ mare,” he had said; “that young Cocoon told me she was a corker; but what’s third to Referee at Sandown, and never ran as a two-year-old? All I know is, she’s eatin’ ’er ’ead off!”

Beside the plethoric bulk of Pulcher, clad in a light-colored boxcloth coat with enormous whitish buttons and a full-blown rose in the lapel, Jimmy’s little, thin, dark-clothed form, withered by anxiety and gin, was, as it were, invisible; and compared with Pulcher’s setting sun, his face, with shaven cheeks sucked-in, and smudged-in

eyes, was like a ghost's under a gray bowler. He spoke off-handedly about his animal, but he was impressed, in a sense abashed, by his ownership. "What the 'ell?" was his constant thought. Was he going to race her, sell her—what? How, indeed, to get back out of her the sum he had been fool enough to let young Cocoon owe him; to say nothing of her trainer's bill? The notion, too, of having to confront that trainer with his ownership was oppressive to one whose whole life was passed in keeping out of the foreground of the picture. Owner! He had never owned even a white mouse, let alone a white elephant. And an 'orse would ruin him in no time if he didn't look alive about it!

The son of a small London baker, devoted to errandry at the age of fourteen, Jimmy Shrewin owed his profession to a certain smartness at sums, a dislike of baking, and an early habit of hanging about street corners with other boys, who had their daily pennies on an 'orse. He had a narrow, calculating head, which pushed him toward street-corner books before he was eighteen. From that time on he had been a surreptitious nomad, till he had silted up at Oxford, where, owing to vice-chancellors, an expert in underground life had greater scope than elsewhere. When he sat solitary at his narrow table in the back room near the Corn—for he had no clerk or associate—eyeing the door, with his lists in a drawer before him, and his black shiny betting book ready for young bloods, he had a sharp, cold, furtive air, and but for a certain imitated tightness of trouser, and a collar standing up all around, gave no impression of ever having heard of the quadruped called horse. Indeed, for Jimmy "horse" was a newspaper quantity with figures against its various names.

Even when, for a short spell, hanger-on to a firm of Cheap Ring bookmakers, he had seen almost nothing of horse; his race-course hours were spent ferreting among a bawling, perspiring crowd, or hanging round within earshot of tight-lipped nobs, trainers, jockeys, anyone who looked like having information. Nowadays he never went near a race meeting—his business of betting on races giving him no chance—yet his conversation seldom deviated for more than a minute at a time from that physically unknown animal, the horse. The ways of making money out of it, infinite, intricate, variegated, occupied the mind in all his haunts, to the accompaniment of liquid and tobacco. Gin and bitters was Jimmy's drink; for choice he smoked cheroots; and he would cherish in his mouth the cold stump of one long after it had gone out, for the homely feeling it gave him while he talked or listened to talk on horses. He was of that vast number, town bred, who, like crows round a carcass, feed on that which to them is not alive. And now he had a horse!

The dogcart traveled at a clinking pace behind Pulcher's bobtail. Jimmy's cheroot burned well in the warm July air; the dust powdered his dark clothes and pinched, sallow face. He thought with malicious pleasure of that young spark Cocoon's collapse—high-'anded lot of young fools thinking themselves so knowing; many were the grins, and not few the grittings of his blackened teeth he had to smother at their swagger. "Jimmy, you robber!" "Jimmy, you little blackguard!" Young sparks—gay and languid—well, one of 'em had gone out.

He looked round with his screwed-up eyes at his friend George Pulcher, who,

man and licensed victualer, had his bally independence; lived remote from the Quality in his Paradise, the Green Dragon; had not to kowtow to anyone; went to Newbury, Gatwick, Stockbridge, here and there, at will. Ah! George Pulcher had the ideal life—and looked it; crimson, square, full-bodied. Judge of a horse, too, in his own estimation; a leery bird—for whose judgment Jimmy had respect—who got the office of any clever work as quick as most men!

And he said, "What am I going to do with this blinkin' 'orse, George?"

Without moving its head the oracle spoke, in a voice rich and raw: "Let's 'ave a look at her, first, Jimmy! Don't like her name—Cal'liope; but you can't change what's in the stud-book. This Jenning that trains 'er is a crusty chap."

Jimmy nervously sucked in his lips.

The cart was mounting through the hedgeless fields which fringed the Downs; larks were singing, the wheat was very green, and patches of charlock brightened everything.

It was lonely—few trees, few houses, no people, extreme peace, just a few rooks crossing under a blue sky.

"Wonder if he'll offer us a drink," said Jimmy.

"Not he; but help yourself, my son."

Jimmy helped himself from a large wicker-covered flask.

"Good for you, George—here's how!"

The large man shifted the reins and drank, in turn tilting up a face whose jaw still struggled to assert itself against chins and neck.

"Well, here's your bloomin' horse," he said. "She can't win the Derby now, but she may do us a bit of good yet."

II

The trainer, Jenning, coming from his Sunday afternoon round of the boxes, heard the sound of wheels. He was a thin man, neat in clothes and boots, medium in height, with a slight limp, narrow gray whiskers, thin shaven lips, eyes sharp and gray.

A dogcart stopping at his yard gate and a rum-looking couple of customers.

"Well, gentlemen?"

"Mr. Jenning? My name's Pulcher—George Pulcher. Brought a client of yours over to see his new mare. Mr. James Shrewin, Oxford city."

Jimmy got down and stood before his trainer's uncompromising stare.

"What mare's that?" asked Jenning.

"Cal' liope."

"Calli' ope—Mr. Colquhoun's?"

Jimmy held out a letter.

Dear Jenning: I have sold Calliope to Jimmy Shrewin, the Oxford bookie. He takes her with all engagements and liabilities, including your training bill. I'm frightfully sick at having to part with her, but needs must when the devil drives.

GARDON COLQUHOUN.

The trainer folded the letter.

"Got proof of registration?"

Jimmy drew out another paper.

The trainer inspected it and called out: "Ben, bring out Calliope. Excuse me a minute"; and he walked into his house.

Jimmy stood shifting from leg to leg. Mortification had set in; the dry abruptness of the trainer had injured even a self-esteem starved from youth.

The voice of Pulcher boomed. "Told you he was a crusty devil. 'And 'im a bit of his own."

The trainer was coming back.

"My bill," he said. "When you've paid it you can have the mare. I train for gentlemen."

"The hell you do!" said Pulcher.

Jimmy said nothing, staring at the bill—seventy-eight pounds three shillings! A buzzing fly settled in the hollow of his cheek, and he did not even brush it off. Seventy-eight pounds!

The sound of hoofs roused him. Here came his horse, throwing up her head as if inquiring why she was being disturbed a second time on Sunday. In the movement of that small head and satin neck was something free and beyond present company.

"There she is," said the trainer. "That'll do, Ben. Stand, girl!"

Answering to a jerk or two of the halter, the mare stood, kicking slightly with a white hind foot and whisking her tail. Her bright coat shone in the sunlight, and little shivers and wrinklins passed up and down its satin because of the flies. Then, for a moment, she stood still, ears pricked, eyes on the distance.

Jimmy approached her. She had resumed her twitchings, swishings and slight kicking, and at a respectful distance he circled, bending as if looking at crucial points. He knew what her sire and dam had done, and all the horses that had beaten or been beaten by them; could have retailed by the half hour the peculiar hearsay of their careers; and here was their offspring in flesh and blood, and he was dumb! He didn't know a thing about what she ought to look like, and he knew it; but he felt obscurely moved. She seemed to him a picture.

Completing his circle he approached her head, white-blazed, thrown up again in listening or scenting, and gingerly he laid

his hand on her neck, warm and smooth as a woman's shoulder. She paid no attention to his touch, and he took his hand away. Ought he to look at her teeth or feel her legs? No, he was not buying her; she was his already; but he must say something. He looked round. The trainer was watching him with a little smile. For almost the first time in his life the worm turned in Jimmy Shrewin; he spoke no word and walked back to the cart.

"Take her in," said Jennings.

From his seat beside Pulcher, Jimmy watched the mare returning to her box.

"When I've cashed your check," said the trainer, "you can send for her."

And, turning on his heel, he went toward his house. The voice of Pulcher followed him.

"Blast your impudence! Git on, bob-tail, we'll shake the dust off 'ere."

Among the fringing fields the dogcart hurried away. The sun slanted, the heat grew less, the color of young wheat and of the charlock brightened.

"The tike! Jimmy, I'd 'ave hit him on the mug! But you've got one there. She's a bit o' blood, my boy! And I know the trainer for her, Polman—no blasted airs about 'im."

Jimmy sucked at his cheroot.

"I ain't had your advantages, George, and that's a fact. I got into it too young, and I'm a little chap. But I'll send the—my check tomorrow. I got my pride, I 'ope."

It was the first time that thought had ever come to him.

III

Though not quite the center of the Turf, the Green Dragon had nursed a coup in its day, nor was it without a sense of venera-

tion. The ownership of Calliope invested Jimmy Shrewin with the importance of those out of whom something can be had. It took time for one so long accustomed to beck and call, to molelike procedure and the demeanor of young bloods to realize that he had it. But, slowly, with the marked increase of his unpaid-for cheroots, with the way in which glasses hung suspended when he came in, with the edgings up to him, and a certain tendency to accompany him along the street, it dawned on him that he was not only an out-of-bounds bookie but a man.

So long as he had remained unconscious of his double nature he had been content with laying the odds as best he might, and getting what he could out of every situation, straight or crooked. Now that he was also a man, his complacency was ruffled. He suffered from a growing headiness connected with his horse. She was trained, now, by Polman, farther along the Downs, too far for Pulcher's bob-tail; and though her public life was carried on at the Green Dragon, her private life required a train journey overnight. Jimmy took it twice a week—touting his own horse in the August mornings up on the Downs, without drink or talk, or even cheroots. Early morning, larks singing and the sound of galloping hoofs! In a moment of expansion he confided to Pulcher that it was bally 'olesome.

There had been the slight difficulty of being mistaken for a tout by his new trainer, Polman, a stoutish man with the look of one of those large sandy Cornish cats, not precisely furtive because craft is their nature. But, that once over, his personality swelled slowly. This month of August was one of those interludes, in fact, when nothing happens, but which shape the future by secret ripening.

An error to suppose that men conduct finance, high or low, from greed, or love of gambling; they do it out of self-esteem, out of an itch to prove their judgment superior to their neighbors', out of a longing for importance. George Pulcher did not despise the turning of a penny, but he valued much more the consciousness that men were saying: "Old George, what 'e says goes—knows a thing or two—George Pulcher!"

To pull the strings of Jimmy Shrewin's horse was a rich and subtle opportunity absorbingly improvable. But first one had to study the animal's engagements, and secondly to gauge that unknown quantity, her form. To make anything of her this year they must get about it. That young toff, her previous owner, had, of course, flown high, entering her for classic races, high-class handicaps, neglecting the rich chances of lesser occasions.

Third to Referee in the three-year-old race at Sandown Spring—two heads—was all that was known of her, and now they had given her seven two in the Cambridgeshire. She might have a chance, and again she might not. George sat two long evenings with Jimmy in the little private room off the bar deliberating this grave question.

Jimmy inclined to the bold course. He kept saying: "The mare's a flyer, George—she's the 'ell of a flyer!"

"Wait till she's been tried," said the oracle.

Had Polman anything that would give them a line?

Yes, he had *The Shirker*—named with that irony which appeals to the English—one of the most honest four-year-olds that ever looked through bridle, who had run up against almost every animal of mark—the one horse that Polman never interfered

with, for if interrupted in his training he ran all the better; who seldom won, but was almost always placed—the sort of horse that handicappers pivot on.

“But,” said Pulcher, “try her with The Shirker, and the first stable money will send her up to tens.

“That ’orse is so darned regular. We’ve got to throw a bit of dust first, Jimmy. I’ll go over and see Polman.”

In Jimmy’s withered chest a faint resentment rose—it wasn’t George’s horse—but it sank again beneath his friend’s bulk and reputation.

The bit of dust was thrown at the ordinary hour of exercise over the Long Mile on the last day of August—the five-year-old Hangman carrying eight stone seven, the three-year-old Parrot seven stone five; what Calliope was carrying nobody but Polman knew. The forethought of George Pulcher had secured the unofficial presence of the press. The instructions to the boy on Calliope were to be there at the finish if he could, but on no account to win. Jimmy and George Pulcher had come out overnight. They sat together in the dogcart by the clump of bushes which marked the winning post, with Polman on his cob on the far side.

By a fine warm light the three horses were visible to the naked eye in the slight dip down by the start. And, through the glasses, invested in now that he had a horse, Jimmy could see every movement of his mare with her blazed face—rather on her toes, like the bright chestnut and bit o’ blood she was. He had a pit-patting in his heart, and his lips were tight pressed. Suppose she was no good after all, and that young Cocoon had palmed him off a pup! But mixed in with his financial fear was

an anxiety more intimate, as if his own value were at stake.

From George Pulcher came an almost excited gurgle.

“See the tout! See ’im behind that bush. Thinks we don’t know ’e’s there, wot oh!”

Jimmy bit into his cheroot. “They’re running,” he said.

Rather wide, the black Hangman on the far side, Calliope in the middle, they came sweeping up the Long Mile. Jimmy held his tobaccoed breath. The mare was going freely—a length or two behind—making up her ground! Now for it!

Ah! She ’ad the ’Angman beat, and ding-dong with this Parrot! It was all he could do to keep from calling out. With a rush and a cludding of hoofs they passed—the blazed nose just behind the Parrot’s bay nose—dead heat all but, with the Hangman beat a good length!

“There ’e goes, Jimmy! See the blank scuttlin’ down the ’ill like a blinkin’ rabbit. That’ll be in tomorrow’s paper, that trial will. Ah! but ’ow to read it—that’s the point.”

The horses had been wheeled and were sidling back; Polman was going forward on his cob.

Jimmy jumped down. Whatever that fellow had to say, he meant to hear. It was his horse! Narrowly avoiding the hoofs of his hot fidgeting mare, he said sharply: “What about it?”

Polman never looked you in the face; his speech came as if not intended to be heard by anyone.

“Tell Mr. Shrewin how she went.”

“Had a bit up my sleeve. If I’d hit her a smart one, I could ha’ landed by a length or more.”

“That so?” said Jimmy with a hiss.

"Well, don't you hit her; she don't want hittin'. You remember that."

The boy said sulkily, "All right!"

"Take her home," said Polman. Then, with that reflective averted air of his he added: "She was carrying eight stone, Mr. Shrewin; you've got a good one there. She's the Hangman at level weights."

Something wild leaped up in Jimmy—the Hangman's form unrolled itself before him in the air—he had a horse—he damn well had a horse!

IV

But how delicate is the process of backing your fancy? The planting of a commission—what tender and efficient work before it will flower! That sixth sense of the racing man, which, like the senses of savages in great forests, seizes telepathically on what is not there, must be dulled, duped, deluded.

George Pulcher had the thing in hand. One might have thought the gross man incapable of such a fairy touch, such power of sowing with one hand and reaping with the other. He intimated rather than asserted that Calliope and the Parrot were one and the same thing. "The Parrot," he said, "couldn't win with seven stone—no use thinkin' of this Cal'liope."

Local opinion was the rock on which, like a great tactician, he built. So long as local opinion was adverse, he could dribble money on in London; the natural jump-up from every long shot taken was dragged back by the careful radiation of disparagement from the seat of knowledge.

Jimmy was the fly in his ointment of those baling early weeks while snapping up every penny of long odds, before suspicion

could begin to work from the persistence of inquiry. Half a dozen times he found the little cuss within an ace of blowing the gaff on his own blinkin' mare; seemed unable to run his horse down; the little beggar's head was swellin'! Once Jimmy had even got up and gone out, leaving a gin and bitters untasted on the bar. Pulcher improved on his absence in the presence of a London tout.

"Saw the trial meself! Jimmy don't like to think he's got a stiff 'un."

And next morning his London agent snapped up some thirty-threes again.

According to the trial the mare was the Hangman at seven stone two, and really hot stuff—a seven-to-one chance. It was none the less with a sense of outrage that, opening the *Sporting Life* on the last day of September, he found her quoted at a hundred to eight. Whose work was this?

He reviewed the altered situation in disgust. He had invested about half the stable commission of three hundred pounds at an average of thirty to one, but now that she had come in the betting he would hardly average tens with the rest. What fool had put his oar in?

He learned the explanation two days later. The rash, the unknown backer was Jimmy! He had acted, it appeared, from jealousy; a bookmaker—it took one's breath away!

"Backed her on your own, just because that young Cocoon told you he fancied her!"

Jimmy looked up from the table in his "office," where he was sitting in wait for the scanty custom of the long vacation.

"She's not his horse," he said sullenly. "I wasn't going to have him get the cream."

"What did you put on?" growled Pulcher.

"Took five hundred to thirty, and fifteen twenties."

"An' see what it's done—knocked the bottom out of the commission. Am I to take that fifty as part of it?"

Jimmy nodded.

"That leaves an 'undred to invest," said Pulcher, somewhat mollified. He stood, with his mind twisting in his thick still body. "It's no good waitin' now," he said. "I'll work the rest of the money on today. If I can average tens on the balance, we'll 'ave six thousand three hundred to play with and the stakes. They tell me Jenning fancies this Diamond Stud of his. He ought to know the 'form with Cal'iope, blast him! We got to watch that."

They had! Diamond Stud, a four-year-old with eight stone two, was being backed as if the Cambridgeshire were over. From fifteens he advanced to sevens, thence to favoritism at fives. Pulcher bit on it. Jenning must know where he stood with Cal'iope! It meant—it meant she couldn't win! The tactician wasted no time in vain regret. Establish Calliope in the betting and lay off. The time had come to utilize The Shirker.

It was misty on the Downs—fine-weather mist of a bright October. The three horses became spectral on their way to the starting point. Polman had thrown the Parrot in again, but this time he made no secret of the weights. The Shirker was carrying eight seven, Calliope eight, the Parrot seven stone.

Once more, in the cart, with his glasses sweeping the bright mist, Jimmy had that pit-patting in his heart. Here they came! His mare leading—all riding hard—a genuine finish! They passed—The Shirker beaten a clear length, with the Parrot at his girth.

Beside him in the cart, George Pulcher

mumbled, "She's The Shirker at eight stone four, Jimmy!"

A silent drive big with thought back to a river inn; a silent breakfast. Over a tankard at the close the Oracle spoke.

"The Shirker, at eight stone four, is a good 'ot chance; but no cert, Jimmy. We'll let 'em know this trial quite open, weights and all. That'll bring her in the betting. And we'll watch Diamond Stud. If he drops back we'll know Jenning thinks he can't beat us now. If Diamond Stud stands up, we'll know Jenning thinks he's still got our mare safe. Then our line'll be clear: we lay off the lot, pick up a thousand or so, and 'ave the mare in at a nice weight at Liverpool."

Jimmy's smudged-in eyes stared hungrily.

"How's that?" he said. "Suppose she wins!"

"Wins! If we lay off the lot, she won't win."

"Pull her!"

George Pulcher's voice sank half an octave with disgust.

"Pull her! Who talked of pullin'? She'll run a bye, that's all. We shan't ever know whether she could 'a' won or not."

Jimmy sat silent; the situation was such as his life during sixteen years had waited for. They stood to win both ways with a bit of handling.

"Who's to ride?" he said.

"Polman's got a call on Docker. He can just ride the weight. Either way he's good for us—strong finisher, and a rare judge of distance; knows how to time things to a *t*. Win or not, he's our man."

Jimmy was deep in figures. Laying off at sevens, they would still win four thousand and the stakes.

"I'd like a win," he said.

"Ah!" said Pulcher. "But there'll be

twenty in the field, my son; no more uncertain race than that bally Cambridgeshire. We could pick up a thou, as easy as I pick up this pot. Bird in the 'and, Jimmy, and a good 'andicap in the busy. If she wins, she's finished. Well, we'll put this trial about and see 'ow Jennings pops."

Jenning popped amazingly. Diamond Stud receded a point, then reëstablished himself at nine to two. Jenning was clearly not dismayed.

George Pulcher shook his head and waited, uncertain still which way to jump. Ironical circumstance decided him.

Term had begun; Jimmy was busy at his seat of custom. By some miracle of guardianly intervention, young Colquhoun had not gone broke. He was up again, eager to retrieve his reputation, and that little brute, Jimmy, would not lay against his horse! He merely sucked in his cheeks and answered, "I'm not layin' my own 'orse." It was felt that he was not the man he had been; assertion had come into his manner, he was better dressed. Someone had seen him at the station looking quite a toff in a blue box-cloth coat standing well out from his wisp of a figure, and with a pair of brown race glasses slung over the shoulder. All together the little brute was getting too big for his boots.

And this strange improvement hardened the feeling that his horse was a real good thing. Patriotism began to burn in Oxford. Here was a snip that belonged to them, as it were, and the money in support of it, finding no outlet, began to ball.

A week before the race—with Calliope at nine to one, and very little doing—young Colquhoun went up to town, taking with him the accumulated support of betting Oxford. That evening she stood at sixes. Next day the public followed on.

George Pulcher took advantage. In this crisis of the proceedings he acted on his own initiative. The mare went back to eights, but the deed was done. He had laid off the whole bally lot, including the stake money. He put it to Jimmy that evening in a nutshell. "We pick up a thousand, and the Liverpool as good as in our pocket. I've done worse."

Jimmy grunted out, "She could 'a' won."

"Not she. Jenning knows—and there's others in the race. This Wasp is goin' to take a lot of catchin', and Deerstalker's not out of it. He's a hell of a horse, even with that weight."

Again Jimmy grunted, slowly sucking down his gin and bitters. Sullenly he said, "Well, I don' want to put money in the pocket of young Cocoon and his crowd. Like his impudence, backin' my horse as if it was his own."

"We'll 'ave to go and see her run, Jimmy."

"Not me," said Jimmy.

"What! First time she runs! It won't look natural."

"No," repeated Jimmy. "I don't want to see 'er beat."

George Pulcher laid his hand on a skinny shoulder.

"Nonsense, Jimmy. You've got to, for the sake of your reputation. You'll enjoy seein' your mare saddled. We'll go up over night. I shall 'ave a few pound on Deerstalker. I believe he can beat this Diamond Stud. And you leave Docker to me; I'll 'ave a word with 'im at Gatwick tomorrow. I've known 'im since 'e was that 'igh; an' 'e ain't much more now."

"All right!" growled Jimmy.

The longer you can bet on a race the greater its fascination. Handicappers can properly enjoy the beauty of their work;

clubmen and oracles of the course have due scope for reminiscence and prophecy; book-makers in lovely leisure can indulge a little their own calculated preferences, instead of being hurried to soulless conclusions by a half hour's market on the course; the professional backer has the longer in which to dream of his fortune made at last by some hell of a horse—spotted somewhere as interfered with, left at the post, running green, too fat, not fancied, backward—now bound to win this race. And the general public has the chance to read the horses' names in the betting news for days and days; and what a comfort that is!

Jimmy Shrewin was not one of those philosophers who justify the great and growing game of betting on the ground that it improves the breed of an animal less and less in use. He justified it much more simply—he lived by it. And in the whole of his career of nearly twenty years since he made hole-and-corner books among the boys of London, he had never stood so utterly on velvet as that morning when his horse must win him five hundred pounds by merely losing. He had spent the night in London anticipating a fraction of his gains with George Pulcher at a music hall. And, in a first-class carriage, as became an owner, he traveled down to Newmarket by an early special. An early special key turned in the lock of the carriage door, preserved their numbers at six, all professionals, with blank, rather rolling eyes, mouths shut or slightly fishy, ears to the ground; and the only natural talker a red-faced man, who had been at it thirty years. Intoning the pasts and futures of this hell of a horse or that, even he was silent on the race in hand; and the journey was half over before the beauty of their own judg-

ments loosened tongues thereon. George Pulcher started it.

"I fancy Deerstalker," he said.

"Too much weight," said the red-faced man. "What about this Cal'lioep?"

"Ah!" said Pulcher. "D'you fancy your mare, Jimmy?"

With all eyes turned on him, lost in his blue box-cloth coat, brown bowler and cheroot smoke, Jimmy experienced a subtle thrill. Addressing the space between the red-faced man and Pulcher, he said, "If she runs up to 'er looks."

"Ah!" said Pulcher, "she's dark—nice mare, but a bit light and shelly."

"Lopez out o' Calendar," muttered the red-faced man. "Lopez didn't stay, but he was the hell of a horse over seven furlongs. The Shirker ought to 'ave told you a bit."

Jimmy did not answer. It gave him pleasure to see the red-faced man's eye trying to get past, and failing.

"Nice race to pick up. Don't fancy the favorite meself; he'd nothin' to beat at Ascot."

"Jenning knows what he's about," said Pulcher.

Jenning! Before Jimmy's mind passed again that first sight of his horse, and the trainer's smile, as if he—Jimmy Shrewin, who owned her—had been dirt. Tike! To have the mare beaten by one of his! A deep, subtle vexation had oppressed him at all times all these last days since George Pulcher had decided in favor of the mare's running a bye. He took too much on himself! Thought he had Jimmy Shrewin in his pocket! He looked at the block of crimson opposite. Aunt Sally! If George Pulcher could tell what was passing in his mind!

But driving up to the course he was not above sharing a sandwich and a flask. In fact his feelings were unstable and gusty—

sometimes resentment, sometimes the old respect for his friend's independent bulk. The dignity of ownership takes long to establish itself in those who have been kicked about.

"All right with Docker," murmured Pulcher, sucking at the wicker flask. "I gave him the office at Gatwick."

"She could 'a' won," muttered Jimmy.

"Not she, my boy; there's two at least can beat 'er."

Like all oracles, George Pulcher could believe what he wanted to.

Arriving, they entered the grand-stand inclosure, and over the dividing railings Jimmy gazed at the Cheap Ring, already filling up with its usual customers. Faces and umbrellas—the same old crowd. How often had he been in that Cheap Ring, with hardly room to move, seeing nothing, hearing nothing but "Two to one on the field!" "Two to one on the field!" Threes Swordfish!" "Fives Alabaster!" "Two to one on the field!"

Nothing but a sea of men like himself, and a sky overhead. He was not exactly conscious of criticism, only of a dull glad-I'm-shut-of-that-lot feeling.

Leaving George Pulcher deep in conversation with a crony, he lighted a cheroot and slipped out on to the course. He passed the Jockey Club inclosure. Some early toffs were there in twos and threes, exchanging wisdom. He looked at them without envy or malice. He was an owner himself now, almost one of them in a manner of thinking. With a sort of relish he thought of how his past life had circled round those toffs, slippery, shadow-like, kicked about; and now he could get up on the Downs away from toffs, George Pulcher, all that crowd, and smell the grass, and hear the bally larks, and watch his own mare gallop!

They were putting the numbers up for the first race. Queer not to be betting, not to be touting around; queer to be giving it a rest! Utterly familiar with those names on the board, he was utterly unfamiliar with the shapes they stood for.

"I'll go and see 'em come out of the paddock," he thought, and moved on, skimpy in his bell-shaped coat and billycock with flattened brim. The clamor of the Rings rose behind him while he was entering the paddock.

Very green, very peaceful there; not many people yet! Three horses in the second race were being led slowly in a sort of winding ring; and men were clustering round the farther gate where the horses would come out. Jimmy joined them, sucking at his cheroot. They were a picture! Damn it, he didn't know but that 'orses laid over men! Pretty creatures!

One by one they passed out of the gate, a round dozen. Selling platers, but pictures, for all that!

He turned back toward the horses being led about; and the old instinct to listen took him close to little groups. Talk was all of the big race. From a tall toff he caught the word "Calliope."

"Belongs to a bookie, they say."

Bookie! Why not? Wasn't a bookie as good as any other? Ah! And sometimes better than these young snobs with everything to their hand! A bookie—well, what chance had he ever had?

A big brown horse came by.

"That's Deerstalker," he heard the toff say.

Jimmy gazed at George Pulcher's fancy with a sort of hostility. Here came another—Wasp, six stone ten, and Deerstalker nine stone—bottom and top of the race!

"My 'orse'd beat either o' them," he thought stubbornly. "Don't like that Wasp."

The distant roar was hushed. They were running in the first race! He moved back to the gate. The quick clamor rose and dropped, and here they came—back into the paddock, darkened with sweat, flanks heaving a little!

Jimmy followed the winner, saw the jockey weigh in.

"What jockey's that?" he asked.

"That? Why, Docker!"

Jimmy stared. A short, square, bowlegged figure, with a hardwood face!

Waiting his chance, he went up to him and said, "Docker, you ride my 'orse in the big race."

"Mr. Shrewin?"

"The same," said Jimmy. The jockey's left eyelid drooped a little. Nothing responded in Jimmy's face. "I'll see you before the race," he said.

Again the jockey's eyelid wavered; he nodded and passed on.

Jimmy stared at his own boots; they struck him suddenly as too yellow and not at the right angle. But why, he couldn't say.

More horses now—those of the first race being unsaddled, clothed and led away. More men; three familiar figures—young Cocoon and two others of his Oxford customers.

Jimmy turned sharply from them. Stand their airs? Not he! He had a sudden sickish feeling. With a win he'd have been a made man—on his own! Blast George Pulcher and his caution! To think of being back in Oxford with those young bloods jeering at his beaten horse! He bit deep into the stump of his cheroot, and suddenly came on Jenning standing by a horse with a star on its bay forehead. The trainer gave him

no sign of recognition, but signed to the boy to lead the horse into a stall, and followed, shutting the door. It was exactly as if he had said, "Vermin about!"

An evil little smile curled Jimmy's lips. The tike!

The horses for the second race passed out of the paddock gate, and he turned to find his own. His ferreting eyes soon sighted Polman. What the cat-faced fellow knew or was thinking, Jimmy could not tell. Nobody could tell.

"Where's the mare?" he said.

"Just coming round."

No mistaking her; fine as a star, shiny-coated, sinuous, her blazed face held rather high! Who said she was shelly? She was a picture! He walked a few paces close to the boy.

"That's Calliope. . . . H'm! . . . Nice filly! . . . Looks fit. . . . Who's this James Shrewin? . . . What's she at? . . . I like her looks."

His horse! Not a prettier filly in the world!

He followed Polman into her stall to see her saddled. In the twilight there he watched her toilet—the rub-over, the exact adjustments, the bottle of water to the mouth, the buckling of the bridle—watched her head high above the boy keeping her steady with gentle pulls of a rein in each hand held out a little wide, and now and then stroking her blazed nose; watched her pretense of nipping at his hand. He watched the beauty of her, exaggerated in this half-lit isolation away from the others, the life and liveness in her satin body, the wilful expectancy in her bright soft eyes.

Run a bye! This bit o' blood—this bit o' fire! This horse of his! Deep within that shell of blue box cloth against the stall partition a thought declared itself: "I'm damned if she shall! She can beat the lot!"

The door was thrown open, and she led out. He moved alongside. They were staring at her, following her. No wonder! She was a picture, his horse—his! She had gone to Jimmy's head.

They passed Jennings with Diamond Stud waiting to be mounted. Jimmy shot him a look. Let the — wait!

His mare reached the palings and was halted. Jimmy saw the short square figure of her jockey, in the new magenta cap and jacket—his cap, his jacket! Beautiful they looked, and no mistake!

"A word with you," he said.

The jockey halted, looked quickly round.

"All right, Mr. Shrewin. I know."

Jimmy's eyes smoldered at him. Hardly moving his lips he said intently: "You damn well don't! You'll ride her to win. Never mind him! If you don't, I'll have you off the turf. Understand me! You'll damn well ride 'er to win."

The jockey's jaw dropped.

"All right, Mr. Shrewin."

"See it is!" said Jimmy with a hiss.

"Mount, jockeys!"

He saw magenta swing into the saddle. And suddenly, as if smitten with the plague, he scuttled away.

He scuttled to where he could see them going down—seventeen. No need to search for his colors; they blazed, like George Pulcher's countenance, or a rhododendron bush in sunlight, above that bright chestnut with the white nose, curvetting a little as she was led past.

Now they came cantering—Deerstalker in the lead.

"He's a hell of a horse, Deerstalker," said someone behind.

Jimmy cast a nervous glance around. No sign of George Pulcher!

One by one they cantered past, and he

watched them with a cold feeling in his stomach.

The same voice said, "New colors! Well, you can see 'em; and the mare too. She's a showy one. Calliope? She's goin' back in the bettin', though."

Jimmy moved up through the Ring.

"Four to one on the field!" "Six Deerstalker!" "Sevens Magistrate!" "Ten to one Wasp!" "Ten to one Calliope!" "Four to one Diamond Stud!" "Four to one on the field!"

Steady as a rock, that horse of Jennings', and his own going back!

"Twelves Calliope!" he heard just as he reached the stand. The telepathic genius of the Ring missed nothing—almost!

A cold shiver went through him. What had he done by his words to Docker? Spoiled the golden egg laid so carefully? But perhaps she couldn't win, even if they let her! He began to mount the stand, his mind in the most acute confusion.

A voice said, "Hullo, Jimmy! Is she going to win?"

One of his young Oxford sparks was jammed against him on the stairway!

He raised his lip in a sort of snarl, and, huddling himself, slipped through and up ahead. He came out and edged in close to the stairs, where he could get play for his glasses. Behind him one of those who improve the shining hour among backers cut off from opportunity was intoning the odds a point shorter than below: "Three to one on the field." "Fives Deerstalker." "Eight to one Wasp."

"What price Calliope?" said Jimmy sharply.

"Hundred to eight."

"Done!" Handing him the eight, he took the ticket. Behind him the man's eyes

moved fishily, and he resumed his incantation:

"Three to one on the field. Three to one on the field. Six to one Magistrate."

On the wheeling bunch of colors at the start Jimmy trained his glasses. Something had broken clean away and come half the course—something in yellow.

"Eights Magistrate. Eight to one Magistrate," drifted up.

So they had spotted that! Precious little they didn't spot!

Magistrate was round again, and being ridden back. Jimmy rested his glasses a moment, and looked down. Swarms in the Cheap Ring, Tattersalls, the Stands—a crowd so great you could lose George Pulcher in it. Just below, a little man was making silent frantic signals with his arms across to someone in the Cheap Ring. Jimmy raised his glasses. In line now—magenta third from the rails!

"They're off!"

The hush, you could cut it with a knife! Something in green away on the right—Wasp! What a bat they were going! And a sort of numbness in Jimmy's mind cracked suddenly; his glasses shook; his thin weasly face became suffused, and quivered. Magenta—magenta—two from the rails! He could make no story of the race such as he would read in tomorrow's paper—he could see nothing but magenta.

Out of the dip now, and coming fast—green still leading—something in violet, something in tartan, closing.

"Wasp's beat!" "The favorite—the favorite wins!" "Deerstalker—Deerstalker wins!" "What's that in pink on the rails?"

It was his in pink on the rails! Behind him a man went suddenly mad.

"Deerstalker—Come on with 'im, Stee! Deerstalker'll win—Deerstalker!"

Jimmy sputtered venomously: "Will 'e? Will 'e?"

Deerstalker and his own out from the rest—opposite the Cheap Ring—neck and neck—Docker riding like a demon.

"Deerstalker! Deerstalker!" "Calliope wins! She wins!"

His horse! They flashed past—fifty yards to go, and not a head between 'em!

"Deerstalker! Deerstalker!" "Calliope!"

He saw his mare shoot out—she'd won!

With a little queer sound he squirmed and wriggled on to the stairs. No thoughts while he squeezed, and slid, and hurried—only emotion—out of the Ring, away to the paddock. His horse!

Docker had weighed in when he reached the mare. All right! He passed with a grin. Jimmy turned almost into the body of Polman standing like an image.

"Well, Mr. Shrewin," he said to nobody, "she's won."

"Damn you!" thought Jimmy. "Damn the lot of you!" And he went up to his mare. Quivering, streaked with sweat, impatient of the gathering crowd, she showed the whites of her eyes when he put his hand up to her nose.

"Good girl!" he said, and watched her led away.

"Gawd! I want a drink!" he thought.

Gingerly, keeping a sharp lookout for Pulcher, he returned to the stand to get it, and to draw his hundred. But up there by the stairs the discreet fellow was no more. On the ticket was the name O. H. Jones, and nothing else. Jimmy Shrewin had been welshed! He went down at last in a hot temper. At the bottom of the staircase stood George Pulcher. The big man's face was crimson, his eyes ominous. He blocked Jimmy into a corner.

"Ah!" he said. "You little crow! What the 'ell made you speak to Docker?"

Jimmy grinned. Some new body within him stood there defiant. "She's my 'orse," he said.

"You Gawd-forsaken rat! If I 'ad you in a quiet spot I'd shake the life out of you!"

Jimmy stared up, his little spindle legs apart, like a cock sparrow confronting an offended pigeon.

"Go 'ome," he said, "George Pulcher, and get your mother to mend your socks. You don't know 'ow! Thought I wasn't a man, did you? Well, now, you damn well know I am. Keep off my 'orse in future."

Crimson rushed up on crimson in Pulcher's face; he raised his heavy fists. Jimmy stood, unmoving, his little hands in his bellcoat pockets, his withered face upraised. The big man gulped as if swallowing back the tide of blood; his fists edged forward and then—dropped.

"That's better," said Jimmy. "Hit one of your own size."

Emitting a deep growl, George Pulcher walked away.

"Two to one on the field—I'll back the field. Two to one on the field." "Threes Snowdrift—Fours Iron Dock."

Jimmy stood a moment mechanically listening to the music of his life; then, edging out, he took a fly and was driven to the station.

All the way up to town he sat chewing his cheroot with the glow of drink inside him, thinking of that finish, and of how he had stood up to George Pulcher. For a whole day he was lost in London, but Friday saw him once more at his seat of custom in the Corn.

Not having laid against his horse, he had had a good race in spite of everything; yet, the following week, uncertain into what further quagmires of quixotry she might lead him, he sold Calliope.

But for years, betting upon horses that he never saw, underground like a rat, yet never again so accessible to the kicks of fortune, or so prone before the shafts of superiority, he would think of the Downs with the blinkin' larks singin', and talk of how once he—had a horse.

JAMES BOYD (1888—)

A Story of a Race in Revolutionary Times

from DRUMS

James Boyd, in Drums, gives us a tremendously vivid picture not only of the actual running of the race and the feelings of his hero who, so unexpectedly, finds himself riding in it but also of the general set-up, in those days, of such affairs. Notice that there is no formal starter with a gun, only a friend who waves a white handkerchief and calls "Go!" The only betting seems to be either between friends, or by a man who stands up on a chair and calls his bids.

Also, the race is run in three heats with no objection, apparently, to the changing of jockeys between heats. The heats are four miles each so that the horses had to run twelve miles in all, something of a test indeed! When one compares the easy informality, the enjoyment that everyone concerned seemed to get out of the affair, one regrets that the professionals of the present day have superseded the amateurs of this earlier period.

The country neighbors and farmers were coming in. Inside the tavern a press of people seemed to bulge the very windows, and still others trickled slowly in the door, clawing and elbowing good-naturedly; trickled slowly out, smacking lips, cracking jokes. Johnny hurried round to the pantry window.

"Hornblower, a glass of spirits, for Gad's sake! I feel like I had a chill."

Mr. Hornblower's distracted face shot in-to view, stared at Johnny, almost without

recognition. He passed out a glass of spirits automatically. "Coming, sir, coming!" he cried in despairing tones and plunged back into the roaring tap-room.

The fiery rum brought heat to Johnny's spine, a look around still further warmed him. Here in high-pitched, comic, friendly mood the pick of the Province crowded in for fellowship and sport. They swarmed the street and sidewalk, overflowed into gardens, on doorsteps. Their carriages and

chaises lined the footpath, their horses were tied to every tree.

They parted slowly as Sir Nat, perched high on a yellow dogcart, drove up to the tavern. His negro boy took the horse's head. Sir Nat, holding whip and reins in his right hand, climbed down. He laid the whip across the seat; he looped the reins through the terrets; he removed his tan box-cloth coat with the grave preoccupation of a Royal Post driver. The crowd watched his careful ritual with good-natured grins.

"How's Peregrine?" they said.

"Fit."

"Huzzah! You've got to beat that Virginia horse!"

"Right. Oh, there's Gerrould now."

The tall, grave Virginian came through the crowd.

"Hullo, Gerrould. Missed you last night. Comus fit?"

"Ah, Dukinfield. My chaise broke down. Yes, sir, my horse is ready to run. How is Peregrine?"

"Fit. Thanks."

Mr. Gerrould glanced about him importantly and clasped Sir Nat's hand.

"Well, then, sir, may the best horse win!"

"Right," answered Sir Nat, overcome by the somewhat theatrical tableau. "Bitters? No? Well, then, let's get for'ard. You know young Fraser?"

"I think, sir, I recollect the pleasure."

"Come along, Bantam; should be at the course."

Dubiously eyeing the dappled March sky, Sir Nat put on his box-cloth coat, buttoned the large mother-of-pearl buttons, took up whip and reins and mounted. Taking the seat beside him, Johnny focused every faculty on the effort to appear at ease and by no means elated.

"Let go," said Sir Nat to the negro. "Take care yourself!" He laid an accurate lash along the bright flank. The dog-cart shot ahead. The little negro made a white-eyed dive for the tail-gate, hoisted himself aboard, legs wildly dangling. All down the street the crowd scattered and raised a humorous cheer.

The tide of sportsmen was already setting strong for the racecourse. They passed knots of workmen trudging along, handkerchiefs stuffed into stocks, smoking stolid pipes, 'prentice lads who whistled through their teeth and winked, pig-tailed seamen, for the most part drunk and bellying. Farmers and small planters bumped along on trace-marked plough-horses. Barefoot negroes moved smoothly single file, each with his ticket of leave pinned to his breast; they pulled caps, ducked heads, grinned. "Looky, nigger. Heah come de golden chariot!" A deep-toned giggle and a high "Hyah! hyah!" ran down the line. A country chaise, mud-spattered, bristled with home-made female finery and bold untutored country glances. Two gutter-snipes from town paddled doggedly through the dust, dragging a weeping sister and a reluctant cur. A straw-filled farmer's wagon gave them a row of ruddy, inarticulate grins.

Captain Tennant, rigid in a hired fly, turned a furious eye on them as they scraped his hub, recognized them, took their dust with an almost benign salute.

"Good luck, young gentlemen!" they heard him call.

"Good luck, Sir Nat!" said a couple of back-country sportsmen on nervous, raw-boned colts. "We're a-backin' you, boy!" The foot people turned at the rattle of hubs, nodded bonnets, raised cocked hats, sticks, high-crowned buckled hats, and smiled.

"Good luck!" they called. "Good luck! You're bound to win. North Carolina wins! Huzzah!"

Ahead in a neat little trap with scarlet wheels, Johnny saw Eve Tennant's new green capucin beside the stout back of Master Hal Cherry.

"Silly fat boy," said Sir Nat. "Give him the go-by, what?" He cut in around them dexterously.

"Confound you!" cried Master Hal, jerking the reins up under his chin. "Do you know what you're about?"

"Yes. How do, Miss Eve?"

"Sir Nat! Johnny!" She smiled at them and laughed at her escort's discomfiture.

Johnny raised his hat and grinned delightedly. She had never seemed so charming and friendly. The fat boy had never seemed so absurd. A sobering thought occurred to him: girls were peculiar, they would inveigle a man into taking them to a party and then be the first to laugh if someone made a monkey of him.

They overtook four handsomely dressed young Virginians in a traveling carriage. "Here comes a rather decent horse," remarked one loftily. Johnny's gorge rose. "Hello, Virginia!" he shouted. "Is that Comus?" He pointed to the fat old cob between their shafts. "No, sir," they answered, "but I reckon he'd win just as easy."

"I reckon he'd stand as good a chance!" He waved derisively.

Wylie Jones, lying back in his saffron-panelled glass coach called to his monkey nigger postillions and, with a wave of tolerant amusement, allowed them to pass.

Now the race-course was in sight. The first comers already outlined a long oval on the greening pasture-lands.

They found Peregrine under a light blan-

ket in a clump of young pines. Sir Nat's old negro, in a bright yellow waistcoat, his Hessian boots freshly shined, waddled distractedly to and fro, babbled conflicting orders to three darky strappers.

"De hind leg, Amos, da's what Ah said. Sassfrass, bring me de water-bucket. Wher' de sponge? You yaller boy, chase off dem chilluns!"

The yellow boy reluctantly approached a ring of youngsters.

"Li'l' white boys, please to go on along. De ho'se despise to be looked at."

"Good horse, Peregrine," said Sir Nat, walking up.

Peregrine seemed not to hear. He chucked his long fine head and kept an apprehensive eye on the distant bustle and confusion.

"Peregrine!"

Now his sharp ears tilted, his pointed muzzle made a nervous thrust at Sir Nat's pocket. Sir Nat brought out a tiny slice of carrot. Peregrine's lips closed on it swiftly, delicately. He turned away and once more fixed his uneasy gaze on the course.

"Nervous," said Sir Nat. "Don't bother him. Amos, leave his leg." He unfastened the halter shank and walked off, leading the bright horse, softly whistling "Rum Punccheon" in his ear. Johnny waited; now and again he could see the pair through the trees and hear Sir Nat's soothing, endless refrain. The three black strappers squatted on the pine straw, solemn as apes.

"Ain't he de man now?" said the old groom. "He des naturally rock dat ho'se to sleep."

Just beyond, Johnny could see the tall black figure of Mr. Gerrould and the scarlet blanket of his Comus. As he walked

over, the white jockey stripped the blanket and started to rub the chestnut quarters.

"Stand over, you Comus!" he shouted, and struck him with the back of his hand. Comus stood over quickly enough, but the look in his eye was not agreeable.

"Ah, Mr. Fraser," said Mr. Gerrould. "We are quite ready. You have not seen this horse before?"

"No, seh. He's a sure 'nough fine-looking horse. I certainly like his looks," he added, with the mental reservation that he would like them better were Comus a little stronger in the gaskins and a little more honest in the eye.

Mr. Gerrould received his remark in complacent silence—there was nothing more to be said. Johnny moved off toward the race-course crowd, which now grew in a steady stream and raised an ever-mounting din to heaven. Carriages, wagons, carts and chaises lined the homestretch. Horses munched nose-bags at the hind wheels. The crowd buzzed to and fro, formed jams, broke up, flowed on again. Here two young country boys, stripped to the waist, swung wildly at each other in a shouting circle. Beyond, a man in a white box coat and a white paper hat stood on a chair intoning, "Five to three on Comus! Five to three on Comus!" in a beery voice. Beside him a pock-marked, ratty man sold tickets. Johnny fell over a sailor sleeping soundly with his hard leather hat clasped to his chest. He stopped, stood wondering how he could get him to his feet again. But the crowd, after tripping over the sailor, seemed to accept him as a feature of the local geography and flowed around him on either side. Johnny strolled on.

A dark foreigner in earrings and feathered cap led a dingy bear. The man's wife bent forward beneath a barrel organ, a

bright silk handkerchief drawn down to her tired eyes. On top of the barrel organ a monkey shivered and cracked his knuckles.

Johnny followed them till they halted. The barrel organ squeaked.

"Tilly-lilly-lon-ton!" the man intoned and jerked the chain.

The bear rose up wearily, shuffled slowly, lurched from side to side. His coat was rubbed and rusty, his powerful forepaws hung against his chest in a begging posture, his eyes were tired like the woman's.

Those big paws, sturdy yet helpless, pulled at Johnny's heart as, years before, the pleading hands of the fisher-coon had pulled. He turned away.

The first event, a farmer's race, was being called. He went to the ropes where Wylie Jones, the starter, was lining up the field. Among the dozen half-bred colts he saw the bound-boy from Slade's Ordinary, his shirt sleeves rolled up to his shoulder, astride a hammer-headed ancient blood horse who stood motionless except for the trembling of his battered knees.

"Go!" cried Wylie Jones, and dropped his handkerchief. The bound-boy's nag got away with the rest under a liberal fusillade of blows. At the turn, however, Johnny saw a cloud of dust, a rolling horse, and the seat of the bound-boy's cowhide breeches sailing through the air.

The morning passed with short races for local horses. Impromptu matches, got up to decide disputes, ended in single combats or massed engagements between the partisans. The constable in his silver chain and badge marshalled his deputies and waited with nice judgment for the moment when it was prudent to intervene.

Toward two o'clock they fell to on their dinners; saddle-bags and hampers were spread on the grass, bottles and jugs passed

from hand to hand. Pastry boys in white aprons sold tarts from shallow wooden trays, a fat old free-nigger woman peddled 'lasses candy.

Johnny strolled slowly to and fro, exhibiting himself and basking gratefully in the blaze of his own magnificence. His hands were clasped behind him, his eyes were bent on the ground as though abstracted, overwhelmed by weighty affairs. He noted accurately, however, the respectful glances of many a worthy burgher, and not a few feminine glances which, though not precisely respectful, were even more gratifying. It was a long cry, indeed, from the little back-country tadpole in moccasins to the well-set-up and irreproachably turned-out young gentleman who now paraded the race-course for the edification of the Province. Nor was his elegance specious in the least degree. Its crowning glory lay in the fact that it did no more than represent the actuality. He was received as friend and familiar by the unassailable few whose lofty position looked up to no man—by Captain Tennant, by Wylie Jones and, especially gratifying on this day of the great race, by Sir Nat.

At this point in his pleasing contemplation of himself, his thoughts shot off abruptly to Peregrine, walking lightly up and down among the pines, cocking his ears and waiting. A swift clutch of insupportable excitement, of chill apprehension, closed on his heart, the hour for the race was almost here. He turned clammy, empty, almost sick. If he did not do something his mind would turn blank, or he would froth and fall down in a fit.

He saw Eve perched on Master Cherry's trap and wandered over.

"Why, sir!" she cried down to him, "you look quite gloomy."

"Fact is, ma'am, I'm nervous about this race."

"Isn't it exciting!" she said without conviction. "But Peregrine will win, won't he?"

"I hope so," he answered listlessly. There was no use trying to tell the things he felt.

"Have some tucker?" Master Cherry mumbled from the corner of a stuffed mouth.

Johnny nibbled at a large fish sandwich mechanically. The bread, the curry and the shredded fish stuck miserably in his throat, went down with hideous gulplings, lay sodden on his chest.

Captain Tennant came up, bristling with excitement and indignation.

"Hello, young Fraser! Where's Sir Nat—with the horse? Good. We must beat these Virginia chaps—by Jove, we must! One of them just had the dashed impudence to offer me five to two against Peregrine!"

"Yes, seh. Virginians certainly are overweening."

"Infernally overweening, sir. I told the young man that I would take nothing but even money and laid him fifteen guineas." He puffed angrily. "Rather a large order on my Collector's pay, but hang me, I won't stand impudence."

At this moment a fat hand clasped Johnny's, a second hand, covered with rings, closed over it.

"Well, suh, young Master Fraser, and how do we fine ou'selves today?"

Mr. Jenney, the pack-horse man, very much frilled and wigged, without, however, great attention either to good taste or cleanliness, clung to Johnny's hand and pressed it to his bosom. His bows included Eve, Captain Tennant, and Master Cherry.

He had evidently forgotten the incident of the fur tippet.

"Master Fraser," he explained to the company, "is the son of a ve'y dear frien' of mine, the gallant and cultivated Mr. Fraser, of Little River. Our relationship is peculiarly close, Mrs. Fraser being a Moore, of Wilmington, and my late wife"—he raised his eyes to heaven—"deceased March 9, 1764, having been a Tollifer and related through the Desaussures to the Moores."

"Did Mr. Arrocks come with you?" asked Johnny hurriedly.

"There he stands," said Mr. Jenney, pointing into the crowd, "the salt of the earth, the positive salt of the earth."

Johnny led Mr. Jenney away to where the grim face of Mr. Arrocks cast its saturnine eye on the throngs below. Mr. Arrocks tilted his long beak vertically as a salutation, then tilted it horizontally with a meaning glance to indicate that he desired a private interview. Disengaging his hand from Mr. Jenney's, Johnny stepped aside.

"Who's to ride Dukinfield's horse?" he said in a hoarse stage whisper.

"Mr. Heywood, of Black River."

Mr. Arrocks shook his head lugubriously. In pantomime he poured out a monumental drink, drank it and simulated stupor. He shook his head again and walked away.

So Mr. Heywood, then, had got drunk the night before the race? He hurried to Sir Nat with the news.

"Nat, has Mr. Heywood come?"

Sir Nat shifted the straw in his mouth.

"Yes," he replied without enthusiasm.

"Is he all right?"

"Seedy. Have to do, though. Too late now—" He bit the straw in two and turned to his horse.

"I just saw a fellow I knew; he told me he'd drunk himself stiff last night."

"Yes, yes, I know," Sir Nat shook his head—"too late now."

Johnny strode moodily up and down before the little group who had gathered to watch Peregrine saddled. He bowed his head, the picture of a high-minded sportsman deploring the less admirable qualities of others. And indeed, beneath this pantomime, he was truly outraged. To be picked to ride Peregrine and then get drunk the night before—such sacrilege would bring a judgment from God.

An expectant hush had fallen on the race crowd, their restless movement ceased; they lined up at the track.

Looking quite alert and fit, Heywood appeared on the other side of Peregrine. He took a pull at the girths, stripped off his coat, gave Sir Nat his thin-lipped grin across the saddle.

"Never fear, Nat, I'll bring him home first!" His speech was hearty, confident, but Johnny noticed that his face, around the sharp mouth, was gray.

"Listen!" said Sir Nat. "Should win the first heat. But the second and third heats—" He whispered to him.

Heywood pulled back the sleeves of his yellow silk jacket and nodded impatiently. "Here, nigger, a leg up!" The rug was slipped off Peregrine's loins and Heywood vaulted into the light racing saddle. "Nigger, hold my iron—not that way, damn you!" He got his feet home in the stirrups, took a light feel of the reins; horse and rider moved off quietly for the starting-post. Sir Nat trudged alongside, softly whistling. Already the scarlet jacket of Mr. Gerrould's jockey could be seen above the heads of the crowd.

Forgetful now of dignity, of earthly pomp and vanity, Johnny trotted behind Peregrine's bay quarters with the three

strappers and the old groom. The crowd gave way, closed in behind. They were at the post. It seemed impossible that the event had arrived. He was fighting through the crowd—he would be too late. He heard an angry voice, “What in the nation!” And another, “Let him through. It’s Sir Nat’s friend.” Then he was on the ropes. He saw a strange gentleman standing with a raised flag; he saw Comus lay back an ear, whirl, come up to the line; he saw Peregrine, steady enough and ready except for a hint of unfathomed apprehension in his eye.

The flag went down with a shout of “Go!” They broke away in a scurry, straightened out side by side down the roaring lane. They disappeared around the turn; the roar of the crowd sank to a busy murmur. Standing on tiptoe, Johnny could just see the scarlet jacket and the yellow moving above the packed heads. Side by side they glided along, like two small colored disks drawn on strings. At the end of the back stretch they vanished.

Now they were coming. A cheer ran down the line with the beat of their hoofs. They passed by, shoulder to shoulder, both horses settled into the long, steady gallop of the four-mile test.

The rest seemed like a dream to Johnny. Horses and riders now glided, two spots in the distance, now drummed past in a shower of turf clods. He heard the people shouting, “Last mile! Peregrine! Go it, Peregrine! Last mile!” He must see! He must see!

He was backing furiously through the press of bodies, he was frantically climbing an over-loaded chaise. A hand reached down and hoisted him.

The two horses, on the back stretch, were level just the same. But as they reached the turn a scarlet arm rose and fell. The

chestnut horse jumped forward, made his drive for home. The crowd gave a whispered groan. Then Peregrine strode out as well; he rounded into the stretch with his head along the other’s saddle-girth. Johnny saw the bay ears flash forward, the bay neck stretch out. He knew the meaning. The horse was going to make his dash. Sit still, Heywood, sit still! But just then Heywood’s whip swung fiercely back, Peregrine swerved, checked his stride, lost half a length, a length, came forward under the whip, made a desperate run, passed the judges a head and neck behind.

Johnny fumbled for his handkerchief. He was going to cry. The beautiful bay horse whom he had ridden so often, the rogueish, gallant horse, who knew just when and how to gather himself for one of his tremendous bursts, was beaten. He blew his nose. Below him a little knot of Virginia supporters were throwing their hats aloft and cheering in the heart of the silent throng. The arm which held him to the hub of the chaise tightened. Mr. Teague Battle stared at the huzzaing young bloods.

“I’d give my hide,” he said, “to send those young scoundrels home with their tails between their legs.”

Here came Peregrine under his sheet, his sweat-blackened neck hanging low. Sir Nat beside him, pale and troubled, was casting anxious glances around.

“Bantam,” he said in a low voice, “come down!”

They walked silently back to the clump of pines. Silently the crowd gave way for them.

They watched the poor old groom sponging out Peregrine’s nostrils, and crying distractedly into the water bucket.

“Heywood,” Sir Nat said gravely, “won’t do.”

"I know, Nat," Johnny mumbled, "but they's no one else. If only you were light enough. Tell him not to use the whip. O my, O my! The horse was all fixed to run."

Sir Nat withdrew a pine needle from his mouth—"You ride."

The world turned slowly upside down, burst into a million fragments which showered on Johnny's head.

"What!" he heard himself say.

"Boy, bring me those boots. Bantam, sit down."

"But, Nat, I've never ridden a race."

"Know horse—horse knows you. Sit still—that's all—speak to him."

Sir Nat was tugging the boots on Johnny's trembling legs and puffing.

Heywood came up, a plaster of mud across his lean jaw.

"Heywood, give Bantam your jacket."

"What!"

"Put this boy up—only chance."

Heywood stripped his jacket and threw it on the ground. "God's teeth!" he said. "You don't expect me to make a good horse out of a bad one, do you?" He walked away.

Now the jacket was on over Johnny's ruffled shirt, now he was hoisted, numb and powerless, into the saddle. By Zooks! He couldn't do it!

But with the familiar feel of the horse between his knees the strength flowed back in him. He took up on the reins. Sir Nat's light hand closed on his thigh.

"Good chap!" he said. "Sit still—speak to him."

He was at the starting post. He heard the crowd's murmur of surprise. A voice cried, "Ride him, youngster!" "Ride him—ride him!" they roared.

The flag went down—he closed his knees and shot away. As the ranks of faces and

waving hats flew past, his heart rose up inside him. He took a breath. "Good horse!" he whispered.

Now they were galloping, galloping through the empty back stretch, through the thundering lane, and he was riding, riding, sitting steady in the saddle, keeping an even feeling on the bit. Back stretch and lane, back stretch and lane wheeled by in dizzy procession.

He heard the cry, "Last mile!" The jockey beside him touched the chestnut horse. Comus quickened stride and drew away—half a length, a length, then two. "Ride him! Ride him!" the crowd implored. He chewed on his tongue, sat still.

He trailed the other around the back stretch, squinting his eyes against the flying sods. At the turn the jockey grinned back at him over his shoulder. Above the tumult he heard Sir Nat's voice, "Now!"

He closed his legs, leaned forward for the coming shock. But the bay horse hung back, thinking of the whip. "Peregrine!" he called. "Peregrine!"

An ear twirled, the reins pulled sharply tight, Peregrine reached for his bit. The crowd shot past in a gray mist; the scarlet jacket was coming back to him. He saw it whipping. "Now sit steady!" he muttered.

As they rounded into the homestretch, the saddle beneath him again thrust forward. By Zooks, he didn't know there was such speed!

In one tremendous instant the chestnut horse fell rapidly behind him. He finished going away.

At the first pull Peregrine came in to him and stopped. The crowd was running down the track, swarming around him. Hats, sticks, greatcoats were in the air. "That's a-ridin', boy! That's a-ridin'!" "Do it again now, son!" "Carolina wins!"

Sir Nat fought through the press. Johnny slipped off weakly into his arms. A hundred hands shook his, reached for him, patted him as they made their way back to the little clump of trees.

"Listen, Bantam!" Sir Nat jerked a thumb toward Comus. "Won't be beat so easy next time. Start racin' third mile, or you won't see him again." He gazed at Peregrine's heaving flanks. "Hold him together," he said; "tired."

Again in the mist and tumult of a dream, Johnny was off the score beside the chestnut. He hugged the rail and waited, sick and anxious, for Peregrine now was not galloping so strong. They made two rounds together, the other horse just a neck and head behind. Then from the corner of his eye he saw the jockey raise his whip. He closed his legs and drew away.

He was galloping into the fourth mile now amid the shrieks of Bedlam. "Carolina! Carolina! Peregrine!" The cursed fools! Couldn't they see the horse was fading fast, his head nodding, his weight all on the bit?

On the next turn he heard the whip behind; the chestnut muzzle crept up to his knee. He shoved his horse along as fast as he dared, but again the whip came down; the chestnut muzzle stayed there.

Cursing and whipping like a madman, the scarlet jockey drew up on the turn, hung knee to knee, passed him by. A hundred yards to go and no more running in

his beaten horse, though the chestnut was just ahead and, whip as the rider might, could not draw away. Johnny took up on the reins. "Go it, good horse!" he shouted thickly. He closed his numb legs; the horse's head came up; he felt his hocks come under; with a last uncertain burst, he drew up to the chestnut, fell back, crawled up, hung forever, it seemed, in a black roaring cavern, then edged an inch ahead.

Peregrine pulled up, stumbling; stood there, legs outspread, muzzle hanging low. Johnny leaned forward and laid his face on the drooping neck. Then the crowd was on them. He was pulled from the saddle, he was rocking aloft on a dozen shoulders. A thousand faces turned up to him, shouted. Men danced, leaped, threw arms about each other, reached up frantic hands. Sir Nat's pink face was rocking above the crowd as well. They drifted slowly together, were hoisted together to the seat of a chaise. The people cheered and cheered again, then fell silent. "Speech! Speech!" they cried. Sir Nat, quite crimson, cleared his throat, touched Johnny's shoulder.

"Good chap!"

"Huzzah!" they howled.

He pointed a stubby finger to where the old groom, laughing, crying, stumbling over his Hessian boots, was leading Peregrine away.

"Good horse!" he said.

ROBERT FROST

The Runaway

from COLLECTED POEMS

This poem is almost the only thing to be found on the Morgan horse, and one of the very few poems about the horse in freedom. Written for children, the adult reader sees in it his own childhood's desire to break the home ties and explore distant horizons.

Once, when the snow of the year was beginning to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say, "Whose colt?"
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head
And snorted at us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled,
And we saw him, or thought we saw him, dim and gray,
Like a shadow against the curtain of falling flakes.
"I think the little fellow's afraid of the snow.
He isn't winter-broken. It isn't play
With the little fellow at all. He's running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, 'Sakes,
It's only weather.' He'd think she didn't know.
Where is his mother? He can't be out alone."
And now he comes again with a clatter of stone
And mounts the wall again with whited eyes
And all his tail that isn't hair up straight.
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.
"Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in."

