

# TALES OF PINK & SILK



By Geo. E. Collins  
(Nimrod Junior)



Illustrated by G. H. Jolland.



JOHN A. SEAVERNS









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BY

GEORGE E. COLLINS

(“NIMROD JUNIOR”)

*ILLUSTRATED BY G. H. JALLAND*

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Dedicated  
BY PERMISSION  
TO  
VICTORIA COUNTESS OF YARBOROUGH  
HEALING MANOR  
LINCOLNSHIRE



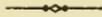
## CONTENTS.



	PAGE
CAPTAIN BLEATER'S COUP . . . . .	9
THE FAIR HORSE-BREAKER . . . . .	17
MONTIE DUNDAS'S LAST STORY . . . . .	33
SULTAN . . . . .	39
DRIVE A NAIL WHERE IT WILL GO . . . . .	48
LUCY GLITTERS . . . . .	61
A DISTINGUISHED STRANGER . . . . .	72
BILL'S CHANCE . . . . .	84
SCRAPPER . . . . .	96
THE POACHER'S REVENGE . . . . .	109
BOB HAMILTON'S MAIDEN RACE . . . . .	120
THE OLD HUNTSMAN'S STORY . . . . .	127



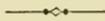
## ILLUSTRATIONS.



LUCY GLITTERS . . . . .	<i>Coloured Frontispiece</i>
“ WHY, I’VE GOT A CROON ON MUSTER FOSWITH, YOU FEUL ! ”	<i>To face</i>
	PAGE
“ BOTH HORSES BLUNDERED BADLY ” . . . . .	16
“ FIGHTING LIKE A VERY DEVIL ” . . . . .	30
“ AND TROTTED UP THE STREET ” . . . . .	34
“ WHERE THE HORSES WERE DOING THEIR WORK ” . . . . .	40
“ HER EARS GO BACK AS OF YORE ” . . . . .	51
“ HANG YOU, SIR ! YOU’VE HEADED THE FOX ! ” . . . . .	70
“ BLUE ROCK IS SHOWING TEMPER ” . . . . .	76
“ BUT THE CRIES OF PAIN DO NOT SEEM TO COME FROM SCRAPPER ” . . . . .	94
“ THERE WAS A FLASH AND A REPORT ” . . . . .	98
“ THEN THE OLD HORSE WOKE INTO LIFE ” . . . . .	114
“ BUT ’T WAS TOO LATE ” . . . . .	125
	135



# TALES OF PINK AND SILK.



## CAPTAIN BLEATER'S COUP.

CAPTAIN BLEATER was down on his luck. Everything seemed to have gone wrong with him lately, and unless there was a turn for the better he would have—to use his own expression—“to put up the shutters,” or, in other words, retire from the business of making money by racing. Yes, the gee-gees must go, unless he could bring off some coup to set matters straight again. But how was it to be done? Many were the consultations with Tuplin, the head lad, as to how they were to run his extremely moderate animals to his own emolument and the discomfiture of the British public. But these confabs had been held before, and more than one scheme had been planned that seemed certain of profit, only to be upset in the most exasperating way by some entirely unlooked-for animal or event. Was there ever such luck? The Town Plate at Roxton seemed a certainty for the Grand Duke, and all the available cash was piled on at a nice price; but the Grand Duke got beaten a head, and the British public gave Captain Bleater credit for losing very cleverly, remarking that it was the weight of money (on the winning horse) that stopped the Grand Duke. It was too bad; especially when they were really “on the job.” But such is fame, and the result of a reputation gained by years of toil and trouble. Then Sylvia breaks down three fences from home, with the Becksid Steeplechase

at Barnoldby practically at her mercy; Tom Bowling "runs out" at Kempdown; and The Toreador falls at Elsham Park. But the finishing touch is put to their misfortune when the rider (and owner) of The Screw is called before the Stewards at Blankborough and severely reprimanded for suspicious riding, just when that animal—the best they have in the stable—is undergoing a careful preparation, both at home and in public, for the Fonaby Handicap.

"Something must be done, and that soon!" thinks Captain Bleater, as he watches his string at work; and then as he catches sight of the last two in the line, an idea enters his head. "How very much alike are Tom Bowling and The Screw!" They are both bright bay geldings. Each has white on the near fetlock, and each has a splash of white on the face. True, The Screw has a little more white on the fore leg, and the blaze on the face is bigger; he is also a better made animal, and gallops like a racehorse, but no one who was not intimately acquainted with them could very well tell him and Tom Bowling apart. "Ah! Ferryhurst, the Kempdown Spring or Truebridge," mutters Captain Bleater softly to himself. "No, too near home, I am afraid, all of them. I must think it over."

And so he goes home to study the Sheet Calendar, which results in a visit to the boxes and the discovery that The Screw is half an inch higher than Tom Bowling and has a small patch of white under the saddle. Well, no one would remember that. Both horses five years old, and so much alike. This is something like luck! "We'll send Tom Bowling to Market Caistor for the Open Steeplechase," says Captain Bleater. "It's for horses that have never started in a handicap steeplechase or won a steeplechase of the value of £100," he adds; "otherwise we might have let The Screw have a go." Tuplin acknowledges these instructions with a wink of much intelligence, as he replaces

the sheets on The Screw's glossy quarters, and exclaims: "By gum, Captin', what a heye you 'ave, and what a 'ed to plan these little amoosements for them as goes racin'! We keeps 'osses for their pleasure, do we!"

The little town of Market Caistor is in an unusual state of bustle. The mid-day train has brought in a tremendous crowd of people, and vehicles of all descriptions are rapidly filling the hotel and livery yards, each conveyance laden with its burden of ladies and gentlemen, evidently bent on enjoyment. The centre of the market place is occupied by a steam roundabout, and is surrounded by shooting galleries, cocoanut shies, and other side shows; but they seem to be attracting little attention at the present, for the stream of foot people and carriages is winding out of the town, as though, having got safely through its narrow approaches into the heart of the place, the great object now is to get out of it as soon as possible. And what a mixture the stream of humanity is composed of! Ladies in neat tailor-made frocks or the creation of deft female fingers; gentlemen in long brown overcoats, with race glasses slung over their shoulders; others, in suits of a pronounced check, carrying hat-boxes, easels, boards, boxes, and large gay coloured umbrellas; niggers, wandering musicians, and gamins with "krect cards" to sell; all tending in one direction, where some white tents and a few flags can be seen in the distance. Now and then a smart four-in-hand makes its way with difficulty through the crowd; a well filled brake and pair, a dog-cart, or the inevitable country "fly"; while here and there a clean-shaved man in breeches and gaiters is seen leading a horse so carefully wrapped in clothing and bandages, that an uninitiated stranger wonders if it has contracted a severe cold. What does it all mean? Why, it is one of the two red-letter days of the year for Market Caistor, one of which is the day of the

Annual Horse and Dog Show, and the other—the present occasion—the Hunt Steeplechase.

Two young men in a smart dog-cart, with a most taking “stepper” in the shafts, drive into the Red Lion yard. “Mornin’, sir,” says the ostler, touching his cap. “Morning, Tom,” replies the gentleman who has been manipulating the ribbons. “My horse come yet?” “Yessir, No. 6 box, sir. Just round the corner at the far end, sir.” “Anything else in here, Tom?” asks George Foswith, the previous speaker. “Yessir, Mr. Elsworth’s ’osses, and Major Spooner’s mare, and a bay ’oss called Tom Bowling. B’longs to Captain Bleater; gent from the south, I believe, sir.”

“Oh, by the way, Charlie,” says Foswith to his companion, “I was going to ask you if you knew anything about this Captain Bleater. He comes from somewhere near your uncle’s place, I fancy, and his horse, Tom Bowling, is in my race.”

“Yes,” replies Charlie Daventry, who is spending a week or two with his old college chum, “his house and training stables are about three miles from Uncle Fred’s, and I often see him or his horses; I don’t know much of him, though. Meet him in the hunting field and at local race-meetings, of course, but he doesn’t mix much in decent society about there, and is rather a shady customer. He just missed being ‘warned off’ for a doubtful piece of jockeyship at Blankborough the other day.”

“Tom Bowling any good?”

“Oh dear, no. Hasn’t won a race at all yet, and been trying hard, too. Horace Murray, who sold him to Bleater for £40, told me he was a confounded rogue, and no earthly use even when he did happen to be in the mood. I can’t think what has induced Bleater to bring him all this way, because the man is no fool at racing—bit too sharp, if anything, and will cut himself some day.

He does not trail horses up and down the country for pleasure."

"Where is Captain Bleater's horse, Tom?" says Foswith, as that worthy reappears from the stable.

"No 9, sir. Padlock on the door, sir, and Captain's man got the key. Rum chap, 'is man, sir, very. Says they don't know much about racin' in the south, so come to see how they do it 'ere. Says he believes Tom Bowling ran in a 'ansum before the Capting bought 'im. Won't let yer go nigh 'is 'oss, though, sir."

They then catch sight of Dawson, Foswith's groom, so move off to inspect the horse in his care, before making their way to the course. George has entered his thoroughbred mare, *The Gaiety Girl*, for the Open Steeplechase, and a good-looking chestnut she is, with galloping quarters, sloping shoulders and a rare back and loins; a splendid type of the blood hunter, in fact, and good enough for a local steeplechase, though by no means a Grand National horse.

Having given the necessary directions as to the time the mare is to be brought down, the two wend their way to the pretty little course, just outside the town, now in a great state of preparatory bustle for the first race. The primitive stand, with its dressing and weighing rooms in the rear, is already beginning to fill, for the bell has gone for the race, and the scarlet-coated hunt servants are clearing the course; so they enter the private portion reserved for local magnates and their friends in time to see the horses canter down. It is a bright and animated scene. On their left are the luncheon and refreshment marquees, gay with flags. The paddock is all but deserted now, save for the sheeted thoroughbreds and their attendants; but the ring is still full of business, for the loud-voiced "pencillers" and their clients are making final investments before securing a coign of vantage from which to view the race. Just over the rails are their more noisy and

gaudily dressed brethren, whose umbrellas and banners show up bravely amid the throng. On the opposite side of the course the carriages are drawn up, bright with smiling faces and pretty dresses, here a coach, there a waggonette or brake; while several farmers have brought waggons, from which their lady folk dispense hospitality out of well-filled lunch baskets, and among the crowd lining the rails on both sides of the course the niggers and peripatetic minstrels drive a roaring trade.

The saddling bell has rung for the fourth race, the Open Steeplechase, and Charlie Daventry is gazing, with a puzzled expression on his handsome face, at a bright bay gelding now being saddled in a remote corner of the paddock. "It can't be Tom Bowling," he muses, "or else he has got very much better looking. I have it. It's The Screw, the horse there was all that row about at Blankborough. I thought he would never trail that other crazy brute all this way for a £50 race. I'm nearly certain it's The Screw. Ah, I thought so. There's no mistaking that heart-shaped patch of white on the withers. Captain Bleater, my boy, the coup won't come off this time, if I can help it!" Up go the numbers with the intelligence that there are only four starters for the three mile race—Mr. George Foswith's ch.m. The Gaiety Girl, 6 years; Captain Bleater's b.g. Tom Bowling, 5 years; Sir C. Lenham's br.h. Dublin, aged; and Mr. R. Elworth's ch.g. Woldsman, aged.

They are laying 2 to 1 against the Gaiety Girl, who is made favourite, Dublin being backed at 5 to 1, and Tom Bowling 7 to 1; but this price soon shortens to threes, and before they are despatched on their journey Captain Bleater's horse can only be backed at evens, and starts favourite.