DOROTHEA DONN BYRNE (contemporary)

The Turn of the Wheel

Here is a beautifully written story about a side of Irish life which is very real, its poverty. Mrs. Donn Byrne, as does her husband, writes of the gypsies and their way with horses.

Born in open field on a grim March day, the world seemed a cold and bitter place to him. The old, gray wintry grass was hard to his little feet. The sea pounded against the wall and threw jets of icy spray over him and his mother, who was too tired and too dazed with the bearing of him—for he was a huge, sturdy colt,—to seek shelter for herself and her son. She stood there, her sides heaving, lip hanging, rain, sweat and sea water in her coat, and round her stumbled the newborn colt, irritable and insatiate.

Oh, he was so cold, the little fellow, and his mother so unsatisfactory. He had just managed to stagger to his feet. The world was gaunt, and bare, and wide. Little, slanting needles of rain pricked him. The big gray sea tried to climb at him over the field wall. He was afraid of all the ugly, sad noises about him. He whimpered and squeezed himself against his mother's legs, and she began to take pity on him, licking him and sheltering him with her body as best she could. Now and then, she turned anxiously to where the towers of Coolveen

jutted out of the fog, and sent out a call for help.

While all this was going on in the nine-acre field by the sea, Captain the Honorable Desmond O'Deasay was sitting in an incredibly dirty, dusty office in Ballyrack town, trying to arrive at some amenable understanding with his creditors. Hard going he was finding it, for what they wanted was spot cash, and what he wanted was time. He hadn't the cash nor they, apparently, the time. Not that time would have done him much good, for the Honorable O'Deasay was flat broke, and mouths that he had fed many's the time when their owners were children, were set in thin, hard lines against him. That is, when they weren't opened in curses and threats.

He had left the castle at seven o'clock that morning, driving his team of white Arab ponies—the only valuable possession left to him—hitched to a light American buggy.

"Well, Minnie," he said to his old housekeeper, as she handed him a rose for his buttonhole and he set his tweed hat with a

jaunty twitch to one side, "I'm off to have a rap at Fortune gate."

"Let you give it a kick for me, your honor," replied Minnie.

The boy handed him the reins and carefully wrapped the rug about his knees and, with a gay flick of the whip, he was off. A grand turnout, gentleman and horses, thought Minnie Murphy as she watched that straight back and the twinkling wheels disappear down the daffodil-fringed avenue. "A grand sight surely," she said to herself, and then, sighing, "Sure it's a murdering shame." However, there was work to be done, and because she was sick and sore at heart, she hustled Bat and the stable boys like a slave driver, slashing and banging at everything, beating the worn carpets to a froth of dust, and stopping to let it settle again while she told her minions what she thought of them.

It was nearly luncheon time when she heard the sound of galloping horses and saw the white team come tearing back up the avenue, her master standing up in the buggy, cracking his whip like a madman and shouting them on. Round by the front entrance he swerved, circling round the back way to the stable yard and, close on his heels, Minnie spied the red wheels of a jaunting car.

"We're destroyed!" said Minnie. "Quick, for your life, Bat! The stable gates!"

And just as the ponies clattered onto the cobblestones of the yard, the big wooden gates clashed to, and the heavy wooden crossbeam fell, shutting out the fastest side car in Ballyrack, while two officers of the law clamored and scratched outside, waving red-sealed documents and shouting vengeance.

"That'll hold them," said Minnie, with a grin. . . . "Are you dead, your honor?"

"Pretty near," said the captain, climbing

down and throwing the reins to the waiting boy. "Just got to ground in time. They'll get the ponies yet, Minnie."

"Divil a get, your honor. Hell's cure to them! May they never—"

"Never mind, Minnie. Have you a kettle boiling? I could do with a cup of tea. . . . You there, Bat; walk those ponies round a bit."

He followed Minnie into her cottage, where she busied herself with kettle and teapot, muttering to herself as she slashed at the big loaf of Bastable bread, digging at it as if at the throat of her enemies: "Coursed him like a hare, they did—him that reared and supported them!"

Desmond O'Deasay sat down heavily on the settle by the turf fire and sipped the black, rancid tea gratefully. Nine miles the bailiffs had chased him, but now that he was inside his own gates he was safe for the moment. They had ambushed him on the high road. Out of a boreen the side car had come rattling, while the big, frightened horse had nearly crashed into his turnout. It was no use stopping to argue. He had proved the futility of that in his three hours in Ballyrack. So he shook up his reins and ran like hell for cover.

"I doubt but we'll have to keep the ponies in the dairy after this, Minnie," he said.

"I'll take them two into the kitchen here with pleasure. Sure 'tis clean as Christians they are, and far pleasanter companions. Let you not worry, my poor gentleman, but drink your tea. We'll find ways to circumvage them."

"I wonder if it would occur to Riordan and the other to go down to the nine acre," said Desmond. "What have we got in the field, Minnie?"

"Sure nothing but the old cow that's as dry as a weasel, and Kitty, just on her time. They'd never be bothered with that one."

"My God! I forgot the poor old girl with all the trouble I've had today. Has anyone been down to look at her?"

"Not one moment have I had since day-break, your honor, what with those dirty whelps of servants walking out and leaving the castle in the state it's in."

"Never mind that now. Go round by the garden and, if those fellows have gone, take a look at the mare."

"They're away all right, sir," broke in Bat. "You never heard such language down the avenue."

"Get on with Minnie, then."

Left alone, he slumped on the settle and buried his face in his hands. He was a fine figure of a man, aged before his time with the nagging worry. When his father had died, Desmond left the swagger cavalry regiment to which he belonged, and brought his motherless son home with him to carry on the old place. He was full of enthusiasm and new ideas, thinking modern methods would bring back former grandeurs. But his enthusiasm and his ideals had crashed on the rock of Irish apathy, and his plans had failed. He wasn't the man to fight the growing depression, the lowered standard of the landlord, the laws that were well enough in the country where they were made, but useless applied to the mentality of his countrymen. However, he had managed to keep Shane, his boy, at a decent school and get him into his own regiment, but now he was all alone at Coolveen, and the circle had nearly closed about him. The mare, Kitty, belonged to Shane, who had spent his twenty-first birthday money sending her to the best stallion in the south. His father had tried to stop him, suggesting it would be kinder to shoot the old lady than start breeding her at her time of life.

"She won't let us down," Shane replied. "She has grand blood in her, and will give

us a foal that will change all our fortunes, you'll see."

"Well, it's your money, Shane, my lad. I would like to see a young one of Kitty's about the place."

The boy had gone off to India with his regiment and things had gone from bad to worse that year. "Why," thought Desmond, "Did I ever stay in this cruel-hearted country and try to make a go of it? I could be sitting blinking at the sun on the Riviera with the rest of the old fogies, with never a care in the world, save a few francs dropped at baccarat or *trente et quarante*. Not that I could have stood that life long. . . . It's funny how hard people's faces seem when you have no money. It's funny how they have that look as if a veil came down over their eyes. Even those from whom you are expecting nothing. Gad, it's a bloody world, all right!"

"'Tis there, your honor!" Minnie came panting back. "'Tis there!"

"What's there, woman? More trouble?"

"The grandest young foaleen, a coult. I'm thinking, though, it's killed the old mare. She looks terrible poor in herself."

"Shut up, and get a big pot of water on the fire. I'll murder Riordan and his lot, if we lose Kitty."

Down the nine-acre field they scurried—Desmond, Minnie, the boys—and dogs barking round them. Kitty saw them coming and roused herself. She threw up her head and gave what sounded very like a cheer, as if to say she had done her best. Minnie busied herself about the foal, with murmurs and grunts of delight, but Desmond O'Deasay threw his arms around the old mare's neck.

"'Tis lovely, Kitty dear," he said. "'Tis beautiful! The finest ever! Well played, old sweetheart."

Old Kitty recovered, and rejoiced in her

fine young son. He was an ugly chap, immensely powerful, but gangly and long-backed; a dark bay in color, with a white-splashed face and one white forefoot. The sort of horse that might be anything or nothing. He grew to an enormous size. The farmers and serving men who played cards of a Sunday afternoon in the corner of the nine acre used to shake their heads over him.

"'Tisn't for beauty Mr. Shane will get his price for him. 'Tis due for the baker's cart that one will be, I'm thinking," they said. But his mother thought he was beautiful, and for two happy years she took her ease in the field by the sea, and gambled, and carried on like a colt herself. Whatever was lacking in the castle larder, there was nothing lacking for this pair. Warm milk and white oats and sweet hay the winter long, a good bed at night, and divil a care in the world.

Then, one fine spring morning when the sea was at its bluest and the birds were singing so that you couldn't hear your ears, old Kitty lay down in the daisy-sprinkled grass and got up no more.

Strangely enough, this happened at the same hour and moment when Minnie Murphy, with her apron over her head and her eyes worn with crying, was pulling down the blinds in Desmond O'Deasy's bedroom and shutting out the gay and pleasant sunshine that has nothing to do with those who have gone away for good.

Andiamo, the colt, finding his mother did not get up, tried kicking her gently, but nothing happened. Frightened, he put his head in the air and ran screaming round the field. He leaped the sea wall and, landing on the hard sand of the beach, galloped away like a mad thing. It was then that Michael Riordan, who was picnicking on

the beach with his wife and children—for even bailiffs have these human appurtenances—saw him.

"Be the hokey, will you look at that one?" said Riordan. "The ugly schamer, he has the divil in his heels."

The auction at Coolveen was in full swing. Strawfilled, manure-scented brogues, cheap, high-heeled paper shoes of town-folk, stout buttoned boots of farm wives, dirty bare feet of little children, tramped in and out of the great oaken doors and narrow French windows, pushing aside the fragile tapestries, crushing the forget-me-nots and tulips in the terrace garden. Whispers, exclamations, curiosity—curiosity because here was the break-up of a great house; because feet like these never got beyond the kitchen door of such places save on days like the present one—days of reckoning.

Shane O'Deasy, the heir, was away in India with his regiment and he had instructed everything to be sold and cleared away on his father's death. The sole relics of old times were Bat, the stable boy, and poor Minnie, overcome with grief and grandeur in her heavy mourning, and full of contempt for what she called "the scruff of Ballyrack."

There was pitifully little to sell. A few bits of old silver, of Waterford glass, fragile, mended furniture, polo sticks and fishing rods, regimental photographs and trophies. Doherty, the auctioneer, was soon finished with the house, and led his following to the stable yard, where broken farm implements, carts, ancient harness and saddlery were heaped in confusion. A solitary cow, a couple of lugubrious donkeys and goats were huddled in one corner. Hens ran squawking under everybody's feet. Pigeons cooed from the lofts and overhead, the rooks

made noisy disturbance. In the center was a small cinder track where Bat, the stable boy, was carefully leading Andiamo around. The colt was fractious, and aimed out kicks right and left.

The auctioneer planted his overturned barrel in front of Minnie's cottage.

"Here you boy!" he called. "Shove that horse in the stable before he kicks the daylight out of somebody. . . . Well, now, ladies and gentlemen, we have here—" And he paused and peered round the yard over his specs. "What the hell have we here anyhow?" The crowd laughed. "Order, order, ladies and gents, please!"—and he thumped with his mallet on the barrel top. "As I was going to say, we have here the contents of this valuable stable." More jeers from the crowd. "Now, now, no nonsense, please. . . . Shove out those animals there boy, and come on, somebody; make me an offer. Who wants a brace of thoroughbred goats? Who'll give me a pound for the goats?"

The animals were clouted forward by Bat and the small boys. Everything was sold quickly, and a few shillings changed hands.

"'Tis wonderful how the quality manages to live when they comes down in the world," murmured the red-faced Mrs. Riordan to Minnie.

"They don't live, Mrs. Riordan, ma'am, they dies," said Minnie, and turned her back.

"Shove out that horse now, Bat Martin!" shouted the auctioneer. "We don't want to spend the night here. Now then, we come to the big event of the day, and the last, thank God! Run your eyes over that fellow. Have any of you ever seen a horse before? If you admit it, I don't need to tell you what this one is worth. Wait now till I read you the breeding. . . . Walk

him round boy." He consulted some dirty bits of paper before him: "This animal is a bay gelding, two years old, by that grand race horse, Impatient, out of Flying Kitty, by Gull Flight out of Kathleen Na Houlihan, by—and now listen well, my masters—by Ascetic—You all know that blood. If you don't, you bloody well ought to. . . . Hold on, don't laugh! I'm tellin' you the truth. This colt is well bred enough to beat the world, and Mr. Shane Desmond paid ninety-eight golden guineas for the fee to get him."

"Owed ninety-eight guineas, more likely," muttered Riordan, the bailiff.

"And what the hell does it matter to the horse whether it was paid or owed? I'll thank you not to interrupt me, Michael Riordan. Now, this colt is just the cut of a grand gentleman's hunter, like his mother, or the winner of valuable races, like his father before him. Make me an offer, you dealing men there. Make me an offer that will show you know your business."

"Ten pound," said a farmer.

"Eleven is my bid," said Riordan.

"Twelve!" came from the other side.

Doherty stuck out his chin and shouted at them: "Do you want to drive me mad, you pack of fools? Amn't I telling you that here's a piece of property worth money?"

"Yerra, Mr. Doherty, my dearie," broke in the farmer. "Have you taken a look at the horse? 'Tis a poor ungainly specimen, at best."

"I don't want to look at him. I am looking at this paper before my eyes. Here, I'll read it all out to you again."

Riordan shoved forward. "I'll give fifteen pounds down for the colt, and I'll bet you ten shillings you can't better the offer."

Sizing up the apathy of the crowd and burning with the thirst of a poor day's

work, Doherty, the auctioneer, knocked down Andiamo to Riordan for fifteen pounds. "And I'm a hard-hearted man, as behooves my trade," he said, "but I'm glad the captain isn't alive to see a dirty deal like this."

He got down and tramped off in disgust. Andiamo was hitched to the back of Riordan's trap and dragged reluctantly out of the gates. Heavy boots clattered after him. Voices and faces faded away. The yard was empty, save for a ragged sheep dog and an old woman sitting on a stone bench outside her door where the early June roses nodded.

"Old Doherty was right," she mused to herself. "'Tis the mercy of God, himself never lived to see the day! . . . Are you there, Bat?" she called into the stable. "Let you put the kettle on. We'll be needing a wee cup of tea."

"Get in there, blast you!" said Riordan, as he pushed the colt into the blackness of a cow shed in his dingy town yard. Andiamo stood trembling. He heard all sorts of noises. There were pigs next door to him. He hated their smell and their squealing. There was a dog tied up on a chain that whimpered continually. He snuffed round, finding nothing but dirty, clammy straw. What light there was filtered through the crumbling walls. He crashed back suddenly as a rat ran over his foreleg. And then, thoroughly wrought up with the day's happenings, he began to walk round and round the narrow circle of the shed, shaking his head up and down.

Andiamo was developing a personality. He was out in the world on his own now. The happy days with his mother were gone. The husky, whispering voice of Bat was gone, and the wheedlings of Minnie; his

home, his warm stable and his field. He hated Riordan with the sudden dislike horses take to a man and his hands. But he was a bit afraid. Riordan had clouted him over the head on that long, racking journey to town.

"Let you not hit the horse in the face, Michael," said Mrs. Riordan. "Do you want to destroy him?"

"Sweet bad luck to him! I hate every living thing, every blade of grass out of that place. They that were so grand, they shut the door in my nose and made a mock of me. The old trickster that shot two valuable ponies with his own hand rather than let them go just and proper to an officer of the law."

"Ah, sure, that's all forbye, Michael. You're only spiting yourself."

"Mind your own business, woman," he said, and drove on sullenly.

At the pub that evening he was full of swank and bluster, standing drinks all round to the farmers and dealers and small townfolk. They drank his liquor because they were thirsty, and they heard him out because they were polite, but no man liked him, and there was scarcely one of them that hadn't a private score of his own against him.

"'Tis true you think you have a winner bought, Mr. R.?" questioned Jerry, the barman. "They tell me the colt's a terrible poor animal."

"What would you expect from the starvation rations at Coolveen?" sneered Riordan.

"'Twas always held, now," went on Jerry, "that the captain would go hungry himself before he'd let his animals want. I'm thinking the young gentleman in foreign parts will be sorry after the horse. He set great store by the old mare."

"If I hadn't bought the horse, I'd have took him soon enough in the name of the law."

"Bigad, the law has a capacious trapple," murmured an old horse dealer.

"'Tis a dirty lot of snobs you all are," said Riordan. "No talk but the sweet captain here, and the sweet captain there. Hanking after an old down-and-out that owed every one of you money, because he was a gentleman and lived in style. Style my elbow! A place like a pigsty."

He stumbled home in the darkness. Outside the shed where Andiamo was stabled, he stopped and shook his fist.

"You'll be a good one all right before I'm through with you, or you'll be hounds' meat." He could hear the horse walking about, his hoofs kicking at the walls.

"Lie down, you—" he yelled, but the tramping and kicking went on.

"I'll give you a lesson this minute will last you—" Snatching up a pitchfork, he threw open the door of the cow shed. The red lamps of the horse's eyes showed in the far corner a second; then, terrified by Riordan's stumbling figure and raised arm, he sprang forward. He rose on his hind legs and boxed at the man, missing him. Riordan slashed at his head with the fork, but Andiamo scattered him like a suit of clothes from a line, and was free. He dashed through the yard gate into Ballyrack High Street, which was empty, save for the old night watchman, who was putting out the gas lamps. This one, seeing a maddened, snorting horse coming at him, downed tools and, calling on the saints, fled up an alley.

Andiamo was soon out of town and away into the fields. Cool and wet with night dew, these were grateful to his unshod feet. He stopped to crop a bit of grass and snuff the air. There was no salty sea smell

as at home, but he was well content with his freedom, and started off cross country at an easy lollop. Low hedges and banks he went over as easily as a grayhound. The small, loose stone walls he took in his stride, and, when he came across something too high for him, he ran up and down looking for a gap or a gate. There was grand "lepping" blood in the colt, and this first hunt of his without quarry or hounds or red-coated passenger, was perhaps the best of his life.

Through the short Irish summer night he cantered, keeping instinctively to the fields, till, with the first sign of dawn, he came to a boreen, where he pulled up with a snort, scenting fire. A curl of smoke was straggling up from the little pile of turf where a gang of traveling tinkers had pitched their camp for the night.

Now, tinkers are the Irish offshoot of the gypsy family, and roam the countryside, living the life of the tent and tilted cart all through the spring and summer. Like the ground hog's shadow in America, the first tinker rattling along the roads of Ireland with his women and children and assortment of animals is the signal that spring is afoot. They have their clans and their signs and tokens, as the high-class gypsies have even a language of their own called Shelta, which is probably very old and very erudite. They twist it to their fancy, but their ordinary speech is the common brogue of their district. A merry, rakish people they are, dark-skinned and foreign-looking, flaming red of hair, with keen blue eyes. Clever as wild animals, the enemies of all respectable house dwellers, they have a certain dignity and a definite code.

As judges of horseflesh they are hard to beat, and make their living trading horses

or "finding" them before the owner has lost them. As a side line, they mend pots and pans, make furniture or fishing rods, and beg loudly and plausibly.

Into the encampment Andiamo wandered carefully. There were a couple of gayly painted living vans, two or three tents, red carts tilted against the hawthorn hedge—gay, colorful litter. There was no stirring of human life, but goats, hens, donkeys and at least a dozen horses of every age and color were browsing along the land. These eyed Andiamo distrustfully, but one old mare, patched white and brown like a circus horse, spying him, lifted her head and long upper lip, showing broken yellow teeth. Andiamo whinnied very low, and she answered him. He came nearer, whereupon she planted both hoofs in his ribs. He took no offense at this, knowing the ways of old mares, but sidled up again. Recognizing from his manner that he was only a poor, foolish youngster, she made room for him at the luscious bit of hedgerow she was engaged on, and soon they were cropping side by side.

The sun rose higher, and from the largest tent there stepped a grandiose figure of a man. He wore a gray whipcord coat buttoned tight up to his neck, and very heavy trousers. His head flamed up like a smaller version of the sun. His feet were bare. Making his way to a water-cress-filled stream, he ducked his head into it rapidly, twice; then shook himself like a dog. His toilet over for the day, he ran an eye over the animals, and spied Andiamo.

"Woman!" he called. "Come out!"

The tent door flapped and a female counterpart of himself stuck her ragged head out.

"Tell me," said her husband. "Am I drunk?"

"How might that be and yourself stone poor?" she replied.

"Take a look at what's by the hedge there."

She stood beside him, arms akimbo, handsome, dirty, live as a steel wire.

"*Dawdi!* [Behold.] 'Tis a blood colt!"

"'Tis a gift, woman, from the gentiles, or the little people, maybe."

"*Awali!*" [Verily.] She nodded. "'Tis a gift anyhow."

The man ran his brown hand over Andiamo, whispering all the time in a low, tuneful way. The colt shivered slightly, but was quiet under the hand. By this time, the other tinkers had stumbled out of their tents, or from behind the ditch where they had been sleeping, and stood around in a distant, respectful circle.

"Woman," said Feodor Mackay, the big tinker, straightening himself, "how so or why, I cannot yet say, but we are rich! Get the food ready, but first bring me the clippers and a pot of brown color. Away the rest of you and prepare. We move in an hour."

Within the hour Andiamo was transformed. He was a rich brown shade, with no white about him but a small star on his forehead and a bleached streak in his long tail. His mane was hogged, and as quickly as the sun dried him, the tinker rubbed dirt and leaf mold into his coat. The camp broke up. Horses were whipped to a trot. Goats, dogs, children and donkeys fell in line.

Andiamo moved happily beside the old mare and, with much joking and whip cracking, they jogged off toward the County of Kerry.

It wasn't till the next day that the law caught up with them. Seeing a motor car draw up by the roadside, Feodor's wife

snatched up a baby and ran forward whining, with outstretched begging hand. The tinker knocked her aside and welcomed the passengers, who had got down and were examining his stock.

"Is it to buy you've come, sweet gentlemen?" he asked politely.

"We'll see about that," said the red-necked policeman who was looking the horses over. "'Tis more likely to jail the lot of you."

"That would be a strange thing now, and we doing no sign of harm."

"Tell me, dark man, where do all these horses come from?"

"From many places, *Rai*." [Sirs] "There's a few bred from my own *grai* Cuhulain. There's others I bought at Cahirmee Fair, and different trading places the length and breadth of Ireland. Maybe you'd like to see the book with their names in it? Written down exact and precise by my woman who is well learned in the arts."

"Black arts, I'm thinking," said the policeman. . . . "And this big colt here?"

"The brown one, is it? Sure, that is the last foal the dappled mare threw for me, and terrible attached she is to it, as you can see for yourselves."

"'Tis ten good years since that one ever foaled."

"The *Rai* is mistook. 'Tis two years last Patrick's Day, and 'tis her last, I'm fearing. He is wrong of his wind and, if it wasn't for sentiment, I'd be knocking him on the head ere this."

"And the sire?"

"Who would that be but Cuhulain himself that has the blood of kings in him? Has the *Rai* noticed the markings?"

"I know as well as I am standing here," said the red-necked one, "you are lying to me, but how am I to prove it?"

"Sweet gentleman, that would be a task."

"Aye, and it will also be a task chasing round the counties of Ireland, accusing decent and otherwise people of having stolen Mike Riordan's colt."

"And for why would anyone go to that trouble, seeing the same man is well able to steal for himself?"

"Give me no lip, tinker, or I'll run you in."

"You are joking now, sweet mister. You wouldn't do that. Would you, instead, sit and drink a drop of the mountain stuff with us? Or maybe you'd like herself to tell your fortunes?"

"God forbid! Let you be moving before I change my mind about you."

The car swirled away in a cloud of dust. The tinker looked thoughtfully after it. "*Muskros sí Jukels*" [policemen are dogs] he said to himself.

Feodor Mackay, the tinker, was a man that rode as one with his horse. So lithe and smoothly they moved together, they were as a single piece. He was kind, too, with his horses, and many's the lad he had laid for dead with his big fist for ill treating one. Whether he loved the horses, or whether he knew they spelled the difference between life and starvation to him, he never stopped to consider. Feodor's struggle for existence was as hard and as subtle as that of the fox or badger. For wife and children, and the occasional women of the ditch, he had little thought. For the relatives and hangers-on that formed his cortège, none at all. They were there to do him reverence, and how could a man be a king, if he had no subjects? So he tagged them round, and threw food to them, and took their part in quarrels. When drunk, he beat them unmercifully. The history of

Andiamo he knew, as it is part of the equipment of such hangers-on of Fortune to know these things, but during the two years in which he kept the colt he said no word of it.

Andiamo grew out to match his big frame during his peaceful adolescence. The old pinto mare was his pal, but with the ragtag and bobtail horses that came and went in the camp he had nothing to do. He was a very grand four-year-old on the day that, Feodor, taking him into a fine open field well out of view of the farmer whose land it was, ran him in the long reins—that is, he would have been grand if his coat was not stiff with mud and burrs, his tail like the tangled stuffing of a mattress and on his upper lip, the wiry mustache which horses get from feeding on furze or gorse.

He gave no trouble and, when the tinker, wheedling and whispering in his usual way, threw a tentative leg over his back, he stood square and unconcerned.

“The father and mother of a horse you are, my boukle, or will be when I say the word,” said Mackay.

There followed an intensive course of breaking, done secretively at hours of the morning when only the birds are up, or in the late evening time when the sun and the moon struggle for mastery in the same sky in Ireland.

Mackay arranged the day's journey to end on the outskirts of some good galloping ground or place of training, and left in his wake a trail of curses from men who rose later to find their best rings scarred with heavy hoof marks, their carefully built banks smashed to bits. But regardless of these respectable gentry, tinker and horse scoured the country at will, taking the best of it.

One crisp October morning when the trees were shivering and the gray tint of winter beginning to settle down, Mackay's red-headed woman stood beside him and the horse, as they took a four-foot hedge, faultlessly clearing it and the ditch on the far side.

“You'll be selling him soon?” said she. “Winter's near on us.”

“I will not. I have other plans,” said her man.

“For why? He came as a gift.”

“And as a gift he goes. This horse is got by Impatient of the stock of Ascetic.”

“And, therefore, Mackay, as you said when he came, we are rich.”

“Not now, but will be. Listen, slut. The horse comes from Coolveen, where the Honorable O'Deasay measured with his own hand the foot of your son that he might buy him boots.”

“The captain was a Noble living, but is now dead.”

“His son lives, and the horse is his.”

She caught at his bridle. “Must not your children eat, Mackay?”

“They will eat, sooner or later is of little account.”

“You are a fool tinker!” screamed the red woman, jumping just in time out of range of her husband's ash plant.

Into brigade headquarters of the —teenth Cavalry on Wiltshire Downs walked our tinker.

Very smart he was, with new corded coat, and trousers tighter than his skin. His face was patched white where the stubble had been razed to the bone; the fiery shock of his hair was soaped flat to his well-shaped head. Behind him straggled the colt and the old mare, a small boy between, leading them.

"Halt!" came from the sentry. "Where the hell do you think you're going? To the knackers? 'Op it."

Feodor did not argue with him. He waved the horses back and produced a large piece of pasteboard on which was inked in heavy letters:

THE MACKAY KING
FEODOR MOR' MACKAY
HORSE DEALER IN CHIEF TO CASTLE COOLVEEN

"Send that to the Lieutenant O'Deasy, who will see me at once."

The sentry threw it back in his face and laughed. "Get to hell out of here, quick," he said.

Mackay picked up the card again, and stepped catlike up to the soldier, who presented his bayonet at him.

"Englishman," said the tinker, "you are a louse and a pickpocket. Presently you will lie dead with your trapple slit, and the doer will never be found."

The sergeant of the guard came running out of the guard room and planted himself between the two, who stood, teeth bared, like dogs before a fight. As he opened his mouth in a string of curses, a young officer who was turning out of the gate in a car pulled up.

"Come, come, what's all this? No gypsies allowed here, fellow."

Feodor whirled round, snatching off his wide-brimmed hat.

"O'Deasy, my darling! God bless the day! God bless your honor's worship! 'Tis you've grown the fine man! Didn't I dandle you, and you a thrawneen no bigger than Shamus here! Look on me, my gentleman. 'Tis old Mackay, from Kerry is in it."

"Good lord, so it is!... All right, you men"—to the soldiers.... "I thought you

were dead like the rest, Mackay. But you can't stand here. Come outside in the field."

He took Feodor by the arm, and they went out talking. O'Deasy saw the horses.

"What have we here, old pal? Been up to your tricks, have you?"

"Listen your honor. I've brought you your horse." He laid his hand on Andiamo's neck.

"Surely that's never Kitty's colt! What a wopper he is. I thought that fellow Riordan had bought him. You've taken my breath away."

"Riordan came to a bad end as befitted him. And no one mourned. The horse is yours. Ask no questions."

O'Deasy was running his hand over the colt's sides and legs. "He's a damn queer color, man."

"That will alter itself quickly."

"Do you want to sell me the horse, Mackay? I'm a poor man."

"That too will alter itself. I have trained him for you as no horse in Ireland has been trained. You will take the National with him."

"Oh, come now, Mackay!"

"I'm telling you. I know you can ride, and the rest I have arranged. Let you watch now."

They were standing near to a five-barred gate. Mackay twisted his hand in Andiamo's mane and, with a spring, was on his back. Loose and easy he sat, his feet hanging. He backed away twenty yards and then, with a whistle, drove at the gate. Over it like an antelope went Andy, and back again as easily to O'Deasy's feet.

"He's a lepper! Whatever he may do, I'm enchanted to have him. Put your price on him."

"There is no price. Your father, God bless him, was good to the woman and the

children. One favor I will ask—that you keep the old mare close to the colt. They are comrades. She has been a help in the rearing of him. I would not see that one wronged.”

“I’ll keep her.”

“*Kushto Bok*” [Good Luck] “I will see you three years from now at the Aintree. The day of the National. My blessing with you, O’Deasy.” And with a wave of his hand, he was gone, the boy trotting like a dog behind.

“Fair and warm; fresh southeasterly winds!” rang the weatherman’s report on the morning of the 19— National.

A brave day for once, sharp and clear. Wiseacres prodded the ground with their sticks. “There’ll be few will stand up to it,” they said.

From over the world the crowd trekked. Shiploads in harbor. Planes settling like awkward birds in the near-by fields. Trains winding from all points. Old-fashioned trams and busses jostling long, rakish cars. Motor bikes, push bikes, foot sloggers. Hours before the race they were all seething on that queer angular course that looks like a huge game a child might set out on a green carpet. A monstrous piece of artificiality it is. A hellish ten minutes done at thirty miles an hour. Growing jumps, fir and spruce and gorse without an inch of give to them, flanked by hard wooden copings. Jumps higher than any five-barred gate. Bright green of grass. Olive green of fences. Miles of white railing. Towering stands and a hundred thousand eyes fixed on that slight, thin line of horses. No smart young things such as we see at Ascot or Epsom, but lean tough, war-scarred old battlers, and the odds against their surviving just 4 to 1.

At the gate, Andiamo stood quietly enough. He was the biggest horse in the race, and his long body and overhigh forehead gave rise to jeers from the crowd and the bookies, who didn’t regard him as a serious entry.

“Win or place, I’ll give you your own price on the Irish antelope,” called one. “No scrimping, no Scotsman’s prices here—50 to 1 the Irishman.”

O’Deasy was cool, too—deadly cool. He knew the course as a sailor his chart—every blade of grass, every twist. He knew, too, that his horse would jump when dead tired, when finished. His only fear was from the other horses. He would not be jostled. The others thought too little of his chance to bother with him, but a falling or refusing horse might finish him. He ran over in his mind the old good advice: “Ride the first time round easy, happy-go-lucky, as if you were on the tail of the hounds; the second round you must race.” Quiet enough, the fifty horses stood. The roar of the crowd came to them—the harsh Lancashire burr, the high voices of bookies, shouts and signals of the ticktack men—a great seething, noisy burr.

“They’re off!” And away went Andiamo, close to the left-hand rail. Away went they all. Full tilt at the first fence, each man striving for balance that his mount might have a clear sight of the obstacle. Over it streamed the field along to the next four plain fences. Some trailed off. Some unshipped their jocks. The line thinned out. They came to Beecher’s Brook, where the favorite hit the fence so hard he lay along the top on his back, and then toppled into the brook, bringing down a group of ten that were on his heels. Curses, flying hoofs and screams. Andiamo, keeping well out to the right, avoided the mess, and was over

grandly, and on to the next, lying well in the middle. At the Canal turn, O'Deasy steadied him, losing a little ground, and then with a shout, took the jump slantingly.

Andiamo stumbled almost to his knees, but O'Deasy sat like a rock and they were on again. On and on. The other jocks began to notice the horse's jumping, and to crowd in on him. One little fellow on a big gray almost threw him at the Chair—the biggest jump in the world—but Andiamo's superior bulk told, and the other crashed right under him. With a supreme effort, O'Deasy lifted his mount over the fallen horse and rider. And they were past the stands again, and settled down to race. There were only fifteen horses left now, and plenty of room. "Horse darling, we'll win yet," muttered O'Deasy.

As they came out of the country, the crowd went mad with excitement. "The big Irish brute! He's a superhorse!"

"Yea, lad, thon's a fair booger."

"Watch him! Watch him!"

"Evens the Irishman!" yelled the bookies, and then came what looked to be disaster. Taking off at the second-last fence, the horse's forefeet tipped the guard rail, and he stumbled onto the broad jump, to be suspended across it. O'Deasy felt his heart break as they sat there, horse and rider draped over the obstacle.

"He's finished! . . . He's done!"

"He's no damn good!" went the shouting, till, by a bit of extraordinary good luck, a loose horse crashed into Andiamo, knocking him over and falling itself. He landed on all four feet with a sickening jar. "His back's broken!" groaned the rider. But it wasn't. On, on he went, sailed the last jump, and when O'Deasy gathered him up for the run-in, he flattened himself like a greyhound and passed the post three

lengths clear of the five horses left.

O'Deasy spoke to no man. He unsaddled his horse, was weighed in, and then he went into a corner of the paddock and laughed quietly to himself for five minutes.

Coolveen lay basking and shimmering in the summer sun. Prosperity was all about it. Bright flared the roses on the terrace. Great activity in the stable yard. Laughing voices came from the tennis court, and young people in bathing dress strolled down the nine acre, where Andiamo, the winner of the Grand National, was cropping away with the donkeys and cows.

Minnie Murphy, in a stiff alpaca dress with a flowered-satin apron, was doing exactly nothing at all when she saw a vermillion-painted saloon car come sweeping up the avenue, and, with a tremendous whirl and flourish, swing round the courtyard. Out sprang Feodor Mackay, his red-headed woman in silk attire, a hat like a cartwheel on one ear, and a dozen, or maybe less, immaculate children.

"Well, I'll be blessed," said Minnie, who was a woman of temperate language. As she sucked in her breath preparatory to directing this unseemly outfit to the back premises, she saw young Captain O'Deasy run out and throw an arm around Mackay's shoulders. They all poured into the house.

"Is it how I'll be opening a few bottles of stout in the kitchen, your honor?" Minnie suggested.

"You will lay tea for everybody on the terrace, Minnie, my girl," returned her master, with emphasis. "Meanwhile, I am sure Mrs. Mackay and the children would like to see the raspberries in the garden"—and he turned away with Feodor.

"Faith, I'll bet they would," said Minnie under her breath.

PETER ALEKSEEVICH SHIRIAEV (1888—1935)

A Trotting Race near Leningrad

from FLATTERY'S FOAL

[English edition TAGLIONI'S GRANDSON]

It may come rather as a surprise to find a modern Russian novel devoted to trotting. One thinks of horses in connection with the Russians only in terms of the Cossacks. But here is a novel, dealing with the Russian peasants during and after the Bolshevik revolution, which establishes the fact that the nation, as a whole, is tremendously interested in a sport which most people think of as being almost wholly American. Contrary to general belief, Russia seems to have developed a breed of trotters which they consider at least the equal of the American trotter.

I have taken the next to the last chapter of the book, both for the excitement of the race described, and for the very interesting picture it paints of the Russian peasant and his delightful reactions during such excitement. The whole book is most interesting, giving, as it does, the history of Flattery and her foal—how she is first in the possession of a wealthy nobleman and then, when the revolution comes, is taken by a farmer. Although he loses the mare, he manages to retain the colt in spite of the efforts of a high-ranking official to obtain it. The local color throughout is convincing—whether the American slang used is the Russian equivalent or whether it's just the translator's idea of what the peasants would say if they were American, I do not know, but the result is free and easy and simple.

By one o'clock the long avenue leading from the Leningrad Road to the race-track looked like some busy central street, but without shops or houses. . . . On the left ran a grey wooden fence, an asphalt path bordered by trees, and a road faced with a thick layer of sand

instead of paving. It stretched to the grandstand, whose sculptured roof loomed in the distance. A wheel or a foot, the crowd streamed forward in a ceaseless flood, as though a reservoir on the Leningrad Road were unsluiced and emptying to the dregs. Some walked in haste, conning their race-

cards; others with the steady trudge of the seasoned race-goer; others again with the sauntering gait of holiday-makers, who cared little where they went. The foot of the avenue was abuzz with program-sellers and cabmen, touting for fares at a quarter of a ruble; street-cars were perpetually disgorging men and women, boys and grey-beards, rich and poor—and from the Bashilovka, which crossed the road and car-lines, grooms led the trotters, draped in flowered horse-cloths; to the stables of the hippodrome. And this pageant of proud horses, grey and bay, sorrel and black, in hoods and blinkers, knee-boots and white bandages, with blazing eyes and glistening flanks, the muscles rippling on sleek arms and withers, recalled a procession of gladiators marching to some circus, hidden from view, but near at hand. . . .

When Nikita, on his return to Moscow, went to the Bashilovka, Loutoshkin gave him such a welcome as no man had ever yet bestowed on him; he asked him to his house, into his dining-room, sat him down, with Syomka, at his table, and began plying him with wine and meat pies and all manner of toothsome things on separate plates, with silver forks and knives. Then he called to the other room, and out came a young woman.

"There, Saphir," he said jauntily, nodding at Nikita, "that's the Grandson's owner, Nikita Loukitch."

Womanlike, smiling, she waited on him and Syomka and presently began talking of the Grandson. She might have been born on the race-track. Her talk reminded Nikita of the old veterinary's—spiced with the same queer lingo and outlandish tongue-twisters—not at all like woman's prattle, when she touched on the colt's points and **manners.**

"Your wife's just like our veterinary, Alexandr Egoritch," he exclaimed to Loutoshkin when they were alone.

Loutoshkin answered with a laugh.

As soon as Nikita entered the stable, he dashed into the loose-box where he had left his precious charge three weeks before. Instead of the grey Grandson he found an ugly-tempered sorrel stallion. He turned to Loutoshkin in dismay.

"Why, don't you see?" said Loutoshkin laughing. "Come along, I've shifted him. This way, second box on the left!"

Nikita burst into the box, and halted spellbound on the threshold. He doffed his cap and stood scratching his head. It was not the rangy, tousle-coated Grandson that he saw, but a sleek, dapple-grey beauty, with a soft, bushy tail, a saucily clipped forelock, and a mane like silk.

Syomka whispered hurriedly: "It's not our colt, I'll take my oath, Papanka! It's not ours, they've changed him!"

"Grandson, is it you?" stammered Nikita, taking a pace forward.

The Grandson turned his head. The keen, glittering, blue-streaked eyes rested on him, the nostrils quivered, and the grey beauty, recognizing his master, snuffled, and nosed for Nikita's pocket. Hastily Nikita drew out a lump of sugar and in a quavering voice began to speak, at once addressing the horse and Syomka and Loutoshkin: "He knows me! . . . You see, he's trying to tell me. That's him, our Grandson! It's me, Grandson, me—Nikita! . . . I've come from Shatnyevka by the railway, in the express! . . . Syomka's here too—look at him, look! We've left Nastasya all alone. . . ."

The Grandson looked at Syomka, at Nikita, at Loutoshkin, glancing from time

to time over their heads through the open door into the passage, and kept plying his ears, as if he followed the conversation of his visitors. Then he thrust out his lips to Syomka and finally dispelled his doubts; he pulled off his cap and tossed it to the ground. Syomka looked up at his father, beaming with delight.

"Well, whose colt is he now?" asked Loutoshkin from behind.

Nikita wagged his head smiling, in lieu of answer.

"We're trotting today, Nikita Loukitch," said Loutoshkin, drawing a race-card from his pocket—"in the fifth race. . . . Can you read? No? Can your son? Well, Semyon, here you are, read it!"

Sheepishly, syllable by syllable, the boy floundered through the printed lines under Nikita's forefinger. Nikita looked at him with eager pride.

"Tag-ly-o-ney's Grand-son. . . grey stallion."

"Quite right, grey stallion, that's quite right," burst in Nikita, afraid to breathe and fastening his eyes on Syomka.

"Born nine-teen . . . twenty-one."

"That's right too, the year of the famine!" cried Nikita.

"Own-er, Ni—Ni—Lou—Lou—"

"Nikita Loukitch Loukoff," prompted Loutoshkin.

Nikita bored his nose into the race-card. He wanted to see himself there with his own eyes, but Syomka edged away from him and went on boldly: "By Favourite out of Flattery. Driven by O. I. Loutoshkin, indigo jacket, white cap. . . ."

Syomka read on; Nikita wiped his streaming forehead.

"Take the card as a souvenir," said Loutoshkin. "It'll tell you all the other horses racing with your colt today. We'll have to

step out, Nikita, the Grandson's in good company. We'll start for the track soon, then you'll see for yourself!"

Philipp stuck his head into the loose-box and reported: "Sinitsin's sent Mitka here again—keeps wanting to know how the colt's shaping."

"And what did you tell him?" asked Loutoshkin.

"Wha-at? 'Goes like the devil,' I told him. Because why? If I run him down, he'll smell a rat—'dark horse,' he'll say. But as it is, I'll keep him guessing!"

Nikita did not quite understand what the driver and the groom were saying, but he knew it was about his colt, and he drank in every word, watching the speakers' lips.

Loutoshkin clapped him gaily on the shoulder. "I saw to it that we should be trotting in good company. In the Grandson's race there's a mare running called Chicane. She's a holy terror—driven by my old friend—we drivers do have friends, you know—Vaska Sinitsin. Now I'm going to show him a *race!* . . . It's a big prize we're trotting for, Nikita!"

He fell silent. Nikita looked at him and said ardently:

"Never you fear, Alim Ivanitch. Just give him his head, and—hell for leather! But mind you don't take the whip to him, he's touchy. At Shrovetide me and my wife drove him to the Settlement; as we came out on the meadow, I just flicked him with a twig—whish! And up flew his heels—not meaning nothing. . . . But believe me or believe me not, I thought we'd never get home with a whole skin! It's by God's mercy I'm here to say it! He's a whirlwind, I tell you, not a horse!"

"It'll be a hard race!" said Philipp grimly, as if answering Loutoshkin's thoughts.

At two o'clock Philipp, Nikita, and Syomka took the Grandson out to the Bashilovka and walked him slowly to the race-track. On the Leningrad Road the holiday crowds parted to give them passage, hailing Nikita's horse with exclamations of delight. Whenever he heard such praise, he wanted to stop and talk, to explain to all those well-dressed Moscow strangers that the horse belonged to him, Nikita Loukoff of Shatnyevka; that he, the owner, was taking him to the great race for the cup—but Philipp frowned and kept shouting: "Don't stare about you! Mind the street-cars or you'll get run over!"

Hastily Nikita would shorten the bridle and look round startled at the passing street-cars. When they came out on the track, Nikita and Syomka halted in amazement. The three-decked stand, like a huge open hive, throbbed and swarmed, ahum with a thousand voices. . . . Somewhere a bell clanged. Somewhere, out of sight, a band struck up. Over a round flat path smart horses trotted, drawing flimsy carriages. The metal spokes flashed as the wheels spun.

All this reminded Syomka of a fair, only that here he missed the merry-go-rounds. Nikita led the Grandson along the black path close behind the stands, gazing dizzily about him, and when he looked up at the teeming crowds, he held his breath—the Grandson, Syomka, and himself were in full view of all those peering faces.

At this thought Nikita puckered his brows, hunched his shoulders, tautened his muscles. Himself—Nikita Loukoff—the grey Grandson, and the lad stood for Shatnyevka; and all that bustling hive to the right of him, for Moscow.

Shatnyevka was racing, Moscow looking on.

He turned his head. A colt was stepping close behind them. Nikita whispered encouragement: "Never mind *him*, Grandson! Just you show 'em."

Philipp nudged Nikita and pointed to a little bay horse coming on at a smart trot, with a driver in a crimson jacket. "Chicane. . . Trotting in your colt's race. . . See her?"

Savagely Nikita eyed the Grandson's rival as she skimmed along the yellow track; but Syomka thought of this puny creature in the harvest-field, straining at a load of sheaves.

"Call that a horse!" he sneered.

Then he whispered to his father: "What's that red duster on the coachman's back? Did he cut it out of a flag, Papanka?"

Unlike the casual public in the second row, where stood the boxes, the great bulk of the spectators in the cheaper seats were regular race-goers; nearly all of them knew each other, they knew the drivers and their horses, remembered the events for dozens of years back, and chatted together in their horsy jargon, which was Greek to a newcomer, or rather a sort of thieves' Latin or conspirators' code. Indeed, besides his knowledge of horse and driver, each had his own secret code to inform him whether such and such a horse would win.

"Hey, watch his leg, that's the main thing!" they would whisper to some novice, mentioning a driver's name. "If he drops his left leg at the turn, he's tipping the wink to a friend of his to bet on him; mustn't bet themselves, you know—strictly forbidden. . . . Aha, there's Yashka! Does all the talking with his whip! Just you take notice—when his whip's behind him, he won't win, but when it's up in the air, you can put your shirt on him! . . ."

These men plunged freely, and reviled and hooted the drivers if they lost. After a loss they would climb down to the second row and, fixing a practised eye on some prosperous greenhorn, stick to him like burs. They would lead him slyly apart and whisper breathlessly:

"I know of a dead sure thing! Simply given away! Safe as the bank!"

And if the victim were incredulous or doubtful, they moved away with unfeigned sorrow on their faces, with gait and gesture eloquent of regret. "Eykh," they seemed to be saying, "there's the money under his nose, and he won't take it!"

And again they would brush past him, breathing into his ear:

"You risk nothing, man.... Nothing at all. He'll *walk* home!"

If the horse won, they were sure of their commission; if he lost—they vanished.

On the lowest bench in the third row, right against the railing, sat Aristarkh Bourmin. Never absent from the races, he arrived punctually and always sat in the same seat. The next was always occupied by a fat, clean-shaven fellow, with field-glasses round his neck. Time and again had the fat man sought to draw his neighbour into conversation, about horses, drivers, or the weather; but Aristarkh Bourmin had never deigned to bestow an answer on this garrulous stranger. Bolt upright he sat, like a wooden idol, propped on his walking-stick, and he seemed to heed and see nothing but the track itself and the horses moving up and down it. He ignored the greeting of Sossounoff, who stalked in front of the rails in his flashy beaver hat and loud check breeches, and since he knew by sight all the old horse-breeders and owners, though on speaking terms with none of

them, deemed it his duty to salute them all, calling them by their Christian names and patronymics.

When Sinitsin drove out for the fifth race, on the bay mare Chicane, the fat man with the field-glasses began fidgeting and, longing to let off steam, strove to attract Bourmin's attention: "Just watch that mare's action! What splendid time she keeps! Superb! Her dam, Telyegin's Tina, never lost a race. Did the mile in two twenty—on a sticky track."

"Two eighteen it was!" a voice from above corrected him.

With astounding suppleness the fat man faced round on the speaker. "Two eighteen, eh? Well, there you are! Two eighteen, on the mud!... You know, when Nikolai Vasilyevitch Telyegin died, his hearse was drawn by Tina, that mare's dam."

"Such ruffraff should be hounded off the course!" Bourmin hissed, addressing the earth in front of him.

"What—Chicane?" said the fat man vehemently. "Were you speaking of Chicane? Ought to be hounded off the course?"

Bourmin vouchsafed no answer. Laughter came from above him. Someone said: "Ruffraff or no ruffraff, all the betting's on her. The driver's sister-in-law's been backing her—to the tune of fifty rubles."

The fat man looked at the speaker, shot out of his seat, elbowed his way to the three-ruble window, fished out a crumpled note, and pushed it through. "Number one, please!"

Number one was Chicane.

Having received his ticket, he went back to his place and again plied Bourmin with praises of the mare. Bourmin was silent. He looked down at the race-track, sprinkled with yellow sand, and his lush black beard twitched ominously.

Sossounoff, lounging against the rails, turned to Bourmin and once more raised his hat.

Nikita and Syomka stood below, in the members' enclosure.

The mild sunny afternoon had drawn thousands to the hippodrome that Sunday.

Aeroplanes hummed in the cloudless blue; from the tops of the stands gay music floated; the crowd buzzed with eager chatter; in the inner circle of the hippodrome fountains played in lawns and flower-beds; the silken sheen of the drivers' jackets, the shrill strokes of the judges' bell, proclaiming that the races had begun, gave zest and sparkle to that sun-drenched festival.

Both Syomka and Nikita greedily devoured every detail of this glittering show, standing agape, like children at a toy-shop window. But when Sinitsin's crimson jacket flashed upon the course, Nikita's wandering eyes were fixed on him. His memory took stock of the round, red-jowled face and held it all his life. Of the horse too—a little bay mare, with the number 1 strapped to her saddle, she dashed past him, her ears laid back, her legs plying like a miraculous piece of clockwork. Though he had never seen a race, Nikita knew instinctively that here was his colt's rival. And everytime the crimson jacket came abreast of them, his heart misgave him for the Grandson.

Loutoshkin drove out last of all. As he passed, close to the rails, he nodded gaily at Nikita. He wore a white cap and a blue silk jacket. The Grandson, gaitered in white linen, his head proudly tilted, seemed to Nikita strange and marvellous. At his saddle-strap hung a little board, with the number 6 on it.

Next to Nikita stood a man in goggles, marking his race-card as the trotters passed.

Nikita plucked him by the sleeve and said, pointing at the Grandson:

"That's *our* colt! Mine! His name's Grandson!"

The man in the goggles looked at Nikita, then at Syomka, but said nothing.

"He's running for the cup. . . . We're from Shatnyevka," explained Nikita.

When the bell rang for the horses to line up, Loutoshkin drove back some distance and brought the Grandson forward at a sharp trot, to warm him up.

A hollow rumble issued from the stands. Overjoyed at this tribute to his nursling, Nikita swallowed his pride and tackled the man in the goggles once again: "That's *our* colt—mine! . . . I'm Nikita Loukoff from Shatnyevka!"

Just then the strokes of a bell shrilled out above them. A man with a red flag, hoisted beside the track on a wooden stand, like a speaker on a platform, shouldered his flag and bellowed:

"Ta-ake your pla-a-ces!"

The six horses, as if drilled to this manoeuvre, broke into groups of three and trotted past Nikita at a lively pace, on the right and left of the track respectively. First of all came the Grandson, in the farther group. Loutoshkin's face was grimly set and—it seemed to Nikita—angry. When they reached the spot where a man stood with a paper in his hands, all six horses turned and dashed forward, Loutoshkin driving nearest to the rails, an arm's length from the crowd.

As he drew level with the platform where the man with the red flag was standing, the Grandson broke into a gallop. Promptly the bell clanged overhead, and again the six horses, in the same order as at first, swung past Nikita.

"Tur-urn!" boomed the man with the flag.

And again the Grandson, and he only, started to gallop. Again the bell rang out. The crowd murmured. Nikita saw Loutoshkin's lips move as he passed the man with the flag; the man gave no answer, but shouted up in the direction whence the bell had sounded:

"Number six, ba-ack! Ba-ack six!"

After the Grandson other horses began to gallop before they reached the start. The crowd grew restive. A man hissed furiously. From the top seats came catcalls. For the fifth time the bell clanged.

Nikita noticed that the bay mare had not once broken her trot, and that each time the horses turned, she darted ahead of her companions. Syomka tugged at his father's coat-tail.

"Papanka, why do they keep whirling round? That's the sixth time they've done it!"

"Shut up! They know what they're about, stupid. Keep quiet!" said Nikita in a whisper, himself hopelessly at sea.

"Why don't they let 'em *race*?" muttered Syomka. "They ain't dancing a quadrille!"

"Tur-urn! . . . Steady, the field! Loutoshkin, steady—back!" thundered the man with the flag; the next moment he jerked it downwards and barked:

"Off!"

The bell clanged from above. Sinitsin's crimson jacket flashed to the front. The Grandson, outstripping the rest, promptly swallowed up the space between him and the mare Chicane, but, to Nikita's horror, lunged suddenly and galloped. Nikita caught sight of Loutoshkin's face—the mouth twisted, the bulging eyes fixed on the crimson jacket forging ahead close to the rails—noticed the convulsive jerk he

gave the reins, and his back bent like a taut spring.

The Grandson checked himself, tossed up his head, and plunged.

Sinitsin's backers cheered and yelped: "He's well away!"

"That was a fine trick he showed Loutoshkin!"

"It's all over but the shouting now!"

"What can he do against that mare? Two fifteen!—he can't beat that!"

The fat man with the field-glasses, who had watched the start with unwonted agitation, turned in triumph to Bourmin. "Well, what do you say now? Hounded off the course, eh? Do you know what a pace that mare's trotting at? Hee-hee-hee! Just like her dam, Tina! No wonder they let her draw Telyegin's hearse!"

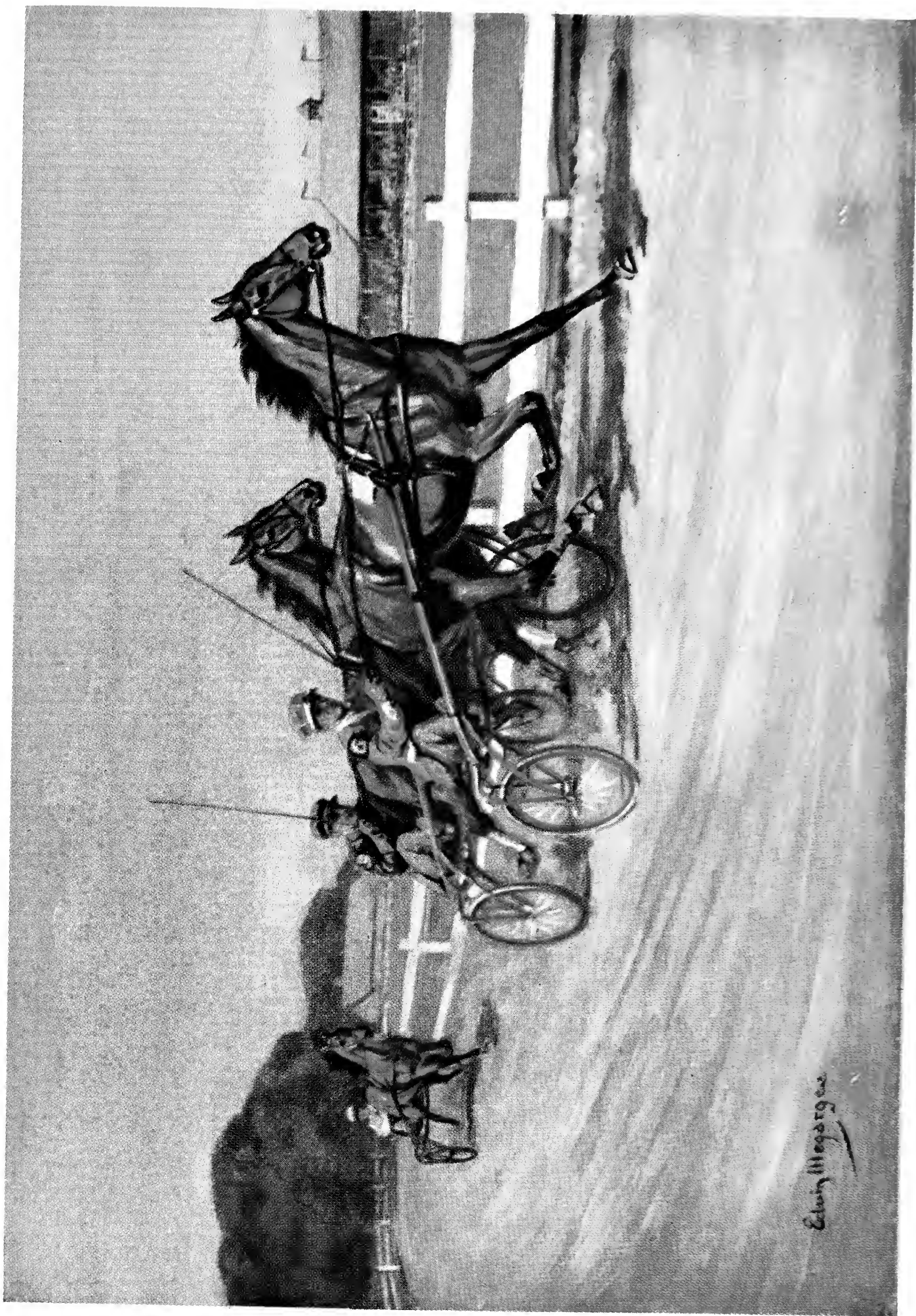
He took out the ticket with the number 1, flicked it up with his thumb, and added: "It's a dead sure thing, safe as the bank!"

Loutoshkin was quite unprepared for the Grandson's break. When the colt galloped, the thought that he must lose the race unnerved him. In a flash he saw Nikita's face—and Syomka's. . . . He remembered Saphir, somewhere in that crowd. . . . Its uproar overwhelmed his reason.

"I'm beat!" he thought. "I'll never catch him!"

But the languid fit, the wave of despair, passed swiftly, and a moment later Loutoshkin mustered his faculties and launched his will like a stream of fire through the steel bit into the colt's body.

The Grandson shook his head, as if to free himself from the steel that fretted him, but the bit was speaking to him now, commanding him to throw his near foot forward. For a moment he jibbed, and shifted his feet awkwardly; then, striking his



Edwin Megargee

proper trot, he strung himself out in fierce pursuit of the horses far in front of him.

The stop-watch in the driver's left ticked out the seconds lost. Loutoshkin reckoned his own speed, appraised the powers of his opponents, and the distance between him and each of them. Swiftly the Grandson closed on them, rounded the bend on the inner side; and as he came into the straight, Loutoshkin swung him out boldly from the rails. It was touch and go.

The Grandson's break had thrown out Loutoshkin's calculations. He must be careful how he urged him, or he would break again. But the Grandson responded so promptly and streaked forward so effortlessly that Loutoshkin was possessed with a sudden confidence, a triumphant ecstasy: that ecstasy which transmutes cool craftsmanship into creative force—when horse and driver mingled their essence, when the impossible is assured and they know only themselves and their exultant purpose. For a moment, ever memorable to Loutoshkin, time stood still. The path before him was illumined, the holiday brightness of the crowds enhanced—all was transfigured by the magic hue of passion; his heart leaped with the joy of battle, his eyes shone with the light of victory.

Cries burst from the rapt spectators: "Look, look! Loutoshkin's off! What a lick he's going at!"

Dozens of hostile voices answered: "Chicane's got the heels of him, all right!"

"Lost more than three seconds when he broke! Won't make that up in a hurry!"

"That break's settled his hash!"

"He can't possibly win against that mare," affirmed the experts. "Sinitsin's going easily, he's got the race in his pocket."

When Nikita saw that the Grandson had

recovered and was catching up with the other horses, he plucked Syomka by the tail of his long shirt and panted: "Say your 'Angels and archangels,' for Grandson to get the cup! Say it, boy!"

"I don't know it!"

"Say it, you little stinkard! Now then, out with it!"

Nikita himself did not know the prayer, except for the first two words, which he kept whispering fervently, never taking his eyes off the horses, which had now turned into the straight.

In front came the little mare, a few lengths from the rest. But suddenly the field seemed spellbound. From the side it looked as if they had all stopped and only the grey colt were moving. The crimson jacket floated back, Loutoshkin's indigo pressed on, drew level, vanished behind it, and crept slowly to the front; farther he came, and faster, hugging the rails now. Chicane dropped back, yielding position and pre-eminence to the Grandson. Sinitsin's whip was going like a flail.

Nikita and Syomka climbed the barrier and, squatting down, slapping their ribs and thighs, cried to each other and the world at large: "See there!... See there!... Our colt's winning! Yes, it's *our* colt, the Grandson!... See how he's coming on!"

Higher and higher surged the tumult. The public swarmed on the benches, the railings of the boxes, the balustrades flanking the steps. Loutoshkin forged relentlessly ahead. The gap between the Grandson and Chicane rapidly lengthened. The Grandson was now near the post, but Loutoshkin still kept urging him.

"What's the man doing? He's won already!" shouted an onlooker.

"Must have gone crazy!" said another.

Nikita looked round at the great, bawling

face of Moscow and in a frenzy of local patriotism tore off his cap, whirled it round his head, and smacked it on his knee. "Go it, Grandson! . . . Eykh, you're a beauty! . . . That's our Shatnyevka breed! Go it!"

"Is he trying to leave 'em all behind the flag?" said voices.

"Yes, and he'll do it!" others answered.

Aristarkh Bourmin turned to the fat man. "Where's your Chicane now?" he rasped.

"Well, what do you expect?" exploded the fat man. 'Plain as a pike-staff! Loutoshkin was always a trickster; he's had this dark horse up his sleeve; backed him himself, of course, and . . ."

"Not a dark horse, my dear sir, an *Orloff!*" said Bourmin haughtily.

"Taglioni's Grandson an *Orloff!*" sneered the fat man. "How do you make that out? Grandsire three-quarters American—sired by Heubingen—granddam a cross-breed—sired by Baron Rogers—and you say his grandson's an *Orloff!*"

With that he pressed his bulk half over the barrier and howled at the oncoming Loutoshkin: "Swindler! Thief! Scoundrel!"

And again he turned spitefully to Bourmin, whose face paled as he watched the colt, now nearly abreast of them: 'May I point out once more that that colt owes his speed to the American Taglioni!"

"To his *Orloff* blood, you mean. . . . A fig

for your Taglioni!" Bourmin shouted in the fat man's face. He rose, majestically erect. "His dam, the grey Flattery, was in my stable. In those days I owned her."

"Vanished like a dream, those days, Aristarkh Sergyeevitch!" the fat man sighed, addressing Bourmin by name for the first time. He crushed his useless ticket in his palm. "You might care to know that I, too, owned a stud-farm once; it vanished."

Bourmin had not listened. He was already stalking out towards the gate, with upflung head and black beard bristling disdain.

As he came to the finish straight, Loutoshkin raised his whip. At its touch the Grandson shot forward like a bolt from a catapult, finishing in record time. The stands rocked and roared with jubilation. As the colt slowed up, the public saw two uncouth figures make a dash at him.

Having weighed in, Loutoshkin stepped down from the sulky and approached Nikita.

Never had he seen such joy on the face of man. And the knowledge that he, Loutoshkin, was the author of this joy in a humble peasant's heart rejoiced his own; the eternal, close-fenced circle of the hippodrome snapped—and a bright path streamed from it, far off, to the simple hearts, the smiling plains of human happiness. . . .

JESSAMYN WEST (contemporary)

First Day Finish

from THE FRIENDLY PERSUASION

Here, to my mind, is one of the finest modern stories concerning horses, and Jessamyn West is greatly to be congratulated. The humor and originality of the plot, the vivid, picturesque dialogue, the really beautiful descriptions, make the story one that should be long remembered.

“Thee’s home, Lady,” Jess told his mare.

They had made the trip in jig time. The sun was still up, catalpa shadows long across the grass, and mud daubers still busy about the horse trough, gathering a few last loads before nightfall, when Lady turned in the home driveway.

Jess loosened the reins, so that on their first homecoming together they could round the curve to the barn with a little flourish of arrival. It was a short-lived flourish, quickly subsiding when Jess caught sight of the Reverend Marcus Augustus Godley’s Black Prince tied to the hitching rack.

“Look who’s here,” Jess told his mare and they came in slow and seemly as befitted travelers with forty weary miles behind them.

The Reverend Godley himself, shading his eyes from the low sun, stepped to the barn door when his Black Prince nickered.

Jess lit stiffly down and was standing at

Lady’s head when the Reverend Marcus Augustus reached them.

“Good evening, Marcus,” said Jess. “Thee run short of something over at thy place?”

“Welcome home,” said Reverend Godley, never flinching. “I was hunting, with Enoch’s help, a bolt to fit my seeder,” he told Jess, but he never took his eyes off Lady.

He was a big man, fat but not pousy, with a full red face preaching had kept supple and limber. A variety of feelings, mostly painful, flickered across it now as he gazed at Jess’s mare.

He opened and shut his mouth a couple of times, but all he managed to say was, “Where’d you come across that animal, Friend Birdwell?”

“Kentucky,” Jess said shortly.

“I’m a Kentuckian myself.” The Reverend Godley marveled that the state that had fathered him could have produced such horseflesh.

"You trade Red Rover for this?" he asked.

Jess rubbed his hand along Lady's neck. "The mare's name is Lady," he said.

"Lady!" the preacher gulped, then threw back his big head and disturbed the evening air with laughter.

"Friend," Jess said, watching the big bulk heave, "thy risibilities are mighty near the surface this evening."

The Reverend Godley wiped the tears from his face and ventured another look. "It's just the cleavage," he said. "The rift between the name and looks."

"That's a matter of opinion," Jess told him, "but Lady is the name."

The preacher stepped off a pace or two as if to try the advantage of a new perspective on the mare's appearance, clapped a handful of Sen-sen into his mouth, and chewed reflectively.

"I figure it this way," he told Jess. "You bought that animal Red Rover. Flashy as sin and twice as unreliable. First little brush you have with me and my cob, Red Rover curdles on you—goes sourer than a crock of cream in a June storm. What's the natural thing to do?"

The Reverend Godley gave his talk a pulpit pause and rested his big thumbs in his curving watch chain.

"The natural thing to do? Why, just what you done. Give speed the go-by. Say Farewell to looks. Get yourself a beast sound in wind and limb and at home behind a plow. Friend," he commended Jess, "you done the right thing, though I'm free to admit I never laid eyes before on a beast of such dimensions.

"Have some Sen-sen?" he asked amiably. "Does wonders for the breath." Jess shook his head.

"Well," he continued, "I want you to

know—Sunday mornings on the way to church, when I pass you, there's nothing personal in it. That morning when I went round you and Red Rover, I somehow got the idea you's taking it personal. Speed's an eternal verity, friend, an eternal verity. Nothing personal. The stars shine. The grass withereth. The race is to the swift. A fast horse passes a slow one. An eternal verity, Friend Birdwell. You're no preacher, but your wife is. She understands these things. Nothing personal. Like gravitation, like life, like death. A law of God. Nothing personal.

"The good woman will be halloing for me," he said, gazing up the pike toward his own farm a quarter of a mile away. He took another look at Jess's new mare.

"Name's Lady," he said, as if reminding himself. "Much obliged for the bolt, Friend Birdwell. Me and my cob'll see you Sunday."

Enoch stepped out from the barn door as the Reverend Godley turned down the driveway.

"Figure I heard my sermon for the week," he said.

"He's got an endurin' flock," Jess told his hired man.

"Cob?" Enoch asked. "What's he mean always calling that animal of his a cob? He ignorant?"

"Not ignorant—smooth," Jess said. "Cob's just his way of saying Black Prince's no ordinary beast without coming straight out with so undraped a word as stallion."

The two men turned with one accord from Godley's cob to Jess's Lady. Enoch's green eyes flickered knowingly; his long freckled hand touched Lady's muscled shoulder lightly, ran down the powerful legs, explored the deep chest.

"There's more here, Mr. Birdwell, than meets the eye?"

Jess nodded.

"As far as looks goes," Enoch said, "the Reverend called the turn."

"As far as looks goes," Jess agreed.

"She part Morgan?"

"Half," Jess said proudly.

Enoch swallowed. "How'd you swing it?"

"Providence," Jess said. "Pure Providence. Widow woman wanted a pretty horse and one that could be passed."

"Red Rover," Enoch agreed, and added softly, "The Reverend was took in."

"He's a smart man," said Jess. "We'd best not bank on it. But by sugar, Enoch, I tell thee I was getting tired of taking Eliza down the pike to Meeting every First Day like a tail to Godley's comet. Have him start late, go round me, then slow down so's we'd eat dust. Riled me so I was arriving at Meeting in no fit state to worship."

"You give her a tryout—coming home?" Enoch asked guardedly.

"I did, Enoch," Jess said solemnly. "This horse, this Morgan mare named Lady, got the heart of a lion and the wings of a bird. Nothing without pinfeathers is going to pass her."

"It's like Mr. Emerson says," said Enoch earnestly.

Jess nodded. "Compensation," he agreed. "A clear case of it and her pure due considering the looks she's got."

"You figure on this Sunday?" Enoch asked.

"Well," Jess said, "I plan to figure on nothing. Thee heard the Reverend Marcus Augustus. A fast horse goes round a slow one. Eternal law. If Black Prince tries to pass us First Day—and don't—it's just a

law, just something eternal. And mighty pretty, Enoch, like the stars."

"A pity," Enoch said reflecting, "The Reverend's young 'uns all so piddling and yours such busters. It'll tell on your mare."

"A pity," Jess acquiesced, "but there it is. Eliza'd never agree to leave the children home from Meeting."

Enoch ruminated, his fingers busy with Lady's harness. "What'll your wife say to this mare? Been a considerable amount of trading lately."

"Say?" said Jess. "Thee heard her. 'Exchange Red Rover for a horse not racy-looking.' This mare racy-looking?"

"You have to look twice to see it," Enoch admitted.

"Eliza don't look twice at a horse. I'll just lead Lady up now for Eliza to see. She don't hold with coming down to the barn while men's about."

Jess took Lady from the shafts and led her between rows of currant bushes up to the house. Dusk was come now, lamps were lit. Inside, Eliza and the children were waiting for their greeting until the men had had their talk.

"Lady," Jess said fondly, "I want thee to see thy mistress."

The rest of the week went by, mild and very fair, one of those spells in autumn when time seems to stand still. Clear days with a wind which would die down by afternoon. The faraway Sandusky ridges seemed to have moved up to the orchard's edge. The purple ironweed, the farewell summer, the goldenrod, stood untrembling beneath an unclouded sky. Onto the corn standing shocked in the fields, gold light softer than arrows, but as pointed, fell. A single crow at dusk would drop in a slow arc against the distant wood to show that

not all had died. Indian summer can be a time of great content.

First Day turned up pretty. Just before the start for Meeting, Jess discovered a hub cap missing off the surrey.

"Lost?" asked Eliza.

"I wouldn't say lost," Jess told her. "Missing."

Odd thing, a pity to be sure, but there it was. Nothing for it but for him and Eliza to ride to meeting in the cut-down buggy and leave the children behind. Great pity, but there it was.

Eliza stood in the yard in her First Day silk. "Jess," she said in a balky voice, "this isn't my idea of what's seemly. A preacher going to Meeting in a cut-down rig like this. Looks more like heading for the trotting races at the county fair than preaching."

Jess said, "Thee surprises me, Eliza. Thee was used to put duty before appearance. Friend Fox was content to tramp the roads to reach his people. Thee asks for thy surrey, fresh blacking on the dashboard and a new whip in the socket."

He turned away sadly. "The Lord's people are everywhere grown more worldly," he said, looking dismally at the ground.

It didn't set good with Jess, pushing Eliza against her will that way—and he wasn't too sure it was going to work. But the name Fox got her. When she was a girl she'd set out to bring the Word to people, the way Fox had done, and he'd have gone, she knew, to Meeting in a barrow, if need be.

So that's the way they started out, and in spite of the rig, Eliza was lighthearted and holy-feeling. When they pulled out on the pike, she was pleased to note the mare's gait was better than her looks. Lady picked

up her feet like she knew what to do with them.

"Thee's got a good-pulling mare, Jess," she said kindly.

"She'll get us there, I don't misdoubt," Jess said.

They'd rounded the first curve below the clump of maples that gave Maple Grove Nursery its name when the Reverend Godley bore down upon them. Neither bothered to look back, both knew the heavy, steady beat of Black Prince's hoofs.

Eliza settled herself in the cut-down rig, her Bible held comfortably in her lap. "It taxes the imagination," she said, "how a man church-bound can have his mind so set on besting another. Don't thee think so, Jess?"

"It don't tax mine," Jess said, thinking honesty might be the only virtue he'd get credit for that day.

Eliza was surprised not to see Black Prince pulling abreast them. It was here on the long stretch of level road that Black Prince usually showed them his heels.

"Thee'd best pull over, Jess," she said.

"I got no call to pull out in the ditch," Jess said. "The law allows me half the road."

The mare hadn't made any fuss about it—no head-shaking, no fancy footwork—but she'd settled down in her harness, she was traveling. It was plain to Eliza they were eating up the road.

"Don't thee think we'd better pull up, Jess?" Eliza said it easy, so as not to stir up the contrary streak that wasn't buried very deep in her husband.

"By sugar," Jess said, "I don't see why."

As soon as Eliza heard that "by sugar" spoken as bold-faced as if it were a weekday,

she knew it was too late for soft words. "By sugar" Jess said again, "I don't see why. The Reverend Godley's got half the road and I ain't urging my mare."

It depended on what you called urging. He hadn't taken to lambasting Lady with his hat yet, the way he had Red Rover, but he was sitting on the edge of his seat—and sitting mighty light, it was plain to see—driving the mare with an easy rein and talking to her like a weanling.

"Thee's a fine mare. Thee's a tryer. Thee's a credit to thy dam. Never have to think twice about thy looks again."

Maybe, strictly speaking, that was just encouraging, not urging, but Eliza wasn't in a hairsplitting mood.

She looked back at the Reverend Marcus Augustus, and no two ways about it: he *was* urging Black Prince. The Reverend Godley's cob wasn't a length behind them and the Reverend himself was half standing, slapping the reins across Black Prince's rump and exhorting him like a sinner newly come to the mourner's bench.

This was a pass to which Eliza hadn't thought to come twice in a lifetime—twice in a lifetime to be heading for Meeting like a county fair racer in a checkered shirt.

"Nothing lacking now," she thought bitterly, "but for bets to be laid on us."

That wasn't lacking, either, if Eliza had only known it. They'd come in view of the Bethel Church now, and more than one of Godley's flock had got so carried away by the race as to try for odds on their own preacher. It didn't seem loyal not to back up their Kentucky brother with hard cash. Two to one the odds were—with no takers.

The Bethel Church sat atop a long, low rise, not much to the eye—but it told on a light mare pulling against a heavy stallion, and it was here Black Prince began to

close in; before the rise was half covered, the stallion's nose was pressing toward the buggy's back wheel.

Jess had given up encouraging. He was urging now. Eliza lifted the hat off his head. Come what might, there wasn't going to be any more hat-whacking if she could help it—Jess was beyond knowing whether his head was bare or covered. He was pulling with his mare now, sweating with her, sucking the air into scalding lungs with her. Lady had slowed on the rise—she'd have been dead if she hadn't—but she was still a-going, still trying hard. Only the Quaker blood in Jess's veins kept him from shouting with pride at his mare's performance.

The Reverend Godley didn't have Quaker blood in his veins. What he had was Kentucky horse-racing blood, and when Black Prince got his nose opposite Lady's rump Godley's racing blood got the best of him. He began to talk to his cob in a voice that got its volume from camp-meeting practice—and its vocabulary, too, as a matter of fact—but he was using it in a fashion his camp-meeting congregation had never heard.

They were almost opposite the Bethel Church now; Black Prince had nosed up an inch or two more on Lady and the Reverend Godley was still strongly exhorting—getting mighty personal, for a man of his convictions.

But Lady was a stayer and so was Jess. And Eliza too, for that matter. Jess spared her a glance out of the corner of his eye to see how she was faring. She was faring mighty well—sitting bolt upright, her Bible tightly clasped, and clucking to the mare. Jess couldn't credit what he heard. But there was no doubt about it—Eliza was counseling Lady. "Thee keep a-going,

Lady," she called. Eliza hadn't camp-meeting experience, but she had a good clear pulpit voice and Lady heard her.

She kept a-going. She did better. She unloosed a spurt of speed Jess hadn't known was in her. Lady was used to being held back, not yelled at in a brush. Yelling got her dander up. She stretched out her long neck, lengthened her powerful stride, and pulled away from Black Prince just as they reached the Bethel Church grounds.

Jess thought the race was won and over, that from here on the pace to Meeting could be more suitable to First Day travel. But the Reverend Godley had no mind to stop at so critical a juncture. He'd wrestled with sinners too long to give up at the first setback. He figured the mare was weakening. He figured that with a strong stayer like his Black Prince he'd settle the matter easy in the half mile that lay between Bethel Church and the Quaker Meetinghouse at Rush Branch. He kept a-coming.

But one thing he didn't figure—that was that the slope from Bethel to Rush Branch was against him. Lady had a downhill grade now. It was all she needed. She didn't pull away from Black Prince in any whirlwind style, but stride by stride she pulled away.

It was a great pity Jess's joy in that brush had to be marred. He'd eaten humble pie some time now, and he was pleased through and through to be doing the dishing up himself. And he was pleased for the mare's sake.

But neither winning nor his mare's pleasure was first with Jess. Eliza was. There she sat, white and suffering, holding her Bible like it was the Rock of Ages from which she'd come mighty near to clean slipping off. Jess knew Eliza had a forgiving

heart when it came to others—but whether she could forgive herself for getting heated over a horse race the way she'd done, he couldn't say.

And the worst for Eliza was yet to come. Jess saw that clear enough. When Lady and Black Prince had pounded past Godley's church, a number of the Bethel brethren, who had arrived early and were still in their rigs, set out behind the Reverend Marcus Augustus to be in at the finish. And they were going to be. Their brother was losing, but they were for him still, close behind and encouraging him in a wholehearted way. The whole caboodle was going to sweep behind Jess and Eliza into the Quaker churchyard. They wouldn't linger, but Jess feared they'd turn around there before heading back. And that's the way it was.

Lady was three lengths ahead of Black Prince when they reached the Rush Branch Meetinghouse. Jess eased her for the turn, made it on two wheels, and drew in close to the church. The Bethelites swooped in behind him and on out—plainly beat but not subdued. The Reverend Marcus Augustus was the only man among them without a word to say. He was as silent as a tombstone and considerably grimmer. Even his fancy vest looked to have faded.

The Quakers waiting in the yard for Meeting to begin were quiet, too. Jess couldn't tell from their faces what they were feeling; but there was no use thinking that they considered what they'd just witnessed an edifying sight. Not for a weekday even, that mess of rigs hitting it down the pike with all that hullabaloo—let alone to First Day and their preacher up front, leading it.

Jess asked a boy to look after Lady. He was so taken up with Eliza he no more than laid a fond hand on Lady's hot flank in

passing. He helped Eliza light down, and set his hat on his head when she handed it to him. Eliza looked mighty peaked and withdrawn, like a woman communing with her Lord.

She bowed to her congregation and they bowed back and she led them out of the sunshine into the Meetinghouse with no word being spoken on either side. She walked to the preacher's bench, laid her Bible quietly down, and untied her bonnet strings.

Jess sat rigid in his seat among the men. Jess was a birthright Quaker—and his father and grandfathers before him—and he'd known Quakers to be read out of Meeting for less.

Eliza laid her little plump hands on her Bible and bowed her head in silent prayer. Jess didn't know how long it lasted—sometimes it seemed stretching out into eternity, but Quakers were used to silent worship, and he was the only one who seemed restive. About the time the ice round Jess's heart was hardening past his enduring, Eliza's sweet, cool, carrying voice said, "If the spirit leads any of thee to speak, will thee speak now?"

Then Eliza lowered her head again—but Jess peered round the Meetinghouse. He thought he saw a contented look on most of the faces—nothing that went so far as to warm into a smile, but a look that said they were satisfied the way the Lord had handled things. And the spirit didn't move any member of the congregation to speak that day except for the prayers of two elderly Friends in closing.

The ride home was mighty quiet. They drove past Bethel Church, where the sermon had been short—for all the hitching racks were empty. Lady carried them along proud and untired. Enoch and the children

met them down the pike a ways from home and Jess nodded the good news to Enoch—but he couldn't glory in it the way he'd like because of Eliza.

Eliza was kind, but silent. Very silent. She spoke when spoken to, did her whole duty by the children and Jess, but in all the ways that made Eliza most herself, she was absent and withdrawn.

Toward evening Jess felt a little dauncy—a pain beneath the ribs, heart, or stomach, he couldn't say which. He thought he'd brew himself a cup of sassafras tea, take it to bed and drink it there, and maybe find a little ease.

It was past nightfall when Jess entered his and Eliza's chamber, but there was a full moon and by its light he saw Eliza sitting at the east window in her white nightdress, plaiting her black hair.

"Jess," asked Eliza, noting the cup he carried, "has thee been taken ill?"

"No," Jess said, "no," his pain easing off of itself when he heard by the tones of Eliza's voice that she was restored to him—forgiving and gentle, letting bygones be bygones.

"Eliza," he asked, "wouldn't thee like a nice hot cup of sassafras tea?"

"Why, yes, Jess," Eliza said. "That'd be real refreshing."

Jess carried Eliza her cup of tea walking down a path of roses the moon had lit up in the ingrain carpet.

He stood, while she drank it, with his hand on her chair, gazing out of the window: the whole upcurve and embowered sweep of the earth soaked in moonlight—hill and wood lot, orchard and silent river. And beneath that sheen his own roof-tree, and all beneath it, peaceful and at rest. Lady in her stall, Enoch reading Emerson, the children long abed.

“‘Sweet day’,” he said, “‘so cool, so calm, so bright, the bridal of the earth and sky’.”

And though he felt so pensive and reposed, still the bridge of his big nose wrinkled up, his ribs shook with laughter.

Eliza felt the movement of his laughing in her chair. “What is it, Jess?” she asked.

Jess stopped laughing, but said nothing. He figured Eliza had gone about as far in one day as a woman could in enlarging her appreciation of horseflesh; still he couldn't help smiling when he thought of the sermon that might have been preached in the Bethel Church upon eternal verities.

R. D. BLACKMORE (1825—1900)

A Rough Ride

from LORNA DOONE

Surely nowhere in English literature will you find a more beautiful and inspiring description than this, of how John Ridd rode the highwayman's horse that was reputed to be a witch. The beautiful rhythm of the writing brings to mind that other poetical description, given on page 15 of this book, of how the horse thief tried to ride Pegasus. And the analogies are superb.*

Well, young uns, what be gaping at?" He gave pretty Annie a chuck on the chin, and took me all in without winking.

"Your mare," said I, standing stoutly up, being a tall boy now; "I never saw such a beauty, sir. Will you let me have a ride of her?"

"Think thou couldst ride her, lad? She will have no burden but mine. Thou couldst never ride her. Tut! I would be loath to kill thee."

"Ride her!" I cried with the bravest scorn, for she looked so kind and gentle; "there never was a horse upon Exmoor foaled, but I could tackle in half an hour. Only I never ride upon saddle. Take them leathers off of her."

He looked at me with a dry little whistle, and thrust his hands into his breeches-pockets, and so grinned that I could not stand it. And Annie laid hold of me in such a way that I was almost mad with her. And he laughed, and approved her for doing so. And the worst of all was—he said nothing.

"Get away, Annie, will you? Do you think I'm a fool, good sir! Only trust me with her, and I will not override her."

"For that I will go bail, my son. She is liker to override thee. But the ground is soft to fall upon, after all this rain. Now come out into the yard, young man, for the sake of your mother's cabbages. And the mellow straw-bed will be softer for thee, since pride must have its fall. I am thy mother's cousin, boy, and am going up to house. Tom

* *The Horse Thief*, by William Rose Benet.

Faggus is my name, as everybody knows; and this is my young mare, Winnie."

What a fool I must have been not to know it at once! Tom Faggus, the great highwayman, and his young blood-mare, the strawberry! Already her fame was noised abroad, nearly as much as her master's; and my longing to ride her grew tenfold, but fear came at the back of it. Not that I had the smallest fear of what the mare could do to me, by fair play and horse-trickery, but that the glory of sitting upon her seemed to be too great for me; especially as there were rumours abroad that she was not a mare after all, but a witch. However, she looked like a filly all over, and wonderfully beautiful, with her supple stride, and soft slope of shoulder, and glossy coat beaded with water, and prominent eyes full of docile fire. Whether this came from her Eastern blood of the Arabs newly imported, and whether the cream-colour, mixed with our bay, led to that bright strawberry tint, is certainly more than I can decide, being chiefly acquaint with farm-horses. And these come of any colour and form; you never can count what they will be, and are lucky to get four legs to them.

Mr. Faggus gave his mare a wink, and she walked demurely after him, a bright young thing, flowing over with life, yet dropping her soul to a higher one, and led by love to anything; as the manner is of females, when they know what is the best for them. Then Winnie trod lightly upon the straw, because it had soft muck under it, and her delicate feet came back again.

"Up for it still, boy, be ye?" Tom Faggus stopped, and the mare stopped there; and they looked at me provokingly.

"Is she able to leap, sir? There is good take-off on this side of the brook."

Mr. Faggus laughed very quietly, turning round to Winnie so that she might enter into it. And she, for her part, seemed to know exactly where the fun lay.

"Good tumble-off, you mean, my boy. Well, there can be small harm to thee. I am akin to thy family, and know the substance of their skulls."

"Let me get up," said I, waxing wroth, for reasons I cannot tell you, because they are too manifold; "take off your saddle-bag things. I will try not to squeeze her ribs in, unless she plays nonsense with me."

Then Mr. Faggus was up on his mettle, at this proud speech of mine; and John Fry was running up all the while, and Bill Dadds, and half a dozen. Tom Faggus gave one glance around, and then dropped all regard for me. The high repute of his mare was at stake, and what was my life compared to it? Through my defiance, and stupid ways, here was I in a duello, and my legs not come to their strength yet, and my arms as limp as a herring.

Something of this occurred to him, even in his wrath with me, for he spoke very softly to the filly, who now could scarce subdue herself; but she drew in her nostrils, and breathed to his breath, and did all she could to answer him.

"Not too hard, my dear," he said; "let him gently down on the mixen. That will be quite enough." Then he turned the saddle off, and I was up in a moment. She began at first so easily, and pricked her ears so lovingly, and minced about as if pleased to find so light a weight upon her, that I thought she knew I could ride a little, and feared to show any capers. "Gee wugg, Polly!" cried I, for all the men were now looking on, being then at the leaving-off time; "Gee wugg, Polly, and show what

thou be'est made of." With that I plugged my heels into her, and Billy Dadds flung his hat up.

Nevertheless, she outraged not, though her eyes were frightening Annie, and John Fry took a pick to keep him safe; but she curbed to and fro with her strong forearms rising like springs ingathered, waiting and quivering grievously, and beginning to sweat about it. Then her master gave a shrill clear whistle, when her ears were bent towards him, and I felt her form beneath me gathering up like whalebone, and her hind-legs coming under her, and I knew that I was in for it.

First she reared upright in the air, and struck me full on the nose with her comb, till I bled worse than Robin Snell made me; and then down with her fore-feet deep in the straw, and her hind-feet going to heaven. Finding me stick to her still like wax, for my mettle was up as hers was, away she flew with me swifter than ever I went before, or since, I trow. She drove full-head at the cob-wall—"Oh, Jack, slip off," screamed Annie—then she turned like light, when I thought to crush her, and ground my left knee against it. "Mux me," I cried, for my breeches were broken, and short words went the furthest—"if you kill me, you shall die with me." Then she took the courtyard gate at a leap, knocking my words between my teeth, and then right over a quick set hedge, as if the sky were a breath to her; and away for the water-meadows, while I lay on her neck like a child at the breast, and wished I had never

been born. Straight away, all in the front of the wind, and scattering clouds around her, all I knew of the speed we made was the frightful flash of her shoulders, and her mane like trees in a tempest. I felt the earth under us rushing away, and the air left far behind us, and my breath came and went, and I prayed to God, and was sorry to be so late of it.

All the long swift while, without power of thought, I clung to her crest and shoulders, and dug my nails into her creases, and my toes into her flank-part, and was proud of holding on so long, though sure of being beaten. Then in her fury at feeling me still, she rushed at another device for it, and leaped the wide water-trough sideways across, to and fro, till no breath was left in me. The hazelboughs took me too hard in the face, and the tall dog-briers got hold of me, and the ache of my back was like crimping a fish; till I longed to give it up, thoroughly beaten, and lie there and die in the cresses. But there came a shrill whistle from up the home-hill, where the people had hurried to watch us; and the mare stopped as if with a bullet; then set off for home with the speed of a swallow, and going as smoothly and silently. I never had dreamed of such delicate motion, fluent, and graceful, and ambient, soft as the breeze flitting over the flowers, but swift as the summer lightning. I sat up again, but my strength was all spent, and no time left to recover it, and though she rose at our gate like a bird, I tumbled off into the mixen.

DONN BYRNE (1889—1928)

Tale of the Gipsy Horse

from DESTINY BAY

Nowhere in literature is there a more colorful or a more loved horse story than this. Many have written of the "raggle-taggle" gypsies, but here we have the aristocracy and pride of the gypsies. It is a story to which one returns over the years, never failing to find new flavor and new delight in its reading.

O saddle me my milk white steed,
Go and fetch me my pony, O!
That I may ride and seek my bride,
Who is gone with the raggle-taggle gypsies, O!

ANON.

I thought first of the old lady's face, in the candlelight of the dinner table at Destiny Bay, as some fine precious coin, a spade guinea perhaps, well and truly minted. How old she was I could not venture to guess, but I knew well that when she was young men's heads must have turned as she passed. Age had boldened the features much, the proud nose and definite chin. Her hair was grey, vitally grey, like a grey wave curling in to crash on the sands of Destiny. And I knew that in another woman that hair would be white as scutched flax. When she spoke, the thought of the spade guinea came to me again,

so rich and golden was her voice.

"Lady Clontarf," said my uncle Valentine, "this is Kerry, Hector's boy."

"May I call you Kerry? I am so old a woman and you are so much a boy. Also I knew your father. He was of that great line of soldiers who read their Bibles in their tents, and go into battle with a prayer in their hearts. I always seem to have known," she said, "that he would fondle no grey beard."

"Madame," I said, "what should I be but Kerry to my father's friends!"

It seemed to me that I must know her because of her proud high face, and her

eyes of a great lady, but the title of Clontarf made little impress on my brain. Our Irish titles have become so hawked and shop-worn that the most hallowed names in Ireland may be borne by a porter brewer or former soap boiler. O'Connor Don and MacCarthy More mean so much more to us than the Duke of This or the Marquis of There, now the politics have so muddled chivalry. We may resent the presentation of this title or that to a foreigner, but what can you do? The loyalty of the Northern Irishman to the Crown is a loyalty of head and not of heart. Out of our Northern country came the United Men, if you remember. But for whom should our hearts beat faster? The Stuarts were never fond of us, and the Prince of Orange came over to us, talked a deal about liberty, was with us at a few battles, and went off to grow asparagus in England. It is so long since O'Neill and O'Donnell sailed for Spain!

Who Lady Clontarf was I did not know. My uncle Valentine is so offhand in his presentations. Were you to come on him closeted with a heavenly visitant he would just say: "Kerry, the Angel Gabriel." Though as to what his Angelicness was doing with my uncle Valentine, you would be left to surmise. My uncle Valentine will tel you just as much as he feels you ought to know and no more—a quality that stood my uncle in good stead in the days when he raced and bred horses for racing. I did know one thing: Lady Clontarf was not Irish. There is a feeling of kindness between all us Irish that we recognise without speaking. One felt courtesy, gravity, dignity in her, but not that quality that makes your troubles another Irish person's troubles, if only for the instant. Nor was she English. One felt her spiritual roots went too deep for that. Nor had she that brilliant armour

of the Latin. Her speech was the ordinary speech of a gentlewoman, unaccented. Yet that remark about knowing my father would never fondle a grey beard!

Who she was and all about her I knew I would find out later from my dear aunt Jenepher. But about the old drawing-room of Destiny there was a strange air of formality. My uncle Valentine is most courteous, but to-night he was courtly. He was like some Hungarian or Russian noble welcoming an empress. There was an air of deference about my dear aunt Jenepher that informed me that Lady Clontarf was very great indeed. Whom my aunt Jenepher likes is lovable, and whom she respects is clean and great. But the most extraordinary part of the setting was our butler James Carabine. He looked as if royalty were present, and I began to say to myself: "By damn, but royalty is! Lady Clontarf is only a racing name. I know that there's a queen or princess in Germany who's held by the Jacobites to be Queen of England. Can it be herself that's in it? It sounds impossible, but sure there's nothing impossible where my uncle Valentine's concerned."

At dinner the talk turned on racing, and my uncle Valentine inveighed bitterly against the new innovations on the track; the starting gate, and the new seat introduced by certain American jockeys, the crouch now recognised as orthodox in flat-racing. As to the value of the starting gate my uncle was open to conviction. He recognised how unfairly the apprentice was treated by the crack jockey with the old method of the flag, but he dilated on his favourite theme: that machinery was the curse of man. All these innovations—

"But it isn't an innovation, sir. The Romans used it."

"You're a liar!" said my uncle Valentine.

My uncle Valentine, or any other Irishman for the matter of that, only means that he doesn't believe you. There is a wide difference.

"I think I'm right, sir. The Romans used it for their chariot races. They dropped the barrier instead of raising it." A tag of my classics came back to me, as tags will. "*Re-pagula submittuntur*, Pausanias writes."

"Pausanias, begob!" My uncle Valentine was visibly impressed.

But as to the new seat he was adamant. I told him competent judges had placed it about seven pounds' advantage to the horse.

"There is only one place on a horse's back for a saddle," said my uncle Valentine. "The shorter your leathers, Kerry, the less you know about your mount. You are only aware whether or not he is winning. With the ordinary seat, you know whether he is lazy, and can make proper use of your spur. You can stick to his head and help him."

"Races are won with that seat, sir."

"Be damned to that!" said my uncle Valentine. "If the horse is good enough, he'll win with the rider facing his tail."

"But we are boring you, Madame," I said, "with our country talk of horses."

"There are three things that are never boring to see: a swift swimmer swimming, a young girl dancing, and a young horse running. And three things that are never tiring to speak of: God, and love, and the racing of horses."

"A *kushto jukel* is also *rinkeno, mi pen*," suddenly spoke our butler, James Carabine.

"*Dabla*, James Carabine, you *roker* like a *didakai*. A *jukel* to catch *kanangre!*" And Lady Clontarf laughed. "What in all the *tem* is as *dinkeno* as a *kushti-dikin grai?*"

"A *tatsheno jukel, mi pen*, like Rory Bosville's," James Carabine evidently stood

his ground, "that *noshered* the Waterloo Cup through *wafro bok!*"

"*Avali!* You are right, James Carabine." And then she must have seen my astonished face, for she laughed, that small golden laughter that was like the ringing of an acolyte's bell. "Are you surprised to hear me speak the *tawlo tshib*, the black language, Kerry? I am a gypsy woman."

"Lady Clontarf, Mister Kerry," said James Carabine, "is saying there is nothing in the world like a fine horse. I told her a fine greyhound is a good thing too. Like Rory Bosville's, that should have won the Waterloo Cup in Princess Dagmar's year."

"Lady Clontarf wants to talk to you about a horse, Kerry," said my uncle Valentine. "So if you would like us to go into the gun-room, Jenepher, instead of the withdrawing room while you play—"

"May I not hear about the horse too?" asked my aunt Jenepher.

"My very, very dear," said the gypsy lady to my blind aunt Jenepher, "I would wish you to, for where you are sitting, there a blessing will be."

My uncle Valentine had given up race horses for as long as I can remember. Except with Limerick Pride, he had never had any luck, and so he had quitted racing as an owner, and gone in for harness ponies, of which, it is admitted, he bred and showed the finest of their class. My own two chasers, while winning many good Irish races, were not quite up to Aintree form, but in the last year I happened to buy, for a couple of hundred guineas, a handicap horse that had failed signally as a three-year-old in classic races, and of which a fashionable stable wanted to get rid. It was Ducks and Drakes, by Drake's Drum out of Little Duck, a beautifully

shaped, dark grey horse, rather short in the neck, but the English stable was convinced he was a hack. However, as often happens, with a change of trainers and jockeys, Ducks and Drakes became a different horse and won five good races, giving me so much in hand that I was able to purchase for a matter of nine hundred guineas a colt I was optimistic about, a son of Saint Simon's. Both horses were in training with Robinson at the Curragh. And now it occurred to me that the gypsy lady wanted to buy one or the other of them. I decided beforehand that it would be across my dead body.

"Would you be surprised," asked my uncle Valentine, "to hear that Lady Clontarf has a horse she expects to win the Derby with?"

"I should be delighted, sir, if she did," I answered warily. There were a hundred people who had hopes of their nominations in the greatest of races.

"Kerry," the gypsy lady said quietly, "I think I will win." She had a way of clearing the air with her voice, with her eyes. What was a vague hope now became an issue.

"What is the horse, Madame?"

"It is as yet unnamed, and has never run as a two-year-old. It is a son of Irlandais, who has sired many winners on the Continent, and who broke down sixteen years ago in preparation for the Derby and was sold to one of the Festetics. Its dam is Iseult III, who won the Prix de Diane four years ago."

"I know so little about Continental horses," I explained.

"The strain is great-hearted, and with the dam, strong as an oak tree. I am a gypsy woman, and I know a horse, and I am an old, studious woman," she said, and she looked at her beautiful, unringed golden hands, as if she were embarrassed, speaking

of something we, not Romanics, could hardly understand, "and I think I know propitious hours and days."

"Where is he now, Madame?"

"He is at Dax, in the Basse-Pyrénées, with Romany folk."

"Here's the whole thing in a nutshell, Kerry: Lady Clontarf wants her colt trained in Ireland. Do you think the old stables of your grandfather are still good?"

"The best in Ireland, sir, but sure there 't no horse been trained there for forty years, barring jumpers."

"Are the gallops good?"

"Sure, you know yourself, sir, how good they are. But you couldn't train without a trainer, and stable boys—"

"We'll come to that," said my uncle Valentine. "Tell me, what odds will you get against an unknown, untried horse in the winter books?"

I thought for an instant. It had been an exceptionally good year for two-year-olds, the big English breeders' stakes having been bitterly contested. Lord Shere had a good horse; Mr. Paris a dangerous colt. I should say there were fifteen good colts, if they wintered well, two with outstanding chances.

"I should say you could really write your own ticket. The ring will be only too glad to get money. There's so much up on Sir James and Toison d'Or."

"To win a quarter-million pounds?" asked my uncle Valentine.

"It would have to be done very carefully, sir, here and there, in ponies and fifties and hundreds, but I think between four and five thousand pounds would do it."

"Now if this horse of Lady Clontarf's wins the Two Thousand and the Derby, and the Saint Leger—"

Something in my face must have shown

a lively distaste for the company of lunatics, for James Carabine spoke quietly from the door by which he was standing.

"Will your young Honour be easy, and listen to your uncle and my lady."

My uncle Valentine is most grandiose, and though he has lived in epic times, a giant among giants, his schemes are too big for practical business days. And I was beginning to think that the gypsy lady, for all her beauty and dignity, was but an old woman crazed by gambling and tarot cards, but James Carabine is so wise, so beautifully sane, facing all events, spiritual and material, foursquare to the wind.

"—what would he command in stud fees?" continued quietly my uncle Valentine.

"If he did this tremendous triple thing, sir, five hundred guineas would not be exorbitant."

"I am not asking you out of idle curiosity, Kerry, or for information," said my uncle Valentine. "I merely wish to know if the ordinary brain arrives at these conclusions of mine; if they are, to use a word, of Mr. Thackeray's, apparent."

"I quite understand, sir," I said politely.

"And now," said my uncle Valentine, "whom would you suggest to come to Destiny Bay as trainer?"

"None of the big trainers will leave their stables to come here, sir. And the small ones I don't know sufficiently. If Sir Arthur Pollexfen were still training, and not so old—"

"Sir Arthur Pollexfen is not old," said my uncle Valentine. "He cannot be more than seventy-two or seventy-three."

"But at that age you cannot expect a man to turn out at five in the morning and oversee gallops."

"How little you know Mayo men," said

my uncle Valentine. "And Sir Arthur with all his triumphs never won a Derby. He will come."

"Even at that, sir, how are you going to get a crack jockey? Most big owners have first or second call on them. And the great free lances, you cannot engage one of those and ensure secrecy."

"That," said my uncle Valentine, "is already arranged. Lady Clontarf has a Gitano, or Spanish gypsy in whom her confidence is boundless. And now," said my uncle Valentine, "we come to the really diplomatic part of the proceeding. Trial horses are needed, so that I am commissioned to approach you with delicacy and ask you if you will bring up your two excellent horses Ducks and Drakes and the Saint Simon colt and help train Lady Clontarf's horse. I don't see why you should object."

To bring up the two darlings of my heart, and put them under the care of a trainer who had won the Gold Cup at Ascot fifty years before, and hadn't run a horse for twelve years, and have them ridden by this Gitano or Spanish gypsy, as my uncle called him; to have them used as trial horses to this colt which might not be good enough for a starter's hack. Ah, no! Not damned likely. I hardened my heart against the pleading gaze of James Carabine.

"Will you or won't you?" roared my uncle diplomatically.

My aunt Jenepher laid down the lace she was making, and reaching across, her fingers caught my sleeve and ran down to my hand, and her hand caught mine.

"Kerry will," she said.

So that was decided.

"Kerry," said my uncle Valentine, "will you see Lady Clontarf home?"

I was rather surprised. I had thought she was staying with us. And I was a bit bothered, for it is not hospitality to allow the visitor to Destiny to put up at the local pub. But James Carabine whispered: "'Tis on the downs she's staying, Master Kerry, in her own great van with four horses." It was difficult to believe that the tall graceful lady in the golden and red Spanish shawl, with the quiet speech of our own people, was a roaming gypsy, with the whole world as her home.

"Good night, Jenepher. Good night, Valentine. *Boshto dok*, good luck, James Carabine!"

"*Boshto dok, mi pen*. Good luck, sister."

We went out into the October night of the full moon—the hunter's moon—and away from the great fire of turf and bog-wood in our drawing-room the night was vital with an electric cold. One could sense the film of ice in the bogs, and the drumming of snipe's wings, disturbed by some roving dog, come to our ears. So bright was the moon that each whitewashed apple tree stood out clear in the orchard, and as we took the road toward Grey River, we could see a barkentine offshore, with sails of polished silver—some boat from Bilbao probably, making for the Clyde, in the daytime a scrubby ore carrier but to-night a ship out of some old sea story, as of Magellan, or our own Saint Brendan:

"*Feach air muir lionadh gealach buidhe mar ór*," she quoted in Gaelic; "See on the filling sea the full moon yellow as gold. . . . It is full moon and full tide, Kerry; if you make a wish, it will come true."

"I wish you success in the Derby, Madame."

Ahead of us down the road moved a little group to the sound of fiddle and mouth organ. It was the Romany body-guard ready

to protect their chieftainess on her way home.

"You mean that, I know, but you dislike the idea. Why?"

"Madame," I said, "if you can read my thoughts as easily as that, it's no more impertinent to speak than think. I have heard a lot about a great colt to-night, and of his chance for the greatest race in the world, and that warms my heart. But I have heard more about money, and that chills me."

"I am so old, Kerry, that the glory of winning the Derby means little to me. Do you know how old I am? I am six years short of an hundred old."

"Then the less—" I began, and stopped short, and could have chucked myself over the cliff for my unpardonable discourtesy.

"Then the less reason for my wanting money," the old lady said. "Is not that so?"

"Exactly, Madame."

"Kerry," she said, "does my name mean anything to you?"

"It has bothered me all evening. Lady Clontarf, I am so sorry my father's son should appear to you so rude and ignorant a lout."

"Mifanwy, Countess Clontarf and Kin-cora."

I gaped like an idiot. "The line of great Brian Boru. But I thought—"

"Did you really ever think of it, Kerry?"

"Not really, Madame," I said. "It's so long ago, so wonderful. It's like that old city they speak of in the country tales, under Ownaglass, the grey river, with its spires and great squares. It seems to me to have vanished like that, in rolling clouds of thunder."

"The last O'Neill has vanished, and the last Plantagenet. But great Brian's strain remains. When I married my lord," she

said quietly, "it was in a troubled time. Our ears had not forgotten the musketry of Waterloo, and England was still shaken by fear of the Emperor, and poor Ireland was hurt and wounded. As you know, Kerry, no peer of the older faith sat in College Green. It is no new thing to ennoble, and steal an ancient name. Pitt and Napoleon passed their leisure hours at it. So that of O'Briens, Kerry, sirred and lorded, there are a score, but my lord was Earl of Clontarf and Kincora since before the English came.

"If my lord was of the great blood of Kincora, myself was not lacking in blood. We Romanies are old, Kerry, so old that no man knows our beginning, but that we came from the uplands of India centuries before history. We are a strong, vital race, and we remain with our language, our own customs, our own laws until this day. And to certain families of us, the Romanies all over the world do reverence, as to our own, the old Lovells. There are three Lovells, Kerry, the *dinelo* or foolish Lovells, the *gozvero* or cunning Lovells, and the *puro* Lovells, the old Lovells. I am of the old Lovells. My father was the great Mairik Lovell. So you see I am of great stock too."

"Dear Madame, one has only to see you to know that."

"My lord had a small place left him near the Village of Swords, and it was near there I met him. He wished to buy a horse from my father Mairik, a stallion my father had brought all the way from the Nejd in Arabia. My lord could not buy that horse. But when I married my lord, it was part of my dowry, that and two handfuls of uncut Russian emeralds, and a chest of gold coins, Russian and Indian and Turkish coins, all gold. So I did not come empty-handed to my lord."

"Madame, do you wish to tell me this?"

"I wish to tell it to you, Kerry, because I want you for a friend to my little people, the sons of my son's son. You must know everything about friends to understand them.

"My lord was rich only in himself and in his ancestry. But with the great Arab stallion and the emeralds and the gold coins we were well. We did a foolish thing, Kerry; we went to London. My lord wished it, and his wishes were my wishes, although something told me we should not have gone. In London I made my lord sell the great Arab. He did not wish to, because it came with me, nor did I wish to, because my father had loved it so, but I made him sell it. All the Selim horses of to-day are descended from him, Sheykh Selim.

"My lord loved horses, Kerry. He knew horses, but he had no luck. Newmarket Heath is a bad spot for those out of luck. And my lord grew worried. When one is worried, Kerry, the heart contracts a little,—is it not so? Or don't you know yet? Also another thing bothered my lord. He was with English people, and English people have their codes and ordinances. They are good people, Kerry, very honest. They go to churches, and like sad songs, but whether they believe in God, or whether they have hearts or have no hearts, I do not know. Each thing they do by rote and custom, and they are curious in this: they will make excuses for a man who has done a great crime, but no excuses for a man who neglects a trivial thing. An eccentricity of dress is not forgiven. An eccentric is an outsider. So that English are not good for Irish folk.

"My own people," she said proudly, "are simple people, kindly and loyal as your family know. A marriage to them is a deep

thing, not the selfish love of one person for another, but involving many factors. A man will say: Mifanwy Lovell's father saved my honour once. What can I do for Mifanwy Lovell and Mifanwy Lovell's man? And the Lovells said when we were married: Brothers, the *gawjo rai*, the foreign gentleman, may not understand the gypsy way, that our sorrows are his sorrows, and our joys his, but we understand that his fights are our fights, and his interests the interests of the Lovell Clan.

"My people were always about my lord, and my lord hated it. In our London house in the morning, there were always gypsies waiting to tell my lord of a great fight coming off quietly on Epsom Downs, which it might interest him to see, or of a good horse to be bought cheaply, or some news of a dog soon to run in a coursing match for a great stake, and of the dog's excellences or his defects. They wanted no money. They only wished to do him a kindness. But my lord was embarrassed, until he began to loathe the sight of a gypsy neckerchief. Also, in the race courses, in the betting ring where my lord would be, a gypsy would pay hard-earned entrance money to tell my lord quietly of something they had noticed that morning in the gallops, or horses to be avoided in betting, or of neglected horses which would win. All kindnesses to my lord. But my lord was with fashionable English folk, who do not understand one's having a strange friend. Their uplifted eyebrows made my lord ashamed of the poor Romanies. These things are things you might laugh at, with laughter like sunshine, but there would be clouds in your heart.

"The end came at Ascot, Kerry, where the young queen was, and the Belgian king, and the great nobles of the court. Into the paddock came one of the greatest of gypsies,

Tyso Herne, who had gone before my marriage with a great draft of Norman trotting horses to Mexico, and came back with a squadron of ponies, suitable for polo. Tyso was a vast man, a *pawni Romany*, a fair gypsy. His hair was red, and his moustache was long and curling, like a Hungarian pandour's. He had a flaunting *diklo* of fine yellow silk about his neck, and the buttons on his coat were gold Indian mohurs, and on his bell-shaped trousers were braids of silver bells, and the spurs on his Wellingtons were fine silver, and his hands were covered with rings, Kerry, with stones in them such as even the young queen did not have. It was not vulgar ostentation. It was just that Tyso felt rich and merry, and no stone on his hand was as fine as his heart.

"When he saw me he let a roar out of him that was like the roar of the ring when the horses are coming in to the stretch.

"'Before God,' he shouted, 'it's Mifanwy Lovell.' And, though I am not a small woman, Kerry, he tossed me in the air, and caught me in the air. And he laughed and kissed me, and I laughed and kissed him, so happy was I to see great Tyso once more, safe from over the sea.

"'Go get your *rom, mi tshai*, your husband, my lass, and we'll go to the *kitshima* and have a jeraboam of Champagne wine.'"

"But I saw my lord walk off with thunder in his face, and all the English folk staring and some women laughing. So I said: 'I will go with you alone, Tyso.' For Tyso Herne had been my father's best friend and my mother's cousin, and had held me as a baby, and no matter how he looked, or who laughed, he was well come for me.

"Of what my lord said, and of what I said in rebuttal, we will not speak. One says foolish things in anger, but, foolish or

not, they leave scars. For out of the mouth come things forgotten, things one thinks dead. But before the end of the meeting, I went to Tyso Herne's van. He was braiding a whip with fingers light as a woman's, and when he saw me he spoke quietly.

"Is all well with thee, Mifanwy?"

"Nothing is well with me, father's friend."

"And so I went back to my people, and I never saw my lord any more."

We had gone along until in the distance I could see the gypsy fire, and turning the headland we saw the light on Farewell Point. A white flash; a second's rest; a red flash; three seconds occultation; then white and red again. There is something heartening and brave in Farewell Light. Ireland keeps watch over her share of the Atlantic sea.

"When I left my lord, I was with child, and when I was delivered of him, and the child weaned and strong, I sent him to my lord, for every man wants his man child, and every family its heir. But when he was four and twenty he came back to me, for the roving gypsy blood and the fighting Irish blood were too much for him. He was never Earl of Clontarf. He died while my lord still lived. He married a Herne, a grandchild of Tyso, a brave golden girl. And he got killed charging in the Balkan Wars.

"Niall's wife—my son's name was Niall—understood, and when young Niall was old enough, we sent him to my lord. My lord was old at this time, older than his years, and very poor. But of my share of money he would have nothing. My lord died when Niall's Niall was at school, so the little lad became Earl of Clontarf and Kincora. I saw to it he had sufficient money, but he married no rich woman. He married a poor

Irish girl, and by her had two children, Niall and Alick. He was interested in horses, and rode well, my English friends tell me. But mounted on a brute in the Punchestown races, he made a mistake at the stone wall. He did not know the horse very well. So he let it have its head at the stone wall. It threw its head up, took the jump by the roots, and so Niall's Niall was killed. His wife, the little Irish girl, turned her face away from life and died.

"The boys are fifteen and thirteen now, and soon they will go into the world. I want them to have a fair chance, and it is for this reason I wish them to have money. I have been rich and then poor, and then very rich and again poor, and rich again and now poor. But if this venture succeeds, the boys will be all right."

"Ye-s," I said.

"You don't seem very enthusiastic, Kerry."

"We have a saying," I told her, "that money won from a bookmaker is only lent."

"If you were down on a race meeting and on the last race of the last day you won a little, what would you say?"

"I'd say I only got a little of my own back."

"Then we only get a little of our own back over the losses of a thousand years."

We had come now to the encampment. Around the great fire were tall swarthy men with coloured neckchiefs, who seemed more reserved, cleaner than the English gypsy. They rose quietly as the gypsy lady came. The great spotted Dalmatian dogs rose too. In the half light the picketed horses could be seen, quiet as trees.

"This is the Younger of Destiny Bay," said the old lady, "who is kind enough to be our friend."

"*Sa shan, rai!*" they spoke with quiet courtesy. "How are you, sir?"

Lady Clontarf's maid hurried forward with a wrap, scolding, and speaking English with beautiful courtesy. "You are dreadful, sister. You go walking the roads at night like a courting girl in spring. Gentleman, you are wrong to keep the *rawnee* out, and she an old woman and not well."

"Supplista," Lady Clontarf chided, "you have no more manners than a growling dog."

"I am the *rawnee's* watchdog," the girl answered.

"Madame, your maid is right. I will go now."

"Kerry," she stopped me, "will you be friends with my little people?"

"I will be their true friend," I promised, and I kissed her hand.

"God bless you!" she said. And "*kushto bok, rai!*" the gypsies wished me. "Good luck, sir!" And I left the camp for my people's house. The hunter's moon was dropping toward the edge of the world, and the light on Farewell Point flashed seaward its white and red, and as I walked along, I noticed that a wind from Ireland had sprung up, and the Bilbao boat was bowling along nor'east on the starboard tack. It seemed to me an augury.

In those days, before my aunt Jenepher's marriage to Patrick Herne, the work of Destiny Bay was divided in this manner: my dear aunt Jenepher was, as was right, supreme in the house. My uncle Valentine planned and superintended the breeding of the harness ponies, and sheep, and black Dexter cattle which made Destiny Bay so feared at the Dublin Horse Show and at the Bath and West. My own work was the farms. To me fell the task of preparing the

stables and training grounds for Lady Clontarf's and my own horses. It was a relief and an adventure to give up thinking of turnips, wheat, barley, and seeds, and to examine the downs for training ground. In my great grandfather's time, in pre-Union days, many a winner at the Curragh had been bred and trained at Destiny Bay. The soil of the downs is chalky, and the matted roots of the woven herbage have a certain give in them in the driest weather. I found out my great-grandfather's mile and a half, and two miles and a half with a turn and shorter gallops of various gradients. My grandfather had used them as a young man, but mainly for hunters, horses which he sold for the great Spanish and Austrian regiments. But to my delight the stables were as good as ever. Covered with reed thatch, they required few repairs. The floors were of chalk, and the boxes beautifully ventilated. There were also great tanks for rainwater, which is of all water the best for horses in training. There were also a few stalls for restless horses. I was worried a little about lighting, but my uncle Valentine told me that Sir Arthur Pollexfen allowed no artificial lights where he trained. Horses went to bed with the fowls and got up at cockcrow.

My own horses I got from Robinson without hurting his feelings. "It's this way, Robinson," I told him. "We're trying to do a crazy thing at Destiny, and I'm not bringing them to another trainer. I'm bringing another trainer there. I can tell you no more."

"Not another word, Mr. Kerry. Bring them back when you want to. I'm sorry to say good-bye to the wee colt. But I wish you luck."

We bought three more horses, and a horse for Ann-Dolly. So that with the six

we had a rattling good little stable. When I saw Sir Arthur Pollexfen, my heart sank a little, for he seemed so much out of a former century. Small, ruddy-cheeked, with the white hair of a bishop, and a bishop's courtesy, I never thought he could run a stable. I thought, perhaps, he had grown too old and had been thinking for a long time now of the Place whither he was going, and that we had brought him back from his thoughts and he had left his vitality behind. His own servant came with him to Destiny Bay, and though we wished to have him in the house with us, yet he preferred to stay in a cottage by the stables. I don't know what there was about his clothes, but they were all of an antique though a beautiful cut. He never wore riding breeches but trousers of a bluish cloth and strapped beneath his varnished boots. A flowered waistcoat with a satin stock, a short covert coat, a grey bowler hat and gloves. Always there was a freshly cut flower in his buttonhole, which his servant got every evening from the greenhouses at Destiny Bay, and kept overnight in a glass of water into which the least drop of whiskey had been poured. I mention this as extraordinary, as most racing men will not wear flowers. They believe flowers bring bad luck, though how the superstition arose I cannot tell. His evening trousers also buckled under his shoes, or rather half Wellingtons, such as army men wear, and though there was never a crease in them there was never a wrinkle. He would never drink port after dinner when the ladies had left, but a little whiskey punch which James Carabine would compose for him. Compared to the hard shrewd-eyed trainers I knew, this bland, soft-spoken old gentleman filled me with misgiving.

I got a different idea of the old man the first morning I went out to the gallops. The sun had hardly risen when the old gentleman appeared, as beautifully turned out as though he were entering the Show Ring at Ballsbridge. His servant held his horse, a big grey, while he swung into the saddle as light as a boy. His hack was feeling good that morning, and he and I went off toward the training ground at a swinging canter, the old gentleman half standing in his stirrups, with a light firm grip of his knees, riding as Cossacks do, his red terrier galloping behind him. When we settled down to walk he told me the pedigree of his horse, descended through Matchem and Whalebone from Oliver Cromwell's great charger The White Turk, or Place's White Turk, as it was called from the Lord Protector's stud manager. To hear him follow the intricacies of breeding was a revelation. Then I understood what a great horseman he was. On the training ground he was like a marshal commanding an army, such respect did every one accord him. The lads perched on the horses' withers, his head man, the grooms, all watched the apple-ruddy face, while he said little or nothing. He must have had eyes in the back of his head, though. For when a colt we had brought from Mr. Gubbins, a son of Galtee More's, started lashing out and the lad up seemed like taking a toss, the old man's voice came low and sharp: "Don't fall off, boy." And the boy did not fall off. The red terrier watched the trials with a keen eye, and I believe honestly that he knew as much about horses as any one of us and certainly more than any of us about his owner. When my lovely Ducks and Drakes went out at the lad's call to beat the field by two lengths over five furlongs, the dog looked up at Sir

Arthur and Sir Arthur looked back at the dog, and what they thought toward each other, God knoweth.

I expected when we rode away that the old gentleman would have some word to say about my horses, but coming home, his remarks were of the country. "Your Derry is a beautiful country, young Mister Kerry," he said, "though it would be treason to say that in my own country of Mayo." Of my horses not a syllable.

He could be the most silent man I have ever known, though giving the illusion of keeping up a conversation. You could talk to him, and he would smile, and nod at the proper times, as though he were devouring every word you said. In the end you thought you had a very interesting conversation. But as to whether he had even heard you, you were never sure. On the other hand when he wished to speak, he spoke to the point and beautifully. Our bishop, on one of his pastoral visitations, if that be the term, stayed at Destiny Bay, and because my uncle Cosimo is a bishop too, and because he felt he ought to do something for our souls he remonstrated with us for starting our stable. My uncle Valentine was livid, but said nothing, for no guest must be contradicted in Destiny Bay.

"For surely, Sir Valentine, no man of breeding can mingle with the rogues, cut-purses and their womenfolk who infest race courses, drunkards, bawds and common gamblers, without lowering himself to some extent to their level," his Lordship purred. "Yourself, one of the wardens of Irish chivalry, must give an example to the common people."

"Your Lordship," broke in old Sir Arthur Pollexfen, "is egregiously misinformed. In all periods of the world's history, eminent personages have concerned themselves with

the racing of horses. We read of Philip of Macedon, that while campaigning in Asia Minor, a courier brought him news of two events, of the birth of his son Alexander and of the winning, by his favourite horse, of the chief race at Athens, and we may reasonably infer that his joy over the winning of the race was equal to if not greater than that over the birth of Alexander. In the life of Charles the Second, the traits which do most credit to that careless monarch are his notable and gentlemanly death and his affection for his great race horse Old Rowley. Your Lordship is, I am sure," said Sir Arthur, more blandly than any ecclesiastic could, "too sound a Greek scholar not to remember the epigrams of Maecius and Philodemus, which show what interest these antique poets took in the racing of horses. And coming to present times, your Lordship must have heard that his Majesty (whom God preserve!) has won two Derbies, once with the leased horse Minoru, and again with his own great Per-simmon. The premier peer of Scotland, the Duke of Hamilton, Duke of Chastellerault in France, Duke of Brandon in England, hereditary prince of Baden, is prouder of his fine mare Eau de Vie than of all his titles. As to the Irish families, the Persses of Galway, the Dawsons of Dublin, and my own, the Pollexfens of Mayo, have always been interested in the breeding and racing of horses. And none of these—my punch, if you please, James Carabine!—are, as your Lordship puts it, drunkards, bawds, and common gamblers. I fear your Lordship has been reading—" and he cocked his eye, bright as a wren's, at the bishop, "religious publications of the sensational and morbid type."

It was all I could do to keep from leap-

ing on the table and giving three loud cheers for the County of Mayo.

Now, on those occasions, none too rare, when my uncle Valentine and I differed on questions of agricultural economy, or of national polity, or of mere faith and morals, he poured torrents of invective over my head, which mattered little. But when he was really aroused to bitterness he called me "modern." And by modern my uncle Valentine meant the quality inherent in brown buttoned boots, in white waistcoats worn with dinner jackets, in nasty little motor cars—in fine, those things before which the angels of God recoil in horror. While I am not modern in that sense, I am modern in this, that I like to see folk getting on with things. Of Lady Clontarf and of *Irlandais colt*, I heard no more. On the morning after seeing her home I called over to the caravan but it was no longer there. There was hardly a trace of it. I found a broken fern and a slip of oaktree, the gypsy patteran. But what it betokened or whither it pointed I could not tell. I had gone to no end of trouble in getting the stables and training grounds ready, and Sir Arthur Pollexfen had been brought out of his retirement in the County of Mayo. But still no word of the horse. I could see my uncle Valentine and Sir Arthur taking their disappointment bravely, if it never arrived, and murmuring some courteous platitude, out of the reign of good Queen Victoria, that it was a lady's privilege to change her mind. That might console them in their philosophy, but it would only make me hot with rage. For to me there is no sex in people of standards. They do not let one another down.

Then one evening the horse arrived.

It arrived at sundown in a large van drawn

by four horses, a van belonging evidently to some circus. It was yellow and covered with paintings of nymphs being wooed by swains, in clothes hardly fitted to agricultural pursuits: of lions of terrifying aspect being put through their paces by a trainer of an aspect still more terrifying: of an Indian gentleman with a vast turban and a small loincloth playing a penny whistle to a snake that would have put the heart crosswise in Saint Patrick himself; of a most adipose lady in tights swinging from a ring while the husband and seven sons hung on to her like bees in a swarm. Floridly painted over the van was "Arsène Bombaudiac, Prop., Bayonne." The whole added no dignity to Destiny Bay, and if some sorceress had disclosed to Mr. Bombaudiac of Bayonne that he was about to lose a van by fire at low tide on the beach of Destiny in Ireland within forty-eight hours—The driver was a burly gypsy, while two of the most utter scoundrels I have ever laid eyes on sat beside him on the wide seat.

"Do you speak English?" I asked the driver.

"Yes, sir," he answered, "I am a *Petulengro*."

"Which of these two beauties beside you is the jockey?"

"Neither, sir. These two are just gypsy fighting men. The jockey is inside with the horse."

My uncle Valentine came down stroking his great red beard. He seemed fascinated by the pictures on the van. "What your poor aunt Jenepher, Kerry," he said, "misses by being blind!"

"What she is spared, sir! Boy," I called one of the servants, "go get Sir Arthur Pollexfen. Where do you come from?" I asked the driver.

"From Dax, sir, in the South of France."

"You're a liar," I said. "Your horses are half-bred Clydesdale. There's no team like that in the South of France."

"We came to Dieppe with an *attelage basque*, six yoked oxen. But I was told they would not be allowed in England, so I telegraphed our chief, Pirus Petulengro, to have a team at Newhaven. So I am not a liar, sir."

"I am sorry."

"Sir, that is all right."

Sir Arthur Pollexfen came down from where he had been speaking to my aunt Jenepher. I could see he was tremendously excited, because he walked more slowly than was usual, spoke with more deliberation. He winced a little as he saw the van. But he was of the old heroic school. He said nothing.

"I think, Sir Valentine," he said, "we might have the horse out."

"Ay, we might as well know the worst," said my uncle Valentine.

A man jumped from the box, and swung the crossbar up. The door opened and into the road stepped a small man in dark clothes. Never on this green earth of God's have I seen such dignity. He was dressed in dark clothes with a wide dark hat, and his face was brown as soil. White starched cuffs covered half of his hands. He took off his hat and bowed first to my uncle Valentine, then to Sir Arthur, and to myself last. His hair was plastered down on his forehead, and the impression you got was of an ugly rugged face, with piercing black eyes. He seemed to say: "Laugh, if you dare!" But laughter was the furthest thing from us, such tremendous masculinity did the small man have. He looked at us searchingly, and I had the feeling that if he didn't like us, for two pins he would have the bar across the van door again and be off with

the horse. Then he turned and spoke gutturally to some one inside.

A boy as rugged as himself, in a Basque cap and with a Basque sash, led first a small donkey round as a barrel out of the outrageous van. One of the gypsies took it, and the next moment the boy led out the Irlandais colt.