Captain Bleater is in high good humour. The Screw is as fit and well as can be, and the gallant owner stands to win a nice little sum by his careful investments, never dreaming

of defeat, for his horse is a superb jumper, and a class better than anything else in the race.

"That's Bleater, George," says Charlie Daventry to his friend, "that good-looking chap there. But come on one side a minute. There's a screw loose, old man, but I think we can fix it all right. Now, don't trouble about Bleater at all, but confine yourself to beating the other two. I think you can easily do that; and if he does come in first, lodge an objection on the ground that the horse is not Tom Bowling."

"Not Tom Bowling! What on earth do you mean?"

"What I say. But I shall be at hand if necessary, and don't forget to beat the others. The mare has dropped back to threes, at which price I have put a fiver on, and now I must get you loaded up."

In the preliminary canter Tom Bowling makes a host of friends, his fine sweeping stride and the way he jumps the hurdle catching the eye of many a good judge; while Captain Bleater, who is really a fine horseman, handles him like a jockey. "They're off!" is the cry, and the primrose and crimson of Woldsman's jockey is soon seen showing the way to Dublin's green and gold and the light blue of The Gaiety Girl, while Captain Bleater in white and brown spots is whipping in, and they are all close together when they pass the stand for the first time, Tom Bowling fencing in perfect style. And now The Gaiety Girl forges ahead, and Captain Bleater draws into third place. He is in ecstasy, having just "taken a feeler," and believes it to be "all over bar shouting."

"Ah, Tom Bowling's down! No! Yes, he is! The Gaiety Girl wins, for a hundred!" Only too true. The Screw—to give him his proper name—blunders at the open ditch (the best of horses make mistakes sometimes), tries to recover himself, his rider sitting like wax all the time; but the effort is futile, and he rolls over on his shoulder. Captain Bleater, who has not lost hold of the reins, is on his feet in an instant, and

trying to get back into the saddle again. But The Screw—always a bad horse to mount—declines to allow him to do so, and circles round and round him. “Stand still, you fool, and we shall catch them yet!”

“Haw! haw!” comes from hard by, and Captain Bleater is conscious of a grinning yokel sitting on a fence and watching the proceedings with intense amusement.

“Here, come and hold this horse, my man, while I get on!” says Captain Bleater.

“Haw! haw! haw!” is the only reply.

“Wo! stand still, you brute. Don’t sit grinning there, you blockhead, but come and help me.”

“Haw! haw! Why, I’ve got a croon on Muster Foswith, you feul,” replies the rustic.

Captain Bleater does eventually get loaded up, but does not finish the course. Entering the straight for home, Woldsmann makes his effort, but The Gaiety Girl soon shakes him off, and canters in an easy winner from Dublin, who comes with a rush at the finish, and just secures second place.

“No need for the objection, old man,” says Charlie, as he leads in his friend; “but I’ll just go and have a word with Bleater.”

“How do you feel?” he says to that worthy, who comes in a few minutes later. “None the worse for your spill, I suppose?”

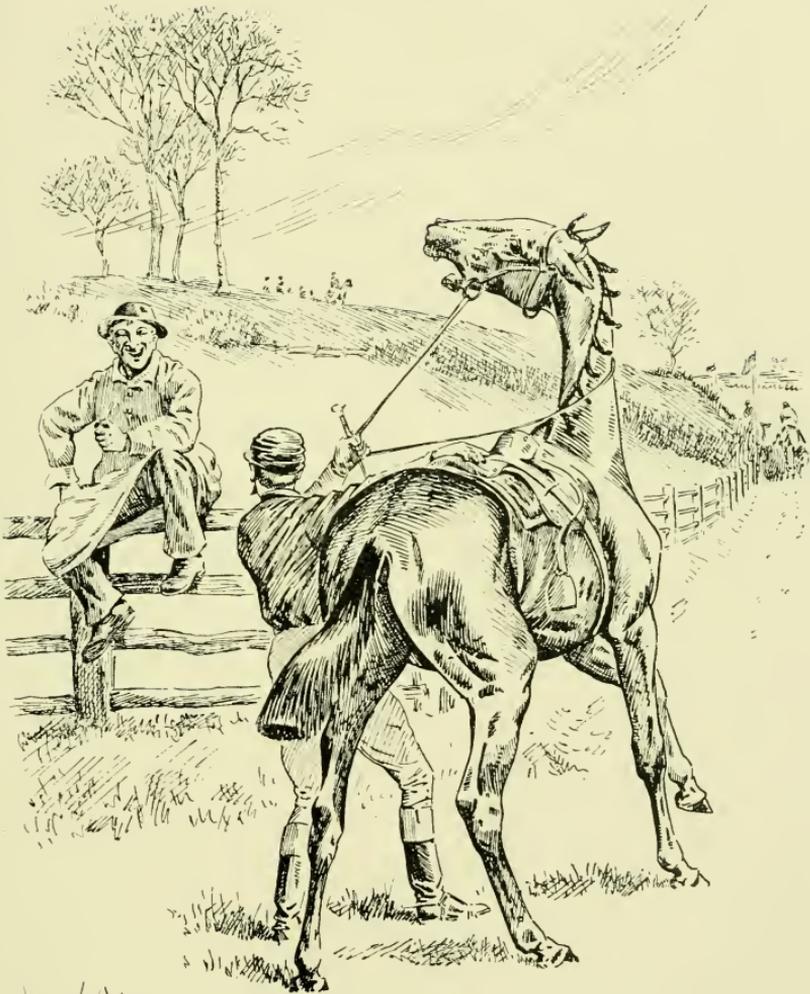
Bleater starts as he hears the voice, and turns aside to unsaddle.

“I think he would have won if he’d stood up,” continues Daventry, “unless, of course, something else happened. I never saw a horse so much like The Screw,” he adds. “By the way, when are you going to pull him out again?”

Bleater turns towards the dressing-room with an oath.

“Well, good-bye!” says his tormentor. “Better luck next time you come north.”

Captain Bleater has “put up the shutters.”



ALLAN CO.

'Why I've got a croon on  
Muster Foswith you feul!'



## THE FAIR HORSE-BREAKER.

LADY MURIEL and her two daughters were dining alone. It was not often that this happened, for although it was seldom that lady visitors graced their board, there were generally a few gentlemen present, asked to come up "and have a bit of dinner, quite an informal affair—just ourselves, you know."

In fact, ladies were not wanted at these little functions at Lambton Lodge, though gentlemen—but only those who were eligible for the Matrimonial Stakes—were cordially welcomed. Lady Muriel and her two daughters, the Misses Gertrude and Enid Styles, were, as I said before, dining alone; Lady Muriel a stately matron of nigh on sixty, while her two daughters were rapidly approaching the mature age of thirty-five. Many summers had come and gone since the Misses Gertrude and Enid Styles had made their bow to Royalty at Buckingham Palace, yet their charms had captivated no one as yet; no one, that is, who was anyone. True, the Rev. Rupert Doubleday, who was curate at Haxelford, close by, had offered his hand, heart, and £80 per annum to Miss Gertrude; but this generous offer was declined with thanks. Miss Gertrude had been quite unconscious that any action of hers had led the poor man to believe that feelings other than those of friendship were entertained towards him: he ought to have understood that any little extra attention which was paid to him was for the purpose of stimulating another. Alas! the Rev. Rupert's uncle, a wealthy cotton-spinner, had died since then, leaving the Rev. Rupert a quarter of a million of money; and, acting on the

principle that "to him that hath shall be given," that young divine was then presented with a wealthy living in the Weald of Kent, where a curate performed the vicar's duties for a remuneration similar to that which the Rev. Rupert had enjoyed when he had bid for the fair Gertrude's affections. This left the vicar and his wife (*née* Montague, "one of the Kent Montagues") to devote themselves to the many social duties which took up so much of their time. Miss Gertrude's thoughts occasionally turned towards the park-like grounds and the new vicarage, which the Rev. Rupert had erected for himself; and on those occasions she might have been heard to sigh.

Then there was young Pole-Newton, who, as a penniless subaltern, had laid his young heart at Gertrude's feet (ladies' fives in boots); but it was returned to him in a bleeding condition. Fortunately, the wounds were not so deep as some that the gallant officer soon received, and they soon healed while in Burmah, where he turned for occupation and perhaps for an early death, he only secured distinction for sundry acts of daring and gallantry. The death of an elder brother brought him a couple of thousand a year, and a not particularly impoverished estate, so that a few years later he was enabled to marry the Colonel's daughter and give up soldiering. There were one or two others whose matrimonial efforts were nipped in the bud, but none were mourned for in after years as were the Rev. Rupert Doubleday and Major-Pole-Newton.

Miss Enid had had admirers too, but unfortunately they seemed to cool off just when the supreme moment appeared to be close at hand; each one fancied—of course it was only fancy—that as they became closer acquainted with the divine Enid, they observed traits of selfishness in her character, and certain weaknesses of temper that boded ill for the future. And so we find them dining alone this October evening, the

parent bird anxious for her young ones to leave the nest, being conscious of their complete ability to take care of themselves; while they in return were equally ready to spread their pinions and fly to other latitudes, where in well-feathered nests they would be willing to settle down with the mates of their choice.

There was usually another occupant of a seat at the Lambton Lodge dinner-table, Mr. William Styles, the head of the house, and the father of the two young ladies I have already introduced to my readers. Mr. William Styles had formerly been a soap-boiler, but, having amassed a tidy fortune, he fell a victim to the somewhat neglected charms of Lady Muriel Devenport, the seventh and youngest daughter of the impecunious Earl of Stonehenge. After their marriage Lady Muriel had induced her spouse to convert the soap-boiling business into a limited liability company, of which he remained a director for some time, and finally persuaded him to retire from it altogether.

“The dear girls will never find husbands while you are mixed up in that horrid soap business,” she said to her husband. “No one will come near them after a while; even now the men seem to sheer off as if the poor things smelt of soap. You must give it up, William,” she continued. “Buy an estate in the country, get into Parliament, and make a position for yourself, and then you may make sure that some men who are not merely vulgar tradesmen will pay some attention to your daughters.”

William protested. He did not see how the fact of his retiring from a lucrative business would advance matters. Once a soap-boiler, always a soap-boiler, he said. Let the men come for the sake of the girls themselves; if not, let them stay away. However, William had to give in, so he bought a small estate in a fairly fashionable hunting country, subscribed liberally to the hounds and other local objects,

and prepared to cultivate the country with a view to his being returned to Parliament as its member. But it was a different matter with regard to funds now, for Lady Muriel proceeded to spend more than in the old days when the soap-boiling industry was flourishing under the name of Styles and Co., so that at the time my story opens, money had become somewhat scarce. The farms on the estate did not pay, as Mr. Styles' agent did not seem to get the right sort of tenant; several of that gentleman's investments did not turn out so profitable as soap, and the expenses of the household had become greater and greater as Lady Muriel and her daughters had become more and more desperate, while the number of hunters required by the young ladies cost no small sum of money annually. They were fairly good, if not particularly graceful horsewomen, and, being possessed of a considerable amount of pluck, showed to no little advantage in the hunting-field. But they bucketed their horses about unmercifully in their efforts to keep a good place in the field, and to be in front of the other ladies; nor were they averse to a little jealous riding and mud-splashing if the opportunity presented itself. Consequently, they were not altogether beloved, either by the Master, whose hounds were overridden so frequently by the daughters of one of his best subscribers, and who had to be guarded in his remarks lest the annual cheque should become a smaller one; or by the other ladies of the hunt, who were bored at their fences, were splashed from head to foot at every muddy lane or wet furrow, had their turns snapped from them at gaps, and gates slammed in their faces at every possible opportunity.