He came out confidently, quietly, approaching gentlemen as a gentleman, a beautiful brown horse, small, standing perfectly. I had just one glance at the sound strong legs and the firm ribs, before his head caught my eye. The graceful neck, the beautiful small muzzle, the gallant eyes. In every inch of him you could see breeding. While Sir Arthur was examining his hocks, and my uncle Valentine was standing weightily considering strength of lungs and heart, my own heart went out to the lovely eyes that seemed to ask: "Are these folk friends?"

Now I think you could parade the Queen of Sheba in the show ring before me without extracting more than an offhand compliment out of me, but there is something about a gallant thoroughbred that makes me sing. I can quite understand the trainer who, pointing to Manifesto, said that if he ever found a woman with a shape like that, he'd marry her. So out of my heart through my lips came the cry: "*Och, asthore!*" which is, in our Gaelic, "Oh, my dear!"

The Spanish jockey, whose brown face was rugged and impassive as a Pyrenee, looked at me, and broke into a wide, understanding smile.

"*Si, si, Señor,*" he uttered, "*si, si!*"

Never did a winter pass so merrily, so advantageously at Destiny Bay. Usually there is fun enough with the hunting, but with a racing stable in winter there is always

anxiety. Is there a suspicion of a cough in the stables? Is the ground too hard for gallops? Will snow come and hold the gallops up for a week? Fortunately we are right on the edge of the great Atlantic drift, and you can catch at times the mild amazing atmosphere of the Caribbean. While Scotland sleeps beneath its coverlet of snow, and England shivers in its ghastly fog, we on the northeast seaboard of Ireland go through a winter that is short as a mid-summer night in Lofoden. The trees have hardly put off their gold and brown until we perceive their cheeping green. And one soft day we say: "Soon on that bank will be the fairy gold of the primrose." And behold, while you are looking the primrose is there!

Each morning at sun-up, the first string of horses were out. Quietly as a general officer reviewing a parade old Sir Arthur sat on his grey horse, his red dog beside him, while Geraghty, his head man, galloped about with his instructions. Hares bolted from their forms in the grass. The sun rolled away the mists from the blue mountains of Donegal. At the starting gate, which Sir Arthur had set up, the red-faced Irish boys steered their mounts from a walk toward the tapes. A pull at the lever and they were off. The old man seemed to notice everything. "Go easy, boy, don't force that horse!" His low voice would carry across the downs. "Don't lag there, Murphy, ride him!" And when the gallop was done, he would trot across to the horses, his red dog trotting beside him, asking how Sarsfield went. Did Ducks and Drakes seem interested? Did Rustum go up to his bit? Then they were off at a slow walk toward their sand bath, where they rolled like dogs. Then the sponging and the rubbing, and the fresh hay in the mangers kept as

clean as a hospital. At eleven the second string came out. At half-past three the lads were called to their horses, and a quarter of an hour's light walking was given to them. At four, Sir Arthur made his "stables," questioning the lads in each detail as to how the horses had fed, running his hand over their legs to feel for any heat in the joints that might betoken trouble.

Small as our stable was, I doubt if there was one in Great Britain and Ireland to compare with it in each fitting and necessity for training a race horse. Sir Arthur pinned his faith to old black tartar oats, of about forty-two pounds to the bushel, bran mashes with a little linseed, and sweet old meadow hay.

The Irlandais colt went beautifully. The Spanish jockey's small brother, Joselito, usually rode it, while the jockey's self, whose name we were told was Frasco, Frasco Moreno—usually called, he told us, Don Frasco—looked on. He constituted himself a sort of sub-trainer for the colt, allowing none else to attend to its feeding. The small donkey was its invariable stable companion, and had to be led out to exercise with it. The donkey belonged to Joselito. Don Frasco rode many trials on the other horses. He might appear small standing, but on horseback he seemed a large man, so straight did he sit in the saddle. The little boys rode with a fairly short stirrup, but the gitano scorned anything but the traditional seat. He never seemed to move on a horse. Yet he could do what he liked with it.

The Irlandais colt was at last named Romany Baw, or "gypsy friend" in English, as James Carabine explained to us, and Lady Clontarf's colours registered, quartered red and gold. When the winter lists came out, we saw the horse quoted at a hundred to one, and later at the call over

of the Victoria Club, saw that price offered but not taken. My uncle Valentine made a journey to Dublin, to arrange for Lady Clontarf's commission being placed, putting it in the hands of a Derry man who had become big in the affairs of Tattersall's. What he himself and Sir Arthur Pollexfen and the jockey had on I do not know, but he arranged to place an hundred pounds of mine, and fifty of Ann-Dolly's. As the months went by, the odds crept down gradually to thirty-three to one, stood there for a while and went out to fifty. Meanwhile Sir James became a sensational favourite at fives, and Toison d'Or varied between tens and one hundred to eight. Some news of a great trial of Lord Shire's horse had leaked out which accounted for the ridiculously short price. But no word did or could get out about Lady Clontarf's colt. The two gypsy fighters from Dax patrolled Destiny Bay, and God help any poor tipster or wretched newspaper tout who tried to plumb the mysteries of training. I honestly believe a bar of iron and a bog hole would have been his end.

The most fascinating figure in this crazy world was the gypsy jockey. To see him talk to Sir Arthur Pollexfen was a phenomenon. Sir Arthur would speak in English and the gypsy answer in Spanish, neither knowing a word of the other's language, yet each perfectly understanding the other. I must say that this only referred to how a horse ran, or how Romany Baw was feeding and feeling. As to more complicated problems, Ann-Dolly was called in, to translate his Spanish.

"Ask him," said Sir Arthur, "has he ever ridden in France?"

"Oiga, Frasco," and Ann-Dolly would burst into a torrent of gutturals.

"Si, si, Doña Anna."

"Ask him has he got his clearance from the Jockey Club of France?"

"Seguro, Don Arturo!" And out of his capacious pocket he extracted the French Jockey Club's "character." They made a picture I will never forget, the old horseman ageing so gently, the vivid boyish beauty of Ann-Dolly, and the overpowering dignity and manliness of the jockey. Always, except when he was riding or working at his anvil,—for he was our smith too—he wore the dark clothes, which evidently some village tailor of the Pyrenees made for him—the very short coat, the trousers tubed like cigarettes, his stiff shirt with the vast cuffs. He never wore a collar, nor a neckerchief. Always his back was flat as the side of a house.

When he worked at the anvil, with his young ruffian of a brother at the bellows, he sang. He had shakes and grace notes enough to make a thrush quit. Ann-Dolly translated one of his songs for us.

*No tengo padre ni madre...
Que desgraciado soy yo!
Soy como el arbol solo
Que echas frutas y no echa flor...*

"He sings he has no father or mother. How out of luck he is! He is like a lonely tree, which bears the fruit and not the flower."

"God bless my soul, Kerry," my uncle was shocked. "The little man is homesick."

"No, no!" Ann-Dolly protested. "He is very happy. That is why he sings a sad song."

One of the reasons of the little man's happiness was the discovery of our national game of handball. He strolled over to the Irish Village and discovered the court back of the Inniskillen Dragoon, that most notable of rural pubs. He was tremendously excited, and getting some gypsy to translate

for him, challenged the local champion for the stake of a barrel of porter. He made the local champion look like a carthorse in the Grand National. When it was told to me I couldn't believe it. Ann-Dolly explained to me that the great game of Basque country was *pelota*.

"But don't they play *pelota* with a basket?"

"Real *pelota* is *à mains nues*, 'with the hands naked.'"

"You mean Irish handball," I told her.

I regret that the population of Destiny made rather a good thing out of Don Frasco's prowess on the court, going from village to village, and betting on a certain win. The end was a match between Mick Tierney, the Portrush Jarvey and the jockey. The match was billed for the champion of Ulster, and Don Frasco was put down on the card, to explain his lack of English, as Danny Frask, the Glenties Miracle, the Glenties being a district of Donegal where Erse is the native speech. The match was poor, the Portrush Jarvey, after the first game, standing and watching the ball hiss past him with his eyes on his cheek bones. All Donegal seemed to have turned out for the fray. When the contest was over, a big Glenties man pushed his way toward the jockey.

"Dublin and London and New York are prime cities," he chanted, "but Glenties is truly magnificent. *Kir do lauv anshin, a railt na hooee*, 'Put your hand there, Star of the North.'"

"*No entiendo, señor*," said Don Frasco. And with that the fight began.

James Carabine was quick enough to get the jockey out of the court before he was lynched. But Destiny Bay men, gypsies, fishers, citizens of Derry, bookmakers and their clerks and the fighting tribes of Done-

gal went to it with a vengeance. Indeed, according to experts, nothing like it, for spirit or results, had been seen since or before the Prentice Boys had chased King James (to whom God give his deserts!) from Derry Walls. The removal of the stunned and wounded from the courts drew the attention of the police, for the fight was continued in grim silence. But on the entrance of half a dozen peelers commanded by a huge sergeant, Joselito, the jockey's young brother, covered himself with glory. Leaping on the reserved seats, he brought his right hand over hard and true to the sergeant's jaw, and the sergeant was out for half an hour. Joselito was arrested, but the case was laughed out of court. The idea of a minuscule jockey who could ride at ninety pounds knocking out six foot three of Royal Irish Constabulary was too much. Nothing was found on him but his bare hands, a packet of cigarettes and thirty sovereigns he had won over the match. But I knew better. I decided to prove him with hard questions.

"Ask him in Romany, James Carabine, what he had wrapped around that horse-shoe he threw away."

"He says: 'Tow, Mister Kerry.'"

"Get me my riding crop," I said; "I'll take him behind the stables." And the training camp lost its best lightweight jockey for ten days, the saddle suddenly becoming repulsive to him. I believe he slept on his face.

But the one who was really wild about the affair was Ann-Dolly. She came across from Spanish Men's Rest flaming with anger.

"Because a Spanish wins, there is fighting, there is anger. If an Irish wins, there is joy, there is drinking. Oh, shame of sportsmanship!"

"Oh, shut your gab, Ann-Dolly," I told her. "They didn't know he was a Spanish, as you call it."

"What did they think he was if not a Spanish? Tell me. I demand it of you."

"They thought he was Welsh."

"Oh, in that case..." said Ann-Dolly, completely mollified. *Ipsa hibernis hibernior!*

I wouldn't have you think that all was beer and skittles, as the English say, in training Romany Baw for the Derby. As spring came closer, the face of the old trainer showed signs of strain. The Lincoln Handicap was run and the Grand National passed, and suddenly flat-racing was on us. And now not the Kohinoor was watched more carefully than the Derby horse. We had a spanking trial on a course as nearly approaching the Two Thousand Guineas route as Destiny Downs would allow, and when Romany Baw flew past us, beating Ducks and Drakes who had picked him up at the mile for the uphill dash, and Sir Arthur clicked his watch, I saw his tense face relax.

"He ran well," said the old man.

"He'll walk in," said my uncle Valentine.

My uncle Valentine and Jenico and Ann-Dolly were going across to Newmarket Heath for the big race, but the spring of the year is the time that the farmer must stay by his land, and nurse it like a child. All farewells, even for a week, are sad, and I was loath to see the horses go into the races. Romany Baw had a regular summer bloom on him and his companion, the donkey, was corpulent as an alderman. Ducks and Drakes looked rough and backward, but that didn't matter.

"You've got the best-looking horse in the United Kingdom," I told Sir Arthur.

"Thank you, Kerry," the old man was pleased. "And as to Ducks and Drakes, looks aren't everything."

"Sure, I know that," I told him.

"I wouldn't be rash," he told me, "but I'd have a little on both. That is, if they go to the post fit and well."

I put in the days as well as I could, getting ready for the Spring Show at Dublin. But my heart and my thoughts were with my people and the horses at Newmarket. I could see my uncle Valentine's deep bow with his hat in his hand as they passed the Roman ditch at Newmarket, giving that squat wall the reverence that racing men have accorded it since races were run there, though why, none know. A letter from Ann-Dolly apprised me that the horses had made a good crossing and that Romany Baw was well—"and you mustn't think, my dear, that your colt is not as much and more to us than the Derby horse, no, Kerry, not for one moment. Lady Clontarf is here, in her caravan, and oh, Kerry, she looks ill. Only her burning spirit keeps her frail body alive. Jenico and I are going down to Eastbourne to see the little Earl and his brother... You will get this letter, cousin, on the morning of the race..."

At noon that day I could stand it no longer so I had James Carabine put the trotter in the dogcart. "There are some things I want in Derry," I told myself, "and I may as well get them to-day as to-morrow." And we went spinning toward Derry Walls. Ducks and Drakes' race was the two-thirty. And after lunch I looked at reapers I might be wanting in July until the time of the race. I went along to the club, and had hardly entered it when I saw the boy putting up the telegram on the notice board.

1, *Ducks and Drakes*, an hundred to

eight; 2, Geneva, four to six; 3, *Ally Sloper*, three to one. "That's that!" I said. Another telegram gave the betting for the Two Thousand: Threes, *Sir James*; seven to two, *Toison d'or*; eights, *Ca' Canny*, *Greek Singer*, *Germanicus*; tens, six or seven horses; twenty to one any other. No word in the betting of the gypsy horse, and I wondered had anything happened. Surely a horse looking as well as he did must have attracted backers' attention. And as I was worrying the result came in, *Romany Baw*, first; *Sir James*, second, *Toison d'Or*, third.

"Kerry," somebody called.

"I haven't a minute," I shouted. Neither I had, for James Carabine was outside, waiting to hear the result. When I told him he said: "There's a lot due to you, Mister Kerry, in laying out those gallops." "Be damned to that!" I said, but I was pleased all the same.

I was on tenterhooks until I got the papers describing the race. Ducks and Drakes' win was dismissed summarily, as that of an Irish outsider, and the jockey, Flory Cantillon (Frasco could not manage the weight), was credited with a clever win of two lengths. But the account of Romany Baw's race filled me with indignation. According to it, the winner got away well, but the favourites were hampered at the start and either could have beaten the Irish trained horse, only that they just didn't. The race was won by half a length, a head separating second and third, and most of the account was given to how the favourites chased the lucky outsider, and in a few more strides would have caught him. There were a few dirty backhanders given at Romany's jockey, who, they said, would be more at home in a circus than on a modern race track. He sat like a rider of a century back, they described it, more like an exponent of the old manège than a modern jockey, and even

while the others were thundering at his horse's hindquarters he never moved his seat or used his whip. The experts' judgment of the race was that the Irish colt was forward in a backward field, and that Romany would be lost on Epsom Downs, especially with its "postillion rider."

But the newspaper criticisms of the jockey and his mount did not seem to bother my uncle Valentine or the trainer or the jockey's self. They came back elated; even the round white donkey had a humorous happy look in his full Latin eye.

"Did he go well?" I asked.

"He trotted it," said my uncle Valentine.

"But the accounts read, sir," I protested, "that the favourites would have caught him in another couple of strides."

"Of course they would," said my uncle Valentine, "at the pace he was going," he added.

"I see," said I.

"You see nothing," said my uncle Valentine. "But if you had seen the race you might talk. The horse is a picture. It goes so sweetly that you wouldn't think it was going at all. And as for the gypsy jockey—"

"The papers say he's antiquated."

"He's seven pounds better than Flory Cantillon," said my uncle Valentine.

I whistled. Cantillon is our best Irish jockey, and his retaining fees are enormous, and justified. "They said he was nearly caught napping—"

"Napping be damned!" exploded my uncle Valentine. "This Spanish gypsy is the finest judge of pace I ever saw. He knew he had the race won, and he never bothered."

"If the horse is as good as that, and you have as high an opinion of the rider, well, sir, I won a hatful over the Newmarket meeting, and as the price hasn't gone below

twenties for the Derby, I'm going after the Ring. There's many a bookmaker will wish he'd stuck to his father's old-clothes business."

"I wouldn't, Kerry," said my uncle Valentine. "I'm not sure I wouldn't hedge a bit of what I have on, if I were you."

I was still with amazement.

"I saw Mifanwy Clontarf," said my uncle Valentine, "and only God and herself and myself and now you, know how ill that woman is."

"But ill or not ill, she won't scratch the horse."

"She won't," said my uncle Valentine, and his emphasis on 'she' chilled me to the heart. "You're forgetting, Kerry," he said very quietly, "the Derby Rule."

Of the Derby itself on Epsom Downs, everybody knows. It is supposed to be the greatest test of a three-year-old in the world, though old William Day used to hold it was easy. The course may have been easy for Lord George Bentinck's famous and unbeaten mare Crucifix, when she won the Oaks in 1840, but most winners over the full course justify their victory in other races. The course starts up a heartbreaking hill, and swinging around the top, comes down again toward Tattenham Corner. If a horse waits to steady itself coming down it is beaten. The famous Fred Archer (whose tortured soul God rest!) used to take Tattenham Corner with one leg over the rails. The straight is uphill. A mile and a half of the trickiest, most heartbreaking ground in the world. Such is Epsom. Its turf has been consecrated by the hoofs of great horses since James I established there a race for the Silver Bell: by Cromwell's great Coffin Mare; by the Arabs, Godolphin and Darby; by the great bay, Malton; by

the prodigious Eclipse; by Diomed, son of Florizel, who went to America. . . .

Over the Derby what sums are wagered no man knows. On it is won the Calcutta Sweepstake, a prize of which makes a man rich for life, and the Stock Exchange sweep, and other sweeps innumerable. Some one has ventured the belief that on it annually are five million of pounds sterling, and whether he is millions short, or millions over none knows. Because betting is illegal.

There are curious customs in regard to it, as this: that when the result is sent over the ticker to clubs, in case of a dead heat, the word "dead heat" must come first, because within recent years a trusted lawyer, wagering trust funds on a certain horse, was waiting by the tape to read the result, and seeing another horse's name come up, went away forthwith and blew his brains out. Had he been less volatile he would have seen his own fancy's name follow that, with "dead heat" after it and been to this day rich and respected. So now, for the protection of such, "dead heat" comes first. A dead heat in the Derby is as rare a thing as there is in the world, but still you can't be too cautious. But the quaintest rule of the Derby is this: that if the nominator of a horse for the Derby Stakes dies, his horse is automatically scratched. There is a legend to the effect that an heir-at-law purposed to kill the owner of an entry, and to run a prime favourite crookedly, and that on hearing this the Stewards of the Jockey Club made the rule. Perhaps it has a more prosaic reason. The Jockey Club may have considered that when a man died, in the trouble of fixing his estates, forfeits would not be paid, and that it was best for all concerned to have the entry scratched. How it came about does not matter, it exists. Whether it is good in law is not certain. Racing folk

will quarrel with His Majesty's Lord Justices of Appeal, with the Privy Council, but they will not quarrel with the Jockey Club. Whether it is good in fact is indisputable, for certain owners can tell stories of narrow escapes from racing gangs, in those old days before the Turf was cleaner than the Church, when attempts were made to noble favourites, when jockeys had not the wings of angels under their silken jackets, when harsh words were spoken about trainers—very, very long ago. There it is, good or bad, the Derby Rule!

As to our bets on the race, they didn't matter. It was just bad luck. But to see the old lady's quarter million of pounds and more go down the pike was a tragedy. We had seen so much of shabby great names that I trembled for young Clontarf and his brother. Armenian and Greek families of doubtful antecedents were always on the lookout for a title for their daughters, and crooked businesses always needed directors of title to catch gulls, so much in the United Kingdom do the poor trust their peers. The boys would not be exactly poor, because the horse, whether or not it ran in the Derby, would be worth a good round sum. If it were as good as my uncle Valentine said, it would win the Leger and the Gold Cup at Ascot. But even with these triumphs it wouldn't be a Derby winner. And the Derby means so much. There are so many people in England who remember dates by the Derby winner's names, as "I was married in *Bend Or's* year", or "the *Achilles* was lost in the China seas, let me see when,—that was in *Sainfoin's* year." Also I wasn't sure that the Spanish gypsy would stay to ride him at Doncaster, or return for Ascot. I found him one day standing on the cliffs of Destiny and looking

long at the sea, and I knew what that meant. And perhaps Romany Baw would not run for another jockey as he ran for him.

I could not think that Death could be so cruel as to come between us and triumph. In Destiny we have a friendliness for the Change which most folk dread. One of our songs says:

"When Mother Death in her warm arms shall embrace me,
Low lull me to sleep with sweet Erin-go-bragh—"

We look upon it as a kind friend who comes when one is tired and twisted with pain, and says: "Listen, *avourneen*, soon the dawn will come, and the tide is on the ebb. We must be going." And we trust him to take us, by a short road or a long road to a place of birds and bees, of which even lovely Destiny is but a clumsy seeming. He could not be such a poor sportsman as to come before the aged gallant lady had won her last gamble. And poor Sir Arthur, who had come out of his old age in Mayo to win a Derby! It would break his heart. And the great horse, it would be so hard on him. Nothing will convince me that a thoroughbred does not know a great race when he runs one. The streaming competitors, the crackle of silk, the roar as they come into the straight, and the sense of the jockey calling on the great heart that the writer of Job knew so well. "The glory of his nostril is terrible," says the greatest of poets. "He pauseth in the valley and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men." Your intellectual will claim that the thoroughbred is an artificial brainless animal evolved by men for their amusement. Your intellectual, here again, is a liar.

Spring came in blue and gold. Blue of

sea and fields and trees; gold of sun and sand and buttercup. Blue of wild hyacinth and bluebell; gold of primrose and laburnum tree. The old gypsy lady was with her caravan near Bordeaux, and from the occasional letter my uncle Valentine got, and from the few words he dropped to me, she was just holding her own. May drowsed by with the cheeping of the little life in the hedgerows. The laburnum floated in a cloud of gold and each day Romany Baw grew stronger. When his blankets were stripped from him he looked a mass of fighting muscle under a covering of satin, and his eye showed that his heart was fighting too. Old Sir Arthur looked at him a few days before we were to go to England, and he turned to me.

"Kerry," he said, very quietly.

"Yes, Sir Arthur."

"All my life I have been breeding and training horses, and it just goes to show," he told me, "that goodness of God that he let me handle this great horse before I died."

The morning before we left my uncle Valentine received a letter which I could see moved him. He swore a little as he does when moved and stroked his vast red beard and looked fiercely at nothing at all.

"Is it bad news, sir?" I asked.

He didn't answer me directly. "Lady Clontarf is coming to the Derby," he told me.

Then it was my turn to swear a little. It seemed to me to be but little short of maniacal to risk a Channel crossing and the treacherous English climate in her stage of health. If she should die on the way or on the downs, then all her planning and our work was for nothing. Why could she not have remained in the soft French air, husbanding her share of life until the event was past!

"She comes of ancient, violent blood," thundered my uncle Valentine, "and where should she be but present when her people or her horses go forth to battle?"

"You are right, sir," I said.

The epithet of "flaming" which the English apply to their June was in this year of grace well deserved. The rhododendrons were bursting into great fountains of scarlet, and near the swans the cygnets paddled, unbelievably small. The larks fluttered in the air above the downs, singing so gallantly that when you heard the trill of the nightingale in the thicket giving his noontime song, you felt inclined to say: "Be damned to that Italian bird; my money's on the wee fellow!" All through Surrey the green walls of spring rose high and thick, and then suddenly coming, as we came, through Leatherhead and topping the hill, in the distance the black colony of the downs showed like a thundercloud. At a quarter mile away, the clamour came to you, like the vibration when great bells have been struck.

The stands and enclosures were packed so thickly that one wondered how movement was possible, how people could enjoy themselves, close as herrings. My uncle Valentine had brought his beautiful harness ponies across from Ireland, "to encourage English interest in the Irish horse" he explained it, but with his beautifully cut clothes, his grey high hat, it seemed to me that more people looked at him as we spun along the road than looked at the horses. Behind us sat James Carabine, with his face brown as autumn and the gold rings in his thickened ears. We got out near the paddock and Carabine took the ribbons. My uncle Valentine said quietly to him: "Find out how things are, James Carabine." And I knew he was referring to the gypsy lady.

Her caravan was somewhere on the Downs guarded by her gypsies, but my uncle had been there the first day of the meeting, and on Monday night, at the National Sporting, some of the gypsies had waited for him coming out and given him news. I asked him how she was, but all his answer was: "It's in the Hands of God."

Along the track toward the grand stand we made our way. On the railings across the track the bookmakers were proclaiming their market: "I'll give fives the field. I'll give nine to one bar two. I'll give twenty to one bar five. Outsiders! Outsiders! Fives *Sir James*. Seven to one *Toison d'Or*. Nines *Honey Bee*. Nines *Welsh Melody*. Ten to one the gypsy horse."

"It runs all right," said my uncle Valentine, "up to now."

"Twenty to one *Maureen Roe!* Twenties *Asclepiades!* Twenty-five *Rifle Ranger*. Here thirty-three to one *Rifle Ranger, Monk of Sussex, or Presumptuous—*"

"Gentlemen, I am here to plead with you not to back the favourite. In this small envelope you will find the number of the winner. For the contemptible sum of two shillings or half a dollar, you may amass a fortune. Who gave the winner of last year's Derby?" a tipster was calling. "Who gave the winner of the Oaks? Who gave the winner of the Steward's Cup?"

"All right, guv'nor, I'll bite. 'Oo the 'ell did?"

Opposite the grand stand the band of the Salvation Army was blaring the music of "Work, for the Night is Coming." Gypsy girls were going around *dukking* or telling fortune. "Ah, gentleman, you've a lucky face. Cross the poor gypsy's hand with silver—"

"You better cut along and see your horse saddled," said my uncle Valentine. Ducks

and Drakes was in the Ranmore Plate and with the penalty he received after Newmarket, Frasco could ride him. As I went toward the paddock I saw the numbers go up, and I saw we were drawn third, which I think is best of all on the tricky Epsom five-furlough dash. I got there in time to see the gypsy swing into the saddle in the green silk jacket and orange cap, and Sir Arthur giving him his orders. "Keep back of the Fusilier," he pointed to the horse, "and then come out. Hit him once if you have to, and no more."

"*Si, si, Don Arturo!*" And he grinned at me.

"Kerry, read this," said the old trainer, and he gave me a newspaper, "and tell me before the race," his voice was trembling a little, "if there's truth in it."

I pushed the paper into my pocket and went back to the box where my uncle Valentine and Jenico and Ann-Dolly were. "What price my horse," I asked in Tattersall's. "Sixes, Mister MacFarlane." "I'll take six hundred to an hundred twice." As I moved away there was a rush to back it. It tumbled in five minutes to five to two.

"And I thought I'd get tens," I said to my uncle Valentine, "with the Fusilier and Bonny Hortense in the race. I wonder who's been backing it."

"I have," said Ann-Dolly. "I got twelves."

"You might have the decency to wait until the owner gets on," I said bitterly. And as I watched the tapes went up. It was a beautiful start. Everything except those on the outside seemed to have a chance as they raced for the rails. I could distinguish the green jacket but vaguely until they came to Tattenham Corner, when I could see Fusilier pull out, and Bonny Hortense follow. But back of Fusilier, racing quietly beside the filly, was the jacket green.

"I wish he'd go up," I said.

"The favourite wins," they were shouting. And a woman in the box next us began to clap her hands calling: "Fusilier's won. Fusilier wins it!"

"You're a damn fool, woman," said Ann-Dolly. "Ducks and Drakes has it." And as she spoke, I could see Frasco hunch forward slightly and dust his mount's neck with his whip. He crept past the hard-pressed Fusilier to win by half a length.

In my joy I nearly forgot the newspaper, and I glanced at it rapidly. My heart sank. "Gypsy Owner Dying as Horse runs in Derby," I read, and reading down it I felt furious. Where the man got his information from I don't know, but he drew a picturesque account of the old gypsy lady on her deathbed on the downs as Romany Baw was waiting in his stall. The account was written the evening before, and "it is improbable she will last the night," it ended. I gave it to my uncle Valentine, who had been strangely silent over my win.

"What shall I say to Sir Arthur Pollexfen?"

"Say she's ill, but it's all rot she's dying."

I noticed as I went to the paddock a murmur among the racegoers. The attention of all had been drawn to the gypsy horse by its jockey having won the Ranmore Plate. Everywhere I heard questions being asked as to whether she were dead. Sir James had hardened to fours. And on the heath I heard a woman proffer a sovereign to a bookmaker on Romany Baw, and he said: "That horse don't run, lady." I forgot my own little triumph in the tragedy of the scratching of the great horse.

In the paddock Sir Arthur was standing watching the lads leading the horses around. Twenty-seven entries, glossy as silk, muscled like athletes of old Greece, ready to run

for the Derooy stakes. The jockeys, with their hard wizened faces, stood talking to trainers and owners, saying nothing about the race, all already having been said, but just putting in the time until the order came to go to the gate. I moved across to the old Irish trainer and the gypsy jockey. Sir Arthur was saying nothing, but his hand trembled as he took a pinch of snuff from his old-fashioned silver horn. The gypsy jockey stood erect, with his overcoat over his silk. It was a heart-rending five minutes standing there beside them, waiting for the message that they were not to go.

My uncle Valentine was standing with a couple of the Stewards. A small race official was explaining something to them. They nodded him away. There was another minute's conversation and my uncle came toward us. The old trainer was fumbling pitifully with his silver snuff horn, trying to find the pocket in which to put it.

"It's queer," said my uncle Valentine, "but nobody seems to know where Lady Clontarf is. She's not in her caravan."

"So—" questioned the old trainer.

"So you run," said my uncle Valentine. "The horse comes under starter's orders. You may have an objection, Arthur, but you run."

The old man put on youth and grandeur before my eyes. He stood erect. With an eye like an eagle's he looked around the paddock.

"Leg up, boy!" he snapped at Frasco.

"Here, give me your coat." I helped throw the golden-and-red shirted figure into the saddle. Then the head lad led the horse out.

We moved down the track and into the stand, and the parade began. Lord Shire's great horse, and the French hope Toison d'Or; the brown colt owned by the richest

merchant in the world, and the little horse owned by the Leicester butcher, who served in his own shop; the horse owned by the peer of last year's making; and the bay filly owned by the first baroness in England. They went down past the stand, and turning breezed off at a gallop back, to cross the downs toward the starting gate, and as they went with each went some one's heart. All eyes seemed turned on the gypsy horse, with his rider erect as a Life Guardsman. As Frasco raised his whip to his cap in the direction of our box, I heard in one of the neighbouring boxes a man say: "But that horse's owner is dead!"

"Is that so, Uncle Valentine?" asked Ann-Dolly. There were tears in her eyes. "Is that true?"

"Nothing is true until you see it yourself," parried my uncle Valentine. And as she seemed to be about to cry openly,— "Don't you see the horse running?" he said. "Don't you know the rule?" But his eyes were riveted through his glasses on the starting gate. I could see deep furrows of anxiety on his bronze brow. In the distance, over the crowd's heads, over the book-maker's banners, over the tents, we could see the dancing horses at the tape, the gay colours of the riders moving here and there in an intricate pattern, the massed hundreds of black figures at the start. Near us, across the rails, some religious zealots let fly little balloons carrying banners reminding us that doom was waiting. Their band broke into a lugubrious hymn, while nasal voices took it up. In the silence of the crowded downs, breathless for the start, the religious demonstration seemed startlingly trivial. The line of horses, formed for the gate, broke, and wheeled. My uncle snapped his fingers in vexation.

"Why can't the fool get them away?"

Then out of a seeming inextricable maze, the line formed suddenly and advanced on the tapes. And the heavy silence exploded into a low roar like growling thunder. Each man shouted: "They're off!" The Derby had started.

It seemed like a river of satin, with iridescent foam, pouring, against all nature, uphill. And for one instant you could distinguish nothing. You looked to see if your horse had got away well, had not been kicked or cut into at the start, and as you were disentangling them, the banks of gorse shut them from your view, and when you saw them again they were racing for the turn of the hill. The erect figure of the jockey caught my eye before his colours did.

"He's lying fifth," I told my uncle Valentine.

"He's running well," my uncle remarked quietly.

They swung around the top of the hill, appearing above the rails and gorse, like something tremendously artificial, like some theatrical illusion, as of a boat going across the stage. There were three horses grouped together, then a black horse—Esterhazy's fine colt—then Romany Baw, then after that a stretching line of horses. Something came out of the pack at the top of the hill, and passed the gypsy horse and the fourth.

"Toison d'Or is going up," Jenico told me.

But the gallant French colt's bolt was flown. He fell back, and now one of the leaders dropped back. And Romany was fourth as they started downhill for Tattenham Corner. "How slow they go!" I thought.

"What a pace!" said Jenico, his watch in his hand.

At Tattenham Corner the butcher's lovely

little horse was beaten, and a sort of moan came from the rails where the poor people stood. Above the religious band's outrageous nasal tones, the ring began roaring: "Sir James! Sir James has it. Twenty to one bar St. James!"

As they came flying up the stretch I could see the favourite going along, like some bird flying low, his jockey hunched like an ape on his withers. Beside him raced an outsider, a French-bred horse owned by Kazoutlian, an Armenian banker. Close to his heels came the gypsy horse on the inside, Frasco sitting as though the horse were standing still. Before him raced the favourite and the rank outsider.

"It's all over," I said. "He can't get through. And he can't pull around. Luck of the game!"

And then the rider on the Armenian's horse tried his last effort. He brought his whip high in the air. My uncle Valentine thundered a great oath.

"Look, Kerry!" His fingers gripped my shoulder.

I knew, when I saw the French horse throw his head up, that he was going to swerve at the whip, but I never expected Frasco's mad rush. He seemed to jump the opening, and land the horse past Sir James.

"The favourite's beat!" went up the cry of dismay.

Romany Baw, with Frasco forward on his neck, passed the winning post first by a clear length.

Then a sort of stunned silence fell on the Derby crowd. Nobody knew what would happen. If, as the rumour went around, the owner was dead, then the second automatically won. All eyes were on the horse as the trainer led him into the paddock, followed by second and third. All eyes turned from the horse toward the notice

board as the numbers went up: 17, 1, 26. All folk were waiting for the red objection signal. The owner of the second led his horse in, the burly Yorkshire peer. An old gnarled man, with a face like a walnut, Kazoutlian's self, led in the third.

"I say, Kerry," Jenico called quietly, "something's up near the paddock."

I turned and noticed a milling mob down the course on our right. The mounted policemen set off at a trot toward the commotion. Then cheering went into the air like a peal of bells.

Down the course came all the gypsies, all the gypsies in the world, it seemed to me. Big-striding, black men with gold earrings and coloured neckerchiefs, and staves in their hands. And gypsy women, a-jingle with coins, dancing. Their tambourines jangled, as they danced forward in a strange East Indian rhythm. There was a loud order barked by the police officer, and the men stood by to let them pass. And the stolid English police began cheering too. It seemed to me that even the little trees of the downs were cheering, and in an instant I cheered too.

For back of an escort of mounted gypsies, big foreign men with moustaches, saddleless on their shaggy mounts, came a gypsy cart with its cover down, drawn by four prancing horses. A wild-looking gypsy man was holding the reins. On the cart, for all to see, seated in a great armchair, propped up by cushions, was Lady Clontarf. Her head was laid back on a pillow, and her eyes were closed, as if the strain of appearing had been too much for her. Her little maid was crouched at her feet.

For an instant we saw her, and noticed the aged beauty of her face, noticed the peace like twilight on it. There was an order from a big Roumanian gypsy and the

Romany people made a lane. The driver stood up on his perch and manœuvring his long snakelike whip in the air, made it crack like a musket. The horses broke into a gallop, and the gypsy cart went over the turfed course toward Tattenham Corner, passed it, and went up the hill and disappeared over the Surrey downs. All the world was cheering.

“Come in here,” said my uncle Valentine, and he took me into the cool beauty of our little church of Saint Columba’s-in-Paganry. “Now what do you think of that?” And he pointed out a brass tablet on the wall.

“In Memory of Mifanwy, Countess of Clontarf and Kincora,” I read. Then came the dates of her birth and death, “and who is buried after the Romany manner, no man knows where.” And then came the strange text, “In death she was not divided.”

“But surely,” I objected, “the quotation is: ‘In death they were not divided.’”

“It may be,” said my uncle Valentine, “or it may not be. But as the living of Saint Columba’s-in-Paganry is in my gift, surely to God!” he broke out, “a man can have a text the way he wants it in his own Church.”

This was arguable, but something more serious caught my eye.

“See, sir,” I said, “the date of her death is wrong. She died on the evening of Derby Day, June the second. And here it is given as June the first.”

“She did not die on the evening of Derby Day. She died on the First.”

“Then,” I said, “when she rode down the course on her gypsy cart,” and a little chill came over me, “she was—”

“As a herring, Kerry, as a gutted herring,” my uncle Valentine said.

“Then the rule was really infringed, and the horse should not have won.”

“Wasn’t he the best horse there?”

“Undoubtedly, sir, but as to the betting.”

“The bookmakers lost less than they would have lost on the favourite.”

“But the backers of the favourite.”

“The small backer in the silver ring is paid on the first past the post, so they’d have lost, anyway. At any rate, they all should have lost. They backed their opinion as to which was the best horse, and it wasn’t.”

“But damn it all, sir! and God forgive me for swearing in this holy place—there’s the Derby Rule.”

“‘The letter killeth,’ Kerry,” quoted my uncle gravely, even piously. “‘The letter killeth.’”

JOHN MASEFIELD

The Finish

from RIGHT ROYAL

This magnificent narrative poem by John Masefield, companion piece to Reynard the Fox, tells the story of a race in which a man riding a horse that has never won because of a lack of courage, dreams that now, at last, his horse's day has come, and so bets his whole fortune and future on the outcome of the race. Off to a bad start with his horse falling over a hurdle, he remounts and trails the field until the very end when he overtakes and passes it. The stirring rhythm of the words ending the poem has the reader very nearly gasping for breath when the "White Post" is finally passed.

So they rushed for one second, then Sir Lopez shot out:
Charles thought, "There, he's done me, without any doubt.
O come now, Right Royal!" And Sir Lopez changed feet
And his ears went back level; Sir Lopez was beat.

Right Royal went past him, half an inch, half a head,
Half a neck, he was leading, for an instant he led;
Then a hooped black and coral flew up like a shot,
With a lightning-like effort from little Gavotte.

The little bright mare, made of nerves and steel springs,
Shot level beside him, shot ahead as with wings.
Charles felt his horse quicken, felt the desperate beat
Of the blood in his body from his knees to his feet.

Three terrible strides brought him up to the mare,
Then they swirled to wild shouting through a whirl of blown air;
Then Gavotte died to nothing; Soyland came once again
Till his muzzle just reached to the knot on his rein.

Then a whirl of urged horses thundered up, whipped and blown
Soyland, Peterkinooks, and Red Ember the roan.

John Masefield

For an instant they challenged, then they drooped and were done;
Then the White Post shot backwards, Right Royal had won.

Won a half length from Soyland, Red Ember close third;
Fourth, Peterkinooks; Fifth, Gavotte, harshly spurred;
Sixth, Sir Lopez, whose rider said "Just at the straight
He swerved at the hurdle and twisted a plate."

Then the numbers went up; then John Harding appeared
To lead in the Winner while the bookmakers cheered.
Then the riders weighed-in, and the meeting was over,
And bright Emmy Crowthorne could go with her lover.

For the bets on Right Royal which Cothill had made
The take defaulted, they never were paid;
The taker went West, whence he sent Charles's bride
Silver bit-cups and beadwork on antelope hide.

Charles married his lady, but he rode no more races;
He lives on the Downland on the blown grassy places,
Where he and Right Royal can canter for hours
On the flock bitten turf full of tiny blue flowers.

There the Roman pitcht camp, there the Saxon kept sheep,
There he lives out this Living that no man can keep,
That is manful but a moment before it must pass,
Like the stars sweeping westward, like the wind on the grass.

VI

Horses, Old & Young Grave & Gay

A bad-tempered man will never
make a good-tempered horse.

ANNA SEWELL



CAPTAIN de COUDENHOVE

The Artillery Horse's Prayer

from THE FIELD ARTILLERY JOURNAL

This prayer was given me some years ago by Colonel Harry Disston. He did not, at the time, tell me who Captain de Coudenhove was, or how he happened to have the prayer. I am glad to include it here as the only representation of the horse at war.

To thee, my Master, I offer my prayer.

Treat me as a living being, not as a machine.

Feed me, water and care for me, and when the day's work is done, groom me carefully so that my circulation may act well, for remember, a good grooming is equivalent to half a feed. Clean my legs and feet and keep them in good condition for they are the most important parts of my body.

Pet me sometimes, be always gentle with me so that I may serve you the more gladly and learn to love you.

Do not jerk the reins, do not whip me when I am going up-hill.

Do not force me out of the regular gait or you will not have my strength when you want it. Never strike, beat or kick me when I do not understand what you mean, but give me a chance to understand you. Watch me, and if I fail to do your bidding, see if something is not wrong with my harness or feet.

Don't draw the straps too tight: give me freedom to move my head. Don't make my load too heavy, and Oh! I pray thee, have me well shod every month. Examine my teeth when I do not eat: I may have some teeth too long or I may have an ulcerated tooth, and that, you know, is very painful. Do not tie my head in an unnatural position or take away my best defence against the flies and mosquitoes by cutting off my tail.

I cannot, alas, tell you when I am thirsty, so give me pure, cold water frequently. Do all you can to protect me from the

Captain de Coudenhove

sun: and throw a cover over me, not when I am working, but when I am standing in the cold.

I always try to do cheerfully the work you require of me: and day and night I stand for hours patiently waiting for you.

In this war, like any other soldier, I will do my best without hope of any war cross, content to serve my country and you; if need be, I will die calm and dignified on the battlefield; therefore, oh! my master, treat me in the kindest way and your God will reward you here and hereafter.

I am not irreverent if I ask this, my prayer, in the name of Him who was born in a stable.

HELEN DORE BOYLSTON (contemporary)

The Lady of Leisure

from HARPER'S MAGAZINE (1933)

Here is as delightful and delicate a picture of a horse as one will find anywhere. The writer depends not on any unusual circumstances, not on any human character, but on the charm of her heroine, and enchants us all in so doing.

Two horses, with rider, came up the highway by the pasture, their hoofs clapping in cheerful rhythm on the hard surface. Molly ran along the fence beside them, her head and tail very high and her black body shining in the sun. If it had not been for the fence she could have outrun them easily. But the fence was there. Molly watched them until they grew small in the distance, then she swung around and ambled slowly back to the end of the pasture.

She was very clean. No speck of dust lurked beneath the sheen of her coat. Her mane and tail were free of burs and tangles. Her hoofs had been newly oiled.

At the margin of the frog pond she paused. Her ears pricked forward and she *wooshed* softly through her nose. The water was brackish and muddy and covered with a green slime. Molly never drank there, preferring the spring under the apple trees, but now she went unhesitatingly to the water and splashed in. When the gray ooze reached her knees she turned sidewise to

the bank and lay down with a grunt. She rolled, floundered up, turned, and rolled again. When at last she rose, dripping, the cool clay lay thickly on her back and sides and plastered her legs. A lily pad was caught in her tail and her mane was festooned with wreaths of green slime. Molly shook herself gingerly and clambered up the bank.

A cowpath wandered through a tangle of weeds and long grass and straggled away under the apple trees, to the barn. It was soft under foot and the grasses were sweet and juicy. Molly browsed a little here and there and snuffed at the clover-scented wind.

The barn windows were open and Molly stopped, very casually, beneath one. She waited for a moment, and then, hearing the swish of a tail inside, laid her ears flat to her head and snorted. There was a sound of trampling, and Molly wheeled. But when the brown head and wondering eyes of Governor, the three-year-old gelding, appeared in the window, Molly was standing

quietly with drooping head and eyes half closed. A wisp of green slime dangled from one ear. Her back was just within reach of Governor's nose.

He stretched his head out of the window, all eagerness, and sniffed at Molly's wet flank. Then he sprank back squealing. Molly's heels had missed his nose by a scant half inch. She lashed out again, her hoofs ringing against the side of the barn. There was a splintering crash inside, more trampling, another crash, and a long enraged squeal. Molly kicked at the barn once more. Governor returned the kick with fury.

"Molly!"

It was Bruce. Molly moved away from the window and stared over the pasture gate at the overalled figure in the garage doorway. The clamor in the barn ceased. Molly's eyes shone with honesty. Her ears stood up in astonished innocence. Her little forefeet were planted close together. She waited primly, clay daubed and virtuous. Bruce grinned and after a moment went back into the garage.

The wind whispered in the oaks and an acorn fell with a sharp thwack on the barn roof. Governor was silent. A leaf blew across the barnyard and a puff-ball of a kitten rushed after it, tail twirking. A sound of hammering came from the garage. Molly stretched out a soft black nose and fumbled with the wooden button that fastened the gate. It did not move easily and it was splintery. Molly tried her teeth on it and at last it turned. She pushed at the gate, but nothing happened.

The hammering in the garage stopped and Bruce appeared suddenly in the door. Molly drowsed hastily. Bruce crossed to the house, got something from the back porch, and returned to the garage.

After a minute Molly tried the gate again.

It refused to open. She nosed around the latch and presently encountered the cold iron of a hook. It was a fairly loose hook. Molly worked at it with short lifting drives of her nose until it fell, tapping, against the gate, which opened a little way of itself, and then caught against the sod. Molly scraped through, broke into a gallop, and thundered across the lawn to the driveway. She clattered before the door of the garage.

Bruce ran out, grimly silent.

Molly cavorted in front of him but not too near. She plunged and whirled and rocked and plunged, her hoofs beating a tattoo on the gravel. Her wet mane flapped against her neck. Lumps of clay fell from her. The lily pad in her tail swung in lively circles behind her. With a final superb fling of heels into the air she raced down the slope to the gorge, jumped lightly across the brook, and began the climb up the steep wooded hill on the other side.

Bruce followed, panting. He would try to cut her off and head her back. Molly kept well ahead of him. She wound in and out among the oaks, stopping now and again to look back and see what progress Bruce was making. He wasn't making much. The hill was very steep.

Molly continued on, up, her tail switching vigorously from side to side. Bruce was crashing through the underbrush below her as she came out on the crest of the ridge. She tore off a mouthful of leaves from a passing branch and stopped to wait. Bruce was nowhere in sight.

Down the ridge on the other side the valley began in green and gold and melted away into the plum-colored hills. Their outlines wavered in the heat, but the breath of the wind on Molly's back was cool and fresh. She munched oak leaves in placid contentment and watched the cloud sha-

dows trailing their purple across the floor of the valley. On the tiny yellow thread of the highway a car glittered for a moment and was gone. Its hum came back on the wind. A squirrel swore with violence from a branch above her head. There was silence below.

Molly moved off the path to the edge of the ravine and looked down. The oak leaves dropped unnoticed from her mouth. Bruce was going back down the hill!

Molly stared after him, round-eyed. Then she lifted a forefoot and stamped once. Her nostrils vibrated with the explosion of her breath.

The path curved sharply and dipped down into the ravine. Molly stepped down cautiously, threw herself back on her haunches, forefeet braced, and slid, plowing up the matting of leaves and leaving a furrow of black loam behind her. One leap and she was across the brook. Her hoofs rang on the flagstone steps that led up the bank to the side of the garage. Bruce was inside. She could hear him moving. On the lawn she stopped, ready to run, but Bruce did not come out.

Molly bit off the top of a nearby hollyhock, mumbled it and let it drop. She moved forward along the side of the garage to where, by stretching her neck to the uttermost, she could just see the doorsill. There was no one there. She stamped. Silence. Briskly, with a determined switch of the tail, Molly tramped across a flower bed and went up to the door. The inside of the garage was dark after the bright sunlight, and Molly blinked and stretched and peered, but she saw nothing but a stairway, outlined against a dusty window-pane. It was too much. Molly took one more step and put her head in at the door.

The rope dropped without a sound, set-

ting neatly behind her ears. Molly knew better than to fight it. She followed Bruce across the yard and through the pasture gate. She watched while he buttoned the gate, hooked it, and bound the hook in place with wire. He went away. That was that.

There was nothing to do. The early wind-fall apples didn't taste right. The grass was dusty. The sun was hot, and the drying clay on her back and sides was beginning to be itchy. Molly knelt, rolled experimentally once or twice, got a good swing, and rolled completely over. Triumphant, she rolled all the way back, and rose in a shower of dust and twigs.

There was nothing left to do but stand. Molly stood, growing sleepy. At last a hen wandering across the pasture caught her eye. She brightened. There were more hens scratching around in the grass under the willows. Molly's ears went back, her head lifted, and her tail went up. She galloped down the flock, and it scattered, fluttering and squawking. Molly dashed back and forth, her teeth snapping, turning back the stragglers, and bunching them together. She drove them into the corner where the fence joined the barn.

It wasn't a very good place. One hen skimmed under the fence and escaped. Molly naggled with teeth and heels and drove the rest, a compact and jittering little group, round to the back of the barn. There was no good place there to hold them either. She headed them down the wagon road toward the orchard in a shrieking procession that sowed the ruts with feathers. Molly capered behind.

"Molly! For God sake!"

Molly veered away from the flock and thundered past them, mane and tail streaming. Under the apple trees she stopped and

swung around to look back, neck arched and head high. Bruce was climbing slowly back over the fence. Molly snorted.

When he had gone Molly cropped a little grass, but languidly. It was too dusty. She knocked a fly off her foreleg with her nose. It returned and buzzed about her. Molly stood waiting, listening to it, her eyes furious. It lit on her shoulder. Molly snapped, and the fly dropped to the ground.

The shadows were growing long down the hillside at the head of the ravine, and swarms of gnats jiggled about her ears. It would soon be time to eat. Molly turned suddenly and trotted back to the barn. The door was open and the sweet musty smell of the hay blew out upon her. She stepped across the threshold and went straight to the door of the feed room. It was not that she expected to get it open, these days, but she could always try. She tried. Miracle of miracles, it opened! Someone had left off the wire which had held it fast for a year, against all Molly's attempts.

The top of the feed box was up!

Molly's eyes bulged. She took one step farther in and buried her nose in the whispering oats. In the loft overhead the hay ticked faintly. A mouse ran along a beam and paused to look, bright-eyed and trembling. From somewhere came the thin mewling of new kittens. Governor stamped in his stall. Molly ate intensely, lifting her head only at rare intervals to munch more leisurely. A fly, caught in a spider web by the window, droned endlessly. The line of oats against the side of the feed box sifted lower and lower.

When it was impossible to crowd in another oat Molly raised her head and sighed, a gusty sigh of repletion. She backed out of the feed room a little awkwardly and went out into the barnyard and down the

orchard road. The grasses brushed her knees and from force of habit she bit off a mouthful, but she chewed without swallowing and without interest.

The spring lay crystal clear under the trees, the green foliage mirrored in its heart. Molly lowered her head and drank for a long time, sucking up the water in great thirsty gulps. The coolness flowed around her nostrils and down her dusty throat. She lifted her head and stood for a moment, motionless. Then she drank again.

She felt a little heavy and cold inside when she at last stopped drinking, and she turned away from the spring with an effort. A strange sharp pain was beginning in her middle. It darted around, stabbing her, and Molly bit at her side. She heard Bruce's shout from the window of the feed room, but it was too much trouble to dodge when he ran down the road, a halter in his hand. He seemed agitated. Molly felt the agitation in his hands when he slipped the halter over her head.

He led her gently back to the barn, tied her by the door, and stood looking at her. "Oh, Molly, Molly! You've killed yourself!" he said. Molly rolled an eye at him. She was very uncomfortable. He touched her side and she flinched. Bruce went away through the barn, running.

Molly's head hung nearly to her knees.

Bruce returned presently and paced back and forth beside her. He usually moved rather slowly, but now he walked with quick short steps and he watched her sharply. It was irritating, and Molly felt uneasy. But the pain in her middle seemed to be going away. She hadn't that heavy sensation any more either.

A car roared out in front of the barn and then stopped roaring. A long narrow man came through the back door of the barn

with a bag in his hand. Molly stiffened. She knew him. He was the one who had pried her mouth open once and had rasped at her back teeth most unpleasantly. The pain in her inside was practically gone now.

The long man and Bruce were both looking at her and their voices rose and fell. Molly switched her tail uneasily. The bag was on the ground and it had an evil smell. The long man went to it and took out a bottle. His movements were unhurried as he approached Molly and his touch on her neck was sure and kind. Molly relaxed a little. He spoke to her and his tone was light. It had been like that before. Molly jerked her head away from his hands but they followed her. There was no escape. Molly stood, rigid and motionless.

It took only a few seconds. The stuff burned in her throat for a short time, but that was all. Bruce untied her and let her go free. They watched her as she turned away and stood quietly at a little distance from them. She was still breathing hard and she was prepared to run if they came toward her, but they didn't. She rambled across the barnyard to a clump of grass and picked at it. She would have gone down to the end of the pasture, but they couldn't catch her now anyway, and she hated to miss anything.

They stayed there for a long time, just waiting, and not doing anything at all, except once, when Molly considered rolling. Then they both ran toward her. But when she scrambled up they only stared at her,

their mouths making little round holes in their faces.

The sun went down behind the hill, leaving it black against the lemon-yellow sky. A smell of wood smoke and damp earth drifted down the breeze. Across the fields a whippoorwill called.

Suddenly Molly flung up her head. She wheeled and raced to the end of the pasture, circled, and raced back, pounding up to Bruce with her ears flattened and her eyes rolling viciously.

The long man sprang for the safety of the barn door, but Bruce didn't move. A slow grin spread across his face. He held out his hand and Molly dropped her nose into it. The long man shook his head, laughing, picked up his bag, and vanished into the darkness. The car roared again and a finger of light swept across the willows.

Molly tossed her head. Very gently she reached down and took Bruce's sleeve into her mouth. A long-drawn loop of sound came up Wolf Creek—a fox hound trying his voice—and a rabbit leaped out of a briar patch and fled, zig-zagging down the orchard road, its white tuft of tail bobbing in the starlight. Bruce's other hand crept up Molly's cheek, patting and patting in quick little movements.

"Come, Molly."

Molly drew a deep breath. It had been a very dull day. She rubbed her face against Bruce's sleeve and then, shoulder to shoulder, they crossed the yard and went into the warm darkness of the barn.

HERBERT RAVENEL SASS (1884—)

Northwind

from THE WAY OF THE WILD

There have been a number of theories advanced as to how the wild horses on the islands off Carolina originated. The supposition of this story is as plausible as any. I felt myself fortunate in finding a story which not only concerned a special breed but also the American Indian. The descriptions are both accurate and beautiful. Indians, like all savages, have no feelings of pity, so the Raven has no pity at the helplessness of the frantic stallion. No wild stallion story seems complete without a fight, and the one recounted here is well done. This whole story is vivid; but not sentimental as are so many about the untamed horses of America.

It was in the days when Moytoy of Tellequo was High Chief of the Cherokee nation that the wild chestnut stallion known afterward as Northwind left the savannahs of the Choctaw country and travelled to the Overhills of the Cherokees. He made this long journey because the Choctaw horse-hunters had been pressing him hard. A rumor had run through the tribe, started perhaps by some learned conjurer or medicine man, that the tall, long-maned chestnut stallion who was king of the wild horse herds was descended from the famous steed which the Prince Soto rode when, many years before, he led his Spaniards through the Choctaw lands far into the Mississippi wilderness and perished there.

This rumor sharpened the eagerness of the younger braves, for it was well known that Soto's horse had magic in him. That spring they hunted the wild stallion more persistently than ever; and at last, taking two sorrel mares with him, he struck north-eastward, seeking safer pastures.

He did not find them in the Overhills, as the Cherokees called the high Smokies and the Blue Ridge where they lived and hunted. At dawn one May morning, as he lay on a bed of fresh sweet-scented grass near the middle of a natural pasture known as Long Meadow, a warning came to him. He raised his head high and sniffed the air, then jumped nimbly to his feet. For a half minute, however, he did not rouse the

two mares lying on either side of him: and they, if they were aware of his movement, were content to await his signal.

He gave the signal presently, and the mares rose, their ears pricked, their nostrils quivering. A light breeze blew across the meadow from the north. The stallion faced south, for his sensitive nose told him that no foeman was approaching from the opposite direction. He knew that his ears had not deceived him and that the sound which he had heard was near at hand. But he did not know the exact quarter from which the sound had come; and though his large eyes were well adapted to the dim light, nowhere could he discern that sinister weaving movement of the tall, close-growing grass which would reveal the stealthy approach of bear or puma. So, for some minutes, he waited motionless, his head held high, every faculty keyed to the utmost.

Twenty yards away down the wind Corane the Raven, young warrior of the Cherokees, crouching low in the grass, watched the wild stallion eagerly. Himself invisible, he could see his quarry more and more plainly as the light grew stronger; and he knew already that the wits of this slim, long-maned chestnut horse, which had come over the mountains from the west, were worthy of his beauty and strength. With all his art—and the Raven prided himself on his skill as a still-hunter—and with all the conditions in his favor, he had been baffled. Having located the beds of the wild horses, he had left his own horse, Monito-Kinibic, at the edge of the woods and had crept through the grass as furtively as a lynx. But his approach had been detected when he was yet five lance-lengths distant, and since then the stallion had made no false move, had committed no error of judgment.

Corane the Raven knew the wild horses well. Most of them were small and wiry, already approaching the mustang type of later years; but in those early days, before inbreeding had proceeded very far, an occasional stallion still revealed unmistakably the fine qualities of blooded forebears. From his hiding place in the grass the young warrior, naked except for a light loincloth of deer-hide, studied the great chestnut carefully, thoughtfully, marvelling at the lithe symmetry of his powerful but beautifully moulded form, admiring his coolness and steadiness in the face of danger. The stallion showed no sign of fear. He did not fidget or caper nervously. Only his head moved slowly back and forth, while with all his powers of sight, scent and hearing he strove to locate the precise spot where his enemy was lurking.

The Raven smiled in approval; and presently he applied a test of another kind.

With his long spear he pushed the grass stems in front of him, causing the tops of the tall blades to quiver and wave. The movement was slight; yet even in the pale morning light the wild horse saw it. He watched the spot intently for some moments. Then he moved slowly and cautiously forward, the mares following in his tracks. He moved neither toward the danger nor away from it. Instead, he circled it, and the Raven realized at once what the stallion's purpose was. He intended to get down wind from the suspected spot, so that his nose could tell him whether an enemy hid there, and, if so, what kind of enemy it was.

The young warrior waited, curious to see the outcome. Suddenly the stallion's head jerked upward. He was well down the wind now and a puff of air had filled his nostrils with the manscent. A moment he

stood at gaze; and in that moment one of the mares caught the tell-tale scent, snorted with terror and bolted at full speed. Close behind her raced the other mare; while the stallion, wheeling gracefully, followed at a slower pace, his eyes searching the grassy plain ahead.

The Raven had risen to his feet and stood in plain view, but the chestnut stallion scarcely glanced at him again. He was no longer a menace. Of greater importance now were other dangers unknown, invisible, yet possibly imminent.

The natural meadows of lush grass and maiden cane were perilous places for the unwary. In them the puma set his ambush; there the black bear often lurked; hidden in that dense cover, the Indian horse-hunter sometimes waited with their snares. The mares, in a frenzy of panic, were beyond their protector's control. Their nostrils full of the man-smell, they had forgotten all other perils. But the stallion had not forgotten. Before the mares had run fifty yards the thing that he feared happened.

Out of the grass a black bulk heaved upward, reared high with huge hairy arms outspread, fell forward with a deep grunting roar on the haunch of the foremost mare. Screaming like a mad thing, the mare reeled, staggered and went down. In a fraction of a second she was on her feet again, but the big mountain black bear, hurling himself on her hindquarters, crushed them to the ground.

Corane the Raven, racing forward at the sound of the mare's frenzied scream, was near enough to see part of what happened. He saw the wild stallion rear to his utmost height and come down with battering forefeet on the bear's back. He heard the stallion's loud squeal of fury, the bear's hoarse

grunt of rage and pain. Next moment the mare was up again and running for her life, the stallion cantering easily behind her.

When the Raven reached the spot the bear had vanished; and the young Indian, marvelling at what he had seen, ran toward the woods-edge where his swift roan, Manito-Kinibic, awaited him.

In this way began the chase of the chestnut stallion—Northwind, as he was afterward known—that long hunt which Corane the Raven made long ago, even before the time of Atta-Kulla-Kulla the Wise. It was Dunmore the trader who first brought down from the Overhills the story of that hunt and told it one night in Nick Rounder's tavern in Charles Town. Dunmore had it from the Raven himself; and the Raven was known among the white traders and hunters as a truthful man. But he was known also as a man of few words, while Dunmore, great hunter and famous Indian fighter though he was, had a tongue more fluent than a play-actor's.

So it was probably Dunmore who put color into the story, and undoubtedly his quick brain, well warmed with rum that night in the tavern, filled in many details. The tale appealed to him, for he was a lover of horses; and this story of the feud between Northwind, the wild stallion, and Manito-Kinibic, the Raven's roan, concerned two horses which were paladins of their kind.

For the hunt which began that morning in Long Meadow became in large measure a contest between these two. It happened that the Raven had returned not long before from a peace mission to the Choctaws, and while in their country he had heard of the wonderful wild horse which was said to

have in him the blood of the Prince Soto's steed and which had vanished from the savannahs after defying all attempts to capture him. In the Overhills wild horses were rare. When the Raven found the tracks of three of them near Long Meadow about sunset one May day, he thought it worth while to sleep that night near the meadow's edge and have a look at the horses in the morning.

So at dawn he had tried to stalk them in their beds; and the moment he saw the wild stallion rise from his sleeping place in the grass he knew that the great chestnut horse of which the Choctaws had spoken stood before him. That morning in Long Meadow he knew also that he could not rest until he had taken this matchless wild horse for his own.

It would be a long hunt, for the stallion would not linger in the Overhills. Small bands of wild horses occasionally crossed the mountains from the west, and always these migrating bands travelled fast, pausing only to feed. Yet, though the hunt might carry him far, Corane the Raven, as he ran swiftly across Long Meadow toward the woods-edge where he had left Manito-Kinibic, had little doubt as to its issue. This wild stallion was a great horse, beautiful, swift and strong—by far the finest wild horse that the Raven had ever seen. But there was one other that was his equal in all things except beauty; and that other was Manito-Kinibic, the Raven's roan.

There was no chief of the Cherokees, the Creeks or the Choctaws who had a horse that could match Manito-Kinibic. His like had never been known in the Overhills. Dunmore the trader had seen him and had wondered whence he came; for though the Raven had taken him from the Chickasaws, whose country lay west of the moun-

tains, it was plain that this big-boned burly roan was not of the Western or Southern wild breed, while his name, which in the white man's tongue meant Rattlesnake, had to Dunmore's ear a Northern sound.

Thick-bodied, wide-headed, short-maned, heavy-eared, Manito-Kinibic was almost grotesquely ugly; yet in his very ugliness there was a sinister, almost reptilian fascination, heightened by the metallic sheen of his red-speckled coat, the odd flatness of his head and the fixed stony glare of his small, deep-set eyes. No warrior of the Cherokees except the Raven could ride him. Few could even approach him, for his temper was as arrogant as that of the royal serpent for which he was named.

There lurked in him, too, a craftiness recalling the subtle cunning which the red men attributed to the rattlesnake and because of which they venerated the king of serpents almost as a god; and with this craftiness he harbored a savage hatred of the wild creatures which the Indians hunted, so that on the hunt he was even more eager, even more relentless than his rider. It was the Raven's boast that Manito-Kinibic could follow a trail which would baffle many a red hunter; that he could scent game at a greater distance than the wolf; that his ears were as keen as those of the deer; that he was as crafty as the fox and as ruthless as the weasel; and that he feared no wild beast of the forest, not even the puma himself.

Such was the horse that Corane the Raven rode on his long hunt. From the beginning of that hunt until its end Manito-Kinibic seemed to live for one thing only—the capture of the wild stallion whose scent he snuffed for the first time that morning in Long Meadow after the wild horse's encounter with the bear.

A few minutes after that encounter, the Raven had reached the woods-edge where he had left the big roan, had vaulted upon his back and, riding as swiftly as was prudent through the tall grass and beds of maiden cane, had struck the trail of the three wild horses near the spot where they had passed from the meadow at its lower end into the woods.

The trail was plain to the eye. The scent was strong where the wild horses had brushed through the rank grass. From that moment Manito-Kinibic knew what game it was that his rider hunted; and in that moment all the strange smouldering hatred of his nature was focused upon the wild stallion which, as his nose told him, had passed that way with one or two mares.

Manito-Kinibic leaped forward with long bounds, his nostrils dilated, his ears flattened against his head. Corane the Raven, smiling grimly, let him go. It might be true, as the Choctaws believed, that the wild stallion was sprung from the mighty horse of the Prince Soto himself. But surely this huge implacable horse that now followed on the wild one's trail must have in his veins the blood of the great black steed which the Evil Spirit bestrode when he stood, wrapped in cloud, on the bare summit of Younaguska peak and hurled those awful arrows of his that flashed like lightning.

Northwind, the chestnut stallion, had passed within sight of Younaguska, highest of the Balsams, which men in these days call Caney Fork Bald; but that sombre mountain lay far behind him now, for he had crossed both the main ranges of the mountain bulwark and had begun to descend the eastern slope of the second and lesser range. From Long Meadow he led his mares southeastward at a steady gait,

following in general the trend of the valleys and the downward-sloping ridges. The injured mare, though her haunch was raw and bloody where the bear's claws had raked it, kept pace with her companions; and the three travelled fast, pausing only once or twice to drink at some cold, clear, hemlock-shaded stream.

For the most part their course carried them through a virgin forest of oak, chestnut, hickory and other broad-leaved trees, clothing the ridges, the slopes and most of the valleys. Occasionally the stallion chose his own way, though as a rule he followed the narrow trails made by the deer; but when in the early forenoon he found a broader path through the woods, well-marked and evidently often used, he turned into it unhesitatingly and followed it without swerving. The wild horse of the southwestern savannahs recognized this path at once. It was one of the highways of the buffalo herds, a road trodden deep and hard through many centuries by thousands of hoofs.

The buffalo were far less abundant now on the eastern side of the mountains. Although the white men's settlements were still confined to a strip along the coast, white hunters sometimes penetrated the foothills and white traders encouraged the taking of pelts. The deer still abounded in almost incredible numbers, but the eastern buffalo herds were withdrawing gradually across the Appalachians. Small droves, however, still ranged the eastern foothills and kept open the deep-worn paths; and the main buffalo roads across the mountain barrier, wider than the narrow buffalo ruts of the Western plains, were still highways for wild creatures of many kinds. It was one of these main roads that the chestnut stallion and his mares were following; a

oad which would lead them with many windings down from the mountains into the hills and through the hills to the broad belt of rolling lands beyond which lay the swamps and savannahs of the Atlantic plain.

All that forenoon the Raven trailed his quarry. Both to the roan stallion and to his rider the trail was a plain one; and when the tracks of the wild horses turned into the buffalo path, the Raven knew that he had only to follow that highway through the woods. With a guttural word he restrained Manito-Kinibic's savage eagerness. So long as the wild horses kept to the buffalo road the task of following them would be simple. The Raven preferred that for the present the chestnut stallion should not know that he was pursued.

Half a bowshot ahead of the young warrior a troop of white-tails crossed the path, following a deer trail leading down the slope to a laurel-bordered stream. Once, at a greater distance, he saw a puma come out of the woods into the path, sit for a moment on its haunches, then vanish at a bound into the forest on the other side. Again and again wild turkeys ran into the woods on either hand, seldom taking wing; and with monotonous regularity ruffed grouse rose a few paces in front of him and whirred swiftly away.

About noon he killed a cock grouse in the path, pinning the bird to the ground with a light cane arrow tipped with bone; and he had scarcely remounted when around a curve of the path appeared the shaggy bulk of a huge buffalo bull. A moment the great beast stood motionless, blinking in astonishment, his massive head hanging low. Then, with surprising nimbleness, he turned and darted around the bend of the trail.

The Raven heard the stamping and trampling of many hoofs and gave Manito-Kinibic his head. The roan bounded forward and almost in an instant reached the bend of the path. At a word from his rider he halted; and the Raven, quivering with excitement, gazed with shining eyes upon a spectacle which sent the blood leaping through his veins—a herd of twenty buffalo pouring out of the path, crowding and jostling one another as they streamed down the mountainside through the woods, following a deer trail which crossed the buffalo road almost at right angles. Twice the young warrior bent his bow and drew the shaft to the head; and twice he lowered his weapon, unwilling to kill game which he must leave to the wolves.

Afternoon came and still the Raven rode on through the teeming mountain forest, following the deep-worn highway which the migrating herds through unknown centuries had carved across the Overhills. More keenly than ever now his eyes searched the path ahead. The wild stallion and his mares had probably grazed abundantly in Long Meadow before their early morning rest and had been interrupted; but by this time they should be hungry again, for since leaving Long Meadow they had not stopped to feed. Wherever the Raven saw the forest open a little ahead of him so that grass grew under the far-spaced trees, he halted and listened carefully. Before long in one of these grassy places he should find the three wild horses grazing, and he wished to avoid frightening them.

The path, which heretofore had wound around the mountain shoulders, dipped suddenly into a deep gorge-like valley at the bottom of which a torrent roared. The forest here was close and dark. The wild horses would not halt in this valley, for

there was no grass to be had; and for a time the Raven relaxed his vigilance, letting his eyes stray from the path ahead.

From a tall hemlock on the mountainside a wild gobbler took wing, sailing obliquely across the valley, and the Raven saw an eagle, which had been perching on a dead tulip poplar, launch himself forward in swift pursuit. The young brave turned on his horse's back, gazing upward over his shoulder, eagerly watching the chase.

Without warning, Manito-Kinibic reared, swerved to the right and plunged forward. His rider, taken utterly by surprise, lurched perilously, yet somehow kept his seat. For an instant, as Manito-Kinibic reared again, the Raven saw a sinewy naked arm raised above a hideous grinning face daubed with vermilion and black. Steel-fingered hands clutched the Raven's leg; on the other side another hand clawed at his thigh. Out from the thicket into the path ahead leaped three more warriors, feathered and plumed with eagle-tails and hawk-wings, striped and mottled with the red and black paint of war. More dreadful than the hunting cry of the puma, the shrill war-whoop of the Muskogee split the air.

But for Manito-Kinibic the Rattlesnake, the chase of the chestnut stallion would have ended then. But the Muskogee war-party which waylaid Corane the Raven in the pass, hoping to take him alive for slavery or the torture, failed to reckon with the temper and strength of the mighty roan.

In an instant Manito-Kinibic had become a rearing, snorting fury, a raging devil of battering hoofs and gleaming teeth. The Raven saw one Muskogee go down before the plunging roan stallion. He saw another whose shoulder was red with something that was not war paint. He saw the three warriors in the path ahead leap for their

lives into the thicket as Manito-Kinibic charged down upon them. Bending low on his horse's neck, he heard an arrow speed over him and, a half-second later, another arrow. Then, remembering that he was the son of a war captain, he rose erect, looked back, and flourishing the hand which still held his bow and spear, hurled at his enemies the Cherokee whoop of triumph.

Thenceforward for a time the Raven watched the path behind rather than the path ahead. The war parties of the Muskogee were often mounted, and the young Cherokee thought it likely that this party had horses concealed in the thickets near the path. They would probably pursue him, but with Manito-Kinibic under him he was safe. Yet for a while he gave the sure-footed roan his head, racing onward as swiftly as the uneven surface of the trail allowed. So it happened that he was driven by necessity into doing the thing which he had intended to avoid.

A mile beyond the scene of the ambush the valley widened. Here, encircled by forested heights, lay a level, sun-bathed meadow, sweet with clover and wild pea vine. Northwind and his mares had travelled far and fast. Urged on by his restless eagerness to get out of the dark forbidding mountains, perhaps impelled, too, by some mysterious premonition of danger, the great chestnut horse had permitted no halt for food. In this beautiful vivid green oasis in the wilderness of woods he halted at last.

The meadow was dotted with grazing deer. Clearly no enemy lurked there. With a joyful whinny Northwind turned aside from the path and led his consorts to the feast.

A half-hour later, an instant before the variest of the whitetails had caught the warning sound, the wild stallion raised his

head suddenly, listened intently for a moment, then, with a peremptory summons to the mares, trotted slowly with high head and tail toward the lower end of the meadow. Because wild creatures do not ordinarily rush headlong through the forest, he miscalculated the speed of the intruder whose hoof-beats he had heard. He was still near the middle of the meadow, while the mares, loath to leave the clover beds, were far behind him, when he saw the Raven on Manito-Kinibic dash out of the woods.

The young brave heard the wild stallion's snort of surprise, saw him leap forward and race for the buffalo path, while the mares wheeled and galloped off to the left. In long beautiful bounds the stallion skimmed over the grass to the meadow's lower end where the path reëntered the forest. There he disappeared amid the trees.

The damage having been done, the Raven let Manito-Kinibic do his best for two or three miles. But the wild horse ran like the north wind which blows across the summit of Unaka Kanoos. It was then that the Raven named him, in honor of that north wind which is the swiftest and keenest of all the winds of the mountains. Until his rider checked him, Manito-Kinibic ran a good race. But they saw the wild stallion no more that day.

Even among the Cherokees, great hunters and marvelously skilful trackers, it was considered a noteworthy thing that Corane the Raven and Manito-Kinibic the Rattlesnake were able to follow the trail of the chestnut stallion all the way from the eastern slope of the Overhills to the Low Country of the Atlantic coast, more than two hundred miles as the white man reckons distance. Certain circumstances aided the pursuers. Nearly always North-

wind kept to the game paths. Until he was well out of the mountains he followed the buffalo road. For many miles through the upper foothills he used the narrow paths trodden out by the deer. Always he chose those paths which led him south or south-east, following the slope of the land.

When he passed from the foothills into the rolling country where the forest was more open and where many prairie-meadows lay embosomed in the woods, the Raven's problem was somewhat harder; and in the Low Country of the coastal plain, so utterly unlike his mountain home, there were moments when the young warrior saw defeat staring him in the face. Yet it was evident that the wild stallion himself was not at home in this land of dense cypress swamps and towering pinewoods, of vast canebrakes and wide wastes of rushes, of dark sluggish rivers winding silently through moss-draped mysterious forests.

If this was the land which some deep-seated instinct had impelled him to seek, it was evidently not what he had expected it to be—not a land like that which he had known westward of the mountains. It was rich beyond measure, affording pasturage of numerous kinds. But in many respects it was strange to him, and his first night within its borders taught him that it bristled with dangers.

He rested that night near the end of a long woods-prairie or open savannah close to a tall canebrake bordering a great swamp. In the late afternoon he had grazed in the savannah amid herds of deer and flocks of tall gray cranes. The air was melodious with the songs of numberless birds. Over him, as he cropped the grass, passed many wild turkeys coming in from the woods to their roosts in the giant pines

of the swamp. Around the margins of a marshy pond scores of graceful milk-white égrets walked to and fro amid hundreds of smaller herons of darker plumage. To the stallion it seemed that he had come to a land of plenty and of peace where no enemies lurked.

The night revealed his mistake. The swamp rang with the cries and roars of hunting beasts and with the long-drawn resonant bellowings of great alligators—a fearful chorus of the wilderness such as he had never heard before. Twice he saw round fiery eyes glaring at him out of the darkness. Once his nose told him that near at hand in the canebrake a puma was passing along one of the winding pathways through the canes. Sleep was impossible; yet, the night being very black, he judged it unsafe to move, fearing to run upon an invisible enemy. He spent the long hours standing, tense and rigid, his senses strained to the utmost, expecting each moment to feel the fangs or claws of some unknown foe.

How long the chestnut stallion remained in the wild swamp region of the Low Country cannot be told. Probably not long, for while food was abundant, the perils were too many. Nor can it be related how he avoided those perils and found his way at last to the edge of the wide salt marshes between the Low Country mainland and the barrier islands along the sea. Day after day Corane the Raven and Manito-Kinibic the Rattlesnake followed him in his wanderings; and day after day the Raven, patient with the long patience of his race, held fast to the resolution which he had formed at the beginning—the resolution not to attempt the capture of the wild stallion until the time should be fully ripe.

He had to wait long for that time, but

in one respect fortune favored the young warrior. Except for the Muskogee ambush in the mountain pass, he suffered no interference at the hands of man and, indeed, saw scarcely a human face between the Overhills and the coast. Even when he had reached the white men's country—where, however, the settlements were still small and sparse—the wild horse's fear of human enemies kept both himself and his pursuers out of man's way. The spot where the long chase had its ending was as lonely as the remotest wilderness.

To Northwind, after his long journey, that spot seemed a paradise. To Corane the Raven, viewing it cautiously from the cover of the woods about noon of a warm cloudless June day, it seemed to combine all the conditions essential for his success. A dry level meadow carpeted with short thick grass and shaped like a broad spearhead lay between a converging river and creek which came together at the meadow's lower end. There, and for some distance along the shore, the land sloped sharply to the river, forming a little bluff about ten feet in height; while beyond the river lay vast marshes stretching for miles toward the hazy line of woods on the barrier isles.

The Raven took in these things at a glance; noted, too, with satisfaction that here and there in the meadow stood clumps of some dense, stiff-branched bush of a kind unknown in the mountains. Then, well pleased, his plan complete to the smallest detail, he let his eyes rest again upon that feature of the scene which was the most important and most gratifying of all.

Almost in the center of the meadow stood Northwind, the wild stallion, alert, arrogant, confident, a picture of lithe, clean-cut beauty and perfectly proportioned strength. But he no longer stood alone. Just

beyond him grazed five mares, all of them bays and all of them of one size and build. The Raven knew at once that they were not wild horses and he surmised that they were strays from the white men's stock. But it mattered little whence they had come. The essential fact was that Northwind had taken them as his own, had become their master and protector.

Two hours before midnight, when the moon, almost at the full, swung high above the marshes beyond the river and the grassy expanse of the meadow was bathed in ghostly light, the Raven led Manito-Kinibic from his hiding place in the woods to the edge of the open. There the young brave halted. The big roan, his nostrils tingling with a scent which set his blood on fire, needed no word of instruction. He knew his part and would play it perfectly. Quivering with eagerness, yet too well trained to give way to the fury that possessed him, Manito-Kinibic moved out into the meadow at a slow walk, his hoofs making no sound.

The Raven waited until the roan had become a dim uncertain shape in the moonlight. Then, crouching low, the Indian stole to the nearest bush-clump, thence to another isolated thicket, and thence by a roundabout course to a third. He was half-way down the meadow when he heard the wild stallion's challenge and knew that Manito-Kinibic's keen nose had led the roan straight to his goal. Bending close to the ground, sometimes creeping on all fours, sometimes crawling like a snake, the Raven moved from bush-clump to bush-clump toward the sound.

A fresh breeze blew from the sea across the marshes. The wild stallion, resting with his mares near the meadow's lower end where the creek and river joined, could

neither smell nor hear an enemy approaching from the direction of the woods. Manito-Kinibic was scarcely fifty paces distant when Northwind saw him.

A moment the wild horse stood at gaze, his muscles tense for the long leap which would launch him forward in swift flight. Then fear passed out of him and fury took its place. A glance had shown him what the intruder was—a lone stallion, riderless, unaccompanied by man, roaming at will and evidently seeking the bay mares. Loud and shrill rang Northwind's challenge. Instantly he charged his foe.

Manito-Kinibic the Rattlesnake was a veteran of many battles. The fiercest battle of his career was the one which he fought that night in the moonlit meadow where the long chase of the chestnut stallion had its end. Northwind, too, had conquered many rivals to make good his mastery of the wild horse herds; but never before had he faced an antagonist as formidable as the burly roan. With Manito-Kinibic lay the advantage of size and weight; with the wild horse the advantage of quickness and agility. In courage neither surpassed the other. In cunning each was the other's match.

Almost at once they took each other's measure and, despite their fury, fought with instinctive skill, each striving to utilize to the utmost those powers in which he excelled. After his first whirlwind charge, Northwind did not charge again. He knew after that first onset that he must not hurl himself recklessly against the roan's weight and bulk. This was an enemy too big to be overwhelmed; he must be cut to pieces with slashing hoofs and torn to ribbons with ripping, raking teeth. Hence the wild stallion whirled and circled, feinted and reared, dashed in and leaped clear again, like a

skilful rapier-man whose opponent wields a broadsword—and wields it well.

For Manito-Kinibic was no blundering bruiser whose sole reliance was his strength. He, too, fought with cunning and skill, manœuvring with a lightness which belied his bulk, parrying and thrusting with an adroitness not much inferior to that of his opponent. But, apparently realizing the advantage which his weight gave him, he strove from the first for close quarters. Furiously, incessantly he forced the fighting, seeking to grip and hold his elusive enemy, rearing high to crush the wild horse with his battering hoofs, plunging forward with all his weight to drive his mighty shoulder against his foe and hurl him to the ground.

It was a fight too furious to last long. A stallion's hoofs and teeth are fearful weapons. A few minutes more must have brought a bloody end to the battle, though no man can say what that end would have been. Suddenly from a bush-clump a shadow darted, sped lightly across the grass, and vanished in a tuft of tall weeds. Northwind did not see it because it was behind him. If Manito-Kinibic saw it he gave no sign.

The battling stallions wheeled and reared, biting and plunging, striking with their forefeet, thrusting, parrying, feinting. Once more the roan hurled himself forward, his small eyes gleaming red, his teeth bared, his heavy hoofs stabbing the air; and once more his slim, long-maned opponent, light as a dancer, lithe as a panther, whirled aside, escaping destruction by an inch.

Again, as they fenced for an opening, rearing high, snorting and squealing, the wild horse's back was turned to the clump of weeds; and again the shadow darted forward, swiftly, noiselessly, gliding over the turf.

The next moment Corane the Raven crouched close behind the chestnut stallion. A half-second more, and he had swung his rawhide thong with the skill for which he was famous. Then, with a shout, he leaped for Manito-Kinibic's head.

Northwind was down. He lay on his side, motionless as a dead thing. The rawhide thong, weighted at its ends, was wrapped around his hind legs, binding them tightly together. The greatest miracle was not the skill with which the Raven had thrown his snare. More wonderful still was the quelling of Manito-Kinibic's battle-fury, the swiftness with which his master brought the raging roan under control. Yet this was merely the result of teaching, of long painstaking instruction. Corane the Raven, the most successful horse-hunter among the Cherokees, owed his success partly to the peculiar methods which he employed and partly to the perfect training of his famous roan.

Manito-Kinibic, his neck and shoulders bloody, his flanks heaving, stood quietly, gazing down at his fallen foe with eyes in which the fire of hatred still glowed; but Northwind, his silky sides streaked with red, lay inert, inanimate, seeming scarcely to breathe. He offered no resistance as the Raven with deft fingers slipped a strong hobble around the slim forelegs and made it fast above each fetlock. There was no terror, no fierceness in the wild horse's large eyes. Instead they seemed singularly calm and soft, as though the brain behind them were lulled with a vision of places far away and days long ago.

Yet, if the chestnut stallion, a prisoner at last, dreamed of some green, daisy-sprinkled forest-prairie beyond the mountains, the dream passed quickly. Presently

the Raven removed the thong which had held Northwind's hind legs helpless; and instantly the wild horse came to life, panic-stricken, furious, frantic for his freedom.

For a moment he thought himself free. His hind legs were no longer bound. The hobble around his forelegs bound them only loosely. With a snort he heaved upward and leaped away in mad flight—only to pitch headlong to the ground with a force which almost drove the breath from his body. Up he scrambled once more and down again he plunged as his fettered forelegs crumpled under him. Five times he rose and five times he fell before he seemed to realize his helplessness.

For several minutes, then, he lay utterly still. The Raven had remounted Manito-Kinibic. The wild horse could not escape; yet it was well to be prepared for whatever might happen. The ordeal might be over in an hour, or, on the other hand, many hours might pass before Northwind's spirit was broken.

At last he struggled to his feet. The Raven circled him on the roan, watching him keenly. The captive's frenzy seemed to have passed. He was cooler now, steadier on his legs. Sudden anxiety which was almost panic gripped the young Indian. He recalled that once he had seen a hobbled wild horse travel a distance of half a bow-shot in short labored bounds before falling; and in a flash he had become aware of a danger hitherto unrealized.

Quickly he slipped from Manito-Kinibic's back and approached Northwind from behind, uncoiling the weighted rawhide thong which he had removed from the wild stallion's hind legs. He would snare those hind legs again and thus make certain of his captive.

By a margin of moments he was too late.

Northwind wheeled, bounded forward, and this time he did not fall. He had learned what not one hobbled wild horse in a thousand ever discovered—that while a leap of normal length would throw him every time, he could travel at least a little distance at fair speed if his leaps were very short.

Another bound he made, another and another—stiff-legged, labored, heart-breaking—keeping his balance by a miracle. He was more than halfway to the river's edge when the hobble threw him, and though he fell heavily, almost in an instant he was on his feet again, bounding onward as before.

On the very verge of the low bluff the Raven, who had remounted as quickly as possible, drove Manito-Kinibic against the chestnut's flank in a last attempt to turn or throw him. Reeling from the blow, Northwind staggered on the brink. Then, rallying his strength for a supreme effort, he plunged sideways down the steep slope, and the water closed over him.

Some say he was drowned. The Raven never saw him again, though the moon shone brightly on the river. But the water is very deep beside that bluff and there the ebb tide is very strong and swift. It might have borne him quickly beyond the Indian's vision; and since the hobble allowed his forelegs some freedom of action, he might have made shift to swim.

At any rate, when Dunmore the trader told the story of the chestnut stallion that night in Nick Rounder's tavern, an old sea-faring man, who was present, pricked up his ears and asked the trader certain questions. Then, with a great show of wonder and a string of sailor's oaths, he spun a queer yarn.

One midnight, he said, while his ship

lay at anchor in a river-mouth between two barrier islands, the lookout sighted a big chestnut horse coming down the river with the tide. They manned a boat, got a rope over the horse's head and towed him to the sandy island shore. He seemed almost exhausted, his neck and shoulders were cut and bruised, and how he had come into the river was a mystery since his forelegs were hobbled. They could not take the horse aboard their vessel; so, after cutting the hobble, they left him lying on the beach, apparently more dead than alive. They expected to see his body there in the morning, but when they weighed anchor at sunrise he was gone.

Dunmore believed the old man's story;

but others held that he had invented the tale on the spur of the moment, in the hope that the trader would stand him a noggin of rum. However that may be, an odd legend exists today on the barrier islands of the Carolina coast.

The story runs that the slim wiry ponies of those islands, rovers of the beaches and marsh flats, have in their veins the blood of De Soto's Andalusian horses abandoned nearly four centuries ago in the Mississippi wilderness six hundred miles away, beyond the mountains.

It seems a fantastic legend; yet the river in which Northwind made his last desperate bid for freedom passes quickly to the sea between two of those barrier isles.

CHARLES TENNEY JACKSON (1874—)

The Horse of Hurricane Reef

from SHORT STORIES (September, 1922)

Here is a magnificently dramatic piece of writing, so real that the reader finds himself struggling for his life in the flood. The story builds up to a tremendous climax not spoiled by a conventional ending.

The mares are for whoever is man enough to take them," retorted Jean Abadie from the bow of the barge which the towing launch was shoving into the mud shoal on the bay side of Île Dautrive. "Rojas has given them up. The white stallion killed his son, Emile, four years ago. No man of the camps around the bay will land on this reef; he has a name, that wild white devil!"

"You see, M'sieu Lalande, it is not stealing," added Pierre as he stopped the motor and looked at the stranger in the stern seat.

"It is stealing," grunted Joe Lalande, "else why do we come under cover of a storm to rope the colts and mares? Well, no matter. Once we get them aboard and up to the Mississippi plantations, I will show you something, you shrimp-seine Cajans. Throwing a rope, eh? Over westward they never yet showed me a horse I could not break."

The two seine-haulers from Sanchez's platform looked at him doubtfully. "Over westward," to the men of Baratavia Bay, began at the dim marsh shore and stretched

to infinity. A native never ventured so far; out there anything might be possible. But no man had faced the exiled king of Dautrive reef. Pierre muttered again how they would get the young mares—they would first shoot the white stallion. It was the hurricane month; they knew well enough that an obliterating sea would come this week over the dunes and marshes. Old Rojas, living with his grandchildren, orphaned by the white brute's savagery, on the far west point of the island, would never know what happened to the five mares and colts. More than once the gales off the Gulf had left the shell-beached *chênaies* far up the bay strewn with the dead cattle of the people of the reefs.

The big Lalande laughed as he followed through the salt grass to the first low dunes. "Shoot him! You'll shoot no horse with me! You say he's so bad; show him to me! I'll rope and load him, too, my friends, or he will finish me. If we lift Rojas's animals we take 'em all."

The Cajans laughed in nervous disbelief. Lalande, a native, also, who had returned

this season to haul seine in Sanchez's company, might have been a great man with the pitching broncos he told of, but Rojas's great white stallion—well, this boaster would see! The brute would allow no seine-crew to land on Île Dautrive; they told of his charging upon the fishing skiffs clear out to the surf line. Sanchez, the boss, had shot him once as he fled to his lugger, leaving the bleeding stallion to rend and trample an abandoned seine.

Grandpère Rojas, in his camp across the shoal depression that cut through the reef, had never tried to reclaim the wild mares and the colts of the white stud's breed. The generations of them lived on the coarse reef grass and the rain pools; an oysterman had no use for horses, anyhow. His son, Emile, had tried this foolish experiment of raising horses on the reef, and given his life under the stallion's hoofs. *Grandpère* had shrugged and let the breed go wild; yet, as Lalande muttered when Jean and Pierre proposed to use his skill in lifting the younger animals, the horses were his to the scrawniest colt. But Lalande had come. He would show these shrimpers; and even if they only roped and dragged the least unruly to the barge, Lalande could break them and Pierre sell them to the plantations. Yet it was horse stealing. Lalande would not gloss that over, but something else had drawn him here—the stories the islanders told of the white stallion's savagery.

"Old Rojas's son, I will be the avenger," he grunted, sullenly, and came on the day Pierre had chosen for the secret raid.

Abadie had stopped in the sandy trail broken through the mangroves to the top of the sand ridge. "*Bon Dieu!*" he whispered, pointing. "His track, Lalande! Big

as a bucket! *Eh, bien!* I'd rather face a hurricane than this white tiger!"

Lalande had stepped out in the open sand patch. From here the dunes fell away to the Gulf beach. Already the sea was rising. Between Dautrive and the outer bar curious, oily currents were twisting in unwonted directions, and beyond them the surf broke in white, serried teeth gleaming against the black southeast. The sky was ribboned in black lines streaming northerly; the wind came in fitful smashes against the mangrove thickets and then seemed sucked up to howl in the writhing clouds.

"There'll have to be quick work," muttered Pierre. "I tell you this is bad, this sea. We waited too long, M'sieu Lalande. We better be back across the bay, and try for the colts another time."

Lalande's gray eyes narrowed surlily. He straightened his powerful figure above the wind-slanting bushes. The two shrimpers had seemed to skulk in their protection. Jean peered down the spray-driven shoreline.

"If we can work one of the yearlings back to the bayside, get him into the mud and tall grass, M'sieu Lalande could use his rope."

But Lalande had gone down the other way. He was out in the open. They howled at him. That was no way to do it! They must stalk the colts. Nothing could be done if the leader of the wild band saw them—unless they killed him first. He would charge a man on sight, he would wreck a boat in the shoals.

Lalande was laughing, whirling his lariat over the mangroves. "I see the mares, Jean! They are crossing the ridge back of us. Getting out of the wind. The big white devil, there he is, eh?"

The two other raiders had crept back through the brush. It was disconcerting to find the animals crossing their trail behind. "If he smells a man he will never let up on us, Lalande," muttered Jean. "Kill him, then!"

The white leader had crossed the trail of the raiders. He turned, broke through the brush, and gained the ridge forty yards from them. Lalande could see him now against the black skyline very plainly. A tremendous brute towering above the others, his shaggy mane flowing backward in the wind, his muzzle outstretched, his neck tensed until the powerful muscles bulged the satin skin. He was suspicious; he stood there a challenging figure to the storm, but his eyes were roving watchfully into the thickets as a tiger scenting prey.

Lalande glanced back. His comrades had slunk below the mangroves. They were brave, hardy men of the hurricane coast, but the evil name of the sea horse of Île Dautrive seemed to hold them nerveless. The horse was coming on along the top of the ridge slowly crashing through the brush with alert glances right and left. His pink nostrils quivered, his iron-gray tail raised and swept in the wind puffs.

"They will shoot," muttered Lalande. "If he trails them the cowards will shoot." And he stepped more in the open, and then shouted, "Come, thieves, let the colts go! I will need you on the throw-line to check and choke this brute!" Breast-high in the windswept thickets he was laughing and coiling his rope. This was a foe for a strong man who boasted!

The great horse suddenly upreared with a neigh that was like the roar of a lion. No man had so much as ever put finger on him; he had beaten the brains from one, broken the leg of another, and smashed

two seine skiffs in the shallows for invaders. He had been the lord of the reef. Now he reared again and again as he plunged through the mangroves watching for the fugitives as a cat would a mouse under a flimsy cover of straw.

His satiny flanks were toward Lalande; apparently he had not yet discovered the man behind him in this hunt for the others. And then, out of pure panic as the white stallion broke near him, Jean Abadie fired. Lalande cursed and sprang down the slope of dunes after them. He knew he would need their help when he roped this horse; it was no starveling cayuse of the Texas range. But he saw now that the two islanders were skulking for the boat in the last fringe of the mangroves. They would never make it; out in the open the white stallion would crush them both ere they covered half the marsh grass, unless, indeed, they killed him.

The brute saw them now; he swerved in a tremendous rush below the man on the higher sand. Lalande was whirling his rope, and when he heard the hiss of it through the air he laughed, for he knew the throw was true.

"*Eh, bien, devil!* You and me!" He went down sprawling, seeking a root of the tough mangroves to snub the line. He caught one, then it was jerked out; and he went trundling and rolling over and over through the sands, hanging to the lariat. He might as well have roped a torpedo. The horse was in the open now, rearing and bucking, but with his savage eyes still on the fugitives. They were floundering through the water. Jean was jerking the mooring-lines from the barge, and Pierre poling the launch back from the swamp grass. The stallion was surging on with the line cutting deep in his neck, but they

could not see this in the welter of spray he threw in his charge.

Joe Lalande was on his back in the high grass, bruised and dizzy from his ride on the throw-rope. It was lying out taut through the grass; and for a time the man did not stir. The stallion was plunging somewhere out there, still implacable with fury to get at the shrimpers. Then Lalande heard the first throb of the motor. They were getting away, leaving him, then? They must think him killed—a good end for a braggart who would rather fight the stud than steal the mares!

He lay in the grass listening, without even resentment. The wide reach of the bay northward was flecked with white surges rising between those curious oily bulges of water, the first stir of the creeping tides which come upon the Gulf shores before the hurricane winds. Lalande remembered enough of his boyhood among the island folk to know that. Pierre was right: they had waited too long for this week of storm to raid Rojas's wild horses.

He crept around on the jerking line. Above the grass billows he saw the brute. He was whirling madly in the shallows fighting this strange, choking clutch on his neck. Then he charged back up the dunes, and Lalande barely had time to lie out on the line ere he was dragged again. But when the stallion plunged into the thickets, no human strength could hold. He felt his fingers breaking in the tangle of rope and roots, his face ground into the sand and pounded by showers of sand from the brute's hoofs.

Lalande staggered to his feet presently, cleared his eyes, and followed a crashing trail over the sand ridge. Northward he saw the launch rocking its way across the pass with whip-like streamers of wind

hitting the water beyond. Everywhere the coast folk would be debating whether to quit their platform camps and take to the luggers or trust to the oaks of the *chênaies* and their moorings. The hurricane month, and a sea coming up past Cuba! Île Dernière had vanished under the waves; La Caminada gone with six hundred souls; there were traditions of the coast, but the natives knew what a hurricane tide meant on the low, loose sand islands that fringed the Louisiana swamps.

Lalande paused on the highest ridge. There was that sullen glister of the sea, cut through with patches of white, and the green-black horizon gaping to east and west and blotting out with gray squalls. The great wind had not come yet beyond these first squadrons. The big man shrugged as he regarded it. The hurricane tide was shoving frothy fingers out over the shoals. Across the sandy stretch westward he could just see the shack camp of Grandpère Rojas on the highest ridge of Dautrive. A few ragged oaks showed white against the sky. The old man ought to be leaving with his orphaned grandchildren, taking his stout oyster lugger and making for the solid land fourteen miles north across the bay.

"It is no place for little ones," muttered Lalande in the Cajan patois. "These people never will leave quick enough before the storms. I can see the old man's lugger still riding behind the point. He is a fool, old Rojas, afraid to put foot on this end of the reef because of the white stud, but stubborn against the sea which comes like a million white horses."

He went warily on the crushed trail. That throw-rope would foul somewhere in the mangroves; that stallion would choke himself to a stupor, for not all the strength in the world can avail against lungs bursting

for air. Then he saw the mares. They were huddled in a hollow of the dunes, the colts about them as if confused, uncertain, their shaggy coats ruffled in the wind. That wind was moaning now, high and far; not so bad here on the reef, but striking in slants on the sea as if the sky had opened to let an arrow loose. A hundred miles away as yet, that Gulf hurricane wind, but mounting; sixty, eighty, a hundred miles an hour—a hundred and twenty-five in the bursts that presently drove the sand dunes into smoke.

The rim of wet sand beyond the dry, hummocky space was covering with sheets of black water racing from the surf line breaking on the shoals.

And here Lalande saw what he had sought. There was the white mound in the ripples. With a cry he dashed for it. The horse was down. He had not thought it would come so soon. But the end of the trailing rope had fouled a great driftheap, and the brute had kept on charging and fighting until he choked and fell in the first wash of the sea. The slip-noose was bound to cut him down if he kept on hurling his weight against it, Lalande knew.

He wished he had seen the last magnificent fight against it on the sands; but now he walked quickly around the fallen brute, and knelt to touch his distended, quivering nostrils. The eyes were shut but bulging under a film. The great sides were heaving, a rumbling groan found escape somehow; it was as if the mighty heart was breaking with a last throb against this mysterious power choking its strength away.

"Eh, soldier!" whispered Lalande, and felt high on the horse's neck.

A sudden apprehension took him. Perhaps the thong had killed the renegade? He

did not mean that; he was filled with a great exultant joy in this savage. He had stalked and subdued him alone! He stood above this outstretched, trembling body in the first sea ripples, laughing.

"Come, boy! The fight's not done yet! Not the end yet." He twisted his fingers into the taut rope, forced on the dragging driftwood, and eased the tension bit by bit. The rope was buried in the white skin; he worked hurriedly, fearing it was too late.

"Come, come; this will not do—" he was whispering into the stallion's tense ear, fighting at the rope. Then came a fierce, convulsive blow, an explosive sigh, a struggle, and the stallion lay quiet again. He was breathing in great, resurging sighs. His filmed eyes opened slowly. Lalande kept on patting his muzzle while he hitched the noose into a knot that would hold but not choke again. He did not know why he did this, only it seemed fair. He was looking close into the brute's eyes which were beginning to glow with sense again; and to withdraw the choking hitch seemed only justice.

Lalande stood up and looked down at the white stallion. The water was roaring out there now. The skyline was blown white as feathers. The mangroves were slanting; and he suddenly realized that the wind was hard as a plank against his cheek. Not bursting, but steadily lying against the land. There was no rain, yet the air was full of water streaming in white lines through a growing darkness.

"Get up!" he shouted. "The sea is coming. This is no place to be! Comrade, on your feet!"

And the great horse did so. First plunging up, but with his haunches squatted in the water as he looked slowly about. Then to all fours and standing with his tail

whipped about on his heaving flanks. He seemed watching that wall of blown water from the Gulf. Watching steadily, undaunted. The sands under the racing froth seemed trembling; one could hardly see the mangrove dunes not a hundred yards away.

Lalande swiftly turned his eyes from the ridge at a sound. It had seemed a shriek above the other tumult. Then he leaped, and the wind appeared to lift him above the shaking earth.

For the great stud was on him. Upreared above him, a shaggy hoof coming not an inch's breadth from his skull.

Just a glimpse of those red, savage eyes; and the impact of those huge feet almost upon his own. Then Lalande ran. The hurricane wind flung him onward, but he could hear the rush of the white stallion. The entangled rope checked the charge only enough to allow the man to hurl himself into the first mangroves, crawl under them in a whirlwind of rising sands, and keep on crawling. When he stopped he knew the horse was crashing in the thickets hunting him. He saw him as a wraith against the sky, plunging his head low to ferret out his enemy, blowing explosively and hurling the tough mangrove clumps aside.

Lalande kept on his stealthy crawl. He lay, finally, in a water-riven dusk under the lee of the dunes, listening. "Dieu!" he panted. "I said, a soldier! The hurricane could not stop that hate of men!"

For half an hour he did not move. The brute had lost his trail. And when Lalande crawled to the top of the dunes he could not stand. All over the weather side the sea had risen. It was white. White, that was all he could say. And the wind? It did not seem a wind, merely a crushing of one's

skull and lungs. When he tried to turn away it threw him headlong, but he got to his feet on the northerly, lee side of the sand ridge and fought on.

The sand was dissolving under his feet, and now he saw the water of the bay streaming by him. The inner marshes were gone; the hurricane tide was on, and sixty miles inland it would rush to batter on the cypress forests and the back levees of the plantation lands. Lelande had no illusions about Île Dautrive—he had been a lad on this coast—but he kept on, for the highest ridge was at the western point. Across the sand shoal, beyond this point, was still higher land, a clay fragment in which grew a few stout oaks. By these Old Rojas's camp had stood. It did not stand there now, thought Lalande. Nothing built by man on the reef would stand. *Grandpère* and the children of the man whom the white stallion had killed must certainly have taken to the lugger—escaped before the hurricane tide rushed upon the flimsy shack. Surely, yes. Rojas was no fool!

Lalande kept on, clinging to the thickets when the worst clutch of the wind was on him. The roaring of it all was so steady that actually he seemed in a great silence; as if a new element had enveloped him, a normal thing, this shock and unceasing tenseness of feeling and of sound. Through it he strode steadily himself, a strong man with neither fear nor curiosity—a mere dull plunge on to the last foothold of that reef which was churning to gruel behind his steps. He could not miss the point; there was no other spot to reach, and the hurricane was guide as well as captor.

And his mind was upon the lord of Dautrive Island. "He will go. Perhaps he is gone now. And the mares and colts, all off the reef by now." And a grim satis-

faction came that the white stud had turned on him at the last. It was fine to think of. The savage had not cringed. "I do not want anything that can be stolen," he murmured, and spat the sea spray from his sore lips. "His mares and colts, he fights for them—that devil!"

And he began shouting profane, fond challenges and adulations to his conqueror somewhere in this white chaos of a night. A whipping wisp of scud was that charging shape above the torn thickets; any single shriek of the storm his trumpeted challenge in return. Lalande boasted to his soul that he was seeking his foe; if it was the last stroke of his hand he wished it raised to taunt the white, oncoming devil.

Even the storm glimmer had faded when he felt the water shoaling from his armpits to his waist. This was the west point, the highest; and here, with hands locked to the stoutest of the mangroves, he would have to let the sea boil over him as long as a strong man could—then go.

On the western high point at last, and nothing to see, nothing to feel but the submerged bushes and the earth dissolving so that he had to keep his feet moving to avoid each becoming the center of a whirlpool.

"It is a storm," Lalande grunted. "Two white devils on this reef." He remembered seeing spaces of mirrored calm, peaceful coves over which they told him orange trees had bloomed in cottage yards of the reef dwellers. The sea had devoured the islands in a night, dug the hole, and lain down in it like a fed tiger. Lalande, crowded closer to the stouter thickets, put out his hand in the dark. He touched a wet, warm surface, heaving slightly.

The skin of a brute. He smoothed the hair in the rushing water, felt along. A wall of steely flesh broadside to the tidal

wave. Lalande softly slipped his hand over the huge round of the flank. The water was swirling about them both—to the man's armpits now. Lalande knew. They were on the highest point, but ahead lay the shoal pass. The sea was eating away this point; what was left was sinking, flicked off into the meeting currents around Dautrive and swept inland. The island would be silt on some cane planter's back fields forty miles up the Mississippi delta within the week.

But for the last of his domain the lord of Dautrive was fighting with his last foothold. The white devil of the sea was doing what man could not do. Lalande laughed in the blackness. The stallion could not feel his soft touch in all that beating welter of sand and *débris* churning around him. He rested his arm across the unseen back—the brute would think it was a driftwood branch. The man stepped forward. There was no other foothold now, it seemed. He reached his hand to the shoulder, up to feel the stiff, wet mane. He laughed and patted the bulged muscles.

"We go, you and I," he grumbled. The mangroves were slatted out on the tiderush; tearing loose, reeling past them. "Eh, friend? The last—"

And then he knew the horse had whirled, upreared in the blackness with a scream of fury. Lalande sprang to the left, into deep, moiling water.

He felt the plunge of his foe just missing him once more. But another body struck him and then was whirled off in the meeting tides. He collided with a colt in the dark; and now he guessed that the white stallion's breed had been gathered on the refuge shielded to the last by his huge bulk against the inexorable seas.

They were gone now. There was no more foothold on Dautrive either for the exiles

or the man who had come to subdue them. Lalande knew he must not go with the tidal wave. It was death anywhere out there. The water would rush fifty miles inland over the battered reefs. So he fought powerfully back to get a hand-hold on the mangrove thickets through a whirlpool of dissolving sand.

But the man could not breast those surges through the dark; he felt himself driven farther back in a tangle of foam and débris, and suddenly came a whip-like tightening about his legs. He was dragged under and out across the current until he fought down to grasp this thing that had him.

It was his throw-rope, the new and heavy line that he had brought to conquer the white stud that the island men feared. Lalande plunged up and along it. The rope was tight and surging athwart the drift. When he got his head above water he knew he was clear of the disintegrating sand point, overwhelmed by the rollers in the pass and stung by the spray, but moving.

An unseen guide, a mighty power was drawing aslant the inshore tide. Lalande hauled along until he felt the rhythmic beat of the stallion's stroke; along until he touch his flank. When he could put his hand on his long mane Lalande laughed. He hung there, and felt the brute plunge higher at this contact. Once, twice, and then the stud settled to his fight.

The lord of Dautrive could not shake him off nor rend him with teeth or hoof. He was being ridden through the blackness and the sea.

Lalande began shouting. He could not resist that impulse of defiance, the great horse had been merciless to him on the island, so now he howled at him whenever

he could keep the salt water from his teeth.

"*Eh, bien!* Big fellow, you see I am here! If you go, I go! Lalande is with you—devil! Fight! Fight on; a man is on your back at last. A last ride, too, white devil!"

For he had no hope of anything except to be battered to a pulp by the driftlogs and wreckage in the pass or drowned over the flooded marshes. But the stallion would not give to the northward tide, always he kept fighting to windward and westerly. When he plunged on these tacks Lalande swung out straight over his back, but clinging lightly and calling his taunting courage to the brute.

"The west ridge," muttered the rider. "He knows that—the oaks and the clay soil. If anything hangs together in this sea it will be that."

So he clung in the dark. Nothing but the incessant battles of the horse's broadside in the hurricane tide kept that feeling in Lalande's heart that the swimmer was trying to cross the pass to Rojas's oak grove. The white devil was blind in the white sea, but he remembered that. Lalande could feel the leg strokes steady and true even when the waves lifted or buried them, or when they were half drowned in the whipped foam among patches of reef wreckage. The man was fighting at this débris to keep it from the stallion's neck when he felt something else streaming along his flanks. It appeared to be submerged bushes or thick, long grass twisting about beneath them. And there was a changed note to the hurricane's tumult.

Lalande swung up on the stallion's back, listening. The swells of the pass were slower here, huge and strangling, but not with the fierce rush they had battled. The horse

was swimming more to seaward, almost head on now, and once he arose as if his forefeet had struck the earth.

"He has found the marsh," muttered Lalande. "Night of wonders; nothing else!"

Still that powerful, steady stroke under the man's clinging limbs. The brute was seeking whatever land might be above the water. Then Lalande began to think, as again he felt the forefeet touch bottom.

"Then we fight again, eh, tiger? Shake me off and come at me! Make the oaks and we'll see!"

The horse plunged past a torn oak stump which smashed him in the side. He was in water to his withers, but Lalande knew he was climbing. He got a foothold, leaned against the tide rushing through the oak grove, and kept on. Against the man and horse there crushed another trunk, denuded of leaves, swinging by its roots, staggering them with its blows. The sea was over this also, Lalande knew. If it came higher there was no hope here.

Then the stallion stopped. He stood belly deep in the lee of another oak trunk which Lalande could feel in the utter dark. And the man sat silent astride the white king of Dautrive who had lost his domain and his subjects. He moved his legs across the heaving flanks—a sort of stealthy challenge. He wanted the white stud to know that he, Joe Lalande, was there astride him. He laughed and leaned to pat the unseen arch of the neck.

And then again came that furious, up-rearing plunge of the great brute. His head came about in a side blow, his teeth tearing at Lalande's face as the rider swerved out under this twisting, maddened attack. He heard that trumpet cry again of the wild horse seeking him as he dragged himself about the oak tree in the water. He stood

clutching the rope, trying to make out the brute's form.

Then he knew that the swells riding through the twisted oaks were slowed; the yelling of the winds more fitful, higher; and a sort of a check came to the clutch on his body against the tree. Lalande seemed to stand in a frothy eddy as if the sea had stopped running and was foaming to an apex about him. And he knew what it meant, the moment that always comes in the Gulf hurricanes. The wind was dying off and changing. The sea could do no more. It had piled its flood as far inland and as high as even its strength could hold. Its whirling center was now over the coast, the wind whipping fitfully, now southwest, westerly, northward, and beginning to rise again. But there came one moment when it was almost a calm, silence except for that roaring in the sky.

"*La revanche,*" muttered the man. "Now comes the worst—the rush of the tide back to sea. The good God help them all, these Cajans who had not found refuge up the bay. *La revanche*—that is when they die!"

He felt about his oak trunk, wondering if it were still rooted firmly. The white stallion must be just about the torn branches, for Lalande still had the trailing line. And then came something that numbed him with uncanny fear. A voice out in the dark, a child's cry among the oaks.

"*La revanche! Grandpère,* it is coming! Get the lines the other way. Grandpère—"

Lalande went plunging toward the spot. "*Nom de Dieu!* It is not possible? Rojas!" He shouted, and stumbled among wreckage of trees and timbers around his waist. "Rojas, you are in the grove?"

A dim light glowed behind a blanket. He saw a boy had snatched this moment of the falling wind to try the lantern. When La-

lande waded to the spot an old man straightened up on the other side of a sunken raft. Upon it, under the blankets, were lashed the forms of Rojas's children, the orphans of Emile, who had once sought to tame the white horse of Île Dautrive. Old Rojas held the lantern close to his white beard. He seemed as frightened as was the small boy by the stranger's coming.

Old Rojas had been trying to spike a cross-piece to his shattered raft. His lugger had been smashed in the first reach of the hurricane, and he had torn up the planks of his camp floor to build this refuge anchored to the biggest oaks of the grove. They knew what to do, these Cajans of the reefs, when they were caught by the hurricane tide. Cut the mast from the lugger and drift inland, seize an anchorage before the dreaded *revanche* took them seaward; or if not that, hang to one's oak stumps!

Lalande did not waste the precious moments with a single question.

"A brave fight, old man. I see you made a brave fight! Give me your raft-lines. The other way around now, and to the stoutest trees. This sea, it is like a mad tiger when it has to go back defeated! Come." He took the mooring-line and plunged off in the waist-deep froth.

"Day of wonders!" mumbled old Rojas. "A man on the reef—living! A big man, strong after the hurricane! It is impossible." He went on hammering his raft as it surged and plunged by his shoulders, ordering the youngster to make himself fast once more in the life-ropes which held them all to the shaking planks. There was no whimper from the four children. They raised big dark eyes staring from *Grandpère* to the strange man who was battling back in the first seaward rush of the waters to make them fast against *la revanche*. The wind

was smiting again. It appeared to fall out of the blackness to the north, blast after blast, rising swifter, smiting the piled-up waters, hurling them over the reef islands with thrice the speed they had come in.

The dim lantern went out. The fugitives tied themselves in again. If the worn lines held and the raft kept together they might live. "Name of Names!" grumbled old Rojas. "A man coming to us out of the sea? He said he would make fast for us. If not, my children—well, we must trust him."

Lalande had struggled off into the new rush of the wind with the raft-lines. They were frayed and ragged. He made them fast to his own new throw-rope. He would get this rope off the stallion somehow, and make it fast to the big oak. If not—he shrugged, well, then, nothing! Every wreck of a lugger, plank of a camp, driftlog, tree, that was loose would be miles in the open Gulf to-morrow to eddy endlessly in *la revanche*.

The old man's mooring-lines would not reach the big oak. Lalande had thought that, combined, they might last the night out, but the sea and wind were whipping fast on him in the dark. He had to plunge out shoulder deep to the tree, feeling of his line.

"The white devil is there and quiet," he grumbled. "If he would let me slip the rope from his shoulders and tie to the tree!" He breasted the brimming tides over the submerged isle past the oak, his hand cautiously out to the dark. "Devil!" he called softly. "This is for Emile Rojas's young ones. The rope, devil! We've fought, you and I, but now let me have it."

The line was tight past the oak stump. The weight of the raft was already coming strongly on it as the tide began to seethe through the shattered grove. Lalande could

hardly keep his feet, or his eyes open against the bitter spray. Then he was off his feet; he was hanging to the line, fighting out on it, calling to his foe, reaching for him. The brute must be swimming now, for the footing had gone from under them both.

Lalande felt a plunging on the line. It was too late now to hope to get the rope to the oak. The fighting horse was on it, and it began to give slowly past the man's hands. *La revanche* was bearing them on, the raft, the man, and the white devil who was its sole anchor now. Lalande clung with one arm to the oak and drew in on the line. The dead weight of the raft had its way. The bucking, plunging brute, now touching the ground, now surging in the tide, was being drawn to him. Lalande began to call again. He had a great sense of pity for the stud. There were things that could not be withstood even by his lion heart; yet even the sea might not conquer except for this choking drag of the raft that held Rojas's grandchildren.

Lalande touched the stallion's muzzle now, coming on fighting with the obstinate ferocity of a white shark. He crouched in the crotch of the oak and held out his arms to the stallion's neck. When finally the brute crashed upon the sunken oak, Lalande reached his fingers to the cleft where the throw-rope cut into his neck. He dragged on the line, vainly trying to ease that tension. Once he thought of his knife; he might cut that choking grip from the white stud's throat. Then Lalande lay back in the crotch above the plunging hoofs and eased the great head above his own shoulder. Dragging on the line with all his power he kept up his whispering as the hurricane tide rushed under them, swinging the oak on its roots, twisting it seaward, and sucking the

earth away in whirls where Rojas's house had stood.

"I tell you we are still here, you and I," called Lalande after a while. "You and I, devil! You and I—smashed up together, my face against your own! *Eh, bien!* Be quiet, Emile Rojas may be watching his children, and you in this storm! Remember that, white devil, you have returned for them!" He laughed and shouted in the dark, his arm about the neck of the horse, working his fingers under the rope, trying to take some of the strain upon his own flesh and bone. And presently he grumbled, "and remember, also, I am not a thief. Not a thief, eh?"

They clung that way five hours, until the crest of *la revanche* was passed. The sun even got through the huge rifts of black clouds streaming south by the time old Rojas stirred about from his creaking raft in the scrub oaks. Everywhere a brown, dirty, sullen sea setting out, flecked with drift and wreckage; and of all Île Dautrive nothing showed but these few battered, branchless trees.

The stout old man waded waist-deep from his raft where now Emile's young ones sat up stiff and drowsy from the sea's night-long flailing. He followed his mooring-line out to where it sogged under water by the big oak. The eldest boy had stood up looking after him.

"*Grandpère!*" screamed the lad suddenly. "Look! The white horse has come! By the tree, with the man!"

Old Rojas waded and struggled there, too astounded to speak. The sight was a queer one, indeed. The white horse was drawn against the oak-crotch, pinned in there, in fact; and the rope from his neck also crushed the strange man against his shoulder. Joe Lalande appeared to be crucified

against the satin coat of the stallion. But he lifted his free arm faintly when the old man floundered near them.

"M'sieu?" gasped Rojas. "You here?" He had to touch Lalande's drenched body ere he would believe that the man lived. Then he fell to loosening the slacked rope so that Lalande lurched down from the horse's neck into the water where he could hardly stand but clung to the tree trunk watching the animal. The rope had cut through Lalande's arm and shoulder until it made a long red-scarred mark from neck to elbow. He could not speak for a time from his salt-swollen lips.

"Yes, I am here," he whispered at last, and staggered weakly.

"Name of God, the white horse!" cried the old man. He put his hand out to touch the smooth side, but as if fearing him even now. Lalande was trying to discover whether or not the heart of the white stal-

lion still beat; and then he turned away, his eyes closing wearily. He seemed to be shaken by a sob, a grief that the islander could not comprehend.

"What's the matter, M'sieu? We are safe; the boats will find us. *Le bon Dieu!* that was a storm! I have never seen a greater on this reef!"

Then he looked curiously at the still form of his old enemy. "*Eh, bien!* It took a white sea to kill this white devil, my friend!"

"It was not the sea," grumbled Lalande. "The touch of a rope on his neck, M'sieu. I saw his heart break last night, but it was for the children of Emile. A rope and the touch of my hand upon his neck, they were not to be endured, M'sieu." Then Lalande turned away, as if speaking to the lord of Dautrive against the tree: "At least you must know this, white devil, the hand on you was not the hand of a thief."

WILL JAMES (1892–1942)

First Money

from THE DRIFTING COWBOY

The American cowboy is an important figure in the history of our country. He rides for work and he rides for pleasure. His mount is a product of his environment and of the purpose for which he is trained and used. No writer can compare with Will James in his ability to portray the cowboy and his horse, for Will James in his portraits draws himself and his own life. The vigor of his language, the lack of unnecessary folderols, the pithy humor of understatement combined with exaggerated analogies present the cowboy and his horse, not only alive but alive and kicking, or rather bucking. I chose the following excerpt from The Drifting Cowboy because it is Will James at his best, showing us a part of American life which may not always be with us, in its present strength, honesty, and simplicity.

It was natural that we was feeling pretty good when we walked in the Rodeo headquarters that evening and hear the reports. We got our “daily money” and then we holds our breaths while we listen who all so far had qualified for the finals. There was only three and *I was one of 'em.*

Tom near went through hissself when he heard my name was on that list and a grin spread on his face that sure disguised it.

“Good boy, Bill,” he hollers at the same

time gives me a slap on that back that give me to understand he meant all what he said.

The eight or ten riders left what hadn't competed for the finals and due to ride the next day was drawing their horses and I edged in to draw my “final” horse, I closed my eyes and near prayed as I reaches in the hat, gets one envelope and steps out where Tom and me can read it together.

We pulls the paper out of the little envelope like it was going to be either real bad news or else information that we'd

inherited a million, and hesitating we unfolds it.—“Slippery Elm” is all that little piece of paper said, but that was enough and meant a plenty. It meant that tomorrow I was to ride a horse by that name and that nine chances out of ten it was up to that horse whether I’d win first, second, or third money or nothing.

“We’d seen that horse bucked out the second day. He was a big black and reminded me some of Angel Face, back there on the range. His mane was roached and from what we’d seen of him he wasn’t near as good a bucking horse as our old Angel Face, he wasn’t as honest and we remembered that he threwed himself a purpose and near killed a good cowboy on that second day. What’s more we learn that he can’t be depended on to buck everytime he’s rode, sometimes he just stampedes and it was told that one time he run through two railings and halfways up the grandstand where he broke through the steps and near broke his neck.

Putting all that together and thinking it over, me and Tom was looking mighty solemn. Of course, chances was that he might buck and buck good but the biggest part of them chances was that he’d just stampede and crowhop and then fall, and we knowed if it happened the imported judges would take advantage of that and instead of giving me another horse they’d grin and just put a line across my name.

Tom ain’t saying nothing, but I can see he’s doing a heap of thinking instead, and watching him I can’t help but grin a little and remark that everything may turn out alright. “Can’t tell about that horse, Tom,” I says, “he might buck like hell.”

“Yes, he might and he might *not*,” says Tom, looking gloomy, “and I sure hate to see you take a chance on a scrub like that

horse after you getting as far as the finals. If you’d a drawed a good one like that Ragtime horse for instance, I don’t mean the one I rode and got disqualified on, I mean the one they cheated me out of, well, if you’d got a horse like that you’d have a chance for your money, but who do you suppose has drawed that horse?” he asks.

“I don’t know,” I says, wondering.

“That pet cowboy of Colter’s got him—and do you think he could of drawed that horse on the square? Not by a damn sight! That cowboy is a good rider and being he is Colter’s drawcard same as some of his horses he advertises and claims can’t be rode, Colter is naturally going to see that that cowboy wins first. It’s a safe bet so far cause when he drawed Ragtime he drawed the best bucking horse in the outfit.”

“Now I’ll tell you, Bill,” says Tom, all het up on the subject, “it’s not the prize money nor the honors we’re after so much, if they can outride us and do it on the square we’d be glad to shake hands with ’em and congratulate, but they’re trying to put something over on us and on all the riders of this part of the country. Other outfits like Colter’s done the same thing last two years and got away with the money when there was boys from here that could of outrode ’em two to one, and it looks like the same thing is going to be done this year, but if you had a good horse, Bill, we’d sure make them circus hands look up to a cowboy.”

It’s after supper when Tom, still looking mighty sour, tells me he’s going to the stable to get his horse and go visiting out of town a ways. I see his mind is still on the subject as he’s saddling, and giving the latigo a jerk remarks that he can lose a square deal and laugh about it, “but I’ll be daggone,” he says, “if it don’t hurt to get

cheated out of what's yours, have it done right under your nose and not have no say acoming."

The next day was the last day, the big day, the grounds was sizzling hot and the dust that was stirred up stayed in the air looking for a cooler atmosphere. It was past noon and Tom hadn't showed up yet. I was beginning to wonder of the whereabouts of that cowboy and started looking for him. I was still at it when the parade drifted in and the Grand Entree was over, every kid that could borrow a horse was in it, some wore red silk shirts and they sure thought they was cowboys far as the clothes was concerned.

The riders what still had to ride for the finals went hard at it and I was busy watching and judging for myself how many of them would make them finals. I hears when it's over that only two had qualified and them two was of Colter's outfit, that made six of us who are still to ride for the grand prize, four of Colter's men and two of us outsiders and by that I figgers that Colter is sure making it a cinch of *keeping the money in the family*.

"All you bulldoggers on the track," hollers the Rodeo boss, and knowing that Tom is in on that event I takes another look for him, but I can't see hair nor hide of that son-of-a-gun nowheres, so I was getting real worried.

My name is called and I rides up to the shute. My steer is let out and for the time being I forgets everything but what I'd rode up there for. I done good time, the best time of that day so far, and I sure did wish that old Tom was there and seen it, cause I know it'd tickled him.

A half dozen or so other bulldoggers are called on to take their chance and then Tom's name comes, but he's still among the

missing and I see no way but offer to substitute for him. I had a mighty hard time to get the judges to agree to that, but with Pete on my side and me atalking my head off, they finally decide to let me take his place.

I glances towards the shutes and notice a steer *just my size* already there and waiting to come out, and I also notices that they're trying to drive him back and put another steer in the place of him, a great big short-horned Durham. I rides up there right now and begins to object, remarking that I'd take on any steer as they come but at the same time I wasn't letting any skunk stack the cards on me by going to the special trouble of picking me the hardest steer they can find. I object so strong that they finally let me have the first steer.

I was mad and when that steer come out I figgered there was something to work my hard feelings out on, I made a reach for them long horns that I wouldn't of made if I'd been normal, the critter kept me up for a good airing, but when my boot heels finally connected with the sod the program wasn't long in ending. I stopped him good so there wouldn't be no danger of being disqualified and imagining that I was bulldogging a Rodeo boss or a judge instead of a steer, it wasn't long before I had him down.

"Old critter," I says to the steer as I lets him up, "you play square which is more than I can say for some folks."

I shakes the dust off myself, locates my hat, and being I was through on bulldogging I struts out round and toward the saddling shutes trying to get a peek at that long lean pardner of mine—a vision of his expression as he was leaving the night before came to me and I'm beginning to wonder if he didn't try to even scores with the

Colter outfit. "But daggone it," I thinks, "he should of let me tag along."

"You'll soon be riding now, Bill," says one of the local boys breaking in on my thoughts, "and if you don't bring home the bacon with first money you better keep on riding and never let me see your homely phizog again."

"Bet your life," I says, "and that goes for two judges too."

Comes the time when they're introducing Colter's pet cowboy to the crowd in the grandstand and telling all about his riding abilities on the worst horses, etc., etc. A few bows in answer to the cheers and that same *hombre* rides to the shutes graceful and prepares to get ready.

The Ragtime horse (the one Tom drawed and didn't get) came out like a real buckner, he wiped up the earth pretty and Colter's top hand was a setting up there as easy as though he was using shock absorbers. None of the hard hitting jumps seemed to faze him and his long lean legs was a reefing that pony from the root of his tail to the tips of his ears and a keeping time with motions that wasn't at all easy to even see.

I felt kind of dubious as I watched the proceedings. If I only had a horse like that I thought, for as it was I didn't see no chance and things was made worse when I hear one of the riders next to me remark: "You know, Bill, we got to hand it to that feller, he may be with Colter's outfit and all that, *but he sure can ride!*"

A couple other boys came out on their ponies and they done fine but it was plain to see who was up for first money. I didn't put much heart to the job when I gets near the shutes to straddle that roach maned scrub I'd drawed, but I figgers to do the best I can, there was no use quitting now and maybe after all that horse might buck

pretty good, good enough to get me into second or third money but dammit, I didn't want second or third money. I wanted first or nothing and it was my intentions to *ride* for that.