The young ladies had been hunting that day, but to judge from their manner things had not gone as smoothly as they could have wished.

"What's the matter with you to-day, Gertrude?" asked

her mother as the fish was removed from the table. "Have you lamed King of Trumps again?"

"No; King of Trumps is all right as far as I know," replied Gertrude pettishly.

"I can tell you what is the matter with her," vouchsafed her sister. "It's because she got pounded by the pretty horse-breaker to-day. She would not follow that Cuthbert girl over the Elmsley brook, and she hasn't got the taste of it out of her mouth yet; particularly as Captain Elwyn and the Master and that girl were the only three who got over."

"King of Trumps refused. You know I told you he did," rejoined the other angrily. "And besides, your nose was put out of joint when you found her riding home with Wilfred Brett, and he declined to come one mile out of his way for refreshment here, preferring instead to go two miles out of his way to escort the horse-breaker home."

"Why did you not jump the brook, Enid?" asked Lady Muriel.

"Oh, I lamed Tim an hour before jumping into a road, or else I'd have taken the young lady's number down."

"What! lamed another horse?" exclaimed her mother. "Why, that's the second this week."

"Can't be helped, mother. It's the fortune of war."

"But what will your father say? He's very short of money just now, he says; some of his speculations have turned out badly."

"Oh, he can't expect us to hunt and to keep up our positions in the country without money. He should invest his money in something safer than foreign railways," said Enid.

"English soap, for instance," suggested Gertrude.

"Bah! it's that which hangs like a millstone round our necks, and prevents us from getting on," snapped Enid, entirely forgetful of the fact that a crossing-sweeper may be a gentleman, and a nursemaid a lady."

“By the way, I met Lady Millingham in Hazleford this afternoon, and she told me she had actually called on the Cuthberts, and that she was delighted with them. Mrs. Cuthbert, she declared to be a charming lady, Mr. Tom a handsome, gentlemanly young fellow, and Miss Ethel a perfect dear.”

“Good heavens!” ejaculated the two Miss Styles together.

“I told her, my dears, that we heard they were a very common lot, and that it was whispered that the girl was not respectable.”

“I am sure she is not, the horrid little cat!” exclaimed Gertrude, with the visions still before her eyes of a chesnut mare and its chesnut-haired burden skimming like a swallow over Elmsley brook. “But wait, my love; listen. Who do you think she met at Ivy Cottage drinking tea with this amiable family?”

“Have no idea,” said Enid. “Bates, the butcher from Hazleford, the sweep, those two girls in Halford’s shop, or Mrs. Diggle who lives in the back lane.”

“You may sneer, Enid, but those people mean to force their way into decent society somehow. Lady Millingham found Canon and Mrs. Wemyss, and Mr. and Mrs. Mollineux there; and Lady Eleanor Bertie and her two daughters came just as she was leaving. Now, did you ever know such nonsense? Why can’t they keep these people in their proper place, instead of lifting them out of the mire in the way they are doing?”

“Fancy the Countess and her daughters calling on them!” exclaimed Gertrude. “They never called here, and not one of us have ever been inside the Towers.”

“It’s disgraceful, I call it,” said Enid.

Yet all this fuss was simply because some really nice people had called upon a widow lady and her two children, who had not long before come to live at Ivy Cottage, which was

not really a cottage at all, but a good sized house, standing in its own grounds, with a small park (field, according to the Misses Styles) attached, and which was situated a few miles outside Hazleford. A week or two later the sisters were jogging to the meet when a smart mail-phaeton dashed past them, two gentlemen in fur-lined overcoats politely raising their tall hats as they recognised the ladies. "By Jove! Frank," exclaimed he who was driving to his companion, "those Styles girls don't get any younger."

"By the way, I thought you were a bit mashed on the younger, Charlie," said the other.

"I? good heavens, no!" laughed Charlie Maunsell. "I cultivated the acquaintance of the divine Enid because I found it very refreshing to learn the scandal of the country side, and the frailties of my feminine acquaintances from those sweet lips. When I meet a girl, and I think she is a nice girl, but want to be sure, I simply go to one of the Misses Styles for their opinion," he went on. "If they cut her up unmercifully, I may rest assured that she is a good, lady-like girl."

A few minutes later the young ladies under discussion arrived at the meet, and were soon busy chatting to those of their male acquaintances that they could buttonhole. Just as the hounds moved off to draw, a quiet, plain-looking old gentleman in scarlet put in an appearance, nodded "Good morning" to those about him, but seemed quite satisfied to be left alone. Then up bustled Mr. Toynbee, the secretary, who always made a point of fussing up to the big subscribers.

"You must do the soft soap business, Tony," said Mr. Buller, the Master. "It's a thing I can't and won't do; and besides I've plenty to do with the hounds and keeping the fields off their backs. Many of them think that because they have a share in them they can ride over them whenever they like. Now Styles is the man for me. If all the field were like him,

what sport we should have, Tony! Gives £250 a year to the hounds, and never leaves the road, not even getting far enough along a road to head a fox, and goes home at three o'clock. Make much of Styles, Tony; men like him want encouraging. But his daughters, Tony! Oh dear! Why a peaceable man like Styles should get such fiends in female shape, I can't say. They've lamed four hounds between them this season already; I've lost half a score of foxes through them pressing hounds; and they nearly killed Ben the day before yesterday by jumping on him when he fell. Lure them to some quiet spot, Tony, murder them and bury them secretly. But cultivate 'Le père,' Tony; his cheque is most useful."

So to Mr. William Styles comes Mr. Anthony Toynbee, the solicitor, and keeps the soft soap business going till hounds have found their fox; then off he slips to get as good a start as possible on that safe conveyance of his, the rat-tailed bay.

"Good morning, Mr. Maunsell," says a voice at that gentleman's side. "As you won't come to speak to me, I've come to speak to you. I'm surprised at your forgetting your old friends like this."

"Oh! Good morning, Miss Enid. Awfully sorry, I'm sure. Passed you on the road, you know, but didn't see you at the meet."

"Have you taken the same house this year, Mr. Maunsell?" asked Miss Enid.

"Yes; Frank and I have gone to the Hollies again; it suits us very well. Any news, Miss Enid? It's such a long time since I was here last."

"Nothing particular, I think. You've heard of Mabel Turton's love affair, of course. No? Well, I must not say a word then, of course."

"What is it?"

"Oh! carried on in the most shameful way with Captain

Bawtry, asked him 'the question' herself, I believe, in the end; but he went away to India, and Miss Mabel Turton is still Mabel Turton."

"By the way," exclaimed Maunsell, who, I fear, had not been listening very intently, "who is that striking-looking girl that Frank is talking to?"

"First, where is Captain Frank Gordon? Oh, there! Why, he is talking to the young horse-breaker. I am surprised at him. I wonder who introduced him, or whether she introduced herself."

"What!" exclaimed Maunsell, "that lady-like girl a horsebreaker? Not! really?"

"Oh, yes," replied Miss Enid. "They are quite common people. She and her mother and brother live at Ivy Cottage, but no one knows them. The brother got lamed during the early part of the cub-hunting season, and she has had the audacity to come out by herself ever since."

"Has she no one with her—no one to look after her, I mean?"

"She has a groom on a second horse. But like most of these people she rides pretty well in a style of her own. Captain Gordon seems to have a good deal to say to her, anyhow. He ought to be told what sort of a person she is," added Miss Enid.

"But are you sure she is a common person? I am certain I have seen her face somewhere. Excuse me asking, Miss Enid, but would you mind telling me who told you?"

"Hark! they're away at the bottom end. Come on, Mr. Maunsell. Where's Gertrude?" And in a moment the two sisters were galloping off down the ride, splashing the mud on all sides, and hustling their way through the stream of men and women as best they could. It was one of those short, sharp and decisive scurries, the hounds racing away with their fox, bursting him up and killing him in the open

in fifteen short minutes. It was like steeplechasing all the way, and those who got off well kept their lead to the finish. Foremost in the rush, and next to the master, who had got well away with his hounds, was "Tony" Toynbee, on the rat-tailed bay, while on his right lay Captain Gordon and the chestnut-haired "horse-breaker" on a beautiful thoroughbred chestnut mare. Behind still, straining every nerve to catch the couple in front, as Maunsell could see from his place a bit further back, came the two Miss Styles, with half a score of red coats and brown-collared habits next in order.

"Who-whoop!" cries the Master, as he sees the hounds run into their fox, and he and Miss Cuthbert jump the last fence side by side. "Glorious burst, was it not, Miss Cuthbert? Bit too fast for *those* two, though," he mutters, as he swings out of the saddle.

The final obsequies of poor Reynard are soon performed. Mr. Buller presents Miss Cuthbert with the brush, and then, as hounds move to draw again, Captain Gordon rides up to the side of his friend with a beaming face.

"Charlie, old man, I've found her at last!" he says.

"Found who?" asks Maunsell, in amazement.

"Why, Ethel."

"Not Ethel Cuthbert?"

"Yes, old man, she's here."

"Here?"

"Yes, over there; can't you see her?"

"You forget, Frank, that I have only seen her photograph. Well, over there I can see Lady Beauchamp, Mrs. Gower, Mrs. Wemyss, and the two Miss Styles, who are apparently making a minute study of 'the pretty horse-breaker' and her mare."

"The pretty 'what'?" says Captain Gordon.

"The pretty horse-breaker. Miss Enid Styles has just informed me that the young lady over there is a horse-

breaker, whether a horse-breaker's daughter, or widow, or even a horse-breaker 'on her own,' I know not. Moreover, she advised me to caution you against her, as she belongs to a common lot, and no one about here has anything to do with her or her people."

Gordon fairly gasped.

"That young lady whom you please to call 'the pretty horse-breaker' is Miss Ethel Cuthbert, and my fiancée," he said, with a little emphasis. "And as to no one having anything to do with her, everyone except those Styles people have called on them at Ivy Cottage, and both she and her mother will be at Lady Bertie's ball to-morrow night, where our engagement will be formally announced. Tom Cuthbert would have been there too, but for his broken leg. Horse-breaker, indeed! I wonder what else your infernal mischief-making old cats have said!"

"My dear old fellow," exclaimed his friend; "I am awfully sorry, but that is really what Enid Styles told me; though where she got the horse-breaking tale from I can't think."

"Never mind, old man," said his friend, "you will excuse me flaring up like that, under the circumstances. But just find out why Ethel has been set down as a horse-breaker, will you? D—— it, here comes the elder of the two beauties. I'm off. I shall only be rude. Come across and let me introduce you to Ethel."

The introduction was effected, and Maunsell was more than delighted with the dainty little chestnut-haired maiden, whose unaffected and winning ways won all hearts. Ethel Cuthbert was then nineteen years of age, and a little mite of a thing too, with the most shapely of figures, the tiniest of waists, and a pretty little face lit up with the sweetest of smiles and a pair of such laughing brown eyes.

"Common!" ejaculated Maunsell to himself; "she's quality to the tips of her fingers."

The next covert was drawn blank, and as they wended their way to the far-famed Bishop's gorse, the home of a well-known veteran, Maunsell trotted up to Captain Frank Gordon and his fiancée.

"Look out for squalls, Miss Cuthbert," he said. "You're shocking the morals of the ladies of the hunt. I've had one remark to me a minute ago, 'Just look at the way that brazen-faced creature is carrying on with Captain Gordon. She has not known him five minutes, and she can't keep out of the poor man's pocket.'"

Both the brazen-faced creature and the poor man laughed loudly.

"Never mind what those poor jealous old maids say, Frank," said Ethel. "They don't bother me in the least, and no one takes the slightest notice of them, I know."

Just then Lady Beauchamp rode up.

"Captain Gordon or Mr. Maunsell, will you be so kind as to introduce me to Miss Cuthbert, or I must introduce myself?"

"Miss Cuthbert," she said, "I must apologise for never having called on you and your mother, but I had no idea that she was my old friend from Edmonton Priory. Some ladies of my acquaintance informed me that you were horse-breakers from Tunbridge Wells. Tell your mother, please, that I will call on her to-morrow afternoon—and pave the way for me, please, by explaining away my rude behaviour."

"We did come from Tunbridge Wells, Lady Beauchamp, where we had been living for five years in a little cottage of mother's, and a mistake might easily be made, for there is a Cuthbert a horse-dealer at Tunbridge Wells. He was stud groom at the Priory for thirty years, and when father died and the smash came, he started horse-dealing on his own account. He has been so good to us in many ways, and has

always kept me supplied with horses. He says I do them good, and that he will fetch them when he wants them. I have been lucky enough to sell three for him since I have been here, and having made a good price of them, he wrote the other day to say I was to accept this mare, Molly Darling, as my commission. Is he not a dear old man?" she said with sparkling eyes.

"Then that's how it is that people call you 'the pretty horse-breaker,'" exclaimed Frank.

"Miss Styles has just informed me," said Maunsell, "that a friend of hers from Tunbridge Wells knows all about you. She said that Mrs. Cuthbert is no more a widow than she is ('or ever will be' growled Frank), that her husband is a horse-dealer at Tunbridge Wells, and that you have merely come up here to sell horses."

Ethel laughed. "Poor things," she said, "they have done their best to hound us out of the place, and as that has failed they now endeavour to terminate my existence in the hunting field. But I have generally been better mounted than they have, and have so far managed to keep clear of them."

"We shall have a gallop from here, Lady Beauchamp, as sure as sure can be," said Maunsell, "so look out for a good start."

The fox was away in a moment, and hounds got a good start with him. Ethel was lying a bit to the right as they approached a formidable bullfinch, some high rails being the only practicable place just where they were, and Captain Gordon called out to her to let him have a go at it first. His horse cleared the rails beautifully, and then he turned in his saddle to see how Molly Darling did it. He saw Ethel steadying her mare a bit as she approached the fence, and behind her he could distinguish two other habits. Suddenly one rushed up beside the chestnut mare just as she was

taking off, the girl uttered a cry as they cannoned in the air, both horses blundered badly, and the next thing Captain Gordon was conscious of was that the younger Miss Styles was swearing at Ethel for cutting in front of her, while the elder of those two estimable sisters was apparently jumping right on to the chestnut mare and her rider.

"Confound you!" roared he. "You did that on purpose. Do you want to kill her!"

By the greatest of luck the chestnut mare scrambled out of the way just as the fore legs of Miss Styles' horse grazed her quarters; then Captain Gordon pulled up alongside the two sisters, and gave them, as he said, "such a piece of my mind as fairly astonished them," and those two ladies kept well clear of the "pretty horse-breaker" and her champion for the rest of the day.

The day following Countess Bertie's ball, the Misses Styles were driving their pony carriage through Hazleford, when they caught sight of a gentleman of their acquaintance who they knew was at the ball the night before, so they thought they would glean a little information from him concerning it.

"Good morning, Mr. Bower," said Gertrude. "You look very fresh this morning, considering you were dancing all night."

"Good morning, ladies," he replied, reining his hack alongside of the carriage. "How is it that the ball was not graced with your presence last night?"

Mr. Bower knew that they had been moving Heaven and earth to get invitations, but wanted to hear the excuse they would make.

"We were both so done up after our day with the North Blankshire," said Enid, "and mamma was so poorly that we decided not to go. I hear that it was a very poor affair, after all."

"Whoever told you that?" exclaimed Mr. Bower. "It



both blundered badly



was the best dance I have ever been to in the neighbourhood. And who do you think was the belle of the ball, Miss Enid?"

"Can't say, I'm sure, as I don't know who was there."

"Why, our champion lady rider, Miss Cuthbert."

"What!" almost shrieked Miss Styles. "That creature there. I am very glad we didn't go, Enid."

"Yes," continued Mr. Bower, enjoying himself immensely, "it appears that the Cuthberts of Ivy Cottage are the Cuthberts of The Priory, Marlshire. Mrs. Cuthbert was the daughter of Sir Frederick Fitzhugh, one of the oldest baronetcies in England, by the way, and her sister is the Duchess of Roxshire. Both the Duke and the Duchess were there last night, and made much of Miss Ethel, who is the Duke's god-daughter. But the sensation of the evening was the announcement of the engagement of Miss Cuthbert to that wealthy Scotchman, Captain Frank Gordon."

The Misses Styles with difficulty suppressed their groans of anguish.

"It is a romantic affair," continued Mr. Bower. "Shortly after Colonel Cuthbert's death, the financial investment in which he had been interested turned out a swindle; some mines in Spain, I fancy. (The Misses Styles winced; Mr. Styles had once been connected with some mines in Spain, and only got out "just in time.") However, Mrs. Cuthbert let The Priory, and lived in seclusion at Tunbridge Wells for a time. Captain Gordon, who had been awfully smitten, searched high and low for the girl he had loved and lost in a week, for on his return from India he could find no trace of her whatever, till he met her in the hunting field here; and now they are to be married in the spring, and as Mrs. Cuthbert's affairs have come all right again, she returns to The Priory next year in time to celebrate her son Tom's coming of age."

“But I thought they were horse-breakers or something,” said Gertrude faintly.

“Quite a mistake, I assure you. It appears that their old stud groom, whose name also is Cuthbert, set up as a dealer at Tunbridge Wells, and he has been good enough to supply his young mistress with hunters during the family’s misfortune. Well, I must be off. Good morning to you.”

The next hunting season found Lambton Lodge let to strangers, Mr. and Lady Muriel and the Misses Styles having gone abroad for the winter.

## MONTIE DUNDAS'S LAST STORY.

Picture if you can an undulating sandy waste, bounded on one side by a low range of hills, sparsely covered with stunted shrubs, and on the other by the limitless horizon; a burning sun is beating down from a cloudless sky. Picture also a square of British troops, who have just beaten off the last savage attack of the wild hordes of the Soudan, and who are about to reckon up what the victory has cost the victors. The air is thick with dust and smoke, the cries and moans of the wounded are heard on all sides, while a sickening smell of blood assails the nostrils. In the distance the sharp crack of the rifle, the cries of vengeance, and every now and then a ringing British cheer, tells how the cavalry are harassing the retreating foe.

Hemmed in between the baggage camels and mules is a small space where the surgeons are already busy at work, and into this space is brought a stretcher on which lies the apparently lifeless form of a young officer. In due course his wants are attended to, and a limb is lopped off, but the grave face of the surgeon and the significant shake of the head seems to indicate that his labour has been in vain.

“Poor chap!” mutters Surgeon-Captain Smithers. “His earthly worries will soon be over.”

Another young officer bursts into the little space, wiping the dust and sweat from his brow, as he looks eagerly round among the dead and dying, a thin stream of blood trickling down his hand the while.

“Is Dundas here?” he asks one of the busy surgeons.

“Over there by Smithers, I fancy,” replies the other,

bandage between his teeth. "I think I saw them bring him in."

The young officer carefully picks his way across the crowded piece of ground.

"Good God!" he exclaims. "Is it all over, Smithers?"

"Not yet; but I don't think he will see another sunrise, poor fellow. He's nearly cut to pieces. But are you hurt?" he asks, catching sight of the blood trickling down the young man's arm.

"No; only a scratch."

"Well, let me see to it. Ah, only a flesh wound. I'll just put a bandage on it."

"Has he been unconscious all the time?"

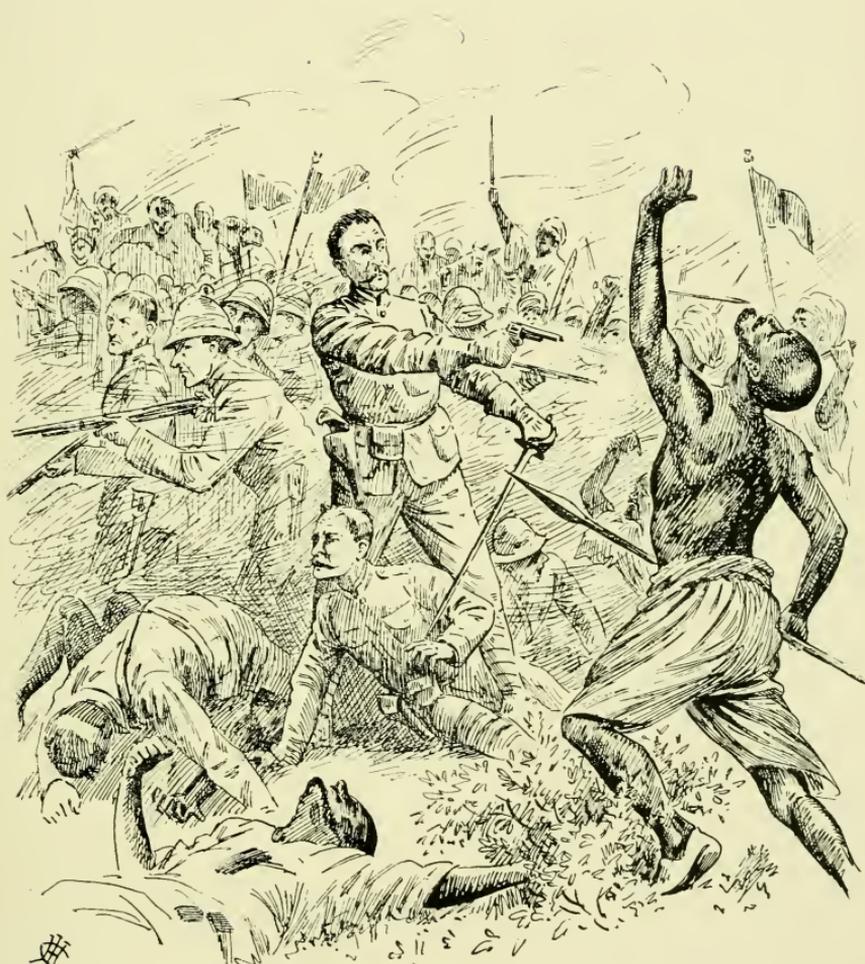
"No; he came to for a few minutes, but went off again after the operation. Just put another wet bandage on his forehead," he added to one of his attendants. "Hold your arm a little more to the right, will you, Collyer?"

"Do you know, I ought to be lying there instead of Dundas," said the young officer addressed as Collyer. "We went out to help the skirmishers, who were hard pressed, and the rush of those spearmen knocked me down. I thought it was all over, but when I came to myself I found him standing over me and fighting like a very devil. Then there was another rush, and we were buried under a mass of the enemy, who fell from a volley at close quarters. When I at last got free, the last rush was over, and Dennis, Dundas's Irish servant, was howling like a child over what I took to be his dead body. He must live," he went on, "if it is only to wear the Victoria Cross he has twice deserved within a week."