The judges, all excepting Pete, didn't seem interested when it was announced that I was next to come out and I reckoned they'd already figured me out of it as they knowed I'd drawed Slippery Elm.

"Judges," hollers a voice that sounds mighty familiar, "Watch this cowboy ride, he's after first money."

The shute gate was about to be opened, but I had to turn and see who'd just spoke—and there, a few feet back stood Tom, a glance of him kept me wondering or asking where he'd been, his features was kinda set, and I finds myself listening mighty close as he looks at me and says—sort of low: "Careful of the first jump, Bill, and ride like you would if old Angel Face was under you."

I had no time to talk back and that got me to setting pretty close, but I had to grin at the thought of the scrub I was setting on being anything like the good buckner old Angel Face could be, but I was going to play safe anyway and get ready to *ride*. If this horse bucked good, all the better—then, the shute gate flies open.

That horse came out like the combination of a ton of dynamite and a lighted match, I lost the grin I'd been packing, I kinda felt the cantle crack as that pony took me up to I don't know where and I was flying instead of riding.

Instinct, or maybe past experience warned me that somehow mighty soon we was going to come down again and natural like I prepares for it. A human can think fast sometimes, and you can tell that I did by the fact that all I've described so far of that

pony's movements was done in about the length of time it took you to read a couple of these words. That roach mane horse was sure surprising.

When that horse hit the ground I felt as though Saint Peter and all the guards of the Pearly Gates who I'd been to see just a second before, had put their foot down on me and was trying to push me through the earth to the hot place. The saddle horn was tickling me under the chin and one of my feet touched the ground, my other one was alongside the horse's jaw.

I hear a snorting beller that sounds away off and I gets a hazy glimpse of the roman-nosed lantern-jawed head that was making it—I'd recognized the whole of it in hell and instead of Slippery Elm, *old Angel Face was under me.*

Right then and there the tune changed, the spirits I'd lost came back along with memories of first money. A full grown war-whoop was heard, Angel Face answers with a beller and all the world was bright once more.

The judges had no chance to direct me when to scratch forward and back, I was doing that aplenty and they was busy turning their ponies and just keeping track of me. I'd look over my shoulder at 'em and laugh in their face at the same time place one of my feet between the pony's ears or reach back and put the III (hundred and eleven) spur mark on the back of the cantle of the saddle.

All through the performance old faithful Angel Face kept up a standard of that first jump I tried to describe. He was wicked but true and it was a miracle that his feet always touched the ground instead of his body. There was none of that high rearing show stuff with that old boy, only just

plain honest to god bucking that only a horse of his kind could put out—one in a thousand of his kind.

I got to loving that horse right then. He was carrying me, kinda rough of course, but straight to my ambitions, and even though my feet was in the motion of scratching and covering a lot of territory on his hide my spurs didn't touch him nor leave a mark on him nowheres, he was my friend in need.

There's cheers from the grandstand, cheers from the cowboys as far as I can see in my wild ride everybody is up and ahollering, everybody but the Colter crowd. The shot is fired that marks the end of my ride and Tom is right there to pick Angel Face's head up out of the dust, that old pony hated to quit and tries to buck even after he's snubbed.

"He's *some* horse," Tom says real serious, "and Bill you're *some* rider."

Late that night finds me and Tom leading Slippery Elm and headed for the grounds, we was going to steal back Slippery Elm's double, Angel Face.

"Too bad," I remarks, "that his mane had to be roached to get him to look like this scrub we're leading. The boss'll have seventeen fits when he sees that."

Tom didn't seem worried. "What I'd like to know," he says, "is how come I was handed the championship bulldogging. I wasn't even there the last day."

"I substituted for you, and even went and broke my own record doing it but," I goes on before Tom can speak, "if you hadn't brought in Angel Face I'd never got first money. If the Colter outfit hadn't switched horses on us we wouldn't of switched horses on them, so there you are, Tom. Turn about is fair play and that goes all round."

CHARLES DICKENS (1812–1870)

How Mr. Pickwick undertook to drive and Mr. Winkle to ride

from THE PICKWICK PAPERS

The plight in which Mr. Winkle finds himself in the ensuing tale is not unlike that in which many a novice finds himself to this day. I have heard people say that horses detect fear by smell—personally, I don't think they need smell to detect it; most certainly they know the inexperienced rider from the moment he lays hands on the reins preparatory to riding, whether he is afraid or not, and invariably take advantage of him. This was true at the time the following tale was written; it is true now, and will be true as long as there are horses to ride and beginners to ride them. Dickens does not often write extensively about horses, which is a little to be wondered at when one considers how largely they figured in the life of his day.

Now, about Manor Farm," said Mr. Pickwick. "How shall we go?"

"We had better consult the waiter, perhaps," said Mr. Tupman, and the waiter was summoned accordingly.

"Dingley Dell, gentlemen—fifteen miles, gentlemen—cross road—post-chaise, sir?"

"Post-chaise won't hold more than two," said Mr. Pickwick.

"True, sir—beg your pardon sir.—Very nice four-wheeled chaise, sir—seat for two behind—one in front for the gentleman

that drives—oh! beg your pardon, sir—that'll only hold three."

"What's to be done?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Perhaps one of the gentlemen would like to ride, sir?" suggested the waiter, looking towards Mr. Winkle; "very good saddle horses, sir—any of Mr. Wardle's men coming to Rochester bring 'em back, sir."

"The very thing," said Mr. Pickwick. "Winkle, will you go on horseback?"

Mr. Winkle did entertain considerable misgivings in the very lowest recesses of

his own heart, relative to his equestrian skill; but, as he would not have them even suspected on any account, he at once replied with great hardihood, "Certainly. I should enjoy it, of all things."

Mr. Winkle had rushed upon his fate; there was no resource. "Let them be at the door by eleven," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very well, sir," replied the waiter.

The waiter retired; the breakfast concluded; and the travellers ascended to their respective bed-rooms, to prepare a change of clothing, to take with them on their approaching expedition.

Mr. Pickwick had made his preliminary arrangements, and was looking over the coffee-room blinds at the passengers in the street, when the waiter entered, and announced that the chaise was ready—an announcement which the vehicle itself confirmed, by forthwith appearing before the coffee-room blinds aforesaid.

It was a curious little green box on four wheels, with a low place like a wine-bin for two behind, and an elevated perch for one in front, drawn by an immense brown horse, displaying great symmetry of bone. An hostler stood near, holding by the bridle another immense horse—apparently a near relative of the animal in the chaise—ready saddled for Mr. Winkle.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Pickwick, as they stood upon the pavement while the coats were being put in. "Bless my soul! who's to drive? I never thought of that."

"Oh! you, of course," said Mr. Tupman.

"Of course," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"I!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Not the slightest fear, sir," interposed the hostler. "Warrant him quiet, sir; a hinfant in arms might drive him."

"He don't shy, does he?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Shy, sir?—He wouldn't shy if he was to meet a vaggin-load of monkeys with their tails burnt off."

The last recommendation was indisputable. Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass got into the bin; Mr. Pickwick ascended to his perch, and deposited his feet on a floor-clothed shelf, erected beneath it for that purpose.

"Now, shiny Villiam," said the hostler to the deputy hostler, "give the gen'l'm'n the ribbins." "Shiny Villiam"—so called, probably, from his sleek hair and oily countenance—placed the reins in Mr. Pickwick's left hand; and the upper hostler thrust a whip into his right.

"Wo—o!" cried Mr. Pickwick, as the tall quadruped evinced a decided inclination to back into the coffee-room window.

"Wo—o!" echoed Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass, from the bin.

"Only his playfulness, gen'l'm'n," said the head hostler encouragingly; "jist kitch hold on him, Villiam." The deputy restrained the animal's impetuosity, and the principal ran to assist Mr. Winkle in mounting.

"T'other side, sir, if you please."

"Blowed if the gen'l'm'n worn't a gettin' up on the wrong side," whispered a grinning post-boy to the inexpressibly gratified waiter.

Mr. Winkle, thus instructed, climbed into his saddle, with about as much difficulty as he would have experienced in getting up the side of a first-rate man-of-war.

"All right?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, with an inward presentiment that it was all wrong.

"All right," replied Mr. Winkle faintly.

"Let 'em go," cried the hostler,—*"Hold him in, sir,"* and away went the chaise, and the saddle-horse, with Mr. Pickwick on the

box of one, and Mr. Winkle on the back of the other, to the delight and gratification of the whole inn yard.

"What makes him go sideways?" said Mr. Snodgrass in the bin, to Mr. Winkle in the saddle.

"I can't imagine," replied Mr. Winkle. His horse was drifting up the street in the most mysterious manner—side first, with his head towards one side of the way, and his tail towards the other.

Mr. Pickwick had no leisure to observe either this or any other particular, the whole of his faculties being concentrated in the management of the animal attached to the chaise, who displayed various peculiarities, highly interesting to a bystander, but by no means equally amusing to any one seated behind him. Besides constantly jerking his head up, in a very unpleasant and uncomfortable manner, and tugging at the reins to an extent which rendered it a matter of great difficulty for Mr. Pickwick to hold them, he had a singular propensity for darting suddenly every now and then to the side of the road, then stopping short, and then rushing forward for some minutes, at a speed which it was wholly impossible to control.

"What *can* he mean by this?" said Mr. Snodgrass, when the horse had executed this manœuvre for the twentieth time.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Tupman; "it *looks* very like shying, don't it?" Mr. Snodgrass was about to reply, when he was interrupted by a shout from Mr. Pickwick.

"Woo!" said that gentleman; "I have dropped my whip."

"Winkle," said Mr. Snodgrass, as the equestrian came trotting up on the tall horse, with his hat over his ears, and shaking all over, as if he would shake to pieces, with the violence of the exercise, "pick up the

whip, there's a good fellow." Mr. Winkle pulled at the bridle of the tall horse till he was black in the face; and having at length succeeded in stopping him, dismounted, handed the whip to Mr. Pickwick, and grasping the reins, prepared to remount.

Now whether the tall horse, in the natural playfulness of his disposition, was desirous of having a little innocent recreation with Mr. Winkle, or whether it occurred to him that he could perform the journey as much to his own satisfaction without a rider as with one, are points upon which, of course, we can arrive at no definite and distinct conclusion. By whatever motives the animal was actuated, certain it is that Mr. Winkle had no sooner touched the reins, than he slipped them over his head, and darted backwards to their full length.

"Poor fellow," said Mr. Winkle, soothingly,—*"poor fellow—good old horse."* The "poor fellow" was proof against flattery: the more Mr. Winkle tried to get nearer him, the more he sidled away; and, notwithstanding all kinds of coaxing and wheedling, there were Mr. Winkle and the horse going round and round each other for ten minutes, at the end of which time each was at precisely the same distance from the other as when they first commenced—an unsatisfactory sort of thing under any circumstances, but particularly so in a lonely road, where no assistance can be procured.

"What am I to do?" shouted Mr. Winkle, after the dodging had been prolonged for a considerable time. "What am I to do? I can't get on him."

"You had better lead him till we come to a turnpike," replied Mr. Pickwick from the chaise.

"But he won't come!" roared Mr. Winkle. "Do come, and hold him."

Mr. Pickwick was the very personation of kindness and humanity: he threw the reins on the horse's back, and having descended from his seat, carefully drew the chaise into the hedge, lest anything should come along the road, and stepped back to the assistance of his distressed companion, leaving Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass in the vehicle.

The horse no sooner beheld Mr. Pickwick advancing towards him with the chaise whip in his hand, than he exchanged the rotary motion in which he had previously indulged, for a retrograde movement of so very determined a character, that it at once drew Mr. Winkle, who was still at the end of the bridle, at a rather quicker rate than fast walking, in the direction from which they had just come. Mr. Pickwick ran to his assistance, but the faster Mr. Pickwick ran forward, the faster the horse ran backward. There was a great scraping of feet, and kicking up of the dust; and at last Mr. Winkle, his arms being nearly pulled out of their sockets, fairly let go his hold. The horse paused, stared, shook his head, turned round, and quietly trotted home to Rochester, leaving Mr. Winkle and Mr. Pickwick gazing on each other with countenances of blank dismay. A rattling noise at a little distance attracted their attention. They looked up.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the agonised Mr. Pickwick, "there's the other horse running away!"

It was but too true. The animal was startled by the noise, and the reins were on his back. The result may be guessed. He tore off with the four-wheeled chaise behind him, and Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass in the four-wheeled chaise. The heat was a short one. Mr. Tupman threw himself into

the hedge. Mr. Snodgrass followed his example, the horse dashed the four-wheeled chaise against a wooden bridge, separated the wheels from the body, and the bin from the perch: and finally stood stock still to gaze upon the ruin he had made.

The first care of the two unspilt friends was to extricate their unfortunate companions from their bed of quickset—a process which gave them the unspeakable satisfaction of discovering that they had sustained no injury, beyond sundry rents in their garments, and various lacerations from the brambles. The next thing to be done was, to unharness the horse. This complicated process having been effected, the party walked slowly forward, leading the horse among them, and abandoning the chaise to its fate.

An hour's walking brought the travelers to a little roadside public-house, with two elm trees, a horse trough, and a signpost in front; one or two deformed hay-ricks behind, a kitchen garden at the side, and rotten sheds and mouldering out-houses jumbled in strange confusion all about it. A red-headed man was working in the garden; and to him Mr. Pickwick called lustily—"Hallo there!"

The red-headed man raised his body, shaded his eyes with his hand, and stared, long and coolly, at Mr. Pickwick and his companions.

"Hallo there!" repeated Mr. Pickwick.

"Hallo!" was the red-headed man's reply.

"How far is it to Dingley Dell?"

"Better er seven mile."

"Is it a good road?"

"No t'ant." Having uttered this brief reply, and apparently satisfied himself with another scrutiny, the red-headed man resumed his work.

"We want to put this horse up here," said Mr. Pickwick; "I suppose we can, can't we?"

"Want to put that ere horse up, do ee?" repeated the red-headed man, leaning on his spade.

"Of course," replied Mr. Pickwick, who had by this time advanced, horse in hand, to the garden rails.

"Missus"—roared the man with the red head, emerging from the garden, and looking very hard at the horse—"Missus!"

A tall bony woman—straight all the way down—in a coarse blue pelisse, with the waist an inch or two below her arm-pits, responded to the call.

"Can we put this horse up here, my good woman?" said Mr. Tupman, advancing, and speaking in his most seductive tones. The woman looked very hard at the whole party; and the red-headed man whispered something in her ear.

"No," replied the woman, after a little consideration, "I'm afeered on it."

"Afraid!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, "what's the woman afraid of?"

"It got us in trouble last time," said the woman, turning into the house: "I woant have nothin' to say to 'un."

"Most extraordinary thing I ever met with in my life," said the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

"I—I—really believe," whispered Mr. Winkle, as his friends gathered round him, "that they think we have come by this horse in some dishonest manner."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, in a storm of indignation. Mr. Winkle modestly repeated his suggestion.

"Hallo, you fellow!" said the angry Mr. Pickwick, "do you think we stole this horse?"

"I'm sure ye did," replied the red-headed

man, with a grin which agitated his countenance from one auricular organ to the other. Saying which, he turned into the house, and banged the door after him.

"It's like a dream," ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, "a hideous dream. The idea of a man's walking about, all day, with a dreadful horse that he can't get rid of!" The depressed Pickwickians turned moodily away, with the tall quadruped, for which they all felt the most unmitigated disgust, following slowly at their heels.

It was late in the afternoon when the four friends and their four-footed companion turned into the lane leading to Manor Farm; and even when they were so near their place of destination, the pleasure they would otherwise have experienced was materially damped as they reflected on the singularity of their appearance, and the absurdity of their situation. Torn clothes, lacerated faces, dusty shoes, exhausted looks, and, above all, the horse. Oh, how Mr. Pickwick cursed that horse: he had eyed the noble animal from time to time with looks expressive of hatred and revenge; more than once he had calculated the probable amount of the expense he would incur by cutting his throat; and now the temptation to destroy him, or to cast him loose upon the world, rushed upon his mind with tenfold force. He was roused from a meditation on these dire imaginings, by the sudden appearance of two figures at a turn of the lane. It was Mr. Wardle, and his faithful attendant, the fat boy.

"Why, where *have* you been?" said the hospitable old gentleman; "I've been waiting for you all day. Well, you *do* look tired. What! Scratches! Not hurt, I hope—eh? Well, I *am* glad to hear that—very. So you've been spilt, eh? Never mind. Common accident in these parts. Joe—he's asleep

again!—Joe, take that horse from the gentleman, and lead it into the stable.”

The fat boy sauntered heavily behind them with the animal; and the old gentleman, condoling with his guests in homely phrase on so much of the day's adventures as they thought proper to communicate, led the way to the kitchen.

“We'll have you put to rights here,” said the old gentleman, “and then I'll introduce you to the people in the parlour. Emma, bring out the cherry brandy; now, Jane, a needle and thread here; towels and water, Mary. Come, girls, bustle about.”

Three or four buxom girls speedily dispersed in search of the different articles in requisition, while a couple of large-headed, circular-visaged males rose from their seats in the chimney-corner (for although it was a May evening, their attachment to the wood fire appeared as cordial as if it were Christmas), and dived into some obscure recesses, from which they speedily produced a bottle of blacking, and some half-dozen brushes.

“Bustle!” said the old gentleman again, but the admonition was quite unnecessary, for one of the girls poured out the cherry brandy, and another brought in the towels, and one of the men suddenly seizing Mr. Pickwick by the leg, at imminent hazard of throwing him off his balance, brushed away at his boot, till his corns were red-hot; while the other shampoo'd Mr. Winkle with a heavy clothes-brush, indulging, during the operation, in that hissing sound

which hostlers are wont to produce when engaged in rubbing down a horse.

Mr. Snodgrass, having concluded his ablutions, took a survey of the room, while standing with his back to the fire, sipping his cherry brandy with heartfelt satisfaction. He describes it as a large apartment, with a red brick floor and a capacious chimney; the ceiling garnished with hams, sides of bacon, and ropes of onions. The walls were decorated with several hunting-whips, two or three bridles, a saddle and an old rusty blunderbuss, with an inscription below it, intimating that it was “Loaded”—as it had been, on the same authority, for half a century at least. An old eight-day clock, of solemn and sedate demeanour, ticked gravely in one corner; and a silver watch, of equal antiquity, dangled from one of the many hooks which ornamented the dresser.

“Ready?” said the old gentleman inquiringly, when his guests had been washed, mended, brushed, and brandied.

“Quite,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“Come along, then,” and the party having traversed several dark passages, and being joined by Mr. Tupman, who had lingered behind to snatch a kiss from Emma, for which he had been duly rewarded with sundry pushings and scratchings, arrived at the parlour door.

“Welcome,” said their hospitable host, throwing it open and stepping forward to announce them, “Welcome, gentlemen, to Manor Farm.”

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811—1863)

Mr. Eglantine's Singular Animal

from THE RAVENSWING

Thackeray was the first, and as far as I know, the last to use a horse as the means of playing a practical joke. One is also interested to note that four miles an hour in a carriage is considered a "rapid pace."

Eglantine's usual morning costume was a blue stain satin neckcloth embroidered with butterflies and ornamented with a brandy-ball brooch, a light shawl waistcoat, and a rhubarb-coloured coat of the sort which, I believe, are called Taglionis, and which have no waist-buttons, and made a pretence, as it were, to have no waists, but are in reality adopted by the fat in order to give them a waist. Nothing easier for an obese man than to have a waist; he has but to pinch his middle part a little, and the very fat on either side pushed violently forward *makes* a waist as it were, and our worthy perfumer's figure was that of a bolster cut almost in two with a string.

Walker presently saw him at his shop-door grinning in this costume, twiddling his ringlets with his dumpy greasy fingers, glittering with oil and rings, and looking so exceedingly contented and happy that the estate-agent felt assured some very

satisfactory conspiracy had been planned between the tailor and him. How was Mr. Walker to learn what the scheme was? Alas! the poor fellow's vanity and delight were such, that he could not keep silent as to the cause of his satisfaction; and rather than not mention it at all, in the fulness of his heart he would have told his secret to Mr. Mossrose himself.

"When I get my coat," thought the Bond Street Alnaschar, "I'll hire of Snaffle that easy-going cream-coloured 'oss that he bought from Astley's, and I'll canter through the Park, and *won't* I pass through Little Bunker's Buildings, that's all? I'll wear my grey trousers with the velvet stripe down the side, and get my spurs lacquered up, and a French polish to my boot; and if I don't *do* for the Captain, and the tailor too, my name's not Archibald. And I know what I'll do: I'll hire the small clarence, and invite the Crumps to dinner at the 'Gar and Starter'" (this was his facetious way

of calling the "Star and Garter"), "and I'll ride by them all the way to Richmond. It's rather a long ride, but with Snaffle's soft saddle I can do it pretty easy, I dare say." And so the honest fellow built castles upon castles in the air; and the last most beautiful vision of all was Miss Crump "in white satting, with a horange-flower in her 'air," putting him in possession of "her lovely 'and before the haltar of St. George's, 'Anover Square." As for Woolsey, Eglantine determined that he should have the best wig his art could produce; for he had not the least fear of his rival.

These points then being arranged to the poor fellow's satisfaction, what does he do but send out for half-a-quire of pink note-paper, and in a filagree envelope despatch a note of invitation to the ladies at the "Bootjack:"—

'BOWER OF BLOOM, BOND STREET,
'Thursday.

'MR. ARCHIBALD EGLANTINE presents his compliments to Mrs. and Miss Crump, and requests the *honour and pleasure* of their company at the "Star and Garter" at Richmond to an early dinner on Sunday next.

'If agreeable, Mr. Eglantine's carriage will be at your door at three o'clock, and I propose to accompany them on horseback, if agreeable likewise.'

This note was sealed with yellow wax, and sent to its destination; and of course Mr. Eglantine went himself for the answer in the evening: and of course he told the ladies to look out for a certain new coat he was going to sport on Sunday; and of course Mr. Walker happens to call the next day with spare tickets for Mrs. Crump and her daughter, when the whole secret was laid bare to him—how the ladies were going to Richmond on Sunday in Mr. Snaffle's clarence, and how Mr. Eglantine was to ride by their side.

Mr. Walker did not keep horses of his own; his magnificent friends at the "Regent" had plenty in their stables, and some of these were at livery at the establishment of the Captain's old "college" companion, Mr. Snaffle. It was easy, therefore, for the Captain to renew his acquaintance with that individual. So, hanging on the arm of my Lord Vauxhall, Captain Walker next day made his appearance at Snaffle's livery stables, and looked at the various horses there for sale or at bait, and soon managed, by putting some facetious questions to Mr. Snaffle regarding the "Kidney Club," &c., to place himself on a friendly footing with that gentleman, and to learn from him what horse Mr. Eglantine was to ride on Sunday.

The monster Walker had fully determined in his mind that Eglantine should *fall off* that horse in the course of his Sunday's ride.

"That sing'lar hanimal," said Mr. Snaffle, pointing to the old horse, "is the celebrated Hemperor that was the wonder of Hastley's some years back, and was parted with by Mr. Ducrow honly because his feelin's wouldn't allow him to keep him no longer after the death of the first Mrs. D., who invariably rode him. I bought him, thinking that p'raps ladies and Cockney bucks might like to ride him (for his haction is wonderful, and he canters like a harm-chair); but he's not safe on any day except Sundays.

"And why's that?" asked Captain Walker. "Why is he safer on Sundays than other days?"

"*Because there's no music* in the streets on Sundays. The first gent that rode him found himself dancing a quadrille in Hupper Brook Street to an 'urdy-gurdy that was playing "Cherry Ripe," such is the natur of the hanimal. And if you relect

the play of the "Battle of Hoysterlitz," in which Mrs. D. hacted "the female hussar," you may remember how she and the horse died in the third act to the toon of "God preserve the Emperor," from which this horse took his name. Only play that toon to him, and he rears hisself up, beats the hair in time with his forelegs, and then sinks gently to the ground as though he were carried off by a cannonball. He served a lady hopposite Hapsley 'Ouse so one day, and since then I've never let him out to a friend except on Sunday, when, in course, there's no danger. Heglantine *is* a friend of mine, and of course I wouldn't put the poor fellow on a hanimal I couldn't trust."

After a little more conversation, my lord and his friend quitted Mr. Snaffle's, and as they walked away towards the "Regent," his Lordship might be heard shrieking with laughter, crying, "Capital, by jingo! ex-thlent! Dwive down in the dwag! Take Lungly. Worth a thousand pound, by Jove!" and similar ejaculations, indicative of exceeding delight.

On Saturday morning, at ten o'clock to a moment, Mr. Woolsey called at Mr. Eglantine's with a yellow handkerchief under his arm. It contained the best and handsomest body-coat that ever gentleman put on. It fitted Eglantine to a nicety—it did not pinch him in the least, and yet it was of so exquisite a cut that the perfumer found, as he gazed delighted in the glass, that he looked like a manly portly high-bred gentleman—a lieutenant-colonel in the army at the very least.

"You're a full man, Eglantine," said the tailor, delighted, too, with his own work; "but that can't be helped. You look more like Hercules than Falstaff now, sir; and if a coat can make a gentleman, a gentleman you are. Let me recommend you to

sink the blue cravat, and take the stripes off your trousers. Dress quiet, sir; draw it mild. Plain waistcoat, dark trousers, black neckcloth, black hat, and if there's a better-dressed man in Europe to-morrow, I'm a Dutchman."

"Thank you, Woolsey—thank you, my dear sir," said the charmed perfumer. "And now I'll just trouble you to try on this here."

The wig had been made with equal skill; it was not in the florid style which Mr. Eglantine loved in his own person, but, as the perfumer said, a simple straight-forward head of hair.

"It seems as if it had grown there all your life, Mr. Woolsey; nobody would tell that it was not your nat'ral colour" (Mr. Woolsey blushed)—"it makes you look ten year younger; and as for that scarecrow yonder, you'll never, I think, want to wear that again."

Woolsey looked in the glass, and was delighted too. The two rivals shook hands and straightway became friends, and in the overflowing of his heart the perfumer mentioned to the tailor the party which he had arranged for the next day, and offered him a seat in the carriage and at the dinner at the "Star and Garter." "Would you like to ride?" said Eglantine, with rather a consequential air. "Snaffle will mount you, and we can go one on each side of the ladies, if you like."

But Woolsey humbly said he was not a riding man, and gladly consented to take a place in the clarence carriage, provided he was allowed to bear half the expenses of the entertainment. This proposal was agreed to by Mr. Eglantine, and the two gentlemen parted, to meet once more at the "Kidneys" that night, when everybody was edified by the friendly tone adopted between them. Mr. Snaffle, at the club meet-

ing, made the very same proposal to Mr. Woolsey that the perfumer had made; and stated that as Eglantine was going to ride Hemperor, Woolsey, at least, ought to mount too. But he was met by the same modest refusal on the tailor's part, who stated that he had never mounted a horse yet, and preferred greatly the use of a coach.

Eglantine's character as a "swell" rose greatly with the club that evening.

Two o'clock on Sunday came: the two beaux arrived punctually at the door to receive the two smiling ladies.

"Bless us, Mr. Eglantine!" said Miss Crump, quite struck by him, "I never saw you look so handsome in your life." He could have flung his arms around her neck at the compliment. "And law, ma! what has happened to Mr. Woolsey? doesn't he look ten years younger than yesterday?" Mamma assented, and Woolsey bowed gallantly, and the two gentlemen exchanged a nod of hearty friendship.

The day was delightful. Eglantine pranced along magnificently on his cantering arm-chair, with his hat on one ear, his left hand on his side, and his head flung over his shoulder, and throwing underglances at Morgiana whenever the "Emperor" was in advance of the clarence. The "Emperor" pricked up his ears a little uneasily passing the Ebenezer chapel in Richmond, where the congregation were singing a hymn, but beyond this no accident, occurred; nor was Mr. Eglantine in the least stiff or fatigued by the time the party reached Richmond, where he arrived time enough to give his steed into the charge of an ostler, and to present his elbow to the ladies as they alighted from the clarence carriage.

What this jovial party ate for dinner at

the "Star and Garter" need not here be set down. If they did not drink champagne I am very much mistaken. They were as merry as any four people in Christendom; and between the bewildering attentions of the perfumer, and the manly courtesy of the tailor, Morgiana very likely forgot the gallant Captain, or, at least, was very happy in his absence.

At eight o'clock they began to drive homewards. "Won't you come into the carriage?" said Morgiana to Eglantine, with one of her tenderest looks; "Dick can ride the horse." But Archibald was too great a lover of equestrian exercise. "I'm afraid to trust anybody on this horse," said he with a knowing look; and so he pranced away by the side of the little carriage. The moon was brilliant, and, with the aid of the gas-lamps, illuminated the whole face of the country in a way inexpressibly lovely.

Presently, in the distance, the sweet and plaintive notes of a bugle were heard, and the performer, with great delicacy, executed a religious air. "Music, too! heavenly!" said Morgiana, throwing up her eyes to the stars. The music came nearer and nearer, and the delight of the company was only more intense. The fly was going at about four miles an hour, and the "Emperor" began cantering to time at the same rapid pace.

"This must be some gallantry of yours, Mr. Woolsey," said the romantic Morgiana, turning upon that gentleman. "Mr. Eglantine treated us to the dinner, and you have provided us with the music."

Now Woolsey had been a little, a very little, dissatisfied during the course of the evening's entertainment, by fancying that Eglantine, a much more voluble person than himself, had obtained rather an undue share of the ladies' favour; and as he himself paid half of the expenses, he felt very

much vexed to think that the perfumer should take all the credit of the business to himself. So when Miss Crump asked if he had provided the music, he foolishly made an evasive reply to her query, and rather wished her to imagine that he *had* performed that piece of gallantry. "If it pleases *you*, Miss Morgiana," said this artful Schneider, "what more need any man ask? wouldn't I have all Drury Lane orchestra to please you?"

The bugle had by this time arrived quite close to the clarence carriage, and if Morgiana had looked round she might have seen whence the music came. Behind her came slowly a drag, or private stage-coach, with four horses. Two grooms with cockades and folded arms were behind; and driving on the box, a little gentleman, with a blue bird's-eye neckcloth, and a white coat. A bugleman was by his side, who performed the melodies which so delighted Miss Crump. He played very gently and sweetly, and "God save the King" trembled so softly out of the brazen orifice of his bugle, that the Crumps, the tailor, and Eglantine himself, who was riding close by the carriage, were quite charmed and subdued.

"Thank you, *dear* Mr. Woolsey," said the grateful Morgiana; which made Eglantine stare, and Woolsey was just saying, "Really, upon my word, I've nothing to do with it," when the man on the drag-box said to the bugleman, "Now!"

The bugleman began the tune of—

'Heaven preserve our Emperor Fra-an-cis.
Rum tum-ti-tum-ti-titty-ti.'

At the sound, the Emperor reared himself (with a roar from Mr. Eglantine)—reared and beat the air with his fore-paws. Eglantine flung his arms round the beast's neck; still he kept beating time with his fore-

paws. Mrs. Crump screamed: Mr. Woolsey, Dick, the clarence coachman, Lord Vauxhall (for it was he), and his Lordship's two grooms, burst into a shout of laughter; Morgiana cries "Mercy! mercy!" Eglantine yells "Stop!"—"Wo!"—"Oh!" and a thousand ejaculations of hideous terror; until, at last, down drops the "Emperor" stone dead in the middle of the road, as if carried off by a cannon-ball.

Fancy the situation, ye callous souls who laugh at the misery of humanity, fancy the situation of poor Eglantine under the "Emperor!" He had fallen very easy, the animal lay perfectly quiet, and the perfumer was to all intents and purposes as dead as the animal. He had not fainted, but he was immovable with terror; he lay in a puddle, and thought it was his own blood gushing from him; and he would have lain there until Monday morning, if my Lord's grooms, descending, had not dragged him by the coat-collar from under the beast, who still lay quiet.

"Play 'Charming Judy Callaghan,' will ye?" says Mr. Snaffle's man, the fly-driver; on which the bugler performed that lively air, and up started the horse, and the grooms, who were rubbing Mr. Eglantine down against a lamp-post, invited him to remount.

But his heart was too broken for that. The ladies gladly made room for him in the clarence. Dick mounted "Emperor" and rode homewards. The drag, too, drove away, playing "Oh dear, what can the matter be?" and with a scowl of furious hate, Mr. Eglantine sat and regarded his rival. His pantaloons were split, and his coat torn up the back.

"Are you hurt much, dear Mr. Archibald?" said Morgiana, with unaffected compassion.

"N-not much," said the poor fellow, ready to burst into tears.

"Oh, Mr. Woolsey," added the good-natured girl, "how could you play such a trick?"

"Upon my word," Woolsey began, intending to plead innocence; but the ludicrousness of the situation was once more too much for him, and he burst out into a roar of laughter.

"You! you cowardly beast!" howled out Eglantine, now driven to fury—"you laugh at me, you miserable cretur! Take *that*, sir!" and he fell upon him with all his might, and well-nigh throttled the tailor, and pummelling his eyes, his nose, his ears, with inconceivable rapidity, wrenched, finally, his wig off his head, and flung it into the road.

Morgiana saw that Woolsey had red hair....

FELIX SALTEN (1869—)

Concerning the Imperial Spanish Riding School in Vienna

from FLORIAN

The Imperial Spanish Riding School in Vienna existed for over two hundred years for the sole purpose of breeding and training their beautiful Leppizan horses and in developing that type of riding known as "Haute Ecole." Whether one believes that Haute Ecole is the acme of fine horsemanship, or whether one is of the school of thought that it is so artificial as to be completely useless, does not change the fact that the interpretation of the will of the rider by the horse (and his desire to comply instantly with that will) approaches the uncanny. The "High School" rider and his mount were as near one as it is possible for man and beast to be. They did not perform for glory or gain as does the Arabian on his war mare, the polo player, or the jockey; horse and man devoted their entire lives to perfecting what they considered a fine art for the sheer love of that art.

The Spanish School disappeared with the death of Franz Joseph at the beginning of World War I. It was revived for a short time, but I fear it has now succumbed again. A few of the horses, or their descendants, are still to be seen doing the simplest of the Haute Ecole movements in circuses and vaudeville acts, but when the trainers who learned from the great Ritmeisters are gone it is questionable whether there will be any to take their places.

"To the degree that an Asil—highborn horse—possesses thy heart will she respond to thee. She will humble thy enemies and honor thy friends. Willingly she will carry thee upon her back, but she will consent to no humiliation. She is at once aware whether she carrieth a friend or an enemy of God.

The mare that lives by Divine orders as a mute and obedient companion of man, has an insight into the mind of her master whom she may even prefer to her own kind."—Mnahi.

DRINKERS OF THE WIND by Carl Raswan.

A brief "Good morning" from the Emperor was accompanied by a circular movement of his hand. The moment he sat down, a door in the opposite wall was thrown wide, and four horsemen rode into the arena. In a straight line they swept toward the Court Box and stopped at an appropriate distance. Simultaneously they doffed their two-cornered hats and swung them until their arms were horizontal. Then they wheeled and to the strains of the *Gypsy Baron* began their quadrille.

The circle and capers cut by the four horses were precisely alike, and gave the effect of music in the flowing rhythm of their execution. The regularity of the horses' strides, and the horsemanship of the four riders aroused the spectators to a gay pitch, no one could have said why; it was sheer rapture evoked by the beautiful, blooded animals and their artistry.

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The quadrille was over, the horsemen had made their exit. The wooden door remained wide open.

Next seven mounted stallions entered and filed in front of the Court Box. Seven bicornes were removed from seven heads, swung to a horizontal position, and replaced.

Florian stood in the center. To his right stood three older stallions, thoroughly trained, and to his left three equally tested ones. He resembled a fiery youth among men. In a row of white steeds he stood out as the only *pure* white one. His snowy skin, unmarred by a single speck, called up memories of cloudless sunny days, of

Nature's gracious gifts. His liquid dark eyes, from whose depths his very soul shone forth, sparkled with inner fire and energy and health. Ennsbauer sat in the saddle like a carved image. With his brown frock-coat, his chiseled, reddish brown features and his fixed mien, he seemed to have been poured in metal.

The Emperor had just remarked, "Ennsbauer uses no stirrups or spurs," when the sextet began to play.

The horses walked alongside the grayish-white wainscoting. Their tails were braided with gold, with gold also their waving manes. Pair by pair they were led through the steps of the High School; approached from the far side toward the middle, and went into their syncopated, cadenced stride.

The Emperor had no eyes for any but Florian. Him he watched, deeply engrossed. His connoisseur's eye tested the animal, tested the rider, and could find no flaw that might belie the unstinted praise he had heard showered on them. His right hand played with his mustache, slowly, not with the impatient flick that spelled disappointment over something.

Ennsbauer felt the Emperor's glance like a physical touch. He stiffened. He could hope for no advancement. Nor did he need fear a fall. Now—in the saddle, under him this unexcelled stallion whose breathing he could feel between his legs and whose readiness and willingness to obey he could sense like some organic outpouring—now doubt and pessimism vanished. The calm, collected, resolute animal gave him calmness, collectedness, and resolution.

At last he rode for the applause of the

Emperor, of Franz Joseph himself, and by Imperial accolade for enduring fame. Now it was his turn. . . .

Away from the wall he guided Florian, into the center of the ring. An invisible sign, and Florian, as if waiting for it, fell into the Spanish step.

Gracefully and solemnly, he lifted his legs as though one with the rhythm of the music. He gave the impression of carrying his rider collectedly and slowly by his own free will and for his own enjoyment. Jealous of space, he placed one hoof directly in front of the other.

The old Archduke Rainer could not contain himself: "Never have I seen a horse *piaffe* like that!"

Ennsbauer wanted to lead Florian out of the Spanish walk, to grant him a moment's respite before the next tour. But Florian insisted on prolonging it and Ennsbauer submitted.

Florian strode as those horses strode who, centuries ago, triumphantly and conscious of their triumphant occasion, bore Caesars and conquerors into vanquished cities or in homecoming processions. The rigid curved neck, such as the ancient sculptors modeled; the heavy short body that seemed to rock on the springs of his legs, the interplay of muscle and joint, together constituted a stately performance, one that amazed the more as it gradually compelled the recognition of its rising out of the will to perfect performance. Every single movement of Florian's revealed nobility, grace, significance and distinction all in one; and in each of his poses he was the ideal model for a sculptor, the composite of all the equestrian statues of history.

The music continued and Florian, chin pressed against chest, deliberately bowed his head to the left, to the right.

"Do you remember," Elizabeth whispered to her husband, "what our boy once said about Florian? He sings—only one does not hear it."

Ennsbauer also was thinking of the words of little Leopold von Neustift as he led Florian from the Spanish step directly into the *volte*. The delight with which Florian took the change, the effortless ease with which he glided into the short, sharply cadenced gallop, encouraged Ennsbauer to try the most precise and exacting form of the *volte*, the *redoppe*, and to follow that with the *pirouette*.

As though he intended to stamp a circle into the tanbark of the floor, Florian pivoted with his hindlegs fixed to the same place, giving the breath-taking impression of a horse in full gallop that could not bolt loose from the spot, nailed to the ground by a sorcerer or by inner compulsion.

And when, right afterward, with but a short gallop around, Florian rose into the *pesade*, his two forelegs high in the air and hindlegs bent low, and accomplished this difficult feat of balance twice, three times, as if it were child's play, he needed no more spurring on. Ennsbauer simply let him be, as he began to *courbette*, stiffly erect. His forelegs did not beat the air, now, but hung limply side by side, folded at the knee. Thus he carried his rider, hopped forward five times without stretching his hindlegs. In the eyes of the spectators Florian's execution of the *courbette* did not impress by its bravura, or by the conquest of body heaviness by careful dressure and rehearsal, but rather as an exuberant means of getting rid of a superabundance of controlled gigantic energy.

Another short canter around the ring was shortened by Florian's own impatience when he voluntarily fell into the Spanish

step. He enjoyed the music, rocked with its rhythm. These men and women and their rank were as nothing to him. Still, the presence of onlookers fired him from the very outset. He wanted to please, he had a sharp longing for applause, for admiration; his ambition, goaded on by the music, threw him into a state of intoxication; youth and fettle raced through his veins like a stream overflowing on a steep grade. Nothing was difficult any longer. With his rider and with all these human beings around him, he celebrated a feast. He did not feel the ground under his feet, the light burden on his back. Gliding, dancing with the melody, he could have flown had the gay strains asked for it.

On Florian's back as he hopped on his hindlegs once, twice, Ennsbauer sat stunned, amazed.

Following two successive *croupades*, a

tremendous feat, Florian went into the Spanish step still again. Tense and at the same time visibly exuberant, proud and amused, his joyously shining eyes made light of his exertions. From the *ballotade* he thrust himself into the *capriole*, rose high in the air from the standing position, forelegs and hindlegs horizontal. He soared above ground, his head high in jubilation. Conquering!

Frenetic applause burst out all over the hall, like many fans opening and shutting, like the rustle of stiff paper being torn.

Surrounded by the six other stallions Florian stepped before the Court Box, and while the riders swung their hats in unison, he bowed his proud head just once, conscious, it seemed, of the fact that the ovation was for him and giving gracious thanks in return.

STEPHEN CRANE (1871–1900)

Horses—One Dash

from THE OPEN BOAT

Stephen Crane may not have been a very prolific writer, but one remembers everything that he has written. I was glad to find a story about Mexico by so fine an author, and one which dealt not with outlaw horses, but with a swift ride to escape danger.

Richardson pulled up his horse and looked back over the trail, where the crimson serape of his servant flamed amid the dusk of the mesquit. The hills in the west were carved into peaks, and were painted the most profound blue. Above them, the sky was of that marvellous tone of green—like still sun-shot water—which people denounce in pictures.

José was muffled deep in his blankets, and his great toppling sombrero was drawn low over his brow. He shadowed his master along the dimming trail in the fashion of an assassin. A cold wind of the impending night swept over the wilderness of mesquit.

“Man,” said Richardson, in lame Mexican, as the servant drew near, “I want eat! I want sleep! Understand no? Quickly! Understand?”

“Si, señor,” said José, nodding. He stretched one arm out of his blanket, and

pointed a yellow finger into the gloom. “Over there, small village! Si, señor.”

They rode forward again. Once the American’s horse shied and breathed quiveringly at something which he saw or imagined in the darkness, and the rider drew a steady, patient rein and leaned over to speak tenderly, as if he were addressing a frightened woman. The sky had faded to white over the mountains, and the plain was a vast, pointless ocean of black.

Suddenly some low houses appeared squatting amid the bushes. The horsemen rode into a hollow until the houses rose against the sombre sundown sky, and then up a small hillock, causing these habitations to sink like boats in the sea of shadow.

A beam of red firelight fell across the trail. Richardson sat sleepily on his horse while the servant quarrelled with somebody—a mere voice in the gloom—over the price of bed and board. The houses about

him were for the most part like tombs in their whiteness and silence, but there were scudding black figures that seemed interested in his arrival.

José came at last to the horses' heads, and the American slid stiffly from his seat. He muttered a greeting as with his spurred feet he clicked into the adobe house that confronted him. The brown, stolid face of a woman shone in the light of the fire. He seated himself on the earthen floor, and blinked drowsily at the blaze. He was aware that the woman was clinking earthenware, and hieing here and everywhere in the manœuvres of the housewife. From a dark corner of the room there came the sound of two or three snores twining together.

The woman handed him a bowl of tortillas. She was a submissive creature, timid and large-eyed. She gazed at his enormous silver spurs, his large and impressive revolver, with the interest and admiration of the highly privileged cat of the adage. When he ate, she seemed transfixed off there in the gloom, her white teeth shining.

José entered, staggering under two Mexican saddles large enough for building-sites. Richardson decided to smoke a cigarette, and then changed his mind. It would be much finer to go to sleep. His blanket hung over his left shoulder, furred into a long pipe of cloth, according to a Mexican fashion. By doffing his sombrero, unfastening his spurs and his revolver-belt, he made himself ready for the slow, blissful twist into the blanket. Like a cautious man, he lay close to the wall, and all his property was very near his hand.

The mesquit brush burned long. José threw two gigantic wings of shadow as he flapped his blanket about him—first across his chest under his arms, and then around his neck and across his chest again, this

time over his arms, with the end tossed on his right shoulder. A Mexican thus snugly enveloped can nevertheless free his fighting arm in a beautifully brisk way, merely shrugging his shoulder as he grabs for the weapon at his belt. They always wear their serapes in this manner.

The firelight smothered the rays which, streaming from a moon as large as a drum-head, were struggling at the open door. Richardson heard from the plain the fine, rhythmical trample of the hoofs of hurried horses. He went to sleep wondering who rode so fast and so late. And in the deep silence the pale rays of the moon must have prevailed against the red spears of the fire until the room was slowly flooded to its middle with a rectangle of silver light.

Richardson was awakened by the sound of a guitar. It was badly played—in this land of Mexico, from which the romance of the instrument ascends to us like a perfume. The guitar was groaning and whining like a badgered soul. A noise of scuffling feet accompanied the music. Sometimes laughter arose, and often the voices of men saying bitter things to each other; but always the guitar cried on, the treble sounding as if someone were beating iron, and the bass humming like bees.

"Damn it! they're having a dance," muttered Richardson, fretfully. He heard two men quarrelling in short, sharp words like pistol-shots; they were calling each other worse names than common people know in other countries.

He wondered why the noise was so loud. Raising his head from his saddle-pillow, he saw, with the help of the valiant moonbeams, a blanket hanging flat against the wall at the farther end of the room. Being of the opinion that it concealed a door, and remembering that Mexican drink made men

very drunk, he pulled his revolver closer to him and prepared for sudden disaster.

Richardson was dreaming of his far and beloved North.

"Well, I would kill him, then!"

"No, you must not!"

"Yes, I will kill him! Listen! I will ask this American beast for his beautiful pistol and spurs and money and saddle, and if he will not give them—you will see!"

"But these Americans—they are a strange people. Look out, señor."

Then twenty voices took part in the discussion. They rose in quivering shrillness, as from men badly drunk.

Richardson felt the skin draw tight around his mouth, and his knee-joints turned to bread. He slowly came to a sitting posture, glaring at the motionless blanket at the far end of the room. This stiff and mechanical movement, accomplished entirely by the muscles of the wrist, must have looked like the rising of a corpse in the wan moonlight, which gave everything a hue of the grave.

My friend, take my advice, and never be executed by a hangman who doesn't talk the English language. It, or anything that resembles it, is the most difficult of deaths. The tumultuous emotions of Richardson's terror destroyed that slow and careful process of thought by means of which he understood Mexican. Then he used his instinctive comprehension of the first and universal language, which is tone. Still, it is disheartening not to be able to understand the details of threats against the blood of your body.

Suddenly the clamor of voices ceased. There was a silence—a silence of decision. The blanket was flung aside, and the red light of a torch flared into the room. It was held high by a fat, round-faced Mexican,

whose little snake-like moustache was as black as his eyes, and whose eyes were black as jet. He was insane with the wild rage of a man whose liquor is dully burning at his brain. Five or six of his fellows crowded after him. The guitar, which had been thrummed doggedly during the time of the high words, now suddenly stopped.

They contemplated each other. Richardson sat very straight and still, his right hand lost in the folds of his blanket. The Mexicans jostled in the light of the torch, their eyes blinking and glittering.

The fat one posed in the manner of a grandee. Presently his hand dropped to his belt, and from his lips there spun an epithet—a hideous word which often foreshadows knife-blows, a word peculiarly of Mexico, where people have to dig deep to find an insult that has not lost its savor.

The American did not move. He was staring at the fat Mexican with a strange fixedness of gaze, not fearful, not dauntless, not anything that could be interpreted; he simply stared.

The fat Mexican must have been disconcerted, for he continued to pose as a grandee with more and more sublimity, until it would have been easy for him to fall over backward. His companions were swaying in a very drunken manner. They still blinked their beady eyes at Richardson. Ah, well, sirs, here was a mystery. At the approach of their menacing company, why did not this American cry out and turn pale, or run, or pray them mercy? The animal merely sat still, and stared, and waited for them to begin. Well, evidently he was a great fighter; or perhaps he was an idiot. Indeed, this was an embarrassing situation, for who was going forward to discover whether he was a great fighter or an idiot?

To Richardson, whose nerves were tin-

gling and twitching like live wires, and whose heart jolted inside him, this pause was a long horror; and for these men who could so frighten him there began to swell in him a fierce hatred—a hatred that made him long to be capable of fighting all of them, a hatred that made him capable of fighting all of them. A .44-caliber revolver can make a hole large enough for little boys to shoot marbles through, and there was a certain fat Mexican, with a moustache like a snake, who came extremely near to have eaten his last tamale merely because he frightened a man too much.

José had slept the first part of the night in his fashion, his body hunched into a heap, his legs crooked, his head touching his knees. Shadows had obscured him from the sight of the invaders. At this point he arose, and began to prowl quakingly over toward Richardson, as if he meant to hide behind him.

Of a sudden the fat Mexican gave a howl of glee. José had come within the torch's circle of light. With roars of singular ferocity the whole group of Mexicans pounced on the American's servant.

He shrank shuddering away from them, beseeching by every device of word and gesture. They pushed him this way and that. They beat him with their fists. They stung him with their curses. As he grovelled on his knees, the fat Mexican took him by the throat and said: "I'm going to kill you!" And continually they turned their eyes to see if they were to succeed in causing the initial demonstration by the American.

Richardson looked on impassively. Under the blanket, however, his fingers were clenched as rigidly as iron upon the handle of his revolver.

Here suddenly two brilliant clashing chords from the guitar were heard, and a

woman's voice, full of laughter and confidence, cried from without: "Hello! hello! Where are you?"

The lurching company of Mexicans instantly paused and looked at the ground. One said, as he stood with his legs wide apart in order to balance himself: "It is the girls! They have come!" He screamed in answer to the question of the woman: "Here!" And without waiting he started on a pilgrimage toward the blanket-covered door. One could now hear a number of female voices giggling and chattering.

Two other Mexicans said: "Yes, it is the girls! Yes!" They also started quietly away. Even the fat Mexican's ferocity seemed to be affected. He looked uncertainly at the still immovable American. Two of his friends grasped him gaily. "Come, the girls are here! Come!" He cast another glower at Richardson. "But this—" he began. Laughing, his comrades hustled him toward the door. On its threshold, and holding back the blanket with one hand, he turned his yellow face with a last challenging glare toward the American. José, bewailing his state in little sobs of utter despair and woe, crept to Richardson and huddled near his knee. Then the cries of the Mexicans meeting the girls were heard, and the guitar burst out in joyous humming.

The moon clouded, and but a faint square of light fell through the open main door of the house. The coals of the fire were silent save for occasional sputters. Richardson did not change his position. He remained staring at the blanket which hid the strategic door in the far end. At his knees José was arguing, in a low, aggrieved tone, with the saints. Without, the Mexicans laughed and danced, and—it would appear from the sound—drank more.

In the stillness and night Richardson sat

wondering if some serpent-like Mexican was sliding toward him in the darkness, and if the first thing he knew of it would be the deadly sting of the knife. "Sssh," he whispered to José. He drew his revolver from under the blanket and held it on his leg.

The blanket over the door fascinated him. It was a vague form, black and unmoving. Through the opening it shielded was to come, probably, menace, death. Sometimes he thought he saw it move.

As grim white sheets, the black and silver of coffins, all the panoply of death, affect us because of that which they hide, so this blanket, dangling before a hole in an adobe wall, was to Richardson a horrible emblem, and a horrible thing in itself. In his present mood Richardson could not have been brought to touch it with his finger.

The celebrating Mexicans occasionally howled in song. The guitarist played with speed and enthusiasm.

Richardson longed to run. But in this threatening gloom, his terror convinced him that a move on his part would be a signal for the pounce of death. José, crouching abjectly, occasionally mumbled. Slowly and ponderous as stars the minutes went.

Suddenly Richardson thrilled and started. His breath, for a moment, left him. In sleep his nerveless fingers had allowed his revolver to fall and clang upon the hard floor. He grabbed it up hastily, and his glance swept apprehensively over the room.

A chill blue light of dawn was in the place. Every outline was slowly growing; detail was following detail. The dread blanket did not move. The riotous company had gone or become silent.

Richardson felt in his blood the effect of this cold dawn. The candor of breaking day

brought his nerve. He touched José. "Come," he said. His servant lifted his lined, yellow face and comprehended. Richardson buckled on his spurs and strode up; José obediently lifted the two great saddles. Richardson held two bridles and a blanket on his left arm; in his right hand he held his revolver. They sneaked toward the door.

The man who said that spurs jingled was insane. Spurs have a mellow clash—clash—clash. Walking in spurs—notably Mexican spurs—you remind yourself vaguely of a telegraphic lineman. Richardson was inexpressibly shocked when he came to walk. He sounded to himself like a pair of cymbals. He would have known of this if he had reflected; but then he was escaping, not reflecting. He made a gesture of despair, and from under the two saddles José tried to make one of hopeless horror. Richardson stooped, and with shaking fingers unfastened the spurs. Taking them in his left hand, he picked up his revolver, and they slunk on toward the door.

On the threshold Richardson looked back. In a corner he saw, watching him with large eyes, the Indian man and woman who had been his hosts. Throughout the night they had made no sign, and now they neither spoke nor moved. Yet Richardson thought he detected meek satisfaction at his departure.

The street was still and deserted. In the eastern sky there was a lemon-colored patch.

José had picketed the horses at the side of the house. As the two men came around the corner, Richardson's animal set up a whinny of welcome. The little horse had evidently heard them coming. He stood facing them, his ears cocked forward, his eyes bright with welcome.

Richardson made a frantic gesture, but the horse, in his happiness at the appear-

ance of his friends, whinnied with enthusiasm.

The American felt at this time that he could have strangled his well-beloved steed. Upon the threshold of safety he was being betrayed by his horse, his friend. He felt the same hate for the horse that he would have felt for a dragon. And yet, as he glanced wildly about him, he could see nothing stirring in the street, nor at the doors of the tomb-like houses.

José had his own saddle girth and both bridles buckled in a moment. He curled the picket-ropes with a few sweeps of his arm. The fingers of Richardson, however, were shaking so that he could hardly buckle the girth. His hands were in invisible mittens. He was wondering, calculating, hoping about his horse. He knew the little animal's willingness and courage under all circumstances up to this time, but then—here it was different. Who could tell if some wretched instance of equine perversity was not about to develop? Maybe the little fellow would not feel like smoking over the plain at express speed this morning, and so he would rebel and kick and be wicked. Maybe he would be without feeling of interest, and run listlessly. All men who have had to hurry in the saddle know what it is to be on a horse who does not understand the dramatic situation. Riding a lame sheep is bliss to it. Richardson, fumbling furiously at the girth, thought of these things.

Presently he had it fastened. He swung into the saddle, and as he did so his horse made a mad jump forward. The spurs of José scratched and tore the flanks of his great black animal, and side by side the two horses raced down the village street. The American heard his horse breathe a quivering sigh of excitement.

Those four feet skimmed. They were as light as fairy puff-balls. The houses of the village glided past in a moment, and the great, clear, silent plain appeared like a pale blue sea of mist and wet bushes. Above the mountains the colors of the sunlight were like the first tones, the opening chords, of the mighty hymn of the morning.

The American looked down at his horse. He felt in his heart the first thrill of confidence. The little animal, unurged and quite tranquil, moving his ears this way and that way with an air of interest in the scenery, was nevertheless bounding into the eye of the breaking day with the speed of a frightened antelope. Richardson, looking down, saw the long, fine reach of forelimb as steady as steel machinery. As the ground reeled past, the long dried grasses hissed, and cactus-plants were dull blurs. A wind whirled the horse's mane over his rider's bridle hand.

José's profile was lined against the pale sky. It was as that of a man who swims alone in an ocean. His eyes glinted like metal fastened on some unknown point ahead of him, some mystic place of safety. Occasionally his mouth puckered in a little unheard cry; and his legs, bent back, worked spasmodically as his spurred heels sliced the flanks of his charger.

Richardson consulted the gloom in the west for signs of a hard-riding, yelling cavalcade. He knew that, whereas his friends the enemy had not attacked him when he had sat still and with apparent calmness confronted them, they would certainly take furiously after him now that he had run from them—now that he had confessed to them that he was the weaker. Their valor would grow like weeds in the spring, and upon discovering his escape they would ride forth dauntless warriors.

Sometimes he was sure he saw them. Sometimes he was sure he heard them. Continually looking backward over his shoulder, he studied the purple expanses where the night was marching away. José rolled and shuddered in his saddle, persistently disturbing the stride of the black horse, fretting and worrying him until the white foam flew and the great shoulders shone like satin from the sweat.

At last Richardson drew his horse carefully down to a walk. José wished to rush insanely on, but the American spoke to him sternly. As the two paced forward side by side, Richardson's little horse thrust over his soft nose and inquired into the black's condition.

Riding with José was like riding with a corpse. His face resembled a cast in lead. Sometimes he swung forward and almost pitched from his seat. Richardson was too frightened himself to do anything but hate this man for his fear. Finally he issued a mandate which nearly caused José's eyes to slide out of his head and fall to the ground like two silver coins.

"Ride behind me—about fifty paces."

"Señor—" stuttered the servant.

"Go!" cried the American, furiously. He glared at the other and laid his hand on his revolver. José looked at his master wildly. He made a piteous gesture. Then slowly he fell back, watching the hard face of the American for a sign of mercy.

Richardson had resolved in his rage that at any rate he was going to use the eyes and ears of extreme fear to detect the approach of danger; and so he established his servant as a sort of outpost.

As they proceeded he was obliged to watch sharply to see that the servant did not slink forward and join him. When José made beseeching circles in the air with his

arm he replied by menacingly gripping his revolver.

José had a revolver, too; nevertheless it was very clear in his mind that the revolver was distinctly an American weapon. He had been educated in the Rio Grande country.

Richardson lost the trail once. He was recalled to it by the loud sobs of his servant.

Then at last José came clattering forward, gesticulating and wailing. The little horse sprang to the shoulder of the black. They were off.

Richardson, again looking backward, could see a slanting flare of dust on the whitening plain. He thought that he could detect small moving figures in it.

José's moans and cries amounted to a university course in theology. They broke continually from his quivering lips. His spurs were as motors. They forced the black horse over the plain in great headlong leaps.

But under Richardson there was a little insignificant rat-colored beast who was running apparently with almost as much effort as it requires for a bronze statue to stand still. As a matter of truth, the ground seemed merely something to be touched from time to time with hoofs that were as light as blown leaves. Occasionally Richardson lay back and pulled stoutly at his bridle to keep from abandoning his servant.

José harried at his horse's mouth, flopped around in the saddle, and made his two heels beat like flails. The black ran like a horse in despair.

Crimson serapes in the distance resemble drops of blood on the great cloth of plain.

Richardson began to dream of all possible chances. Although quite a humane man, he did not once think of his servant. José being a Mexican, it was natural that

he should be killed in Mexico; but for himself, a New Yorker—

He remembered all the tales of such races for life, and he thought them badly written.

The great black horse was growing indifferent. The jabs of José's spurs no longer caused him to bound forward in wild leaps of pain. José had at last succeeded in teaching him that spurring was to be expected, speed or no speed, and now he took the pain of it dully and stolidly, as an animal who finds that doing his best gains him no respite.

José was turned into a raving maniac. He bellowed and screamed, working his arms and his heels like one in a fit. He resembled a man on a sinking ship, who appeals to the ship. Richardson, too, cried madly to the black horse.

The spirit of the horse responded to these calls, and, quivering and breathing heavily, he made a great effort, a sort of final rush, not for himself apparently, but because he understood that his life's sacrifice, perhaps, had been invoked by these two men who cried to him in the universal tongue. Richardson had no sense of appreciation at this time—he was too frightened—but often now he remembers a certain black horse.

From the rear could be heard a yelling, and once a shot was fired—in the air, evidently. Richardson moaned as he looked back. He kept his hand on his revolver. He tried to imagine the brief tumult of his capture—the flurry of dust from the hoofs of horses pulled suddenly to their haunches, the shrill biting curses of the men, the ring of the shots, his own last contortion. He wondered, too, if he could not somehow manage to pelt that fat Mexican, just to cure his abominable egotism.

It was José, the terror-stricken, who at last discovered safety. Suddenly he gave a howl of delight, and astonished his horse into a new burst of speed. They were on a little ridge at the time, and the American at the top of it saw his servant gallop down the slope and into the arms, so to speak, of a small column of horsemen in gray and silver clothes. In the dim light of the early morning they were as vague as shadows, but Richardson knew them at once for a detachment of rurales, that crack cavalry corps of the Mexican army which polices the plain so zealously, being of themselves the law and the arm of it—a fierce and swift-moving body that knows little of prevention, but much of vengeance. They drew up suddenly, and the rows of great silver-trimmed sombreros bobbed in surprise.

Richardson saw José throw himself from his horse and begin to jabber at the leader of the party. When he arrived he found that his servant had already outlined the entire situation, and was then engaged in describing him, Richardson, as an American señor of vast wealth, who was the friend of almost every governmental potentate within two hundred miles. This seemed to profoundly impress the officer. He bowed gravely to Richardson and smiled significantly at his men, who unslung their carbines.

The little ridge hid the pursuers from view, but the rapid thud of their horses' feet could be heard. Occasionally they yelled and called to each other.

Then at last they swept over the brow of the hill, a wild mob of almost fifty drunken horsemen. When they discerned the pale-uniformed rurales they were sailing down the slope at top speed.

If toboggans half-way down a hill should suddenly make up their minds to turn

around and go back, there would be an effect somewhat like that now produced by the drunken horsemen. Richardson saw the rurales serenely swing their carbines forward, and, peculiar-minded person that he was, felt his heart leap into his throat at the prospective volley. But the officer rode forward alone.

It appeared that the man who owned the best horse in this astonished company was the fat Mexican with the snaky moustache, and, in consequence, this gentleman was quite a distance in the van. He tried to pull up, wheel his horse, and scuttle back over the hill as some of his companions had done, but the officer called to him in a voice harsh with rage.

"——!" howled the officer. "This señor is my friend, the friend of my friends. Do you dare pursue him, ——? ——! ——! ——! ——!" These lines represent terrible names, all different, used by the officer.

The fat Mexican simply grovelled on his horse's neck. His face was green; it could be seen that he expected death.

The officer stormed with magnificent intensity: "——! ——! ——!"

Finally he sprang from his saddle and, running to the fat Mexican's side, yelled: "Go!" and kicked the horse in the belly with all his might. The animal gave a mighty leap into the air, and the fat Mexican, with one wretched glance at the contemplative rurales, aimed his steed for the top of the ridge. Richardson again gulped in expectation of a volley, for, it is said, this is one of the favorite methods of the rurales for disposing of objectionable people. The fat, green Mexican also evidently thought that he was to be killed while on the run, from the miserable look he cast at the troops. Nevertheless, he was allowed to vanish in a cloud of yellow dust at the ridge-top.