"Now you may go," said Surgeon Smithers. "You need not worry about that cut. It will be all right in a day or two."

"Send me word if he regains consciousness, will you, Smithers?"

"Yes," replied the surgeon. "Put that stretcher down there, my men," he said, and was soon hard at work again.



ALLAN D. O'...

'fighting' like a very devil'



It was night. All was still in the zeriba, save for the grunting of the camels, the groans of the wounded, the tread of the sentries, and the surgeons, who got little sleep that night. Earlier in the night the camp had been harassed by a dropping fire, and whenever a light showed itself it brought half a score of bullets to the spot. Once even when a surgeon's attendant incautiously turned his lantern, it was shattered in his hand. However, a few picked shots were told off to fire at the flashes, and their good practice had the effect of silencing the annoyance. And now all was comparatively still, and the wearied officers and men were endeavouring to snatch a few hours' sleep before the bugles called them to another day's hardships. Wrapped in a cloak, Captain Collyer, who was worn out by the fatigues of the day, was sleeping soundly, when a figure crept to his side and touched him on the shoulder.

"Are ye awake, Captain Collyer?" whispered a voice in his ear. "He's asking for ye, sorr."

"What? Is that you, Dennis?" said the young man, starting up. "Has he regained consciousness?"

"Yess, sorr, and he wants to speak to ye."

Collyer hastened to the spot where his friend lay, and fell on his knees beside him.

"My poor old pal," he said, as he took his hand, "I'm heartbroken to see you like this. You saved my life, Montie, and God bless you for it."

A smile flickered over the wounded man's features, and he pressed his friend's hand gently.

"I'm nearly done for, Charlie, and I want to have a talk with you. To-morrow will be too late. Ah, but I know it, old man," as Collyer made a gesture of dissent. "I shall not see another sunrise. Just give me a drink of water, will you? Thanks. Now listen to what I've got to say, for my time is short. What! crying, old man. I thought you said you

hadn't a heart. I don't grumble, you know; I went the pace since the fall of the flag, and the race is over now. We've been good pals, haven't we, Charlie, ever since I joined the Bays? And there's only one secret I've kept from you. That I'm going to tell you now.

"I daresay you've wondered," he went on, "why my wife suddenly became such an invalid and found it necessary to live in the South of France. Pshaw! she's brutally well. She's no more an invalid than you or Dennis. But I'll tell you all about it. Before I met her, I was practically engaged to another—you know her, Charlie, the parson's daughter at Chiltern; the kindest and sweetest woman that ever lived. But for that fiend, whom the law calls my wife, she might have been alive now and I her husband. Poor girl, I honestly believe she died of a broken heart. Thanks, old man, just moisten my lips again; the pain makes one feel a bit sick. I met my wife at a Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace. I was on duty there, and I thought, as I saw her sweep down the staircase, that I had never seen such a face or figure before. Her eyes met mine, so blue, apparently so true; she smiled as her train caught in something and I disengaged it. She passed on, and left me like one in a dream. Then I thought of the dear, trustful little face of Gladys, as I had seen her last, among her father's roses at Chiltern Rectory. The one was a pretty country flower; the other a choice exotic. I met the town beauty the following night at the Berkeley's ball, was introduced, and danced twice with her. The madness of her beauty seemed to fascinate me, but still in my sober moments I clung to the remembrance of that bright little face at Chiltern. To make a long story short, Dorothy Mortimer meant from the first to marry me. Did I say marry me? I should have said marry my money and position. Her beauty and soft purring ways always had a hold on me fool that I was; but she made assurance doubly

sure by bringing about an estrangement between Gladys Rawnsley and myself. It matters not how; it is sufficient that she lied damnably to us both. Then, in a fit of temper at what I considered Gladys' ill-treatment, I proposed to Dorothy Mortimer, and was accepted by her. We were soon married, and in a very short time I discovered that she was heartless, selfish, and utterly unscrupulous; that she was a liar and a forger. I found out that she had forged letters to bring about a rupture with Gladys Rawnsley, that she had forged my signature to securities, and that she had pawned both my gifts to her and some of the family jewels too. But being my wife, I still did all I could to shield the name she bore from shame; we lived a good deal apart, I either in barracks or at my place in Northamptonshire, while she visited or resided at whichever fashionable resort suited her. We never stopped in the same house if it could be avoided. Another drink of water, dear friend. I am getting weaker and weaker. I shall have to be quick.

“Then came the final rupture. For some time she had been encouraging a fellow called Milner, an awful outsider, but very rich. How he got his wealth I know not, probably inherited it for all I know, but he had a very shady reputation on the turf, and ugly rumours were floating about concerning him. I warned my wife that the slightest scandal would prove her undoing, and she was wise enough to keep quiet. However, the winter before last found me as usual at my hunting quarters in Northamptonshire; my wife was supposed to be in Scotland with an aunt. Do you remember, Charlie, the great gallop from Kilworth? you and I were well in it. Of course you do. When I got home that day—I left directly after that run—I found a wire from the Colonel, who wanted to see me on some business or other, so I caught the express to town, had my interview with the chief, and dined at mess. Going home that night from the club a hansom passed me,

and in it I could have sworn I saw both my wife and Milner. I ordered my cabman to follow the other hansom, never to lose sight of it, and to stop when it stopped. It pulled up at the Grand Hotel, I leapt out of mine and was just in time to see the couple pass into the entrance hall. It was as I expected. The next day I wrote to both; I gave the man the offer of a public horsewhipping and a challenge, or to leave England for good; and the woman the choice of an action for divorce, or a permanent residence in the South of France with a sufficient income allowed her. I informed the latter that she would be carefully watched, and that the slightest cause for scandal would stop the allowance and bring on an action. Both chose a residence abroad, and I changed from the Household Brigade to the Bays. That's my story, Charlie; it's been an effort to tell it, but as I have left you sole executor, I wanted you to know all. Take my watch and the diamond ring to my mother when you get home. Bless her, she was always opposed to the marriage, but would deny her boy nothing if she thought it would make him happy; she had set her heart on having Gladys for a daughter, I know."

Then came a silence. "Are you there, Charlie? I can't see you. Give me your hand; and, Dennis, yours too. Look after him, Charlie; he's been a good lad, though a bit wild."

Another silence. The surgeon came and looked at his patient, shook his head and passed on.

Suddenly the wounded man raised himself into a sitting posture. "Hark!" he said, "the assembly is sounding, I shall be late for parade," and then with a cry of "Gladys! Mother!" he fell back dead.

Collyer dropped his friend's hand with a groan, a long-drawn Irish howl broke from the man Dennis, and just at that moment the bugle sounded the réveille.

## SULTAN.

SULTAN began life in a very humble capacity, and his first public appearance was in an Irish drove at Lincoln Horse Fair. Even there his merits seemed to be unappreciated, and he stood amid the gradually diminishing group of his companions from Monday till Wednesday before he found a customer. Sultan was then three years old, a well-bred but not particularly handsome gelding, jet black in colour, with good limbs, back and loins, a well shaped head, and so on. Yet there was something that did not take the eye, an inexplicable something; and though several gentlemen had him out and found him a very nice mover, particularly in his trot, he going well from the shoulders, without that abominable extravagant knee action, no one could be induced to give the £80 asked for him. Nor would they give £70, nor even £60, when the day was far spent, and the night was at hand. On Tuesday the black colt opened at £60, and closed at £40. How was it that those undeniable points failed to catch the eye of some of those judges of horseflesh who came to look at him? On Wednesday there was but few of his companions left, and he looked a king among them. Several young farmers now cast their eyes in his direction, but they opined that there was something wrong somewhere; they had seen the celebrated Mr. Black looking at him on Monday, and he had soon done with him; several hunting farmers and dealers had had him out, but they would not even bid for him, nor would Mr. Breeze, the steeplechase rider. However, about noon on Wednesday the black colt met his fate.

Two young farmers, cigars in mouth, came strolling up. "Got anything that will make a blood-trapper, Neddy? None of your confounded hackneys for me. I want something that can do ten miles an hour, and keep going all day if you want him to."

"There's that black colt there, Mr. Waller; he ought to have been sold for a hunter, and he might win a race at a local meeting some day if given a chance, but he will make a sweet trapper. See him move. Just suit you, Mr. Waller. Mike, give the gentleman a show!"

Once more was the black colt hauled out and trotted up the street, while his owner followed in the rear, rattling his whip-stock in the crown of his hat with much vigour.

"Uses his shoulders well, Fred, and his hocks too, and he certainly has no extravagant knee action; he'd kick a pebble in front of him for a mile. Bit too big, I am afraid, Neddy."

"Not he, yer honour. He's not 15.3. It's these little beggars what's left that makes him look big."

"How's he bred?"

"By old Victor (who was by Uncas), out of a mare by Cardinal York."

"Sure, Neddy?"

"Now, would I deceive you, yer honour?"

"Not so sure. Well, what are you asking?"

"Forty-five pounds, yer honour."

"Let me feel his legs. Is he quiet?"

"Quiet as a new-born lamb, yer honour."

"Give you twenty-five pounds."

"Och! couldn't possibly take it!"

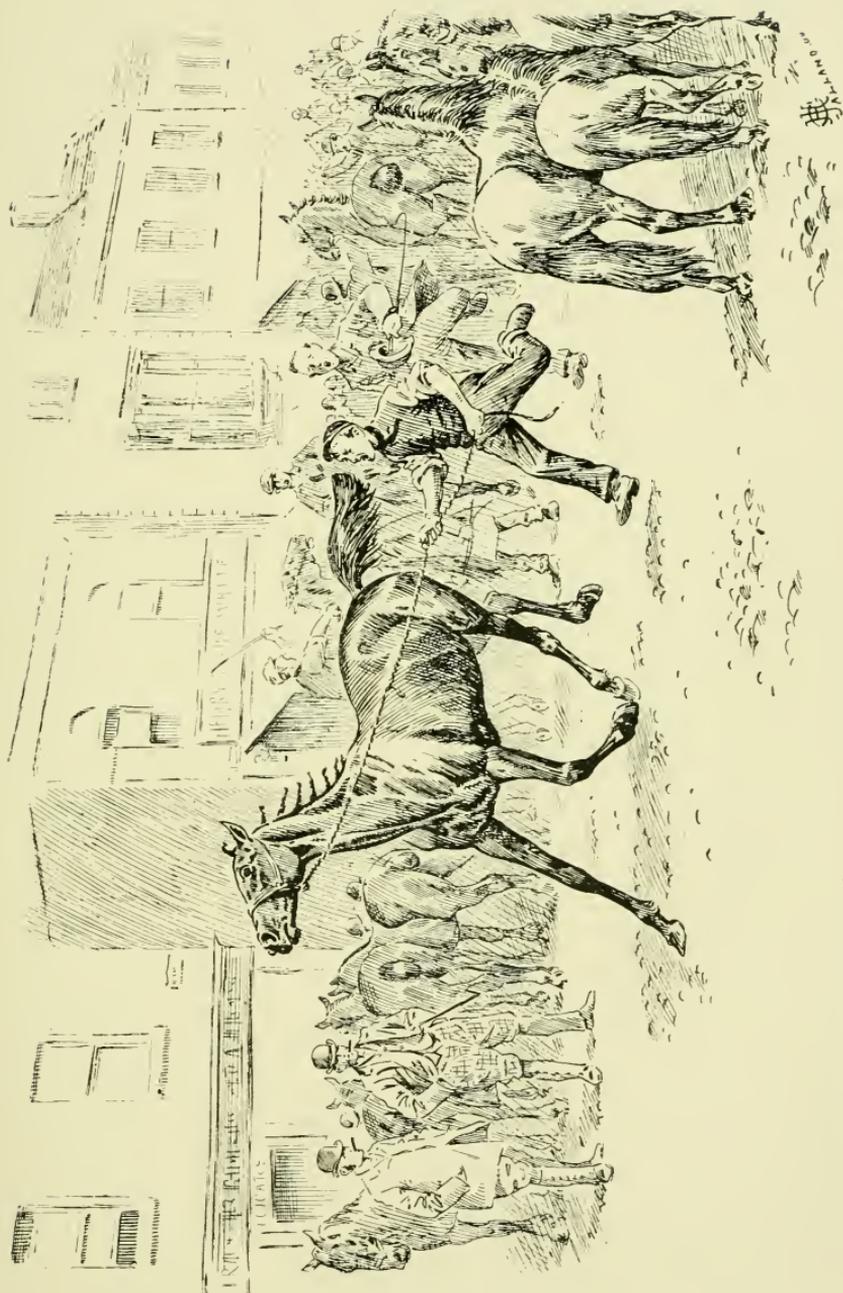
"Twenty-five golden sovereigns, Neddy."

"Impossible, yer honour. Here, I'll take forty."

"Twenty-five little yellow boys, Neddy, and not one more."

"I really couldn't, sir. It's impossible."

"Twenty-five pounds, Neddy. Are you doing business?"



'and trotted up the street'



“ There, I’ll take thirty, and you must give me the price of a bottle.”

“ Come on, Fred, it’s no use waiting.”

“ Take him, sir. Take him at your own price. I’ll give you a fiver to take him away. But seriously, sir, won’t you give thirty for him ?”

“ No.”

“ Then stand a bottle, and you may have him for twenty-five, and bad luck to ye for robbing a poor man.”

Sultan went to his new home, and his education commenced. It cannot be truly said that he took kindly to harness ; in fact, he would not have it at any price. He was tried in a long-shafted break, but that did not suit. Then he was put in roller shafts, tied securely down, and a pair of cart-horses were yoked in front of him ; but after Sultan had been pulled along by the neck for half an hour or so, his owner thought he would suspend tuition for a while. Sultan had a stiff neck for a day or two but he was given no respite, and at the end of a week it was thought that he might be induced to pull the shepherd’s cart. Sultan never got so far up the social scale as the dog-cart ; he was allowed to play havoc with one or two more solidly built conveyances, but his owner thought that his own pet vehicle was too good to be trifled with. To the saddle he took very kindly, and gave very little trouble indeed, allowing the shepherd, who was not exactly a Watts or a Nightingall, to bump about all over him, and would even carry half a sack of cake and chop across his withers. It seemed as though the blood of his ancestors boiled within him at the indignity of being expected to pull a shepherd’s cart or a roller ; saddle horses his family had been for generations, they had won big races and carried good men to hounds, and that much he would do cheerfully, even if the stepping stones to fame were but the daily tasks of shepherding.

Summer came and went, and the autumn tints spoke of the approaching hunting season. Mr. Waller had done a lot of cub-hunting on his regular hunters, and he thought a little education over fences might not be amiss for the black horse, in case any of the stud gave out; so Sultan was taken to see hounds once or twice, and acquitted himself well; however, as he was as quiet as anything on the place, he was still placed at the shepherd's disposal. We all know, no matter what our station in life, what it is to yearn for a chance to distinguish ourselves. If only we were given the chance, we think, then people would see of what stuff we are made; but the chance does not come, and our brilliant talents lie dormant for want of an opportunity. These thoughts, and there is no doubt a horse does think, must have troubled Sultan. Why was he condemned to carry 14 stones of bucolic humanity and a bag of cake to a lot of silly sheep, instead of leading the field in a fast forty minutes with the Brockleness hounds? One can imagine how his spirit chafed within him. If only the chance would come! Jump, of course he could jump; he fairly loved it; and as for galloping, well, perhaps he was not very fit, but he had been doing a lot of slow work during the summer, and with a little more hard corn, a little less chop and crushed oats, and an occasional "pipe-opener," he would soon be as good as the best of them.

At last the opportunity arrived. Mr. Waller wished to go to the meet one November day, for various reasons; he wanted to see the Master on a matter of some importance, also one or two farmers on matters of business, and he—well, he should just like to have a few words with Miss Bellermy. But Grey Friar, whose turn it was, had gone a bit feeling the day before; Tom King was out yesterday, Kathleen had had a gruelling day the last time she was out, and the three-year-old colt had got a sore back.

"Tell Parker I shall want the black horse to-morrow

morning, Tom," Waller said to the head groom, "so brush him over and tidy him up a bit, and tell Parker he must get the foreman's mare to take the cake to the sheep with."

The meet was some seven or eight miles' distant, but Mr. Waller arrived in good time for the few minutes' conversation with Miss Bellermy, and golden minutes they were to him. Topham, the groom, had smartened Sultan up as best he could by a little extra grooming, and by pulling his mane and squaring his tail, but he looked somewhat rough at the best.

"Good morning, Mr. Waller," said a sweet voice as that gentleman approached a little knot of men surrounding a lady on a thoroughbred mare. "Why, where's the Friar this morning?"

"Good morning, Miss Bellermy. Grey Friar came out a bit lame yesterday, and is no better to-day, I am sorry to say, so I am obliged to rest him. Reduced to the shepherd's horse, you see, so no fun for me to-day."

"He looks a bit rough in his coat, certainly," said Miss Bellermy. "But he is made like a hunter, and ought to carry you if only he can gallop and jump." The young farmer edged his way close up to the young lady, and in a very short time they were left to themselves. What they said to each other has nothing to do with Sultan's story, nor has the business which his owner had with the Master and the other followers of the Brockleness Hounds. What we want to take notice of is the manner in which Sultan seized his opportunity, and leapt from a shepherd's horse to a hunter at one bound.

There was a good field out, and in a few minutes the Master gave the order to move off to draw. It was a capital little gorse covert situated on a gentle slope, and as there was not another covert for six miles, there was bound to be a gallop if it held a good fox. The Master marshalled his field at the

top end, and as they were approaching it up wind, the first whipper-in galloped forward, and the huntsman blew a stirring blast on his horn to give a timely warning of their approach to any vulpine occupant of the snug little place.

"There's sure to be a gallop to-day, and I shall miss it, Miss Bellermy," said young Waller. "Isn't it rough luck?"

"Oh, you must give Sultan a chance," replied that young lady. "I'm sure he's fitter than he looks, and I've seen him jump very nicely with you out cub-hunting once or twice."

"If we run hard for fifteen minutes he'll be done, and I shall never see you again to-day," said Waller in a mournful voice.

"Oh, I'll stop and take pity on you," laughed Miss Bellermy.

"I wish you would take pity on a fellow, Bessie." If you only knew——"

"Fo'rard, away—y!"

"Hark! Jim's viewed him away. I'll be pilot to-day, and I'll not lead you into trouble. May we go, Sir Charles?" to the Master.

"Half a minute, please, Miss Bellermy," replied Sir Charles. "Now you may be off," he says a little later, as the pack could be seen streaming away from the covert, and the twang of the huntsman's horn told that he was away with them.

"The Druid" tells us how it was on a foggy morning, in a fast thing from Bradley Wood to Irby Holme, that the powers of the great Lincolnshire Peter Simple were first discovered; the leaders could not shake off what appeared to be a phantom stealing away through the mist. As it was with the grey son of Arbutus, so was it with our black friend Sultan. Hounds did not race, but they kept pegging away at a good hunting pace over

a strongly fenced country, for the most part grass. They ran an eight-mile point, and killed their fox in the open. There had been only one trifling check, and they had been running nigh on fifty minutes. Mr. Waller did not, as usual, cut out the work, but by judicious riding and nursing his horse as much as possible, he contrived to be among the select ten or twelve who heard the first "Who—whoop!" ring out from Ben Day's lusty throat.

All the good resolutions that he had made with regard to cantering about and jumping over a few little fences were cast to the winds as soon as he saw hounds streaming away down the grassy slope to the rich pastures stretched out at his feet. Go he must; he must keep with them and his chesnut-haired divinity as long as he can; then he would pull up, wind his horse, and jog steadily home. To see hounds running like that, and pointing for such a country, without attempting to follow them was out of the question. Sultan popped over the first fence like a bird; his ears were pricked, and he strode away like a racehorse, evidently thoroughly enjoying himself. Each succeeding fence gave horse and rider more confidence, but there were some narrow escapes nevertheless. A blind ditch on the take-off side brought Sultan on to his knees and nose in the next field, and a less skilful rider would have done worse than merely land on his horse's neck. Then, again, an extra wide ditch, with a guard-rail on the landing side of a fence, nearly spelt disaster, and Waller thanked his lucky stars that the rail was rotten. But Sultan flew the brook, which came in their way after they had been running about fifteen minutes, in grand style; he pricked his ears, and sailed away at it in the most confident manner.

Long before Reynard had surrendered his brush, and Ben Day had sounded "*la morte*" over the tattered bits of fur, Tom Waller discovered that he had got a good

hunter. Why, in a couple of months this three-year-old would be fit to carry him anywhere once a week, if he did not keep him out too long! How he could jump to be sure, and what a fine easy sweeping stride he had! Waller was surprised, and Miss Bellermy was delighted; unfortunately she had lamed her horse slightly, so she decided to go home with that gentleman, who was perfectly satisfied with the sport the youngster had shown him, and with the turn events had taken. Once more, it does not concern us what the young couple talked of, but when the event of which I am now about to tell you took place, everyone knew that Miss Bellermy was going to change her surname to that of Waller, and that in the merry month of May the gentleman of that name would cease to be a bachelor.

It is quite unnecessary to say that Sultan now took up his abode in the hunting stable, and that the promise he showed on that eventful day in November was fully borne out. And now, wonder of wonders! we find him in the saddling paddock at the Brockleness Steeplechases being carefully saddled by his owner for the Hunt Cup. Miss Bellermy was close at hand, wearing the dark and light blue colours she hoped to see Sultan bear proudly first past the post.

"Do you think he will win, dear?" whispered the girl in Tom Waller's ear.

"Win! Bess. Why, he can't lose. He's only got 10st. 10lb. to carry, and we tried to win with 12st. He's the second favourite now, and will be favourite directly he's been over the preliminary hurdle."

"Well, good luck to you, dear. I'm going on the stand to watch this race."

Sultan won easily, and many another race, too, before Tom Waller accepted the bid of 300 guineas which a gentleman made him two years later.

“I’m sorry to lose the old boy, Bess, but money is money. He’s the best hunter I ever rode, and he’s won me a pot of money racing. Do you remember the day I rode him in the fifty minutes from Blow Wells to Temperton and you lamed Bridget?”

“Shall I ever forget, Tom? And now I must go in to baby. Good-bye, Sultan, boy. May you be as happy in your new home as you have been here,” she added, patting the glossy black neck, and the pretty brown eyes were very bright when his velvety nose rubbed for the last time against her cheek.

Once more did Sultan distinguish himself, for he won the House of Commons Point to Point Steeplechase for his owner, who also saw many and many a good fox killed when riding him to hounds. And then they made him a peer who was peerless already, as Mrs. Waller puts it, for his owner went up to “the other House,” and after some ten seasons, during which he carried his master without one serious fall, he retired on his laurels and died in the sunny paddocks at his last home.