José was exultant, defiant, and, oh! bristling with courage. The black horse was drooping sadly, his nose to the ground. Richardson's little animal, with his ears bent forward, was staring at the horses of the rurales as if in an intense study. Richardson longed for speech, but he could only bend forward and pat the shining, silken shoulders. The little horse turned his head and looked back gravely.

ANONYMOUS

Poor Old Horse

from COME HITHER

I found this poem in Walter de la Mare's Come Hither. No date is given, and the author is long since forgotten, but the sentiment and simplicity have kept the verses alive.

My clothing was once of the linsey woolsey
fine,
My tail it grew at length, my coat did like-
wise shine;

But now I'm growing old; my beauty does
decay,

My master frowns upon me; one day I
heard him say,

Poor old horse: poor old horse.

Once I was kept in the stable snug and warm,
To keep my tender limbs from any cold or
harm;

But now, in open fields, I am forced for to go,
In all sorts of weather, let it be hail, rain,
freeze, or snow.

Poor old horse: poor old horse.

Once I was fed on the very best corn and hay
That ever grew in yon fields, or in yon
meadows gay;

But now there's no such doing can I find
at all,

I'm glad to pick the green sprouts that grow
behind yon wall.

Poor old horse: poor old horse.

"You are old, you are cold, you are deaf, dull,
dumb and slow,

You are not fit for anything, or in my team
to draw.

You have eaten all my hay, you have spoiled
all my straw,

So hang him, whip, stick him, to the hunts-
man let him go.

Poor old horse: poor old horse.

My hide unto the tanners then I would freely
give,

My body to the hound dogs, I would rather
die than live,

Likewise my poor old bones that have carried
you many a mile,

Over hedges, ditches, brooks, bridges, like-
wise gates and stiles.

Poor old horse: poor old horse.

JAMES STEVENS (1892—)

Horses

from THE AMERICAN MERCURY (April, 1926)

The beauty and the peace in this writing is soul-satisfying. The picture of the little boy overcoming his fear of the supposedly terrifying team is so convincing that one almost climbs up into the driver's seat along with him to help with the reins. The whole tale is delightful from beginning to end, and completely different from any other that I have ever read.

I

As a boy in a prairie town I early learned to revere the work horse. To me, as to all boys, a dog was a slave, but a horse was a hero. And the men who handled him were heroes, too. On summer Saturday mornings I would lie in the grass under a maple tree, drowse in the heavy prairie heat, and watch the town-going farmers pass. The surrey and buggy teams never touched my fancy; I could see such light, lively horses any day in the town streets and in the livery barn. And the rough-haired, scrawny, hungry-eyed teams of the shiftless Soap Crickers were beneath notice, of course. But let me catch sight of a team of work horses such as Mister Barrick drove; and then how I would lift my head, prop my chin on my fists, look with wide eyes, and feel the glow of a waking dream!

The road, with a cloddy ridge in the center and a wheel-marked path on each side,

ran straight down a small hill and twisted sharply into the green trees of Elm Hollow. From these trees sounded the lusty rumble of a lumber-wagon and the jingle of harness. Suddenly the massive heads of two gray horses emerged from the greenery. There was a flash of polished brass from the studded ornamental tabs of leather that flapped over their wide foreheads, and a shine from the small colored rings which were strapped in their headstalls. Their big hoofs struck the wagon tracks forcefully as they tramped soberly on. A red neck-yoke hung from heavy breast-straps, and it swung now to the right, now to the left, as the front wheels rolled into chuck holes and jerked the tongue. At each swing there was a sharp tug at the stout oak hames of the horses, but they tramped on unwaveringly. Their bodies came into full view. Short, thick necks, and waving curly manes. Immensely wide shoulders and deep chests,

the dappled gray hair rippling over moving bands and rolls of muscle, the thick leather traces tight over the wide shoulders and fat sides. What broad, inviting backs under the brass-studded leather of the backbands! It looked as if you could spread out a bed on one of their backs and go to sleep there. The breeching slipped from broad hip to broad hip and tightened and loosened over round, thick buttocks. The gray tails, brushed glossy and clean by Mister Barrick, swung out in sweeping waves at the pestiferous summer flies.

The wheels of the rumbling wagon were yellow; the wagon box was green, with strips and curlicues of red for decoration. The spring seat slanted to the right under the weight of Mister Barrick. He himself was a regular work-horse of a man. A straw hat shaded his eyes, a brown beard curled over his cheeks and chin, and between suspenders and sleeve-holders muscles bulged the cloth of his hickory shirt. He rode with a straight back, and he drove with tight lines. Mister Barrick was as proud of himself as he was of his clean wagon and fat, glossy work-horses.

How great and strong Bob and Jake appeared as they plodded into the shade of my maple tree! They were the strongest and most dangerous horses in the whole country, but Mister Barrick could do anything with them. I knew, for he often let me ride with him on the days when he hauled milk to the cheese factory. "Whoa-ah!" he would say, and the big gray horses would stop dead still as soon as he said it. And they certainly didn't dare to make a move while I was climbing up and up, just about twenty-five feet, to the spring seat. And then, when Mister Barrick clucked and said, "Giddap!" those horses stepped ahead before the word was out of his mouth.

There couldn't be anything more exciting than to ride with Mister Barrick to the cheese factory. You were so high in the air that if you were to fall off it would certainly break every bone in your body. And Bob and Jake were so dangerous and strong that if they were to run away—and they were ready to break and go at the least excuse, Mister Barrick said—they would simply smash everything behind them to smithereens.

"I have to be on the watch every second," Mister Barrick would say. "They ain't aynother man around who could hold 'em."

And I'd feel his muscle and notice how big his hands looked around the lines; and I'd stare at the broad backs and broader hips of the horses as they tramped soberly on; and I'd get to feeling that I was no bigger than a fly, and that Bob and Jake were the greatest horses in the world, and that Mister Barrick was the greatest of heroes to handle them as he did. I played horse a lot; and whenever I did I was always Mister Barrick driving Bob and Jake to the cheese factory.

On Saturday Mister Barrick hauled nothing but produce to sell at the stores. He never asked me to ride with him then. But he spoke to me as he drove into the shade of my maple tree. He looked down soberly from the great height of the wagon seat, and his voice boomed through his brown curly beard:

"Mornin', bub. How air yuh? Still a Democrat, I s'pose."

Mister Barrick and I agreed on almost everything but politics.

"Good mornin', Mister Barrick," I said. "I'm fine as silk and I'm still a Democrat. And how are you and Bob and Jake?"

"Perty well, thanky. And Bob and Jake is wild and dangerous as ever they was. Ef I

didn't watch 'em like a hawk they'd leave nothin' of me but a grease spot!"

The last words were spoken loudly over his shoulder. I only watched and dreamed then, while Mister Barrick and his big, fat horses turned a corner and moved out of sight. It made my heart pound whenever Jake threw his big head down, snorted against his knees and chomped the bit. Wasn't he a savage, though! And Bob was about as bad. What a brave, strong man Mister Barrick was! I'd dream I was away up there in his place, watching Bob and Jake with the eye of a hawk; and didn't I hold them down, though, when they tried to break and run . . . !

"Just to think of you driving that terrible big team!" exclaimed Inez Hartley, the banker's beautiful daughter. "I'd never imagined you could do anything so wonderful!"

"Fear not. It is nothing," I replied calmly. "Robert and Jacob know their master."

"But I fear to go riding with you through the wood," said the banker's beautiful daughter. "Are there not redskins lurking in the wood?"

"Fear not," I replied sternly. "Robert and Jacob will bear us safely through all perils. I will have you fly with me, Inez—"

"Preacher's stuck on Inez! Haw! Haw! Haw! Preacher's stuck on Inez!"

Robert and Jacob and the banker's beautiful daughter vanished at the sound of Stub Crumley's voice. With a vile grin on his wretched freckled face, he leered down at me as I rolled over in the grass.

"Talkin' to hisself about Inez Hartley! Haw! Haw! Haw!"

He stepped closer; and I grabbed his bare leg; and after we had wrassled around in the grass for ten minutes we were having so much fun that we both forgot about Robert

and Jacob and the banker's beautiful daughter. At dinner time we made it up to go to the town square together to spend the long, lazy afternoon.

II

In the center of the town square was a small park. It was fenced by chains bolted to stout posts. Every summer Saturday afternoon the park was circled by farmers' teams, which were hitched to the chains. Many of us town boys would gather in the park after Saturday dinner; and our first activity, as a rule, was to look over the teams and argue about the horses. Some of the boys were familiar with horses and were brave enough to pet the most sleepy-eyed ones. Sometimes we would climb into wagons and pretend that we were stage-coaching it through the Far West. But we never got to play in Mister Barrick's wagon on Saturday afternoons. He always put Bob and Jake in the livery barn.

All of the farmers who took good care of their horses did the same; and the poorer farmers who left their teams at the park always gathered at the livery barn to chew the rag for a spell before they started for home. The town boys always came around when the crowd began to gather. There were always interesting stories, gossip and political arguments to be heard; and usually there was a lot of instructive horse talk. I seldom missed a Saturday afternoon at the livery barn, for Mister Barrick was a friend of mine, and he was always the leader in the arguments about horses. But he was never too interested or excited to stop his talk for a second, grin down through his brown curly beard at me, and say, "How air yuh, bub?"

Stub Crumley didn't have anything to say about Inez Hartley then. He would only

look at me with humble envy for being so familiar with Mister Barrick, who was listened to by everybody in the livery barn as he proved to a man who drove Morgans how superior Percherons were to Morgans, and to Clydes, Belgians and French Coaches as well.

His argument was particularly warm this afternoon, because Humbert, the famous thousand-dollar Percheron stallion, was due at the livery barn. Humbert had been advertised like an opera-house show; big cards showing a fine picture of him had been tacked up at the livery barn and the feed store two weeks before. The description was high-sounding poetry, but the town boys made out from it that Humbert was a foreigner, a genuine French horse. We talked a great deal about Humbert; he had been brought clear across the ocean, and he was worth such a pile of money! And he looked so tremendously big and so awfully wild and dangerous in his picture that I asked Mister Barrick if, taking it all around and by and large, he wasn't more of a horse than Bob and Jake.

"Shucks, no," said Mister Barrick solemnly. "Shucks, no. Bob and Jake are work-horses. And Humbert never done a tap of work in his life. How can you ask if he is a better horse?"

"What's Humbert good for then, Mister Barrick, if he ain't strong and dangerous like Bob and Jake are?" I asked. "Why do they brag him up so much then?"

"He's the best Perch'on stallion in the county, that's why," said Mister Barrick.

Being just an eight-year-old town boy, Perch'on stallion meant nothing to me; but the words sounded fine, and I thought Humbert must be something wonderful.

And now Humbert was being driven into the livery barn. He was wonderful; any-

body could see that. Humbert was every bit as big as Bob or Jake, and he *looked* a lot more dangerous and strong. How the muscles rolled under his glossy dappled gray hair! What a thick neck he had, and how he did curvet it as he tossed his head, snorted and cavorted around! Humbert wouldn't stand still, but kept up a kind of heavy dance. There was the wickedest flash in his eye, as he rolled his gaze toward the crowd, snorting all the time.

"I hear he killed a man in Des Moines," said the Morgan man to Mister Barrick. "That's why they brought him down here."

"I don't believe it," declared Mister Barrick. "Perch'ons is the gentlest horses alive, even the studs."

I laughed to myself, for I knew that Mister Barrick was only coddling the Morgan man. Mister Barrick had told me too many times how dangerous Bob and Jake were for me to swallow any talk about Percherons being so gentle as all that.

Still, I was considerably puzzled; for if Humbert was so strong, why was he hitched to a cart that I could have pulled myself? Mister Barrick's wagon was a thousand times heavier. And that fat, red-faced man who was driving Humbert looked like he didn't have any muscle at all and had never done a lick of work in his life. Humbert couldn't be so dangerous if this man handled him. I'd never thought actually that I could handle Bob and Jake; but if this little fat man could handle Humbert, I expected I could, too. He couldn't be so much—

Just then Humbert commenced to faunch around, snorting and shaking his head, and stamping so hard on the floor that he shook the whole barn; and then he let out a neigh that was a regular ripper; and even Mister Barrick backed away with the other farm-

ers. But the little fat man just took hold of Humbert's bit and talked low to him. In no time at all the stallion was quieted down.

"He's a whisperer," said the Morgan man. "Best horse-handler in the county."

Then Humbert was unhitched and the little fat man led him down between the rows of dark stalls. Humbert neighed again in his wild way as he was led along. The livery man chased us boys from the barn.

"You young uns skedaddle!" he said sharply.

"I guess they're goin' to have a horse fight, maybe," I said, as we walked reluctantly away.

Bill Huff, a ten-year-old boy who had lived on a farm, began to laugh like a fool, and he wagged his finger under my nose.

"Preacher thinks they's goin' to be a horse fight!" he jeered. "Jest lis'en! Preacher thinks they's goin' to be a horse fight!"

Some of the older boys began to laugh and jeer, too, or I'd have shown Bill Huff how smart he was right then and there. But I wasn't fool enough to try to show a whole gang how smart they were; so I got Stub Crumley, and we went home and played catch in an alley until supper time. But every once in a while I'd wonder about Humbert. He was a mystery to me, and he stayed so for a long time.

III

It wasn't so long, however, until I got on more familiar terms with Bob and Jake. My folks planned a three-day visit to the county seat. I was to stay with a neighbor until they returned. I didn't like the idea, and I told Mister Barrick so one morning when I rode with him to the cheese factory.

"Why don't you come out and stay with me and maw?" said Mister Barrick. "We'd take keer of you, and I 'low you'd be a lot of help, too."

That idea certainly excited me; and when I got home I bawled until it was agreed that I should have my way. Two days later I was riding behind Bob and Jake as they tramped over a road that twisted and turned and led up and down through fields of timothy, clover and corn, past orchards, pastures and ponds. Mister Barrick didn't say much, except to answer my questions; and after about an hour I got tired of asking questions, and just looked around at the country and dreamed.

The sky was a hazy blue, the sun seemed to just pour its light down, and the air was still, thick and hot. It was easy to drowse. The green blades of the young corn were quiet, and the heads of timothy on long slender stems were quiet, too. When we passed an orchard I could hear all kinds of buzzy sounds in the deep grass among the trees. I could hear every plomp of the horses' feet in the dusty road. Each wheel had a rumble of its own as it bumped along. Sweat stains spread over the backs of Bob and Jake, where the backbands and breeching pressed. A sharp smell came up from them.

I got to looking as far out and away as I could. Over yonder some red cattle were lying in the shade of elm trees on the bank of a pond. The water of the pond looked cool and the green grass of the pasture was like a smooth carpet—I'd like to wade through that grass barefooted, I thought, and then go swimming in the pond with Stub Crumley: it was so blamed hot and drowsy. Beyond the pond was the biggest cornfield I had ever seen. It ran away and away, out into the hazy sky. A man was



Edward M. ...



cultivating the young corn. His team plodded and plodded on until there was only one small speck and two larger ones where the green of the field and the blue of the sky melted together in a haze.

I looked out at the specks and tried to fancy some fine things about them; and then it did seem as though I was in a corn-field myself. But I wasn't on a cultivator; I was on a cart, and I was driving Humbert, who seemed to have become the best-natured horse alive, for he would turn his head, wink his bright eye, and smile in the friendliest way every once in a while as I drove him on toward the far haze. The cart rolled on very smoothly, and Humbert looked friendlier every time he smiled back at me; and I knew that we were going on and on through the corn until we reached the Chariton River; and there I'd find Inez Hartley, the banker's beautiful daughter; and wouldn't she be proud and surprised to see me driving Humbert, and wouldn't we have the happiest time...!

"Wake up, young un. We're 'most home."

I blinked at the sound of Mister Barrick's voice. I felt that my head was resting on something hard and yet alive—and then I discovered that I'd been asleep and was lying against Mister Barrick's strong left arm. He looked down very kindly as I straightened myself and yawned.

"I pert' nigh went to sleep myself," said Mister Barrick. "It's that hot. And ef I had I bet Bob and Jake wouldn't of left more'n two grease spots of us!"

He stopped the team then, for he had reached his gate. Mister Barrick stepped down to the wheel and jumped to the ground. I was scared half to death right then, for he had left the lines in my hands. Never had Bob and Jake looked so big. Never, it seemed, had I been so high in the

air. But somehow I held my breath and clutched the big lines tightly as Mister Barrick opened the gate. He clucked and Bob and Jake moved ahead. The lines tugged at my hands. The spring seat swayed under me. The wheels jolted over a culvert. Far below I saw Mister Barrick as the wagon passed the gate. Ahead was a barn lot as big as a hay field, and a monster barn. Bob and Jake were sticking up their ears. Oh, lordy, what would happen now? I shut my eyes.

"Stop 'em, bub," called Mister Barrick.

Somehow I got out a weak whoa-ah; and I had never felt so good in my life as I did when Bob and Jake stopped dead still. Then Mister Barrick walked on toward the barn. The horses tramped soberly behind him. Nobody was holding their lines but me! And suddenly I felt a thrill of reckless joy. Let 'em run and leave only a grease spot of me, if they wanted to—maybe they wouldn't run, either—and if they didn't, and I came through alive, what I would have to tell to the town boys! I was driving the biggest, strongest and most dangerous team in the whole county! Shucks, they were not going to run; they saw Mister Barrick ahead of them, and they knew they hadn't better. And for a good minute I had the most fun I ever had had. And I certainly hated it when Bob and Jake got to the place where Mister Barrick always unhitched. I wanted to help him unhitch, but he sent me on to the house.

"You tell maw I said fer you to have some cookies and milk," said Mister Barrick.

Mrs. Barrick seemed very glad to see me, though she had a sharp, cranky way of talking. She had to get around the house in a wheel-chair, as she had been crippled in a runaway a little while after she and Mister Barrick were married. Mister Barrick had

shot the runaway horses and had hated fast ones ever since, people said. She managed to do her own kitchen work, wheeling her chair around, and Mister Barrick did all the house-cleaning.

Mrs. Barrick was in her wheel-chair on the back porch when I came up to the farmhouse. There were morning glory vines all over the back porch, and her chair was in the shade. When I told her what Mister Barrick had said she snapped: "Law! That man!" Then she looked me over from head to foot. "Law! You've ripped a button from your shirt, young un. Come here till I pin it up." And after I'd let her fuss with my shirt all she wanted to, she got a kind of smile in her black eyes, and told me to go to the pantry and help myself. After I did so I came back to the porch, and Mrs. Barrick sat and smoked her pipe and asked questions, and I sat and ate cookies and drank cool milk and answered them.

The poor soul, as my folks called her, didn't get around very much, and she appreciated even a boy like me to visit with. I was polite to Mrs. Barrick and answered her questions as well as I could, but all the time I wanted to be out at the barn with Mister Barrick and Bob and Jake.

He came in after a while and built a fire in the kitchen stove. I helped Mrs. Barrick get supper, just as Mister Barrick told me to do, while he went out to get the cows in and begin the chores. Mrs. Barrick got nicer to me all the time; she asked me what I liked best to eat; and when I said, "Fried chicken and jelly layer cake and roas'in' ears, I guess," she said she'd have some tomorrow or know the reason why. I got to feeling very much at home with Mrs. Barrick, but I did want to be out at the barn. Mister Barrick might let me give Bob and Jake their corn.

But I didn't get out to the barn until the next morning. Mrs. Barrick kept thinking of new questions; and after supper it was the same thing over again as we washed the dishes; and after Mister Barrick came in we all sat in the front room, with the windows open, while Mrs. Barrick smiled at me, and asked questions.

Mister Barrick just sat in his sock feet, leaned back in his rocker, with his hands clasped behind his head most of the time, smoked his pipe, smiled at his wife and me, and said hardly a word the whole evening. I wasn't used to having so much attention paid to me, and I was proud of it, though it wasn't very exciting.

At bedtime Mister Barrick took me up to a room that had a big feather bed in it. He set the lamp on a bureau and turned the sheets down as if he was used to it. He stood in the door for a minute before he went back downstairs.

"Ain't homesick, air yuh, bub?"

"No, I ain't. Not a particle, Mister Barrick."

"That's the ticket. I 'low I have yuh help cultivate some tomorrer."

"With Bob and Jake, Mister Barrick?"

"I 'spect."

"Golly! I'm mighty glad I come out to your place, Mister Barrick!"

"Wal—good night, bub. Hope yuh sleep good. Be keerful of the light."

He stood in the door for another second, staring at me, and pulling at his beard with a big, hairy hand. Then he turned around and tramped down the stairs. I could hear him and his wife talking, and they were still talking after I was in bed.

It was so hot I didn't sleep good in the early part of the night. Once I woke up and looked out into the moonlight. I thought I saw Mister Barrick tramping up and down

in the barn lot. But I was drowsy and I dozed off again before I could think about it very much.

IV

It was fine and cool the next morning when I went out to the barn with Mister Barrick. We had eaten a good breakfast, and now we were going to feed the young stock. The cows had already been milked and fed. Bob and Jake had finished their corn and were nibbling at the timothy in their manger. They looked up and nickered when we came into the barn. Mister Barrick fetched Jake a slap on the hips as we walked behind them. I jumped a foot, for I expected Jake to kick us into pieces. But he only switched his tail. We went on through the barn and came to a pen with a shed in one side of it. There was a bed of straw in the shed; and on the straw were eight of the funniest and cutest pigs I had ever seen. They were just finishing their breakfast, and their fat mother was grunting for them to get away and leave her alone. Mister Barrick helped me into the pen; and then he picked up one of the pigs and let it chew his fingers. And he told me to do the same with another. The little rascal chewed away for all he was worth, but he didn't hurt my hand the least bit. Mister Barrick and I had a lot of fun with the pigs, their mother grunting in a suspicious way all the time; and then we fed the calves skimmed milk and played with them for a while. One of the calves was a regular baby; and it was so wobbly-legged and owl-eyed, and it looked so funny and cute when it would hoist its tail and try to run, and then stop and look at me and baa, that I'd have stayed and played with it all day if Mister Barrick hadn't needed me to help him with the cultivating.

We left the calves and fed corn to the chickens and the shoats; and then we leaned on the pasture fence for a while, and Mister Barrick showed me Bob's and Jake's mother. She was a big gray Percheron, too, and there was a frolicsome little colt with her. Her name was Grace, and the colt hadn't been given a name yet. Grace tramped up to the fence as Mister Barrick and I were talking and stood there while he scratched her neck. I tried to get the colt to come to me; but he would only stick out his nose, smell my fingers, shake his head and snort a couple of times, then back away and look at me suspiciously. He wasn't nearly so friendly as the calf was, but I liked him about as well anyhow. I certainly was enjoying myself. The air smelled sweet as it blew from the dewy pasture grass. The red and white cows were moving toward the elms that marked the pond. All over the barn lot the hens were singing their clucking songs. But the old prairie sun was beginning to warm things up.

"Time for us to git to work," said Mister Barrick.

When he had harnessed Bob and Jake and led them out of the barn, he took me by the arm.

"Pile on, bub," he said, "and we'll ride out to the field."

"Ain't—ain't they pretty dangerous to ride, Mister Barrick?"

"Not to ride—no. Jest out on the road. You pile on old Jake now and hang to the hames."

I was scared, but I wouldn't back down; so up I went; and there I was, astraddle one of the biggest, strongest and most dangerous horses in the county, riding out to cultivate corn!

That was the most wonderful and excit-

ing day I had ever known. I didn't only ride the big Percheron out to the cornfield; but after Mister Barrick had made a couple of rounds with the cultivator, he put me up in the seat and gave me the lines, and there I was again, driving this great team down the corn rows, their big hips looming high above me, their heads swinging gee when I pulled gee and swinging haw when I pulled haw. And they stopped when I yelled whoa and went ahead when I yelled giddap. And Mister Barrick walked so quietly behind me that I could imagine he was Inez Hartley or Stub Crumley or anybody I wanted to.

That evening I went to the field again, drove some more rounds with Mister Barrick, and helped him unhitch at six o'clock. He had brought the wagon out at noon and I got permission to drive it back. I felt that I was the boss of Bob and Jake now. They might be strong and dangerous, but I could handle them. As they neared the barn they broke into a heavy trot and I let them go. The wagon bumped and rumbled, dust rolled up from the thumping hoofs, and I declared to myself that no stage-driver of the Far West ever drove faster than I was driving then. And at supper Mister Barrick said to Mrs. Barrick:

"You ought to seen that boy handle Bob and Jake! Ain't 'nuther boy nigh his age could handle sech a dangerous team, I bet."

"Law! How you *do* go on about Bob and Jake!" said Mrs. Barrick in her sharp way. But she smiled over at me. I was very proud; and after I'd filled up on fried chicken and jelly layer cake and roasting ears and milk I felt so good that it seemed

like I had never lived at all before. I wanted to stay with Mister and Mrs. Barrick and Bob and Jake forever.

But the next two days went by so fast that I could hardly count them. Then I was in town again, with about seven hundred fine stories to tell to Stub Crumley and Inez Hartley. And I could put Bill Huff in his place, too. He might have lived on a farm once, but he had never cultivated corn with a team like Bob and Jake. He might know all about Humbert, but Mister Barrick didn't let *him* drive Bob and Jake through town to the cheese factory.

Mister Barrick and I were always good friends while I lived in that town. He and Mrs. Barrick always liked me to come out and stay at their place. I liked him so much that it bothered me because it seemed that he slept poorly. Several times when I was out at his place I heard him tramp to the barn in the middle of the night. Finally I asked him about it. As I might have known, it was on account of his horses.

"I worry about Bob and Jake fightin' at night," he said.

Mrs. Barrick usually spoke sharply to him for being foolish about his horses, but she didn't say a word now. And I said:

"You certainly do take fine care of your stock, Mister Barrick."

And he did. Mister Barrick seemed to love even the little pigs. But he thought the most of Bob and Jake and their mother, Grace. It was because I appreciated them so much, I guess, that he liked to have me come out to his place and always let me ride with him to the cheese factory.

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE (1883—)

Loreine: a Horse

from THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE
(September, 1926)

This descriptive poem gives, in verse, the same feeling that Helen Dore Boylston, gives us in Lady of Leisure; to everyone who has owned horses it will bring to mind some favorite mount.

She lifted up her head
With the proud incredible poise
Of beauty recovered
From the Mycenæan tombs.

She opened her nostrils
With the wild arrogance
Of life that knows nothing
Except that it is life.

Her slender legs
Quivered above the soft grass.
Her hard hooves
Danced among the dandelions.

Her great dark eyes
Saw all that could be seen.
Her large lips
Plucked at my coat-sleeve.

All the wisdom of the prophets
Vanished into laughter
As Loreine lifted her small foot
And pawed the air.

All the learning of the sages
Turned to ribald rubrics
When that proud head
Looked at a passing cloud.

And so, amid this godless
God-hungry generation,
Let us, my friends, take Loreine
And worship her.

She would demand nothing,
Nor would she utter thunders.
She is living, and real,
And she is beautiful.

JOHAN BOJER (1872—)

Skobelef Was a Horse

from THE COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE (1921)

Not a long story, this, but one which will stick in your memory. It has the delightful flavor of Norway in it, the down-to-earthiness of the peasant. The description of the horse in the act of being harnessed is unusually vivid. Though the end is tragic, one does not feel too sad. In spite of the fact that the horse, in the flesh, is made very real, he seems to be an almost legendary animal with his raw eggs and brandy; and one thinks of him as an existent part of Norwegian folklore. The quiet humor of the tale with its sly insinuations adds to the savoriness of the morsel.

Skobelef was a horse. He lived at the time when on Sunday morning the church bells rang, not in vain across deserted roads and sleeping farms, but across a valley that woke up to life under the deep boom of their sonorous call.

*Come, come,
Old and young,
Old and young,
Rich and poor,
Fisherman, dalesman,
Huntsmen from moor,
From forest and sea.
Come, come to me.*

*Peter and Paul and Ole, from Vang,
Vang, Vang,
And Mari and Cari from Renstali, -li, -li;
From mountains and valley
From islands at sea,
Come, come to me.*

All roads would be darkened with people going churchwards, walking or driving. There were old men, with a big stick in one hand and a hat in the other, coat over arm, and gray homespun trousers turned up high over strong boots shiny with grease. The women walked sedately, covered with shawls and prayer-books in hand, smelling of the scent on the ends of their handkerchiefs. The lake would swarm with boats that darted out from farmsteads on the other side, and white sails would dot the fiord. Even in the mountains the cowbells seemed to stop tinkling and the boy would lift his long lur (a birch-bark trumpet) to his lips and send a long sounding greeting down towards the valley. Thus Sunday was kept then. Sunday was a real holy day.

Now, at so great a distance, it seems as if

all Sundays were sunny and the forest was ever green in those days. The old tar-brown church among the huge trees did not seem to be a building any longer; it became a supernatural being. It bore the aspect of something all-knowing. It was hundreds and hundreds of years old. It had seen the dead when they were alive going to church like ourselves. The churchyard around it was a tiny town of wooden crosses and flat stones, the grass grew high among the sunken mounds. We knew that the sexton cut it for his cows, and drinking a cup of milk in his house was like communing with the spirits of the dead. His milk was to us a kind of angel's drink which made us feel good after tasting it.

We boys used to wait outside the church and act like the grown-ups. We reviewed those coming after us. We judged them by their looks; and they felt it.

The cripple would shrink and try to hide among the crowd; the important men calmly met the glances of friends and foes alike; the pretty girls looked down, smiling. We boys were always seeking somebody in the crowd, a hero for worship, a man for a model. We too should be grown-ups one day.

There was the new schoolmaster now. He walked upright, dressed in homespun with all his buttons buttoned, a white starched collar, a hard felt hat and an umbrella. He was a step up from a plain farmer's lad. Evidently we should all have to go to a training college. Later, however, a butcher arrived from town, in blue broadcloth, with a gold chain across a white waistcoat, with white cuffs, a snowy white shirt and collar, and a white straw hat. He was a vision crushing the new teacher to dust beneath his feet. Evidently we should all have to learn the butcher's trade when we grew up.

The great men who influenced our day-dreams were numerous. It was a moment of emotion when for the first time we beheld a solicitor from town. He was a right royal man; he even wore an ornament on his nose, a pair of gold-trimmed eyeglasses. From that day our ambition was unbridled. We were not at all sure of the feasibility of a liberal education, but everyone was resolved to read sufficiently hard to develop bad eyes and be compelled to wear eyeglasses.

Then Skobelef arrived. And Skobelef was not a man; he was a horse.

For weeks beforehand little legs ran from farm to farm with the great news. Peter Lo had acquired a new Government stallion. He was not merely an animal on four legs; he was a fairytale by himself. Six men had enough to do to get him off the steamer, yet there was one man who could master him, unaided. That man was Peter Lo. He—not Peter Lo, of course; Peter Lo was only a man—walked mostly on his hind legs, and he whinnied even in his sleep. He was so wild that he had killed several men. And his name was Skobelef.

What do you think Skobelef had to eat?

No, not hay, nor chaff, nor oats. No, Skobelef had uncooked eggs with brandy for meals.

And they said Peter Lo and the stallion took their wonderful strengthening food out of the same manger. They both needed something invigorating.

One Sunday the crowd of boys outside the church stood looking along the valley road in great, though subdued, excitement. Peter Lo was expected to come to church driving no less a horse than Skobelef himself.

The long procession of vehicles from the

farther valley arrived, swelling with fresh buggies from every side-road, until it formed an unbroken line, like a grand bridal procession.

That day we judged the drivers by their horses. What a diversity of fates passed before our eyes! Fat horses and lean, fresh horses and tired. There were old big-bellied crocks, long-necked and raw-boned, whose heads sank low earthwards at each step—as if infinitely weary. Then would come fine beasts that reminded the onlookers of rich crops and swelling bank accounts. There was perhaps a mare, the mother of many foals and ready to mother all the world. Once in a while a fiord pony with long fur would pull hard at a heavy gig; he was small enough to make one think of a mouse. Then an old red horse with big watery eyes and shaky knees would stare in astonishment, as if asking why he was not free to rest even on Sunday. Then there were virtuous mares' faces ready to declare that all the world was vanity; then again madcap youngsters whinnying to all the world.

Look at that red gelding! Why is he spattered with mud right up to his belly? He came from a farm far away in the mountains. Since early in the morning he has been plodding across bogs and moors, through brooks and rivers, until when finally he reached the valley a buggy was borrowed for him. He will have had a hard day's work before he reaches his mountain home again.

What a long procession it is! But where is Peter Lo? Where is Skobelef?

One trap came by itself, far behind all the others. It was still far away, but came on rapidly. Many hundred eyes were fixed on it.

The church bells were booming. Most of the horses were unhitched and tied up to the massive ash trees. They were biting their hay impassively. Suddenly, however, all heads were raised and even the old crocks, arching their necks, tried to look down the road.

Then came Peter Lo. There was Skobelef. He came trotting before the buggy, black, broad on dancing hoofs, with his long-haired fetlocks streaming, his mane flowing thickly over his neck, his eyes two gleams of lightning; and from behind both ears the blue ribbons of the prize-winner waved in the air.

He lifted his head and seemed to drink in the very day. He took dominion over the whole of the landscape. Then he lifted his voice and pierced the air with a signal that echoed back from the mountain-sides.

Peter Lo was in the buggy, calmly holding slack reins. He was not yet more than thirty-five, broad-shouldered, full-blooded, with a smile in one corner of his mouth, and a tuft of brown beard under his chin.

Alas, his wife beside him was so much older than he, every feature of her face drooped—cheeks, eyes, mouth—and when she spoke, her voice had the quality of an unceasing wail. But Peter Lo loved everything that was beautiful, even when it was not his own. When Skobelef whinnied to his lady friends, Peter glanced toward his acquaintances in the crowd, smiling. Skobelef stopped, felt the whip, and tried to rear; the whip fell once more and he trotted with long strides up the lane to the parsonage, the crowd following, we boys foremost.

It was a sight for eager eyes even to watch Peter Lo leading Skobelef from the shafts of the buggy in through the stable door.

Peter Lo was very well groomed that day. His fine horse had evidently increased his self-respect. His gray suit was well brushed; he wore a hard felt hat like the teacher's, and while leading his horse his shining shoes had to step high once in a while. The crowd stared with all its eyes. The stable door swallowed the wonderful apparition but in a little while Peter Lo returned, wiping horse's hair from his hands. Treading carefully so as not to soil those very shiny shoes, he slowly approached the church, the crowd following.

Peter Lo mounted the steps leading up to the "armory" which is still the word for a church porch in rural Norway, reminiscent of the times when every man carried his weapons about with him, leaving them, however, outside God's House. Peter Lo entered the church, sat down in a pew, produced his hymn-book and started to sing. The crowd did what he did, and the singing increased in volume.

But we youngsters kept watch outside the stable door. Luckily the door was locked, for what might not have happened if Skobelef had been let out on his own?

Suddenly we heard a clanking in there and the stamping of hoofs; now and then the walls trembled with his whinnying. How thrilling! We stood still, whispering.

Even the crowd of horses felt the excitement. The mares under the huge ash trees forgot their appetite and arched their necks, trying to look young. Stallions and geldings had seen that morning a rival whose eyes glistened with pride. Should he be tolerated? They spurned the earth under their hoofs, whinnying challenges in all directions.

At last the final bell was heard, and the congregation came out. Most of the men,

however, let their own horses alone for a while, and the parsonage farmyard was crowded with people who wanted to see Peter Lo fetching Skobelef out from the stable.

Then the owner arrived; all eyes centered upon him where he was talking to the sexton, who was like any other plain mortal man, except that he had acquired some of the same gestures that the parson used when he was preaching.

People began to make room. The cautious man pulled his buggy away from the middle of the yard. The women occupied the bridge up to the barn. Better be careful—though all were eager to see.

Peter Lo disappeared through the stable door. Whinnying was heard from in there, hoofs tramping, and bridle clanking, and a moment afterwards a black head appeared in the doorway. Skobelef lifted up his voice in a ringing, fighting challenge for heaven and earth to hear; Peter Lo was flung skywards, alighting, however, a little farther on.

Women screamed, and men withdrew in such a hurry that several hats remained behind them, for now Peter Lo and Skobelef began to dance round the yard. Skobelef snorted and foamed until his silky black hide was flecked with white spots. He did not agree about going toward that buggy. He wanted to pay calls on his lady friends. He pranced, reared, kicked and backed, but a pair of shiny shoes kept pace beside him all the time. It was a vision and a revelation to the onlookers.

The yard by this time was swept free of vehicles and people and it became a dancing floor for Skobelef and Peter Lo.

The man yelled at his stallion and the horse screamed at all the world in general

and at Peter Lo in particular—and they kept on dancing. At last Skobelef seemed determined to call on the parson's wife indoors, but Peter Lo's shining feet were on the spot before him and the animal merely succeeded in knocking down the railings of the porch steps. Peter Lo's face was red as red and Skobelef's entire body was a mass of foam. The women continually gave vent to short tremulous utterances—oh!

Finally the horse had to stand between the shafts of the buggy, but he reared when the reins were loosened. The whip descended, however, and he tried to dance on the same spot, lifting all four legs, arching his neck, and snorting out of extended nostrils.

Then Peter Lo's wife appeared, gathering her shawl and her skirts, and calmly took her seat in the buggy behind that hurricane of a horse. Now Peter Lo was the conqueror; he placed his hand on the seat and swung up behind his wife.

We saw a rear and wild-gleaming eyes, heard the crack of a whip, and in a moment there was but a cloud of dust which disappeared behind the nearest buildings.

We were left behind, and those who had horses felt ashamed. What was there to see after this?

From that day Skobelef was a power in our valley. Peter Lo and Skobelef together united into a kind of higher being to be stared at by common people as they flashed by. The two excited the whole community into a quicker pace. A new sense of honor toward horses arose, which caused every owner to mind his beast with greater care until it showed up, sleek and well-groomed. Everybody began driving faster on the high-road; men also began talking more

merrily, laughing toward heaven and across earth, and even their thoughts began moving in a more daring light.

Every Sunday morning the sight of Skobelef and Peter Lo was a manifestation of a hitherto unknown force in life. We were face to face with the joy of being alive, realizing the sanctity of the body and reading the joyous song of power in muscles rippling under silky skin. To more than one the two revealed for the first time that life is not only sin and sorrow. Even the days of this life have their glory.

Peter Lo, little by little, soared upwards from his former level. He began to read books, to wear a white collar and use a pocket handkerchief at church. His speech grew as careful as that of the *lensmand*. Knowing himself and Skobelef to be the center of general observation, he developed a new sense of responsibility and a desire to become a worthy model for the many.

True enough, we youngsters were not the only ones who included a fresh petition in our evening prayers: "O God, help me to become like Peter Lo when I grow up."

Even the grown-ups imitated him. "You brush your shoes as carefully as Peter Lo," they would say to each other, and, "You wear a white collar like Peter Lo does."

Skobelef's mission was originally to provide the district with a new race of horses, but he grew to be a spiritual power, an educational influence for the whole valley.

Peter Lo, however, was worse off. He was no longer happy except in Skobelef's company. He lost all inclination for farm work. He loved to flash through the district with his friend or to provide a silent sermon outside the church with him.

People said that Peter Lo slept in the stable. They also said that the horse and the man were growing more and more to resemble each other. Skobelef developed an oblique smile for his lady friends, and Peter Lo's laughter sounded like whinnying when he met his acquaintances at church.

Peter Lo's life was not very easy, after all. He was so very fond of everything beautiful, even though it did not belong to him. And when his pranks grew too outrageous he was very helpless, indeed. Then he went to church and partook of Holy Communion.

Many a time we watched him coming to church, not driving his fierce stallion but with a staid elderly mare in front of his buggy. His sour-faced wife within her shawls was perched up in the vehicle. On one side walked the deacon, and on the other Peter Lo, head bent low. It was an act of public repentance which made many people laugh. "Peter's done some fool thing again," they would say.

A few days afterwards, however, he would flash past us with Skobelef, so freshly eager for the joy of life and the joy of beauty that he was soon worse than ever. His wife wanted Skobelef to be sent away, and insisted that Peter would never be converted from his sins as long as he had the horse for a friend.

On every farm in the valley, however, there soon grew up prancing black colts and fillies, and the buggy wheels began to roll more quickly along all roads. A lusty whinnying gladdened all minds. Men lifted

their heads and looked about them merrily; women dared to laugh aloud, and young people once more started dancing.

Skobelef, however, did not live long. He broke loose from his stable one fine night, and made for the mountain moors where he believed his beloved lady friends were enjoying freedom and fresh air.

When Peter Lo found the stable empty in the morning he began crying out, and wailing as if he foresaw a tragedy. He understood well enough where his dear friend had gone, and people maintained afterward that he was running about among the hills whinnying like Skobelef, calling and coaxing his faithless friend.

At last he found him. Skobelef had sunk up to his neck in a treacherous bog, and in his efforts to haul himself out of it one leg had broken; the splinters of the bone stuck out, and his eyes were bleeding from fly-bites.

Peter wiped those poor eyes with soft grass, then gave his dear friend a raw egg with brandy. He wept for a while, and then at last he had to use his knife.

From that day Peter Lo drove slowly along the roads. His head dropped and his beard turned gray.

Today he is an old man, but he still dresses better than most of his neighbors and talks town language as he used to do before. When people speak to him of Skobelef his eyes grow dim.

"Skobelef!" he exclaims. "He was far more than a horse. He was a liberal education for every one of us."

WILBUR DANIEL STEELE (1886—)

Blue Murder

*from THE MAN WHO SAW THROUGH HEAVEN
AND OTHER STORIES*

A well-written murder story is rare, and a well-written murder story about a horse is practically nonexistent, with the exception of the fine tale which follows. Here is fine local color, strong character portrayal, and a surprise ending that is yet logical if one goes back and studies the actors in the scenes.

At Mill Crossing it was already past sunset. The rays, redder for what autumn leaves were left, still laid fire along the woods crowning the stony slopes of Jim Bluedge's pastures; but then the line of the dusk began and from that level it filled the valley, washing with transparent blue the buildings scattered about the bridge, Jim's house and horse sheds and hay barns, Frank's store, and Camden's blacksmith shop.

The mill had been gone fifty years, but the falls which had turned its wheel still poured in the bottom of the valley, and when the wind came from the Footstool way their mist wet the smithy, built of the old stone on the old foundations, and their pouring drowned the clink of Camden's hammer.

Just now they couldn't drown Camden's hammer, for he wasn't in the smithy; he was at his brother's farm. Standing inside

the smaller of the horse paddocks behind the sheds he drove in stakes, one after another, cut green from saplings, and so disposed as to cover the more glaring of the weaknesses in the five foot fence. From time to time, when one was done and another to do, he rested the head of his sledge in the pocket of his leather apron (he was never without it; it was as though it had grown on him, lumpy with odds and ends of his trade—bolts and nails and rusty pliers and old horseshoes) and, standing so, he mopped the sweat from his face and looked up at the mountain.

Of the three brothers he was the dumb one. He seldom had anything to say. It was providential (folks said) that of the three enterprises at the Crossing one was a smithy; for while he was a strong, big, hungry-muscled fellow, he never would have had the shrewdness to run the store or the farm. He was better at pounding—

pounding while the fire reddened and the sparks flew, and thinking, and letting other people wonder what he was thinking of.

Blossom Bluedge, his brother's wife, sat perched on the top bar of the paddock gate, holding her skirts around her ankles with a trifle too much care to be quite unconscious, and watched him work. When he looked at the mountain he was looking at the mares, half a mile up the slope, grazing in a line as straight as soldiers, their heads all one way. But Blossom thought it was the receding light he was thinking of, and her own sense of misgiving returned and deepened.

"You'd have thought Jim would be home before this, wouldn't you, Cam?"

Her brother-in-law said nothing.

"Cam, look at me!"

It was nervousness, but it wasn't all nervousness—she was the prettiest girl in the valley; a small part of it was mingled coquetry and pique.

The smith began to drive another stake, swinging the hammer from high overhead, his muscles playing in fine big rhythmical convulsions under the skin of his arms and chest, covered with short blond down. Studying him cornerwise, Blossom muttered, "Well, *don't* look at me, then!"

He was too dumb for any use. He was as dumb as this: when all three of the Bluedge boys were after her a year ago, Frank, the storekeeper, had brought her candy: chocolates wrapped in silver foil in a two-pound Boston box. Jim had laid before her the Bluedge farm and with it the dominance of the valley. And Camden! To the daughter of Ed Beck, the apple grower, Camden brought a *box of apples!*—and been bewildered too, when, for all she could help it, she had had to clap a hand over her

mouth and run into the house to have her giggle.

A little more than just bewildered, perhaps. Had she, or any of them, ever speculated about that? . . . He had been dumb enough before; but that was when he started being as dumb as he was now.

Well, if he wanted to be dumb let him be dumb. Pouting her pretty lips and arching her fine brows, she forgot the unimaginative fellow and turned to the ridge again. And now, seeing the sun was quite gone, all the day's vague worries and dreads—held off by this and that—could not be held off longer. For weeks there had been so much talk, so much gossip and speculation and doubt.

"Camden," she reverted suddenly. "Tell me one thing; did you hear—"

She stopped there. Some people were coming into the kitchen yard, dark forms in the growing darkness. Most of them lingered at the porch, sitting on the steps and lighting their pipes. The one that came out was Frank, the second of her brothers-in-law. She was glad. Frank wasn't like Camden; he would talk. Turning and taking care of her skirts, she gave him a bright and sisterly smile.

"Well, Frankie, what's the crowd?"

Far from avoiding the smile, as Camden's habit was, the storekeeper returned it with a brotherly wink for good measure. "Oh, they're tired of waiting down the road, so they come up here to see the grand arrival." He was something of a man of the world; in his calling he acquired a fine turn for skepticism. "Don't want to miss being on hand to see what flaws they can pick in 'Jim's five hundred dollar's worth of experiment.'"

"Frank, ain't you the least bit worried over Jim? So Late?"

"Don't see why."

"All the same, I wish either you or Cam could've gone with him."

"Don't see why. Had all the men from Perry's stable there in Twinshead to help him get the animal off the freight, and he took an extra rope and the log-chain and the heavy wagon, so I guess no matter how wild and woolly the devil is he'll scarcely be climbing over the tailboard. Besides, them Western horses ain't such a big breed; even a stallion."

"All the same—(look the other way, Frankie)." Flipping her ankles over the rail, Blossom jumped down beside him. "Listen, Frank, tell me something; did you hear—did you hear the reason Jim's getting him cheap was because he killed a man out West there, what's-its-name, Wyoming?"

Frank was taking off his sleeve protectors, the pins in his mouth. It was Camden, at the bars, speaking in his sudden deep rough way, "who the hell told you that?"

Frank got the pins out of his mouth. "I guess what it is, Blossie, what's mixed you up is his having that name 'Blue Murder.'"

"No sir! I got some sense and some ears. You don't go fooling me."

Frank laughed indulgently and struck her shoulder with a light hand.

"Don't worry. Between two horsemen like Jim and Cam—"

"Don't *Cam* me! He's none of *my* horse. I told Jim once—" Breaking off, Camden hoisted his weight over the fence and stood outside, his feet spread and his hammer in both hands, an attitude that would have looked a little ludicrous had anyone been watching him.

Jim had arrived. With a clatter of hoofs and a rattle of wheels he was in the yard and come to a standstill, calling aloud as

he threw the lines over the team, "Well, friends, here we are."

The curious began to edge around, closing a cautious circle. The dusk had deepened so that it was hard to make anything at any distance of Jim's "experiment" but a blurry silhouette anchored at the wagon's tail. The farmer put an end to it, crying from his eminence, "Now, now, clear out and don't worry him; give him some peace tonight, for Lord's sake! Git!" He jumped to the ground and began to whack his arms, chilled with driving, only to have them pinioned by Blossom's without warning.

"Oh, Jim, I'm so glad you come. I been so worried; gi' me a kiss!"

The farmer reddened, eyeing the cloud of witnesses. He felt awkward and wished she could have waited. "Get along, didn't I tell you fellows?" he cried with a trace of the Bluedge temper. "Go and wait in the kitchen then; I'll tell you all about everything soon's I come in.... Well now—wife—"

"What's the matter?" she laughed, an eye over her shoulder. "Nobody's looking that matters. I'm sure Frank don't mind. And as for Camden—"

Camden wasn't looking at them. Still standing with his hammer two-fisted and his legs spread, his chin down and his thoughts to himself (the dumb head) he was looking at Blue Murder, staring at that other dumb head, which, raised high on the motionless column of the stallion's neck, seemed hearkening with an exile's doubt to the sounds of this new universe, testing with wide nostrils the taint in the wind of equine strangers, and studying with eyes accustomed to far horizons these dark pastures that went up in the air.

Whatever the smith's cogitations, pres-

ently he let the hammer down and said aloud, "So you're him, eh?"

Jim put Blossom aside, saying, "Got supper ready? I'm hungry!" Excited by the act of kissing and the sense of witnesses to it, she fussed her hair and started kitchenwards as he turned to his brothers.

"Well, what do you make of him?"

"Five hundred dollars," said Frank. "However, it's your money."

Camden was shorter. "Better put him in."

"All right; let them bars down while I and Frank lead him around."

"No thanks!" the storekeeper kept his hands in his pockets. "I just cleaned up, thanks. Cam's the boy for horses."

"He's none o' my horse!" Camden wet his lips, shook his shoulders, and scowled. "Be damned, no!" He never had the right words, and it made him mad. Hadn't he told Jim from the beginning that he washed his hands of this fool Agricultural College squandering, "and a man-killer to the bargain?"

"Unless," Frank put in slyly, "unless Cam's scared."

"Oh, is Cam scared?"

"Scared?" And still to the brothers' enduring wonder, the big dense fellow would rise to that boyhood bait. "Scared? The hell I'm scared of any horse ever wore a shoe! Come on, I'll show you! I'll show you!"

"Well, be gentle with him, boys, he may be brittle." As Frank sauntered off around the shed he whistled the latest tune.

In the warmth and light of the kitchen he began to fool with his pretty sister-in-law, feigning princely impatience and growling with a wink at the assembled neighbors, "When do we eat?"

But she protested, "Land, I had everything ready since five, ain't I? And now

if it ain't you it's them to wait for. I declare for men!"

At last one of the gossips got in a word.

"What you make of Jim's purchase, Frank?"

"Well, it's Jim's money, Darred. If *I* had the running of this farm—" Frank began drawing up chairs noisily, leaving it at that.

Darred persisted. "Don't look to me much like an animal for women and children to handle, not yet awhile."

"Cowboys han'les 'em, pa." That was Darred's ten-year-old, big-eyed.

Blossom put the kettle back, protesting, "Leave off, or you'll get me worried to death; all your talk...I declare, where *are* those bad boys?" opening the door she called into the dark, "Jim! Cam! Land's sake!"

Subdued by distance and the intervening sheds, she could hear them at their business—sounds muffled and fragmentary, soft thunder of hoofs, snorts, puffings, and the short words of men in action: "Aw, leave him be in the paddock tonight."... "With them mares there, you damn fool?"... "Damn fool, eh? Try getting him in at that door and see who's the damn fool!"... "Come on, don't be so scared" ... "Scared, eh? Scared?" ...

Why was it she always felt that curious tightening of all her powers of attention when Camden Bluedge spoke? Probably because he spoke so rarely, and then so roughly, as if his own thickness made him mad. Never mind.

"Last call for supper in the dining-car, boys!" she called and closed the door. Turning back to the stove she was about to replace the tea water for the third time, when, straightening up, she said, "What's that?"

No one else had heard anything. They looked at one another.

"Frank, go—go see what—go tell the boys come in."

Frank hesitated, feeling foolish, then went to the door.

Then everyone in the room was out of his chair.

There were three sounds. The first was human and incoherent. The second was incoherent too, but it wasn't human. The third was a crash, a ripping and splintering of wood.

When they got to the paddock they found Camden crawling from beneath the wreckage of the fence where a gap was opened on the pasture side. He must have received a blow on the head, for he seemed dazed. He didn't seem to know they were there. At a precarious balance—one hand at the back of his neck—he stood facing up the hill, gaping after the diminuendo of floundering hoofs, invisible above.

So seconds passed. Again the beast gave tongue, a high wild horning note, and on the black of the stony hill to the right of it a faint shower of sparks blew like fireflies where the herding mares wheeled. It seemed to waken the dazed smith. He opened his mouth "*Almighty God!*" Swinging, he flung his arms towards the shed. "*There! There!*"

At last someone brought a lantern. They found Jim Bluedge lying on his back in the corner of the paddock near the door to the shed. In the lantern light, and still better in the kitchen when they had carried him in, they read the record of the thing which Camden, dumb in good earnest now, seemed unable to tell them with anything but his strange unfocused stare.

The bloody offense to the skull would have been enough to kill the man, but it

was the second, full on the chest above the heart, that told the tale. On the caved grating of the ribs, already turning blue under the yellowish down, the iron shoe had left its mark; and when, laying back the rag of shirt, they saw that the toe of the shoe was upward and the cutting calkends down they knew all they wanted to know of that swift, black, crushing episode.

No outlash of heels in fright. Here was a forefoot. An attack aimed and frontal; an onslaught reared, erect; beast turned biped; red eyes mad to white eyes aghast... And only afterward, when it was done, the blood-fright that serves the horse for conscience; the blind rush across the inclosure; the fence gone down....

No one had much to say. No one seemed to know what to do.

As for Camden, he was no help. He simply stood propped on top of his logs of legs where someone had left him. From the instant when with his "*Almighty God!*" he had been brought back to memory, instead of easing its hold as the minutes passed, the event to which he remained the only living human witness seemed minute by minute to tighten its grip. It set its sweat-beaded stamp on his face, distorted his eyes, and tied his tongue. He was no good to anyone.

As for Blossom, even now—perhaps more than ever now—her dependence on physical touch was the thing that ruled her. Down on her knees beside the lamp they had set on the floor, she plucked at one of the dead man's shoes monotonously, and as it were idly, swaying the toe like an inverted pendulum from side to side. That was all. Not a word. And when Frank, the only one of the three with any sense, got her up finally and led her away to her room, she clung to *him*.

It was lucky that Frank was a man of affairs. His brother was dead, and frightfully dead, but there was tomorrow for grief. Just now there were many things to do. There were people to be gotten rid of. With short words and angry gestures he cleared them out, all but Darred and a man named White, and to these he said, "Now first thing, Jim can't stay here." He ran and got a blanket from a closet. "Give me a hand and we'll lay him in the ice house overnight. Don't sound so good, but it's best, poor fellow. Cam, come along!"

He waited a moment, and as he studied the wooden fool the blood poured back into his face. "Wake up, Cam! You great big scared stiff, you!"

Camden brought his eyes out of nothingness and looked at his brother. A twinge passed over his face, convulsing the mouth muscles. "Scared?"

"Yes, you're scared!" Frank's lip lifted, showing the tips of his teeth. "And I'll warrant you something: if you wasn't the scared stiff you was, this hellish damn thing wouldn't have happened, maybe. Scared! You a blacksmith! Scared of a horse!"

"*Horse!*" Again that convulsion of the mouth muscles, something between irony and an idiot craft. "Why don't you go catch 'im?"

"Hush it! Don't waste time by going loony now, for God's sake. Come!"

"My advice to anybody—" Camden looked crazier than ever, knotting his brows. "My advice to anybody is to let somebody else go catch that—that—" Opening the door he faced out into the night, his head sunk between his shoulders and the fingers working at the ends of his hanging arms; and before they knew it he began to swear. They could hardly hear because his teeth were locked and his

breath soft. There were all the vile words he had ever heard in his life, curses and threats and abominations, vindictive, violent, obscene. He stopped only when at a sharp word from Frank he was made aware that Blossom had come back into the room. Even then he didn't seem to comprehend her return but stood blinking at her, and at the rifle she carried, with his distraught bloodshot eyes.

Frank comprehended. Hysteria had followed the girl's blankness. Stepping between her and the body on the floor, he spoke in a persuasive, unhurried way. "What are you doing with that gun, Blossie? Now, now, you don't want that gun, you know you don't."

It worked. Her rigidity lessened appreciably. Confusion gained.

"Well, but—oh, Frank—well, but when we going to shoot him?"

"Yes, yes, Blossie—now, yes—only you best give me that gun, that's the girlie." When he had got the weapon he put an arm around her shoulders. "Yes, yes, course we're going to shoot him; what you think? Don't want an animal like that running round. Now first thing in the morning—"

Hysteria returned. With its strength she resisted his leading.

"No, now! *Now!*"

"He's gone and killed Jim! Killed my husband! I won't have him left alive another minute! I won't! *Now!* No sir, I'm going myself, I am! Frank, I am! *Cam!*"

At his name, appealed to in that queer screeching way, the man in the doorway shivered all over, wet his lips, and walked out into the dark.

"There, you see?" Frank was quick to capitalize anything. "Cam's gone to do it. Cam's gone, Blossie! . . . Here, one of you—"

Darred, take this gun and run give it to Camden, that's the boy."

"You sure he'll kill him, Frank? you sure?"

"Sure as daylight. Now you come along back to your room like a good girl and get some rest. Come, I'll go with you."

When Frank returned to the kitchen ten minutes later, Darred was back.

"Well, now, let's get at it and carry out poor Jim; he can't lay here.... Where's Cam gone *now*, damn him!"

"Cam? Why, he's gone and went."

"Went where?"

"Up the pasture, like you said."

"Like I——" Frank went an odd color. He walked to the door. Between the light on the sill and the beginnings of the stars where the woods crowned the mountain was all one blackness. One stillness too. He turned on Darred. "But look, you never gave him that gun, even."

"He didn't want it."

"Lord's sake; what did he say?"

"Said nothing. He'd got the log-chain out of the wagon and when I caught him he was up hunting his hammer in under that wreck at the fence. Once he found it he started off up. 'Cam,' says I, 'here's a gun, want it?' He seem not to. Just went on walking up."

"How'd he look?"

"Look same's you seen him looking. Sick."

"The damned fool!"...

Poor dead Jim! Poor fool Camden! As the storekeeper went about his business, and afterward when, the ice house door closed on its tragic tenant and White and Darred gone off home, he roamed the yard, driven here and there, soft-footed, waiting, hearkening—his mind was for a time not on his own property but the plaything of

thoughts diverse and wayward. Jim his brother, so suddenly and so violently gone. The stallion. That beast that had kicked him to death. With anger and hate and pitiless impatience of time he thought of the morrow, when they would catch him and take their revenge with guns and clubs. Behind these speculations, covering the background of his consciousness and stringing his nerves to endless vigil, spread the wall of the mountain: silent from instant to instant but devising under its black silence (who-could-know-what instant to come) a neigh, a yell, a spark-line of iron hoofs on rolling flints, a groan. And still behind that and deeper into the borders of the unconscious, the storekeeper thought of the farm that had lost its master, the rich bottoms, the broad, well-stocked pastures, the fat barns, and the comfortable house whose chimneys and gable ends fell into changing shapes of perspective against the stars as he wandered here and there....

Jim gone.... And Camden, at any moment....

His face grew hot. An impulse carried him a dozen steps. "I ought to go up. Ought to take the gun and go up." But there shrewd sanity put on the brakes. "Where's the use? Couldn't find him in this dark. Besides I oughtn't to leave Blossom here alone."

With that he went around toward the kitchen, thinking to go in. But the sight of the lantern, left burning out near the sheds, sent his ideas off on another course. At any rate it would give his muscles and nerves something to work on. Taking the lantern and entering the paddock, he fell to patching the gap into the pasture, using broken boards from the wreck. As he worked his eyes chanced to fall on footprints in the dung-mixed earth—Camden's

footprints, leading away beyond the little ring of light. And beside them, taking off from the landing-place of that prodigious leap, he discerned the trail of the stallion. After a moment he got down on his knees where the earth was softest, holding the lantern so that its light fell full.

He gave over his fence building. Returning to the house his gait was no longer that of the roamer; his face, caught by the periodic flare of the swinging lantern, was the face of another man. In its expression there was a kind of fright and a kind of calculating eagerness. He looked at the clock on the kitchen shelf, shook it, and read it again. He went to the telephone and fumbled at the receiver. He waited till his hand quit shaking, then removed it from the hook.

"Listen, Darred," he said, when he had got the farmer at last, "get White and whatever others you can and come over first thing it's light. Come a-riding and bring your guns. No, Cam ain't back."

He heard Blossom calling. Outside her door he passed one hand down over his face, as he might have passed a wash rag to wipe off what was there. Then he went in.

"What's the matter, Blossie? Can't sleep?"

"No, I can't sleep. Can't think. Can't sleep. Oh, Frankie!"

He sat down beside the bed.

"Oh, Frankie, Frankie, *hold my hand!*"

She looked almost homely, her face bleached out and her hair in a mess on the pillow. But she would get over that. And the short sleeve of the nightgown on the arm he held was edged with pretty lace.

"Got your watch here?" he asked. She gave it to him from under the pillow. This

too he shook as if he couldn't believe it was going.

Pretty Blossom Beck. Here for a wonder he sat in her bedroom and held her hand. One brother was dead and the other was on the mountain.

But little by little, as he sat and dreamed so, nightmare crept over his brain. He had to arouse and shake himself. He had to set his thoughts resolutely in other roads.... Perhaps there would be even the smithy. The smithy, the store, the farm. Complete. The farm, the farmhouse, the room in the farmhouse, the bed in the room, the wife in the bed. Complete beyond belief. If.... Worth dodging horror for. If...

"Frank, has Cam come back?"

"Cam? Don't worry about Cam... Where's that watch again?..."

Far from rounding up their quarry in the early hours after dawn, it took the riders, five of them, till almost noon simply to make certain that he wasn't to be found—not in any of the pastures. Then when they discovered the hole in the fence far up in the woods beyond the crest where Blue Murder had led the mares in a break for the open country of hills and ravines to the south, they were only beginning.

The farmers had left their work undone at home and, as the afternoon lengthened and with it the shadows in the hollow places, they began to eye one another behind their leader's back. Yet they couldn't say it; there was something in the storekeeper's air today, something zealous and pitiless and fanatical, that shut them up and pulled them plodding on.

Frank did the trailing. Hopeless of getting anywhere before sundown in that unkempt wilderness of a hundred square miles of scrub, his companions slouched in

their saddles and rode more and more mechanically, knee to knee, and it was he who made the casts to recover the lost trail and, dismounting to read the dust, cried back, "He's still with 'em," and with gestures of imperious excitement beckoned them on.

"Which you mean?" Darred asked him once. "Cam or the horse?"

Frank wheeled his beast and spurred back at the speaker. It was extraordinary. "You don't know what you're talking about!" he cried, with a causelessness and a disordered vehemence that set them first staring, then speculating. "Come on, you dumb heads; don't talk—*ride!*"

By the following day, when it was being told in all the farmhouses, the story might vary in details and more and more as the tellings multiplied, but in its fundamentals it remained the same. In one thing they certainly all agreed: they used the same expression—"It was like Frank was drove. Drove in a race against something, and not sparing the whip."