## DRIVE A NAIL WHERE IT WILL GO.

WILLIAM MORGAN'S father was a solicitor's clerk, and his mother had once been a nursery governess; but at the time when Jabez Morgan courted her, Lizzie Holland dispensed ribbons and lace from the counter of Messrs. Smith and Holland's drapery establishment in the market place of the little country town of Market Blyton. Now, Jabez Morgan was a deeply religious man, according to his own lights; these were, that if a man were a regular attendant at the chapel which Jabez honoured by attending; if he eschewed even the most harmless pleasures of life and took no recreation save that provided by an occasional lecture and the daily walk, the latter taken more for health than pleasure—in fact, if he worked hard all the week, walked out for a prescribed distance every evening when the weather allowed, and spent every Sunday either in chapel or reading religious books at home—he stood a very good chance of getting to Heaven. If a man adopted any other method, Jabez could not see what chance the poor fellow had. He would try to point out the error of the unfortunate's ways, and to guide him into the right path; but when his efforts failed, Jabez sighed, metaphorically washed his hands of him, and gave him up as hopelessly lost. Lizzie Holland at the time when she first encountered Jabez, which happened when the latter had once so far “let himself go” as to drink tea at the house of a local preacher, was a fairly regular attendant at the Sunday evening services at the parish church, though the objects in view were generally—

(1) to sit and gaze humbly at the feet of a pale-faced curate who was wont to plunge into unfathomable and incomprehensible depths of theology, from which he emerged in a half-drowned condition at the end of his sermon; (2) to display some new hat or garment to the wondering gaze of the less fortunate young ladies at the rival establishments of Earl and Drake, Thompson, or Lamming.

But by degrees Jabez's influence began to be felt. Lizzie gave up the theology-stricken curate; she attended Jabez's own particular chapel; she discarded her gay feathers, ribbons, and other decorations that were once things of beauty and joys for a season, *i.e.* till the young ladies at the rival establishments "went one better"; she did not go to the circus as usual when it paid its annual visit, nor was she once seen in the market place among "the fun of the fair" at the Feast. Her intimates fancied she must be sickening for an illness or drifting towards insanity; while the rival establishments' young ladies set it down to a feeling of hopelessness brought on by her inability to out-do them in the competition for high-class female self-decoration. By the time Lizzie Holland had become Lizzie Morgan, Jabez's principles had so permeated her system that she was almost a second edition of Jabez; but, like most absorbent bodies, Mrs. Morgan's system required an occasional replenishing from her husband's inexhaustible store of religious doctrine, and any symptoms of hankering after the flesh-pots of old, in the shape of gay ribbons or circuses, were treated in the most drastic form. Given parents so steeped to the lips in self-righteousness, it is all the more remarkable that their only son, William, should have developed a character so entirely antagonistic.

With sorrow in their hearts they watched the growing up of their young hopeful; and why the child should develop a disposition so different to their own they could not for the

life of them imagine. Master William was as unlike his parents as is the young duckling the barn-door hen who hatched him and brought him up. From his earliest days he showed such precocious superiority that not one of the neighbours' children could vie with him. Couldn't he give them all a year or two and half a stone and lick the best of them? And didn't he win all their marbles and tops and other toys from them? And wasn't he the fastest runner, the best athlete, and always the ringleader of any mischief on hand?

Now it was a most curious fact that the lines of Jabez Morgan should be laid in such a place as Market Blyton, for, according to Jabez, it was one of the chief recruiting centres of the Evil One. Were there not at least half a dozen training establishments in and around the little town, to start with? Moreover, there was a racecourse, and spring and autumn meetings, which filled the little town with racing folk, were held annually. There was one satisfactory point of view from which Jabez could look at it, and that was that with so much iniquity going on around there was all the more work for him to do in the ranks of the evildoers, while at the same time the lamp of his own righteousness shone all the more brightly out of the surrounding darkness.

There was busy work doing on the uplands behind the town, and during the day the streets were seldom unoccupied by strings of sheeted thoroughbreds and the diminutive atoms of humanity attending on them, wending their way to and from the wide stretches of springy turf which had proved such a gold mine to Market Blyton. These horses and their attendant sprites were the joy of Master William's heart and the bane of his parents' existence. The pinnacle of Master William's ambition would be reached when one day he should find himself seated high on one of those beautiful animals; but if such a thought ever crossed the minds of his parents in those early days, it would have been tantamount in their





where the horses were doing their work

opinion to the submersion of the name of Morgan in the lowest possible depths of degradation. William's chief pleasure, when there were no more tops, marbles, and such like to be won in the town, was to climb the steady slope to the uplands where the horses were doing their work; and many and many a beating did he get for thus wasting the golden hours. But what cared he? His skin was tough enough by this time, and a half hour spent in watching the beautiful creatures striding away over the undulating sea of grass was not dearly bought at the price of "a jacket dusting."

Then there came on the scene a new curate at the parish church, a great, big specimen of brawny, muscular Christianity, with a deep melodious voice, a cheery laugh, and a fine honest face that beamed friendship on everyone. William Morgan went for him heart and soul. They met by accident one morning in early summer, when three-fourths of the inhabitants, including Mr. and Mrs. Morgan, were fast asleep in their beds. It was occasionally William's custom, unknown to his parents, to steal up to the training grounds in the early hours of the morning to see the horses go through their work. Nor was he the only a spectator of what was going on, for besides those directly connected with the business in hand, there were sundry groups of more or less seedy-looking individuals, with or without race glasses, employed in the lucrative occupation (it must be lucrative or it would never flourish as it does) of touting. Occasionally gentlemen connected with the stables put in an appearance on horseback to see their animals do a gallop or to witness a trial; and it was astonishing how the whisper of a trial got wafted on the winds, and what commotion it created in the ranks of the touting fraternity. But one morning William, from his favourite seat behind some gorse bushes, noticed an unfamiliar figure in the foreground, a big, broad man with a clean shaven face

a cricket cap on his head, a pipe in his mouth, and dressed in a black Norfolk jacket, knickers and stockings, but wearing a small white tie neatly tied in a bow. Many mornings in the week did this burly figure appear on the training grounds, and soon the trainers began to wish him "Good morning," and the stable boys to touch their caps to him. William learnt that he was the new curate at the parish church.

There was a trial one morning, and William was ensconced as usual behind his favourite gorse bushes, when suddenly he heard the thud of feet behind him, a shadow appeared on the ground in front of him, and the next moment he was crushed to the earth by the weight of a heavy body. Gasping for breath he struggled to his feet, and there lay the new curate, laughing uproariously.

"Not hurt, young 'un, I hope?" he said.

"No, sir; I'm all right, thank you."

"I had no idea you were there, or I should not have jumped that bush by way of a short cut. Why! you are the little chap that I see here so often. What brings you here so early, eh?"

"The mornings are so fine just now, and I like to see the horses galloping, sir."

"So do I, youngster. I am passionately fond of a good horse, and those breezy downs or wolds, or whatever you call them, are a capital place for a spin before breakfast, and fit one for the day's work far more than do two hours spent in bed instead."

They went down to the town together; and as time passed a friendship grew up between them—a friendship that Jabez emphatically forbade as soon as he became aware of it. The Rev. Montague Talbot adopted a different method of teaching the Gospel to that adopted by Jabez; consequently, it was a wrong one. Mr. Talbot tried to impress upon his flock that the Christian religion was not meant to be a miserable one,

and that we were sent into a beautiful world to enjoy it. Racing, he said, was not in itself a sin, nor was a bet, if the person who made it could afford to lose the sum he staked. It was against the abuses, such as cheating, lying, and swindling which had grown up round a fine sport, that he declaimed. Was not every sport liable to the same unfortunate surroundings—cricket, football, tennis, or golf? Let all those, then, who were engaged in the business of racing, carry out their duties in a straightforward and honest manner. Let them strive manfully to purify the sport, which in the town of Market Blyton was an important industry, and let there be no blot on the transactions of any in their little colony. Mr. Talbot established an institute for the stable boys belonging to the training stables in the neighbourhood, started evening classes, got up concerts and entertainments in the winter and cricket matches in the summer, and by his manly example did no little good in Market Blyton. But in the Gospel according to Jabez all this was hopelessly and shockingly wrong.

In due time William Morgan left the village school for the Grammar school, and after he left the latter came the important question of his future career. Jabez settled the matter by securing him a situation in a solicitor's office in the neighbouring town of Long Buckley, and thither he was sent. William had held out strongly in favour of being allowed to enter a racing stable as apprentice, but this his father emphatically declined to permit. Still the boy was bent on it, and after a few months had elapsed he wrote his father to the effect that he could not and would not continue to drag out a miserable existence in a lawyer's office, and that by the time he received that letter he should have left Long Buckley in search of work more congenial to him. To Mr Talbot, who had urged him to abide by his father's wishes, he also wrote telling him that he had done

his best, but that he really could stand it no longer, and that he was starting to seek a fortune elsewhere; when he was in a fair way of earning his living he would communicate with Mr. Talbot and his parents, but not before. Efforts were made to trace him, but without avail, and William Morgan was given up as one of the lost ones. Years went by and many changes took place in Market Blyton. Jabez Morgan's old employer died, and his son took Jabez into partnership; Mr. Talbot was appointed vicar of Long Buckley, and took a wife to assist him in his good work. Many trainers came and went from the neighbourhood, some of the boys became jockeys, some head lads, some mere grooms, and some few drifted into the scum that unfortunately clings to horseracing.

And now the racing world was beginning to ring with the fame of a young jockey who had commenced "to witch the world with noble horsemanship," Morgan Holland by name, and who our readers will readily recognise as our young friend William Morgan. He had been riding for two or three years, and had already distinguished himself by winning several races by sheer jockeyship; offers of mounts were pouring in on him, and he had just been secured by a well-known racing peer to ride his horse in an important cup race.

One morning he was cantering along a lane near the town where he lodged, when the "ting-ting" of a bicycle bell startled him, and then a big-bearded clergyman passed with a cheery "Good morning!" Surely he knew that voice, though it was long years since he had heard it. The clergyman slackened his pace till the horseman got abreast of him, and said—

"Can you tell me, sir, whether the Bilsdown Road or by Little Downham is the nearer to Bychester?"

Then he looked fixedly at the other and exclaimed, "Why, it's William Morgan, as I'm a sinner!"

“ Yes, sir, I’m William Morgan, or rather I once was, for I am now known as Morgan Holland. And you are Mr. Talbot, as your voice told me at once.”

“ Montague Talbot, once more at your service,” laughed the clergyman. “ And William Morgan is the Morgan Holland who is taking the racing world by storm, eh ? ”

“ I am that individual,” said Morgan. “ But what brings you here, sir ? ”

“ Oh ! I’m doing duty for my friend Westlake, who has gone honeymooning for a month or so, as no doubt you know. But I must be off now, as I have an important appointment to keep ; will you come up to supper to-night at eight o’clock, and then we can have a chat ? I suppose you are living in the neighbourhood ? ”

“ Yes, sir, my rooms are in High Street. But may I ask one question before you go ? My parents, sir ? ”

“ Are well, Morgan, and I am pleased to say are friends of mine now. Your father is a partner in the firm of Melbourne and Morgan, and has forgiven you all the worry you caused him, you scamp. When they learn that you are earning an honest living, they will welcome you back cordially.”

“ Thank you, sir, and good-bye for the present. I shall be so glad to have a chat with you this evening.”