They were a good six miles to the south of the fence. Already the road back home would have to be followed three parts in the dark.

Darred was the spokesman. "Frank, I'm going to call it a day."

The others reined up with him but the man ahead rode on. He didn't seem to hear. Darred lifted his voice. "Come on, call it a day, Frank. Tomorrow, maybe. But you see we've run it out and they're not here."

"Wait," said Frank over his shoulder, still riding on into the pocket.

White's mount, a mare, laid back her ears, shied, and stood trembling. After a moment she whinnied.

It was as if she had whinnied for a

dozen. A crashing in the woods above them to the left and the avalanche came—down streaming, erupting, wheeling, wheeling away with volleying snorts, a dark rout.

Darred, reining his horse, began to shout, "Here they go this way, Frank!" But Frank was yelling, "Up here, boys! This way, quick!"

It was the same note, excited, feverish, disordered, breaking like a child's. When they neared him they saw he was off his horse, rifle in hand, and down on his knees to study the ground where the woods began. By the time they reached his animal the impetuous fellow had started up into the cover, his voice trailing, "Come on; spread out and come on!"

One of the farmers got down. When he saw the other three keeping their saddles he swung up again.

White spoke this time. "Be darned if I do!" He lifted a protesting hail. "Come back here, Frank! You're crazy! It's getting dark!"

It was Frank's own fault. They told him plainly to come back and he wouldn't listen.

For a while they could hear his crackle in the mounting underbrush. Then that stopped, whether he had gone too far for their ears or whether he had come to a halt to give his own ears a chance. . . . Once, off to the right, a little higher up under the low ceiling of the trees that darkened moment by moment with the rush of night, they heard another movement, another restlessness of leaves and stones. Then that was still, and everything was still.

Darred ran a sleeve over his face and swung down. "God alive, boys!"

It was the silence. All agreed there—the silence and the deepening dusk.

The first they heard was the shot. No

voice. Just the one report. Then after five breaths of another silence a crashing of growth, a charge in the darkness under the withered scrub, continuous and diminishing.

They shouted "Frank!" No answer. They called, "*Frank Bluedge!*"

Now, since they had to, they did. Keeping contact by word, and guided partly by directional memory (and mostly in the end by luck), after a time they found the storekeeper in a brake of ferns, lying across his gun.

They got him down to the open, watching behind them all the while. Only then, by the flares of successive matches, under the noses of the snorting horses, did they look for the damage done.

They remembered the stillness and the gloom; it must have been quite black in there. The attack had come from behind—equine and pantherine at once, and planned and cunning. A deliberate lunge with a forefoot again: the shoe which had crushed the backbone between the shoulder blades was a fore shoe; that much they saw by the match flares in the red wreck.

They took no longer getting home than they had to, but it was longer than they wished. With Frank across his own saddle, walking their horses and with one or another ahead to pick the road (it was going to rain, and even the stars were lost), they made no more than a creeping speed.

None of them had much to say on the journey. Finding the break in the boundary fence and feeling through the last of the woods, the lights of their farms began to show in the pool of blackness below, and Darred uttered a part of what had lain in their minds during the return.

"Well, that leaves Cam."

None followed it up. None cared to go

any closer than he was to the real question. Something new, alien, menacing and pitiless had come into the valley of their lives with that beast they had never really seen; they felt its oppression, every one, and kept the real question back in their minds: "*Does it leave Cam?*"

It answered itself. Camden was at home when they got there.

He had come in a little before them, empty-handed. Empty-headed too. When Blossom, who had waited all day, part of the time with neighbor women who had come in and part of the time alone to the point of going mad—when she saw him coming down the pasture, his feet stumbling and his shoulders dejected, her first feeling was relief. Her first words, however were, "Did you get him, Cam?" And all he would answer was, "Gi' me something to eat, can't you? Gi' me a few hours' sleep, can't you? Then wait!"

He looked as if he would need more than a few hours' sleep. Propped on his elbows over his plate, it seemed as though his eyes would close before his mouth would open.

His skin was scored by thorns and his shirt was in ribbons under the straps of his iron-sagged apron; but it was not by these marks that his twenty-odd hours showed: it was by his face. While yet his eyes were open and his wits still half awake, his face surrendered. The flesh relaxed into lines of stupor, a putty-formed, putty-colored mask of sleep.

Once he let himself be aroused. This was when, to an abstracted query as to Frank's whereabouts, Blossom told him Frank had been out with four others since dawn. He heaved clear of the table and opened his eyes at her, showing the red around the rims.

He spoke with the thick tongue of the drunkard. "If anybody but me lays hand on that stallion I'll kill him. I'll wring his neck."

Then he relapsed into his stupidity, and not even the arrival of the party bringing his brother's body home seemed able to shake him so far clear of it again.

At first, when they had laid Frank on the floor where on the night before they had laid Jim, he seemed hardly to comprehend.

"What's wrong with Frank?"

"Some more of Jim's 'experiment.'"

"Frank see him? He's scared, Frank is. Look at his face there."

"He's dead, Cam."

"Dead, you say? Frank dead? Dead of fright; is that it?"

Even when, rolling the body over they showed him what was what, he appeared incapable of comprehension, of amazement, of passion, or of any added grief. He looked at them all with a kind of befuddled protest. Returning to chair and his plate, he grumbled, "Le' me eat first, can't you? Can't you gi' me a little time to sleep?"

"Well, you wouldn't do much tonight anyway, I guess."

At White's words Blossom opened her mouth for the first time.

"No, nothing tonight, Cam. Cam! *Camden!* Say! Promise!"

"And then tomorrow, Cam, what we'll do is to get every last man in the valley, and we'll go at this right. We'll lay hand on that devil—"

Camden swallowed his mouthful of cold steak with difficulty. His obsession touched, he showed them the rims of his eyes again.

"You do and I'll wring your necks. The man that touches that animal before I do gets his neck wrang. That's all you need to remember."

"Yes, yes—no—that is—" Poor Blossom. "Yes, Mr. White, thanks; no, Cam's not going out tonight.... No, Cam, nobody's going to interfere—nor nothing. Don't you worry there...."

Again poor Blossom! Disaster piled too swiftly on disaster; no discipline but instinct left. Caught in fire and flood and earthquake and not knowing what to come, and no creed but "save him who can!"—by hook or crook of wile or smile. With the valley of her life emptied out, and its emptiness re peopled monstrously and pressing down black on the roof under which (now that Frank was gone to the ice house too and the farmers back home) one brother was left of three—she would tread softly, she would talk or she would be dumb, as her sidelong glimpses of the awake-asleep man's face above the table told her was the instant's need; or if he would eat, she would magic out of nothing something, anything; or if he would sleep, he could sleep, so long as he slept in that house where she could know he was sleeping.

Only one thing. If she could touch him. If she could touch and cling.

Lightning filled the windows. After a moment the thunder came avalanching down the pasture and brought up against the clapboards of the house. At this she was behind his chair. She put out a hand. She touched his shoulder. The shoulder was bare, the shirt ripped away; it was caked with sweat and with the blackening smears of scratches, but for all its exhaustion it was flesh alive—a living man to touch.

Camden blundered up. "What the hell!" He started off two steps and wheeled on her. "Why don't you get off to bed for Goll sake!"

"Yes, Cam, yes—right off, yes."

"Well, *I'm* going, I can tell you. For Goll sake, I need some sleep!"

"Yes, that's right, yes, Cam, good night, Cam—only—only you promise—promise you won't go out—nowheres."

"Go out? Not likely I won't! Not *likely!* Get along."

It took her no time to get going then—quick and quiet as a mouse.

Camden lingered to stand at one of the windows where the lightning came again, throwing the black barns and paddocks at him from the white sweep of the pastures crowned by woods.

As it had taken her no time to go, it took Blossom no time to undress and get in bed. When Camden was on his way to his room he heard her calling, "Cam! Just a second, Cam!"

In the dark outside her door he drew one hand down over his face, wiping off whatever might be there. Then he entered.

"Yes? What?"

"Cam, set by me a minute, won't you? And Cam, oh Cam, hold my hand."

As he slouched down, his fist inclosing her fingers, thoughts awakened and ran and fastened on things. They fastened, tentatively at first, upon the farm. Jim gone. Frank gone. The smithy, the store, and the farm. The whole of Mill Crossing. The trinity. The three in one. . . .

"Tight, Cam, for pity's sake! Hold it tight!"

His eyes, falling to his fist, strayed up along the arm it held. The sleeve, rumped near the shoulder, was trimmed with pretty lace. . . .

"Tighter, Cam!"

A box of apples. That memory hidden away in the cellar of his mind. Hidden away, clamped down in the dark, till the noxious vapors, the murderous vapors of its

rotting had filled the shut-up house he was. . . . A box of red apples for the apple grower's girl . . . the girl who sniggered and ran away from him to laugh at him. . . .

And here, by the unfolding of a devious destiny, he sat in that girl's bedroom, holding that girl's hand. Jim who had got her, Frank who had wanted her lay side by side out there in the ice house under the lightning. While he, the "dumb one"—the last to be thought of with anything but amusement and the last to be feared—his big hot fist inclosing her imprecating hand now, and his eyes on the pretty lace at her shoulder— He jumped up with a gulp and a clatter of iron.

"What the ——" He flung her hand away. "What the —— hell!" He swallowed. "Damn you, Blossie Beck!" He stared at her with repugnance and mortal fright. "Why, you—you—you—"

He moderated his voice with an effort, wiping his brow, "Good night. You must excuse me, Blossie; I wasn't meaning—I mean—I hope you sleep good. *I shall. . . .* Good night!"

In his own brain was the one word "Hurry!"

She lay and listened to his boots going along the hall and heard the closing of his door. She ought to have put out the lamp. But even with the shades drawn, the lightning around the edges of the window unnerved her; in the dark alone it would have been more than she could bear.

She lay so still she felt herself nearing exhaustion from the sustained rigidity of her limbs. Rain came and with the rain, wind. Around the eaves it neighed like wild stallions; down the chimneys it moaned like men.

Slipping out of bed and pulling on a

bathrobe she ran from her room, barefooted, and along the hall to Camden's door.

"Cam!" she called. "Oh, Cam!" she begged. "Please, please!"

And now he wouldn't answer her.

New lightning, diffused through all the sky by the blown rain, ran at her along the corridor. She pushed the door open. The lamp was burning on the bureau but the room was empty and the bed untouched.

Taking the lamp she skittered down to the kitchen. No one there. . . .

"Hurry!"

Camden had reached the woods when the rain came. Lighting the lantern he had brought, he made his way on to the boundary fence. There, about a mile to the east of the path the others had taken that day, he pulled the rails down and tumbled the stones together in a pile. Then he proceeded another hundred yards, holding the lantern high and peering through the streaming crystals of the rain.

Blue Murder was there. Neither the chain nor the sapling had given way. The lantern and, better than the lantern, a globe of lightning, showed the tethered stallion glistening and quivering, his eyes all whites at the man's approach.

"Gentle, boy; steady, boy!" Talking all the while in the way he had with horses, Camden put a hand on the taut chain and bore with a gradually progressive weight, bringing the dark head nearer. "Steady, boy; gentle there, damn you; gentle!"

Was he afraid of horses? Who said he was afraid of horses?

The beast's head was against the man's chest, held there by an arm thrown over the bowed neck. As he smoothed the forehead and fingered the nose with false ca-

resses, Camden's "horse talk" ran on—the cadence one thing, the words another.

"Steady, Goll damn you; you're going to get yours. Cheer up, cheer up, the worst is yet to come. Come now! Come easy! Come along!"

When he had unloosed the chain he felt for and found with his free hand his hammer hidden behind the tree. Throwing the lantern into the brush where it flared for an instant before dying, he led the stallion back as far as the break he had made in the fence. Taking a turn with the chain around the animal's nose, like an improvised hackamore, he swung from the stone pile to the slippery back. A moment's shying, a sliding caracole of amazement and distrust, a crushing of knees, a lash of the chain end, and that was all there was to that. Blue Murder had been ridden before. . . .

In the smithy, chambered in the roaring of the falls and the swish and shock of the storm, Camden sang as he pumped his bellows, filling the cave beneath the rafters with red. The air was nothing, the words were mumbo-jumbo, but they swelled his chest. His eyes, cast from time to time at his wheeling prisoner had lost their look of helplessness and surly distraction.

Scared? He? No, no, no! Now that he wasn't any longer afraid of time, he wasn't afraid of anything on earth.

"Shy, you devil!" He wagged his exalted head. "Whicker, you hellion! Whicker all you want to, stud horse! Tomorrow they're going to get you, the numb fools! Tomorrow they can have you. *I got you tonight!*"

He was more than other men; he was enormous. Fishing an iron shoe from that inseparable apron pocket of his, he thrust it into the coals and blew and blew. He tried it and it was burning red. He tried it again and it was searing white. Taking it

out on the anvil he began to beat it, swinging his hammer one-handed, gigantic. So in the crimson light, irradiating iron sparks, he was at his greatest. Pounding, pounding. A man in the dark of night with a hammer about him can do wonders; with a horse-shoe about him he can cover up a sin. And if the dark of night in a paddock won't hold it, then the dark of undergrowth on a mountainside will. . . .

Pounding, pounding; thinking, thinking, in a great halo of hot stars. Feeding his hungry, his insatiable muscles.

"Steady now, you blue bastard! Steady boy!"

What he did not realize in his feverish exhaustion was that his muscles were not insatiable. In the thirty-odd hours past they had had a feast spread before them and they had had their fill. . . . More than their fill.

As with the scorching iron in his tongs he approached the stallion, he had to step over the nail box he had stepped over five thousand times in the routine of every day.

A box of apples, eh? Apples to snigger at, eh? But whose girl are you now? . . . Scared, eh?

His foot was heavier of a sudden than it should have been. This five thousand and first time, by the drag of the tenth of an inch, the heel caught the lip of the nail box.

He tried to save himself from stumbling. At the same time, instinctively, he held the iron flame in his tongs away.

There was a scream out of a horse's throat; a whiff of hair and burnt flesh.

There was a lash of something in the red shadows. There was another sound and another wisp of stench. . . .

When, guided by the stallion's whinnying, they found the smith next day, they saw by the cant of his head that his neck was broken, and they perceived that he too had on him the mark of a shoe. It lay up on one side of his throat and the broad of a cheek. It wasn't blue, this time, however—it was red. It took them some instants in the sunshine pouring through the wide door to comprehend this phenomenon. It wasn't sunk in by a blow this time; it was burned in, a brand.

Darred called them to look at the stallion, chained behind the forge.

"Almighty God!" The words sounded funny in his mouth. They sounded the funnier in that they were the same ones the blundering smith had uttered when, staring uphill from his clever wreckage of the paddock fence, he had seen the mares striking sparks from the stones where the stallion struck none. And he, of all men, a smith!

"Almighty God!" called Darred. "What do you make of these here feet?"

One fore hoof was freshly pared for shoeing; the other three hoofs were as virgin as any yearling's on the plains. Blue Murder had never yet been shod. . . .

JOHN STEINBECK (1902—)

The Gift

from THE RED PONY

John Steinbeck's Red Pony has already become a classic. It will continue to live long after its present readers are dead. Few other authors care to portray the grim, stark reality of life, with so little to soften its tragedy.

At daybreak Billy Buck emerged from the bunkhouse and stood for a moment on the porch looking up at the sky. He was a broad, bandy-legged little man with a walrus mustache, with square hands, puffed and muscled on the palms. His eyes were a contemplative, watery grey and the hair which protruded from under his Stetson hat was spiky and weathered. Billy was still stuffing his shirt into his blue jeans as he stood on the porch. He unbuckled his belt and tightened it again. The belt showed, by the worn shiny places opposite each hole, the gradual increase of Billy's middle over a period of years. When he had seen to the weather, Billy cleared each nostril by holding its mate closed with his forefinger and blowing fiercely. Then he walked down to the barn, rubbing his hands together. He curried and brushed two saddle horses in the stalls, talking quietly to them all the time; and he

had hardly finished when the iron triangle started ringing at the ranch house. Billy stuck the brush and currycomb together and laid them on the rail, and went up to breakfast. His action had been so deliberate and yet so wasteless of time that he came to the house while Mrs. Tiflin was still ringing the triangle. She nodded her grey head to him and withdrew into the kitchen. Billy Buck sat down on the steps, because he was a cow-hand, and it wouldn't be fitting that he should go first into the dining-room. He heard Mr. Tiflin in the house, stamping his feet into his boots.

The high jangling note of the triangle put the boy Jody in motion. He was only a little boy, ten years old, with hair like dusty yellow grass and with shy polite grey eyes, and with a mouth that worked when he thought. The triangle picked him up out of sleep. It didn't occur to him to disobey the harsh note. He never had; no one he knew

ever had. He brushed the tangled hair out of his eyes and skinned his nightgown off. In a moment he was dressed—blue chambray shirt and overalls. It was late in the summer, so of course there were no shoes to bother with. In the kitchen he waited until his mother got from in front of the sink and went back to the stove. Then he washed himself and brushed back his wet hair with his fingers. His mother turned sharply on him as he left the sink. Jody looked shyly away.

"I've got to cut your hair before long," his mother said. "Breakfast's on the table. Go on in, so Billy can come."

Jody sat at the long table which was covered with white oilcloth washed through to the fabric in some places. The fried eggs lay in rows on their platter. Jody took three eggs on his plate and followed with three thick slices of crisp bacon. He carefully scraped a spot of blood from one of the egg yolks.

Billy Buck clumped in. "That won't hurt you," Billy explained. "That's only a sign the rooster leaves."

Jody's tall stern father came in then and Jody knew from the noise on the floor that he was wearing boots, but he looked under the table anyway, to make sure. His father turned off the oil lamp over the table, for plenty of morning light now came through the windows.

Jody did not ask where his father and Billy Buck were riding that day, but he wished he might go along. His father was a disciplinarian. Jody obeyed him in everything without questions of any kind. Now, Carl Tiffin sat down and reached for the egg platter.

"Got the cows ready to go, Billy?" he asked.

"In the lower corral," Billy said. "I could just as well take them in alone."

"Sure you could. But a man needs company. Besides your throat gets pretty dry." Carl Tiffin was jovial this morning.

Jody's mother put her head in the door. "What time do you think to be back, Carl?"

"I can't tell. I've got to see some men in Salinas. Might be gone till dark."

The eggs and coffee and big biscuits disappeared rapidly. Jody followed the two men out of the house. He watched them mount their horses and drive six old milk cows out of the corral and start over the hill toward Salinas. They were going to sell the old cows to the butcher.

When they had disappeared over the crown of the ridge Jody walked up the hill in back of the house. The dogs trotted around the house corner hunching their shoulders and grinning horribly with pleasure. Jody patted their heads—Doubletree Mutt with the big thick tail and yellow eyes, and Smasher, the shepherd, who had killed a coyote and lost an ear in doing it. Smasher's one good ear stood up higher than a collie's ear should. Billy Buck said that always happened. After the frenzied greeting the dogs lowered their noses to the ground in a business-like way and went ahead, looking back now and then to make sure that the boy was coming. They walked up through the chicken yard and saw the quail eating with the chickens. Smasher chased the chickens a little to keep in practice in case there should ever be sheep to herd. Jody continued on through the large vegetable patch where the green corn was higher than his head. The cow-pumpkins were green and small yet. He went on to the sagebrush line where the cold spring ran out of its pipe and fell into a round wooden tub. He

leaned over and drank close to the green mossy wood where the water tasted best. Then he turned and looked back on the ranch, on the low, whitewashed house girded with red geraniums, and on the long bunkhouse by the cypress tree where Billy Buck lived alone. Jody could see the great black kettle under the cypress tree. That was where the pigs were scalded. The sun was coming over the ridge now, glaring on the whitewash of the houses and barns, making the wet grass blaze softly. Behind him, in the tall sagebrush, the birds were scampering on the ground, making a great noise among the dry leaves; the squirrels piped shrilly on the side-hills. Jody looked along at the farm buildings. He felt an uncertainty in the air, a feeling of change and of loss and of the gain of new and unfamiliar things. Over the hillside two big black buzzards sailed low to the ground and their shadows slipped smoothly and quickly ahead of them. Some animal had died in the vicinity. Jody knew it. It might be a cow or it might be the remains of a rabbit. The buzzards overlooked nothing. Jody hated them as all decent things hate them, but they could not be hurt because they made away with carrion.

After a while the boy sauntered down hill again. The dogs had long ago given him up and gone into the brush to do things in their own way. Back through the vegetable garden he went, and he paused for a moment to smash a green muskmelon with his heel, but he was not happy about it. It was a bad thing to do, he knew perfectly well. He kicked dirt over the ruined melon to conceal it.

Back at the house his mother bent over his rough hands, inspecting his fingers and nails. It did little good to start him clean to school for too many things could happen

on the way. She sighed over the black cracks on his fingers, and then gave him his books and his lunch and started him on the mile walk to school. She noticed that his mouth was working a good deal this morning.

Jody started his journey. He filled his pockets with little pieces of white quartz that lay in the road, and every so often he took a shot at a bird or at some rabbit that had stayed sunning itself in the road too long. At the crossroads over the bridge he met two friends and the three of them walked to school together, making ridiculous strides and being rather silly. School had just opened two weeks before. There was still a spirit of revolt among the pupils.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when Jody topped the hill and looked down on the ranch again. He looked for the saddle horses, but the corral was empty. His father was not back yet. He went slowly, then, toward the afternoon chores. At the ranch house, he found his mother sitting on the porch, mending socks.

"There's two doughnuts in the kitchen for you," she said. Jody slid to the kitchen, and returned with half of one of the doughnuts already eaten and his mouth full. His mother asked him what he had learned in school that day, but she didn't listen to his doughnut-muffled answer. She interrupted, "Jody, tonight see you fill the wood-box clear full. Last night you crossed the sticks and it wasn't only about half full. Lay the sticks flat tonight. And Jody, some of the hens are hiding eggs, or else the dogs are eating them. Look about in the grass and see if you can find any nests."

Jody, still eating, went out and did his chores. He saw the quail come down to eat with the chickens when he threw out the grain. For some reason his father was proud to have them come. He never allowed any

shooting near the house for fear the quail might go away.

When the wood-box was full, Jody took his twenty-two rifle up to the cold spring at the brush line. He drank again and then aimed the gun at all manner of things, at rocks, at birds on the wing, at the big black pig kettle under the cypress tree, but he didn't shoot for he had no cartridges and wouldn't have until he was twelve. If his father had seen him aim the rifle in the direction of the house he would have put the cartridges off another year. Jody remembered this and did not point the rifle down the hill again. Two years was enough to wait for cartridges. Nearly all of his father's presents were given with reservations which hampered their value somewhat. It was good discipline.

The supper waited until dark for his father to return. When at last he came in with Billy Buck, Jody could smell the delicious brandy on their breaths. Inwardly he rejoiced, for his father sometimes talked to him when he smelled of brandy, sometimes even told things he had done in the wild days when he was a boy.

After supper, Jody sat by the fireplace and his shy polite eyes sought the room corners, and he waited for his father to tell what it was he contained, for Jody knew he had news of some sort. But he was disappointed. His father pointed a stern finger at him.

"You'd better go to bed, Jody. I'm going to need you in the morning."

That wasn't so bad. Jody liked to do the things he had to do as long as they weren't routine things. He looked at the floor and his mouth worked out a question before he spoke it. "What are we going to do in the morning, kill a pig?" he asked softly.

"Never you mind. You better get to bed."

When the door was closed behind him, Jody heard his father and Billy Buck chuckling and he knew it was a joke of some kind. And later, when he lay in bed, trying to make words out of the murmurs in the other room, he heard his father protest, "But, Ruth, I didn't give much for him."

Jody heard the hoot-owls hunting mice down by the barn, and he heard a fruit tree limb tap-tapping against the house. A cow was lowing when he went to sleep.

When the triangle sounded in the morning, Jody dressed more quickly even than usual. In the kitchen, while he washed his face and combed back his hair, his mother addressed him irritably. "Don't you go out until you get a good breakfast in you."

He went into the dining-room and sat at the long white table. He took a steaming hotcake from the platter, arranged two fried eggs on it, covered them with another hotcake and squashed the whole thing with his fork.

His father and Billy Buck came in. Jody knew from the sound on the floor that both of them were wearing flat-heeled shoes, but he peered under the table to make sure. His father turned off the oil lamp, for the day had arrived, and he looked stern and disciplinary, but Billy Buck didn't look at Jody at all. He avoided the shy questioning eyes of the boy and soaked a whole piece of toast in his coffee.

Carl Tiflin said crossly, "You come with us after breakfast!"

Jody had trouble with his food then, for he felt a kind of doom in the air. After Billy had tilted his saucer and drained the coffee which had slopped into it, and had wiped his hands on his jeans, the two men stood up from the table and went out into the morning light together, and Jody re-

spectfully followed a little behind them. He tried to keep his mind from running ahead, tried to keep it absolutely motionless.

His mother called, "Carl! Don't you let it keep him from school."

They marched past the cypress, where a singletree hung from a limb to butcher the pigs on, and past the black iron kettle, so it was not a pig killing. The sun shone over the hill and threw long, dark shadows of the trees and buildings. They crossed a stubblefield to shortcut to the barn. Jody's father unhooked the door and they went in. They had been walking toward the sun on the way down. The barn was black as night in contrast and warm from the hay and from the beasts. Jody's father moved over toward the one box stall. "Come here!" he ordered. Jody could begin to see things now. He looked into the box stall and then stepped back quickly.

A red pony colt was looking at him out of the stall. Its tense ears were forward and a light of disobedience was in its eyes. Its coat was rough and thick as an airedale's fur and its mane was long and tangled. Jody's throat collapsed in on itself and cut his breath short.

"He needs a good currying," his father said, "and if I ever hear of you not feeding him or leaving his stall dirty, I'll sell him off in a minute."

Jody couldn't bear to look at the pony's eyes any more. He gazed down at his hands for a moment, and he asked very shyly, "Mine?" No one answered him. He put his hand out toward the pony. Its grey nose came close, sniffing loudly, and then the lips drew back and the strong teeth closed on Jody's fingers. The pony shook its head up and down and seemed to laugh with amusement. Jody regarded his bruised fingers. "Well," he said with pride—"Well, I

guess he can bite all right." The two men laughed, somewhat in relief. Carl Tiflin went out of the barn and walked up a side-hill to be by himself, for he was embarrassed, but Billy Buck stayed. It was easier to talk to Billy Buck. Jody asked again—"Mine?"

Billy became professional in tone. "Sure! That is, if you look out for him and break him right. I'll show you how. He's just a colt. You can't ride him for some time."

Jody put out his bruised hand again, and this time the red pony let his nose be rubbed. "I ought to have a carrot," Jody said. "Where'd we get him, Billy?"

"Bought him at a sheriff's auction," Billy explained. "A show went broke in Salinas and had debts. The sheriff was selling off their stuff."

The pony stretched out his nose and shook the forelock from his wild eyes. Jody stroked the nose a little. He said softly, "There isn't a—saddle?"

Billy Buck laughed. "I'd forgot. Come along."

In the harness room he lifted down a little saddle of red morocco leather. "It's just a show saddle," Billy Buck said disparagingly. "It isn't practical for the brush, but it was cheap at the sale."

Jody couldn't trust himself to look at the saddle either, and he couldn't speak at all. He brushed the shining red leather with his fingertips, and after a long time he said, "It'll look pretty on him though." He thought of the grandest and prettiest things he knew. "If he hasn't a name already, I think I'll call him Gabilan Mountains," he said.

Billy Buck knew how he felt. "It's a pretty long name. Why don't you just call him Gabilan? That means hawk. That would be a fine name for him." Billy felt glad. "If

you will collect tail hair, I might be able to make a hair rope for you sometime. You could use it for a hackamore."

Jody wanted to go back to the box stall. "Could I lead him to school, do you think—to show the kids?"

But Billy shook his head. "He's not even halter-broke yet. We had a time getting him here. Had to almost drag him. You better be starting for school though."

"I'll bring the kids to see him here this afternoon," Jody said.

Six boys came over the hill half an hour early that afternoon, running hard, their heads down, their forearms working, their breath whistling. They swept by the house and cut across the stubble-field to the barn. And then they stood self-consciously before the pony, and then they looked at Jody with eyes in which there was a new admiration and a new respect. Before today Jody had been a boy, dressed in overalls and a blue shirt—quieter than most, even suspected of being a little cowardly. And now he was different. Out of a thousand centuries they drew the ancient admiration of the footman for the horseman. They knew instinctively that a man on a horse is spiritually as well as physically bigger than a man on foot. They knew that Jody had been miraculously lifted out of equality with them, and had been placed over them. Gabilan put his head out of the stall and sniffed them.

"Why'n't you ride him?" the boys cried. "Why'n't you braid his tail with ribbons like in the fair?" "When you going to ride him?"

Jody's courage was up. He too felt the superiority of the horseman. "He's not old enough. Nobody can ride him for a long time. I'm going to train him on the long halter. Billy Buck is going to show me how."

"Well, can't we even lead him around a little?"

"He isn't even halter-broke," Jody said. He wanted to be completely alone when he took the pony out the first time. "Come and see the saddle."

They were speechless at the red morocco saddle, completely shocked out of comment. "It isn't much use in the brush," Jody explained. "It'll look pretty on him though. Maybe I'll ride bareback when I go into the brush."

"How you going to rope a cow without a saddle horn?"

"Maybe I'll get another saddle for every day. My father might want me to help him with the stock." He let them feel the red saddle, and showed them the brass chain throat-latch on the bridle and the big brass buttons at each temple where the headstall and brow band crossed. The whole thing was too wonderful. They had to go away after a little while, and each boy, in his mind, searched among his possessions for a bribe worthy of offering in return for a ride on the red pony when the time should come.

Jody was glad when they had gone. He took brush and currycomb from the wall, took down the barrier of the box stall and stepped cautiously in. The pony's eyes glittered, and he edged around into kicking position. But Jody touched him on the shoulder and rubbed his high arched neck as he had always seen Billy Buck do, and he crooned "So-o-o Boy," in a deep voice. The pony gradually relaxed his tenseness. Jody curried and brushed until a pile of dead hair lay in the stall and until the pony's coat had taken on a deep red shine. Each time he finished he thought it might have been done better. He braided the mane into a dozen little pigtails, and he braided the

forelock, and then he undid them and brushed the hair out straight again.

Jody did not hear his mother enter the barn. She was angry when she came, but when she looked in at the pony and at Jody working over him, she felt a curious pride rise up in her. "Have you forgot the wood-box?" she asked gently. "It's not far off from dark and there's not a stick of wood in the house, and the chickens aren't fed."

Jody quickly put up his tools. "I forgot, ma'am."

"Well, after this do your chores first. Then you won't forget. I expect you'll forget lots of things now if I don't keep an eye on you."

"Can I have carrots from the garden for him, ma'am?"

She had to think about that. "Oh—I guess so, if you only take the big tough ones."

"Carrots keep the coat good," he said, and again she felt the curious rush of pride.

Jody never waited for the triangle to get him out of bed after the coming of the pony. It became his habit to creep out of bed even before his mother was awake, to slip into his clothes and to go quietly down to the barn to see Gabilan. In the grey quiet mornings when the land and the brush and the houses and the trees were silver-grey and black like a photograph negative, he stole toward the barn, past the sleeping stones and the sleeping cypress tree. The turkeys, roosting in the tree out of coyotes' reach, clicked drowsily. The fields glowed with a grey frost-like light and in the dew the tracks of rabbits and of field mice stood out sharply. The good dogs came stiffly out of their little houses, hackles up and deep growls in their throats. Then they caught Jody's scent, and their stiff tails rose up and waved a greeting—Doubletree Mutt with

the big thick tail, and Smasher, the incipient shepherd—then went lazily back to their warm beds.

It was a strange time and a mysterious journey, to Jody—an extension of a dream. When he first had the pony he liked to torture himself during the trip by thinking Gabilan would not be in his stall, and worse, would never have been there. And he had other delicious little self-induced pains. He thought how the rats had gnawed ragged holes in the red saddle, and how the mice had nibbled Gabilan's tail until it was stringy and thin. He usually ran the last little way to the barn. He unlatched the rusty hasp of the barn door and stepped in, and no matter how quietly he opened the door, Gabilan was always looking at him over the barrier of the box stall and Gabilan whinnied softly and stamped his front foot, and his eyes had big sparks of red fire in them like oak-wood embers.

Sometimes, if the work horses were to be used that day, Jody found Billy Buck in the barn harnessing and currying. Billy stood with him and looked long at Gabilan and he told Jody a great many things about horses. He explained that they were terribly afraid for their feet, so that one must make a practice of lifting the legs and patting the hooves and ankles to remove their terror. He told Jody how horses love conversation. He must talk to the pony all the time, and tell him the reasons for everything. Billy wasn't sure a horse could understand everything that was said to him, but it was impossible to say how much was understood. A horse never kicked up a fuss if some one he liked explained things to him. Billy could give examples, too. He had known, for instance, a horse nearly dead beat with fatigue to perk up when told it was only a little farther to his destination. And he had

known a horse paralyzed with fright to come out of it when his rider told him what it was that was frightening him. While he talked in the mornings, Billy Buck cut twenty or thirty straws into neat three-inch lengths and stuck them into his hatband. Then during the whole day, if he wanted to pick his teeth or merely to chew on something, he had only to reach up for one of them.

Jody listened carefully, for he knew and the whole country knew that Billy Buck was a fine hand with horses. Billy's own horse was a stringy cayuse with a hammer head, but he nearly always won the first prizes at the stock trials. Billy could rope a steer, take a double half-hitch about the horn with his riata, and dismount, and his horse would play the steer as an angler plays a fish, keeping a tight rope until the steer was down or beaten.

Every morning, after Jody had curried and brushed the pony, he let down the barrier of the stall, and Gabilan thrust past him and raced down the barn and into the corral. Around and around he galloped, and sometimes he jumped forward and landed on stiff legs. He stood quivering, stiff ears forward, eyes rolling so that the whites showed, pretending to be frightened. At last he walked snorting to the water-trough and buried his nose in the water up to the nostrils. Jody was proud then, for he knew that was the way to judge a horse. Poor horses only touched their lips to the water, but a fine spirited beast put his whole nose and mouth under, and only left room to breathe.

Then Jody stood and watched the pony, and he saw things he had never noticed about any other horse, the sleek, sliding flank muscles and the cords of the buttocks, which flexed like a closing fist, and the shine

the sun put on the red coat. Having seen horses all his life, Jody had never looked at them very closely before. But now he noticed the moving ears which gave expression and even inflection of expression to the face. The pony talked with his ears. You could tell exactly how he felt about everything by the way his ears pointed. Sometimes they were stiff and upright and sometimes lax and sagging. They went back when he was angry or fearful, and forward when he was anxious and curious and pleased; and their exact position indicated which emotion he had.

Billy Buck kept his word. In the early fall the training began. First there was the halter-breaking, and that was the hardest because it was the first thing. Jody held a carrot and coaxed and promised and pulled on the rope. The pony set his feet like a burro when he felt the strain. But before long he learned. Jody walked all over the ranch leading him. Gradually he took to dropping the rope until the pony followed him unled wherever he went.

And then came the training on the long halter. That was slower work. Jody stood in the middle of a circle, holding the long halter. He clucked with his tongue and the pony started to walk in a big circle, held in by the long rope. He clucked again to make the pony trot, and again to make him gallop. Around and around Gabilan went thundering and enjoying it immensely. Then he called, "Whoa," and the pony stopped. It was not long until Gabilan was perfect at it. But in many ways he was a bad pony. He bit Jody in the pants and stomped on Jody's feet. Now and then his ears went back and he aimed a tremendous kick at the boy. Everytime he did one of these bad things, Gabilan settled back and seemed to laugh to himself.

Billy Buck worked at the hair rope in the evenings before the fireplace. Jody collected tail hair in a bag, and he sat and watched Billy slowly constructing the rope, twisting a few hairs to make a string and rolling two strings together for a cord, and then braiding a number of cords to make the rope. Billy rolled the finished rope on the floor under his foot to make it round and hard.

The long halter work rapidly approached perfection. Jody's father, watching the pony stop and start and trot and gallop, was a little bothered by it.

"He's getting to be almost a trick pony," he complained. "I don't like trick horses. It takes all the—dignity out of a horse to make him do tricks. Why, a trick horse is kind of like an actor—no dignity, no character of his own." And his father said, "I guess you better be getting him used to the saddle pretty soon."

Jody rushed for the harness-room. For some time he had been riding the saddle on a sawhorse. He changed the stirrup length over and over, and could never get it just right. Sometimes, mounted on the sawhorse in the harness-room, with collars and hames and tugs hung all about him, Jody rode out beyond the room. He carried his rifle across the pommel. He saw the fields go flying by, and he heard the beat of the galloping hoofs.

It was a ticklish job, saddling the pony the first time. Gabilan hunched and reared and threw the saddle off before the cinch could be tightened. It had to be replaced again and again until at last the pony let it stay. And the cinching was difficult, too. Day by day Jody tightened the girth a little more until at last the pony didn't mind the saddle at all.

Then there was the bridle. Billy explained how to use a stick of licorice for a bit until Gabilan was used to having something in his mouth. Billy explained, "Of course we could force-break him to everything, but he wouldn't be as good a horse if we did. He'd always be a little bit afraid, and he wouldn't mind because he wanted to."

The first time the pony wore the bridle he whipped his head about and worked his tongue against the bit until the blood oozed from the corners of his mouth. He tried to rub the headstall off on the manger. His ears pivoted about and his eyes turned red with fear and with general rambunctiousness. Jody rejoiced, for he knew that only a mean-souled horse does not resent training.

And Jody trembled when he thought of the time when he would first sit in the saddle. The pony would probably throw him off. There was no disgrace in that. The disgrace would come if he did not get right up and mount again. Sometimes he dreamed that he lay in the dirt and cried and couldn't make himself mount again. The shame of the dream lasted until the middle of the day.

Gabilan was growing fast. Already he had lost the long-leggedness of the colt; his mane was getting longer and blacker. Under the constant currying and brushing his coat lay as smooth and gleaming as orange-red lacquer. Jody oiled the hoofs and kept them carefully trimmed so they would not crack.

The hair rope was nearly finished. Jody's father gave him an old pair of spurs and bent in the side bars and cut down the strap and took up the chainlets until they fitted. And then one day Carl Tiffin said:

"The pony's growing faster than I thought. I guess you can ride him by Thanksgiving. Think you can stick on?"

"I don't know," Jody said shyly. Thanksgiving was only three weeks off. He hoped it wouldn't rain, for rain would spot the red saddle.

Gabilan knew and liked Jody by now. He nickered when Jody came across the stubble-field, and in the pasture he came running when his master whistled for him. There was always a carrot for him every time.

Billy Buck gave him riding instructions over and over. "Now when you get up there, just grab tight with your knees, and keep your hands away from the saddle, and if you get throwed, don't let that stop you. No matter how good a man is, there's always some horse can pitch him. You just climb up again before he gets to feeling smart about it. Pretty soon, he won't throw you no more, and pretty soon he can't throw you no more. That's the way to do it."

"I hope it don't rain before," Jody said.

"Why not? Don't want to get throwed in the mud?"

That was partly it, and also he was afraid that in the flurry of bucking Gabilan might slip and fall on him and break his leg or his hip. He had seen that happen to men before, had seen how they writhed on the ground like squashed bugs, and he was afraid of it.

He practiced on the sawhorse how he would hold the reins in his left hand and a hat in his right hand. If he kept his hands thus busy, he couldn't grab the horn if he felt himself going off. He didn't like to think of what would happen if he did grab the horn. Perhaps his father and Billy Buck would never speak to him again, they would be so ashamed. The news would get about and his mother would be ashamed too. And in the school yard—it was too awful to contemplate.

He began putting his weight in a stirrup when Gabilan was saddled, but he didn't throw his leg over the pony's back. That was forbidden until Thanksgiving.

Every afternoon he put the red saddle on the pony and cinched it tight. The pony was learning already to fill his stomach out unnaturally large while the cinching was going on, and then to let it down when the straps were fixed. Sometimes Jody led him up to the brush line and let him drink from the round green tub, and sometimes he led him up through the stubble-field to the hilltop from which it was possible to see the white town of Salinas and the geometric fields of the great valley, and the oak trees clipped by the sheep. Now and then they broke through the brush and came to little cleared circles so hedged in that the world was gone and only the sky and the circle of brush were left from the old life. Gabilan liked these trips and showed it by keeping his head very high and by quivering his nostrils with interest. When the two came back from an expedition they smelled of the sweet sage they had forced through.

Time dragged on toward Thanksgiving, but winter came fast. The clouds swept down and hung all day over the land and brushed the hilltops, and the winds blew shrilly at night. All day the dry oak leaves drifted down from the trees until they covered the ground, and yet the trees were unchanged.

Jody had wished it might not rain before Thanksgiving, but it did. The brown earth turned dark and the trees glistened. The cut ends of the stubble turned black with mildew; the haystacks greyed from exposure to the damp, and on the roofs the moss, which had been all summer as grey

as lizards, turned a brilliant yellow-green. During the week of rain, Jody kept the pony in the box stall out of the dampness, except for a little time after school when he took him out for exercise and to drink at the water-trough in the upper corral. Not once did Gabilan get wet.

The wet weather continued until little new grass appeared. Jody walked to school dressed in a slicker and short rubber boots. At length one morning the sun came out brightly. Jody, at his work in the box stall, said to Billy Buck, "Maybe I'll leave Gabilan in the corral when I go to school today."

"Be good for him to be out in the sun," Billy assured him. "No animal likes to be cooped up too long. Your father and me are going back on the hill to clean the leaves out of the spring." Billy nodded and picked his teeth with one of his little straws.

"If the rain comes, though—" Jody suggested.

"Not likely to rain today. She's rained herself out." Billy pulled up his sleeves and snapped his arm bands. "If it comes on to rain—why a little rain don't hurt a horse."

"Well, if it does come on to rain, you put him in, will you, Billy? I'm scared he might get cold so I couldn't ride him when the time comes."

"Oh sure! I'll watch out for him if we get back in time. But it won't rain today."

And so Jody, when he went to school left Gabilan standing out in the corral.

Billy Buck wasn't wrong about many things. He couldn't be. But he was wrong about the weather that day, for a little after noon the clouds pushed over the hills and the rain began to pour down. Jody heard it start on the schoolhouse roof. He considered holding up one finger for permission to go to the outhouse and, once outside, running for home to put the pony in.

Punishment would be prompt both at school and at home. He gave it up and took ease from Billy's assurance that rain couldn't hurt a horse. When school was finally out, he hurried home through the dark rain. The banks at the sides of the road spouted little jets of muddy water. The rain slanted and swirled under a cold and gusty wind. Jody dog-trotted home, slopping through the gravelly mud of the road.

From the top of the ridge he could see Gabilan standing miserably in the corral. The red coat was almost black, and streaked with water. He stood head down with his rump to the rain and wind. Jody arrived running and threw open the barn door and led the wet pony in by his forelock. Then he found a gunny sack and rubbed the soaked hair and rubbed the legs and ankles. Gabilan stood patiently, but he trembled in gusts like the wind.

When he had dried the pony as well as he could, Jody went up to the house and brought hot water down to the barn and soaked the grain in it. Gabilan was not very hungry. He nibbled at the hot mash, but he was not very much interested in it, and he still shivered now and then. A little steam rose from his damp back.

It was almost dark when Billy Buck and Carl Tiflin came home. "When the rain started we put up at Ben Herche's place, and the rain never let up all afternoon," Carl Tiflin explained. Jody looked reproachfully at Billy Buck and Billy felt guilty.

"You said it wouldn't rain," Jody accused him.

Billy looked away. "It's hard to tell, this time of year," he said, but his excuse was lame. He had no right to be fallible, and he knew it.

"The pony got wet, got soaked through."

"Did you dry him off?"

"I rubbed him with a sack and I gave him hot grain."

Billy nodded in agreement.

"Do you think he'll take cold, Billy?"

"A little rain never hurt anything," Billy assured him.

Jody's father joined the conversation then and lectured the boy a little. "A horse," he said, "isn't any lap-dog kind of thing." Carl Tiflin hated weakness and sickness, and he held a violent contempt for helplessness.

Jody's mother put a platter of steaks on the table and boiled potatoes and boiled squash, which clouded the room with their steam. They sat down to eat. Carl Tiflin still grumbled about weakness put into animals and men by too much coddling.

Billy Buck felt bad about his mistake. "Did you blanket him?" he asked.

"No. I couldn't find any blanket. I laid some sacks over his back."

"We'll go down and cover him up after we eat, then." Billy felt better about it then. When Jody's father had gone in to the fire and his mother was washing dishes, Billy found and lighted a lantern. He and Jody walked through the mud to the barn. The barn was dark and warm and sweet. The horses still munched their evening hay. "You hold the lantern!" Billy ordered. And he felt the pony's legs and tested the heat of the flanks. He put his cheek against the pony's grey muzzle and then he rolled up the eyelids to look at the eyeballs and he lifted the lips to see the gums, and he put his fingers inside the ears. "He don't seem so chipper," Billy said. "I'll give him a rub-down."

Then Billy found a sack and rubbed the pony's legs violently and he rubbed the chest and the withers. Gabilan was strangely spiritless. He submitted patiently to the

rubbing. At last Billy brought an old cotton comforter from the saddle-room, and threw it over the pony's back and tied it at neck and chest with string.

"Now he'll be all right in the morning," Billy said.

Jody's mother looked up when he got back to the house. "You're late up from bed," she said. She held his chin in her hard hand and brushed the tangled hair out of his eyes and she said, "Don't worry about the pony. He'll be all right. Billy's as good as any horse doctor in the country."

Jody hadn't known she could see his worry. He pulled gently away from her and knelt down in front of the fireplace until it burned his stomach. He scorched himself through and then went in to bed, but it was a hard thing to go to sleep. He awakened after what seemed a long time. The room was dark but there was a greyness in the window like that which precedes the dawn. He got up and found his overalls and searched for the legs, and then the clock in the other room struck two. He laid his clothes down and got back into bed. It was broad daylight when he awakened again. For the first time he had slept through the ringing of the triangle. He leaped up, flung on his clothes and went out of the door still buttoning his shirt. His mother looked after him for a moment and then went quietly back to her work. Her eyes were brooding and kind. Now and then her mouth smiled a little but without changing her eyes at all.

Jody ran on toward the barn. Halfway there he heard the sound he dreaded, the hollow rasping cough of a horse. He broke into a sprint then. In the barn he found Billy Buck with the pony. Billy was rubbing its legs with his strong thick hands. He

looked up and smiled gaily. "He just took a little cold," Billy said. "We'll have him out of it in a couple of days."

Jody looked at the pony's face. The eyes were half closed and the lids thick and dry. In the eye corners a crust of hard mucus stuck. Gabilan's ears hung loosely sideways and his head was low. Jody put out his hand, but the pony did not move close to it. He coughed again and his whole body constricted with the effort. A little stream of thin fluid ran from his nostrils.

Jody looked back at Billy Buck. "He's awful sick, Billy."

"Just a little cold, like I said," Billy insisted. "You go get some breakfast and then go back to school. I'll take care of him."

"But you might have to do something else. You might leave him."

"No, I won't. I won't leave him at all. Tomorrow's Saturday. Then you can stay with him all day." Billy had failed again, and he felt badly about it. He had to cure the pony now.

Jody walked up to the house and took his place listlessly at the table. The eggs and bacon were cold and greasy, but he didn't notice it. He ate his usual amount. He didn't even ask to stay home from school. His mother pushed his hair back when she took his plate. "Billy'll take care of the pony," she assured him.

He moped through the whole day at school. He couldn't answer any questions nor read any words. He couldn't even tell anyone the pony was sick, for that might make him sicker. And when school was finally out he started home in dread. He walked slowly and let the other boys leave him. He wished he might continue walking and never arrive at the ranch.

Billy was in the barn, as he had promised,

and the pony was worse. His eyes were almost closed now, and his breath whistled shrilly past an obstruction in his nose. A film covered that part of the eyes that was visible at all. It was doubtful whether the pony could see any more. Now and then he snorted, to clear his nose, and by the action seemed to plug it tighter. Jody looked dispiritedly at the pony's coat. The hair lay rough and unkempt and seemed to have lost all of its old luster. Billy stood quietly beside the stall. Jody hated to ask, but he had to know.

"Billy, is he—is he going to get well?"

Billy put his fingers between the bars under the pony's jaw and felt about. "Feel here," he said and he guided Jody's fingers to a large lump under the jaw. "When that gets bigger, I'll open it up and then he'll get better."

Jody looked quickly away, for he had heard about that lump. "What is it the matter with him?"

Billy didn't want to answer, but he had to. He couldn't be wrong three times. "Strangles," he said shortly, "but don't you worry about that. I'll pull him out of it. I've seen them get well when they were worse than Gabilan is. I'm going to steam him now. You can help."

"Yes," Jody said miserably. He followed Billy into the grain room and watched him make the steaming bag ready. It was a long canvas nose bag with straps to go over a horse's ears. Billy filled it one-third full of bran and then he added a couple of handfuls of dried hops. On top of the dry substance he poured a little carbolic acid and a little turpentine. "I'll be mixing it all up while you run to the house for a kettle of boiling water," Billy said.

When Jody came back with the steaming kettle, Billy buckled the straps over Gabi-

lan's head and fitted the bag tightly around his nose. Then through a little hole in the side of the bag he poured the boiling water on the mixture. The pony started away as a cloud of strong steam rose up, but then the soothing fumes crept through his nose and into his lungs, and the sharp steam began to clear out the nasal passages. He breathed loudly. His legs trembled in an ague, and his eyes closed against the biting cloud. Billy poured in more water and kept the steam rising for fifteen minutes. At last he set down the kettle and took the bag from Gabilan's nose. The pony looked better. He breathed freely, and his eyes were open wider than they had been.

"See how good it makes him feel," Billy said. "Now we'll wrap him up in the blanket again. Maybe he'll be nearly well by morning."

"I'll stay with him tonight," Jody suggested.

"No. Don't you do it. I'll bring my blankets down here and put them in the hay. You can stay tomorrow and steam him if he needs it."

The evening was falling when they went to the house for their supper. Jody didn't even realize that some one else had fed the chickens and filled the wood-box. He walked up past the house to the dark brush line and took a drink of water from the tub. The spring water was so cold that it stung his mouth and drove a shiver through him. The sky above the hills was still light. He saw a hawk flying so high that it caught the sun on its breast and shone like a spark. Two blackbirds were driving him down the sky, glittering as they attacked their enemy. In the west, the clouds were moving in to rain again.

Jody's father didn't speak at all while the family ate supper, but after Billy Buck had

taken his blankets and gone to sleep in the barn, Carl Tiflin built a high fire in the fireplace and told stories. He told about the wild man who ran naked through the country and had a tail and ears like a horse, and he told about the rabbit-cats of Moro Cojo that hopped into the trees for birds. He revived the famous Maxwell brothers who found a vein of gold and hid the traces of it so carefully that they could never find it again.

Jody sat with his chin in his hands; his mouth worked nervously, and his father gradually became aware that he wasn't listening very carefully. "Isn't that funny?" he asked.

Jody laughed politely and said, "Yes, sir." His father was angry and hurt, then. He didn't tell any more stories. After a while, Jody took a lantern and went down to the barn. Billy Buck was asleep in the hay, and, except that his breath rasped a little in his lungs, the pony seemed to be much better. Jody stayed a little while, running his fingers over the red rough coat, and then he took up the lantern and went back to the house. When he was in bed, his mother came into the room.

"Have you enough covers on? It's getting winter."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, get some rest tonight." She hesitated to go out, stood uncertainly. "The pony will be all right," she said.

Jody was tired. He went to sleep quickly and didn't awaken until dawn. The triangle sounded, and Billy Buck came up from the barn before Jody could get out of the house.

"How is he?" Jody demanded.

Billy always wolfed his breakfast. "Pretty good. I'm going to open that lump this morning. Then he'll be better maybe."

After breakfast, Billy got out his best knife, one with a needle point. He whetted the shining blade a long time on a little carborundum stone. He tried the point and the blade again and again on his calloused thumb-ball, and at last he tried it on his upper lip.

On the way to the barn, Jody noticed how the young grass was up and how the stubble was melting day by day into the new green crop of volunteer. It was a cold sunny morning.

As soon as he saw the pony, Jody knew he was worse. His eyes were closed and sealed shut with dried mucus. His head hung so low that his nose almost touched the straw of his bed. There was a little groan in each breath, a deep-seated, patient groan.

Billy lifted the weak head and made a quick slash with the knife. Jody saw the yellow pus run out. He held up the head while Billy swabbed out the wound with weak carbolic acid salve.

"Now he'll feel better," Billy assured him. "That yellow poison is what makes him sick."

Jody looked unbelieving at Billy Buck. "He's awful sick."

Billy thought a long time what to say. He nearly tossed off a careless assurance, but he saved himself in time. "Yes, he's pretty sick," he said at last. "I've seen worse ones get well. If he doesn't get pneumonia, we'll pull him through. You stay with him. If he gets worse, you can come and get me."

For a long time after Billy went away, Jody stood beside the pony, stroking him behind the ears. The pony didn't flip his head the way he had done when he was well. The groaning in his breathing was becoming more hollow.

Doubletree Mutt looked into the barn,

his big tail waving provocatively, and Jody was so incensed at his health that he found a hard black clod on the floor and deliberately threw it. Doubletree Mutt went yelping away to nurse a bruised paw.

In the middle of the morning, Billy Buck came back and made another steam bag. Jody watched to see whether the pony improved this time as he had before. His breathing eased a little, but he did not raise his head.

The Saturday dragged on. Late in the afternoon Jody went to the house and brought his bedding down and made up a place to sleep in the hay. He didn't ask permission. He knew from the way his mother looked at him that she would let him do almost anything. That night he left a lantern burning on a wire over the box stall. Billy had told him to rub the pony's legs every little while.

At nine o'clock the wind sprang up and howled around the barn. And in spite of his worry, Jody grew sleepy. He got into his blankets and went to sleep, but the breathy groans of the pony sounded in his dreams. And in his sleep he heard a crashing noise which went on and on until it awakened him. The wind was rushing through the barn. He sprang up and looked down the lane of stalls. The barn door had blown open, and the pony was gone.

He caught the lantern and ran outside into the gale, and he saw Gabilan weakly shambling away into the darkness, head down, legs working slowly and mechanically. When Jody ran up and caught him by the forelock, he allowed himself to be led back and put into his stall. His groans were louder, and a fierce whistling came from his nose. Jody didn't sleep any more then. The hissing of the pony's breath grew louder and sharper.

He was glad when Billy Buck came in at dawn. Billy looked for a time at the pony as though he had never seen him before. He felt the ears and flanks. "Jody," he said, "I've got to do something you won't want to see. You run up to the house for a while."

Jody grabbed him fiercely by the forearm. "You're not going to shoot him?"

Billy patted his hand. "No. I'm going to open a little hole in his windpipe so he can breathe. His nose is filled up. When he gets well, we'll put a little brass button in the hole for him to breathe through."

Jody couldn't have gone away if he had wanted to. It was awful to see the red hide cut, but infinitely more terrible to know it was being cut and not to see it. "I'll stay right here," he said bitterly. "You sure you got to?"

"Yes. I'm sure. If you stay, you can hold his head. If it doesn't make you sick, that is."

The fine knife came out again and was whetted again just as carefully as it had been the first time. Jody held the pony's head up and the throat taut, while Billy felt up and down for the right place. Jody sobbed once as the bright knife point disappeared into the throat. The pony plunged weakly away and then stood still, trembling violently. The blood ran thickly out and up the knife and across Billy's hand and into his shirtsleeve. The sure square hand sawed out a round hole in the flesh, and the breath came bursting out of the hole, throwing a fine spray of blood. With the rush of oxygen, the pony took a sudden strength. He lashed out with his hind feet and tried to rear, but Jody held his head down while Billy mopped the new wound with carbolic salve. It was a good job. The blood stopped flowing and the air puffed

out the hole and sucked it in regularly with a little bubbling noise.

The rain brought in by the night wind began to fall on the barn roof. Then the triangle rang for breakfast. "You go up and eat while I wait," Billy said. "We've got to keep this hole from plugging up."

Jody walked slowly out of the barn. He was too dispirited to tell Billy how the barn door had blown open and let the pony out. He emerged into the wet grey morning and sloshed up to the house, taking a perverse pleasure in splashing through all the puddles. His mother fed him and put dry clothes on. She didn't question him. She seemed to know he couldn't answer questions. But when he was ready to go back to the barn she brought him a pan of steaming meal. "Give him this," she said.

But Jody did not take the pan. He said, "He won't eat anything," and ran out of the house. At the barn, Billy showed him how to fix a ball of cotton on a stick, with which to swab out the breathing hole when it became clogged with mucus.

Jody's father walked into the barn and stood with them in front of the stall. At length he turned to the boy. "Hadn't you better come with me? I'm going to drive over the hill." Jody shook his head. "You better come on, out of this," his father insisted.

Billy turned on him angrily. "Let him alone. It's his pony, isn't it?"

Carl Tifin walked away without saying another word. His feelings were badly hurt.

All morning Jody kept the wound open and the air passing in and out freely. At noon the pony lay wearily down on his side and stretched his nose out.

Billy came back. "If you're going to stay with him tonight, you better take a little nap," he said. Jody went absently out of

the barn. The sky had cleared to a hard thin blue. Everywhere the birds were busy with worms that had come to the damp surface of the ground.

Jody walked to the brush line and sat on the edge of the mossy tub. He looked down at the house and at the old bunkhouse and at the dark cypress tree. The place was familiar, but curiously changed. It wasn't itself any more, but a frame for things that were happening. A cold wind blew out of the east now, signifying that the rain was over for a little while. At his feet Jody could see the little arms of new weeds spreading out over the ground. In the mud about the spring were thousands of quail tracks.

Doubletree Mutt came sideways and embarrassed up through the vegetable patch, and Jody, remembering how he had thrown the clod, put his arm about the dog's neck and kissed him on his wide black nose. Doubletree Mutt sat still, as though he knew some solemn thing was happening. His big tail slapped the ground gravely. Jody pulled a swollen tick out of Mutt's neck and popped it dead between his thumb-nails. It was a nasty thing. He washed his hands in the cold spring water.

Except for the steady swish of the wind, the farm was very quiet. Jody knew his mother wouldn't mind if he didn't go in to eat his lunch. After a little while he went slowly back to the barn. Mutt crept into his own little house and whined softly to himself for a long time.

Billy Buck stood up from the box and surrendered the cotton swab. The pony still lay on his side and the wound in his throat bellowsed in and out. When Jody saw how dry and dead the hair looked, he knew at last that there was no hope for the pony. He had seen the dead hair before on

dogs and on cows, and it was a sure sign. He sat heavily on the box and let down the barrier of the box stall. For a long time he kept his eyes on the moving wound, and at last he dozed, and the afternoon passed quickly. Just before dark his mother brought in a deep dish of stew and left it for him and went away. Jody ate a little of it, and, when it was dark, he set the lantern on the floor by the pony's head so he could watch the wound and keep it open. And he dozed again until the night chill awakened him. The wind was blowing fiercely, bringing the north cold with it. Jody brought a blanket from his bed in the hay and wrapped himself in it. Gabilan's breathing was quiet at last; the hole in his throat moved gently. The owls flew through the hayloft, shrieking and looking for mice. Jody put his hands down on his head and slept. In his sleep he was aware that the wind had increased. He heard it slamming about the barn.

It was daylight when he awakened. The barn door had swung open. The pony was gone. He sprang up and ran out into the morning light.

The pony's tracks were plain enough, dragging through the frostlike dew on the young grass, tired tracks with little lines between them where the hoofs had dragged. They headed for the brush line halfway up the ridge. Jody broke into a run and followed them. The sun shone on the sharp white quartz that stuck through the ground here and there. As he followed the plain trail, a shadow cut across in front of him. He looked up and saw a high circle of black buzzards, and the slowly revolving circle dropped lower and lower. The solemn birds soon disappeared over the ridge. Jody ran faster then, forced on by panic and rage. The trail entered the brush at last and

followed a winding route among the tall sage bushes.

At the top of the ridge Jody was winded. He paused, puffing noisily. The blood pounded in his ears. Then he saw what he was looking for. Below, in one of the little clearings in the brush, lay the red pony. In the distance, Jody could see the legs moving slowly and convulsively. And in a circle around him stood the buzzards, waiting for the moment of death they know so well.

Jody leaped forward and plunged down the hill. The wet ground muffled his steps and the brush hid him. When he arrived, it was all over. The first buzzard sat on the pony's head and its beak had just risen dripping with dark eye fluid. Jody plunged into the circle like a cat. The black brotherhood arose in a cloud, but the big one on the pony's head was too late. As it hopped along to take off, Jody caught its wing tip and pulled it down. It was nearly as big as he was. The free wing crashed into his face with the force of a club, but he hung on. The claws fastened on his leg and the wing elbows battered his head on either side. Jody groped blindly with his free hand. His fingers found the neck of the struggling bird. The red eyes looked into

his face, calm and fearless and fierce; the naked head turned from side to side. Then the beak opened and vomited a stream of putrefied fluid. Jody brought up his knee and fell on the great bird. He held the neck to the ground with one hand while his other found a piece of sharp white quartz. The first blow broke the beak sideways and black blood spurted from the twisted, leathery mouth corners. He struck again and missed. The red fearless eyes still looked at him, impersonal and unafraid and detached. He struck again and again, until the buzzard lay dead, until its head was a red pulp. He was still beating the dead bird when Billy Buck pulled him off and held him tightly to calm his shaking.

Carl Tiflin wiped the blood from the boy's face with a red bandana. Jody was limp and quiet now. His father moved the buzzard with his toe. "Jody," he explained, "the buzzard didn't kill the pony. Don't you know that?"

"I know it," Jody said wearily.

It was Billy Buck who was angry. He had lifted Jody in his arms, and had turned to carry him home. But he turned back on Carl Tiflin. "'Course he knows it," Billy said furiously, "Jesus Christ! man, can't you see how he'd feel about it?"

ROBERT LOWE,
VISCOUNT SHERBROOKE (1811—1892)

A Horse's Epitaph

What could be more appropriate as an ending of a book of this sort than the simple and delightful epitaph of Viscount Sherbrooke?

Soft lies the turf on those who find their rest
Beneath our common mother's ample breast,
Unstained by meanness, avarice, or pride;
They never cheated, and they never lied;
They ne'er intrigued a rival to dispose;
They ran, but never betted on the race;
Content with harmless sport and simple food,
Boundless in faith and love and gratitude;
Happy the man, if there be any such—
Of whom his epitaph can say as much.

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