It may be imagined that the two found plenty to talk of that night. Talbot told the young jockey that he had become vicar of Long Buckley, and that he had set himself the task of making friends with Mr. and Mrs. Morgan. It had been a hard battle, but the lawyer’s prejudices had gradually given way before the sound common sense of the clergyman, who refused to be rebuffed by rudeness, and had at last wormed his way into the affections of the two Morgans. Mr. Talbot told the young man of the changes at the training establishments and elsewhere, and then Morgan had to

account to him for his doings during the ten years that had passed.

And a hard struggle he had to describe, for nowhere had he been able to obtain employment at first, though trainer after trainer was appealed to. At one time he was reduced to selling race cards, then he found employment with a gipsy dealer, then with a horse-breaker, and finally got taken on as temporary lad in Mr. Grantham's training stables. The temporary job became a permanency; then came the riding of gallops, the promise of race-riding shown by him in trials, and finally the first mount in public, which, though it did not earn him winning brackets, soon brought him another. Five mounts in that year, only one of which was a winning one, was followed by nearly fifty the next, eleven of which were successful; while over a hundred came to his share the following season, and he succeeded in steering a score or more horses first past the post. This year he had got as much riding as he wanted, and with better horses under him he stood a fair chance of being among the first half dozen winning jockeys of the year. Then he told of his trials and temptations; but thanks to the teaching of Mr. Talbot he had been able to steer a straight course amid the quicksands of a difficult profession without a mishap.

"And what do you think of Toreador's chance three days hence?" asked Mr. Talbot, for that was the horse that Morgan was to ride in the great race for the Cup.

"They have not dealt very leniently with him as regards weight," said Morgan, "but he's as game as a pebble, and will wear his horses down, I have no doubt. It's his gameness which takes the public's fancy, sir, and, as perhaps you know, he was favourite till yesterday. However, there has been a disposition to lay against him by somebody, and he and Miss Muffit are at the same price in to-day's paper.

"It will be an important race for me, sir," he went on,

"I want to be married in the spring," he added, with some awkwardness.

"What! Going to be married, Will? Who is the lucky lady?" ejaculated Talbot.

"Miss Grantham, the trainer's daughter, sir. I hope to introduce her to you some day. And now I must be off, as I have two trials and a gallop to ride before breakfast to-morrow morning."

"I'll walk as far as the end of the lane with you, Will; it's such a lovely moonlight night," said Talbot. "Are you game for a more circuitous route, just to make a half-hour's stroll for me?"

"Certainly, sir. We can cross the meadows by Mr. Grantham's house."

When close to Oak Lodge, the name by which Mr. Grantham's place was known, Morgan suddenly gave the clergyman's sleeve a twitch and gently pulled him into the shadow caused by a high hedge.

"Look, sir," he whispered, "look at those two men there. What can they be after at this time of night?"

Talbot looked in the direction in which he was pointing and saw the figures of two men creeping round the corner of the buildings.

"They are going to Toreador's box," whispered his companion. "They are going to get at the favourite. Come on, sir, we must stop them."

Talbot seized the lad's arm just as he was about to rush out. "Wait," he said, "we must make sure first."

Slowly they followed the two shadows in front till they pulled up at the corner of the row of boxes round which the men had disappeared, and then they listened.

"That's his box," whispered one of the men, "the third, and here's the key I got copied. Is Bill up at the house?"

"Yes," replied the other; "he's gone to supper with

Grantham, and promised to keep him busy till eleven o'clock. I suppose there's no other way but to nobble the 'oss, but I don't half like it."

"Rot!" replied the other. "We tried that young fool that is to ride him, but he won't bite, and there's no other way. Besides, you'll get two hundred for the job."

They heard the key turn in the lock, then Talbot, peeping round the corner, saw the two men disappear into the box, from which came the sound of a horse rapidly rising to his feet.

"Woa, 'oss," said a voice. "Now, then, Bill, strike a light. I've got the twitch ready."

Talbot had a stout ash stick in his hand, but Morgan had nothing but a thin riding cane, so he softly retraced his steps to pick up a thin iron bar which he remembered having seen lying at the foot of a wall, and then rapidly rejoined his companion.

"Now, then, Will," said Talbot, "you take the smaller man, and I'll come to you as soon as I've finished with mine. Are you ready? Off, then!"

The two men in the box were completely taken by surprise, and after a short struggle Talbot had his opponent stretched out insensible, and then he turned to see how it fared with Morgan. Badly, it turned out, for at that moment the man had hurled the young jockey staggering against the wall, and was making a bolt for the door just as the clergyman threw himself upon him. The ruffian was no match for his burly opponent, who soon had him on his back in a half-strangled condition. Tying their hands and feet with neckties, braces and string, Talbot left Morgan to watch over them with the iron bar in his hand, while he went into the house to interview the trainer.

"Give them a tap on the head if they venture to move," he said. "We must catch the other rascal if possible."

Talbot went straight to the front door and rang the bell, the door being opened by the trainer himself.

"Good evening, Mr. Grantham," he said; "it's rather late to make a call, but I want to speak to you for a moment, if I may. I saw a light as I was passing, so knew you had not gone to bed."

"Certainly, sir, certainly," said the trainer; "won't you come in for a minute?"

"No, I won't do that, if you will just walk as far as the drive gate with me."

Then as he moved down the gravel he whispered, "Have you a visitor to-night?"

"Yes," said the other, with some surprise, "Mr. Mackintosh, a brother trainer from Downham; he's stopping the night."

"There's been an attempt to get at Toreador. Morgan and I have secured the two men, but I heard them say that Mackintosh—or rather your visitor—is in the plot."

"Why, you don't say so! The man has just laid me two thousand to five hundred he beats me. Where are the men?"

"Lying in Toreador's box. Wake a lad and send for the police, and keep Mackintosh as unsuspecting as possible."

The police arrived in due course, and the two gentlemen captured in Toreador's box were handed over to their care, the favourite was more carefully locked up for the night, and by three o'clock Talbot and Morgan had retired to their respective couches.

Next morning the news of the attempt on Toreador and the capture of the men while engaged in their work became known all over the country; Mr. Talbot and Morgan receiving general praise for their clever capture.

The two prisoners accused Mackintosh of being their employer, and all three were eventually brought to book.

Toreador won his race cleverly, and Morgan, who assumed his own name the following spring, was married to Miss Grantham. The young couple paid a visit to the bridegroom's parents at Market Blyton, and a complete reconciliation took place; the old people got to be quite proud of their son when they found how respected he was in his profession. One by one their bigoted prejudices were removed, and under Mr. Talbot's kindly influence they became more charitably disposed towards their neighbours, more conscious of their own failings, and better Christians in reality.

“LUCY GLITTERS; CH.M. BY WILD HUNTS-  
MAN—SPANGLES. AGED.”

“WHAT’S that picture, there? Oh, that’s a mare that had a lot to do with the most important event in my life. My first racehorse, in fact; and she won me my wife, as well as the Manby Cup. Tell you all about it? Certainly. Get another whiskey and soda and light another cigar, and I’ll begin.

“Well, to start with, I can’t tell you very clearly why I did buy her. It wasn’t for her good looks, certainly, for she had as evil an eye as ever I saw: had a pretty habit, too, of carrying her ears flat on her neck, and would let out at anyone who approached her without the slightest warning. It was at the Market Clixby Autumn Meeting that I first became acquainted with ‘Lucy Glitters, a chestnut mare by Wild Huntsman, out of Spangles, aged’; and though I was not impressed with her in the slightest degree—except as regards her utter worthlessness—I bought her. And this is how it came about.

“I had just settled down here after coming in for my uncle’s money, and was anxious to play the part of a country gentleman; that is, I hunted two or three days a week, kept a few pheasants for my friends to shoot, gave an occasional dinner party, and a hunt breakfast once during the season. Having got on fairly well with hounds, the suggestions of my friends that I should run something at our hunt meetings fired my ambition with a desire to possess a racehorse of my own, and to don silk myself. Why not? There were plenty

of fellows who rode in our local steeplechases who were no better performers than myself. Why should I not have a cut in for the Manby Cup next spring? And if I could but win that, might it not be the means of my winning something nearer to my heart—the hand of pretty Miss Manby, our Master's daughter. Many a toss had I taken in vain attempts to distinguish myself in the hunting field, and yet each purler made me feel that I was smaller than ever in her eyes, and that my divinity was further than ever from my reach.

“These thoughts were entering my head once more as I stood watching the sale of the winner of the Maiden Selling Steeplechase at the Market Clixby Meeting. Why not buy Lucy Glitters? 'Twas a good name. The mare was well bred. Done! The mare was mine. But what a rude awakening when I realised what I had bought! Never did five greater rogues or crocks start for a £50 selling race. One refused at the first fence, and nothing would induce it to jump; another, after two attempts, succeeded in running out; a third fell, hopelessly beaten, about half way, leaving Lucy Glitters and a bay gelding called Dublin to fight it out between them. The mare was sailing away in front, galloping and fencing in perfect style, her rider sitting as still as a mouse on her, and two fields from home it seemed ‘all over bar shouting.’ Suddenly Dublin's jockey set to work, and the old horse, who must have been useful once upon a time, answered gamely. At the last fence he was close behind, and coming up gradually. Still, the mare's jockey did not move. Nearer and nearer crept the bay gelding; and now the whip sounded like pistol shots. That settled it. Back went Lucy Glitters' ears, her stride shortened, and the old horse shot past. With an oath the mare's jockey took up the whip, as he crammed his spurs into her flanks. The sweet creature stopped to kick. 'Twas all over now. ‘Dublin wins in a canter!’ No! At the very moment that the mare com-

mences her last exhibition the old horse falters in his stride, crosses his legs, and falls with a crash, while Lucy Glitters gains an ill-deserved victory by two lengths. In due time Lucy Glitters came to take up her abode in my stables. I knew her to be a capital jumper, she never having made the slightest mistake at the Market Clixby Meeting. She had also shown a fair amount of speed, and had come in without turning a hair. As far as I could see there was only her horrid temper to deal with, and even if she would not race, there was just the chance that she would make a useful hunter. Brissels, my head groom was no more impressed with her beauty than I was, sniffed ominously, and gave his directions to his underlings at a respectable distance from the half-lifted hind foot.

“On my return from hunting next day, I found she had kicked one of the grooms over her head at exercise. ‘I only shoved my ’eels into ’er to make ’er trot,’ observed the lad. Moreover, she had seized hold of Brissels’ coat-sleeve—only the coat-sleeve—but it sufficiently alarmed that worthy, who never ceased to revile her as ‘a narsty, hugly, useless warmint.’ In a few days I decided to try her mettle with hounds; not without certain inward qualms, I can assure you. She was fairly gracious in allowing me to mount, and only lashed out once; but once in the saddle I found her a sweet enough hack, though she watched my every movement, and back went her ears every time I asked her to increase her pace or lifted my hunting whip. At the meet, too, she was quiet enough till old Colonel Bludgeon passed behind, and then she lashed out viciously and hit his stirrup-iron with a sounding ring.

“‘Confound you and your dangerous brutes!’ roared the Colonel, greatly alarmed; ‘why the dickens don’t you put a red ribbon in their tails, if you must bring them out to endanger our lives and limbs?’

“How dare I approach my divinity on such a brute!

"Then, of course, I had to endure the nasty chaff of any of my acquaintances who thought they had a turn for wit.

"What on earth has Jameson got there?' asks one. 'Where did you pick up that camel?' inquires another. 'Why, don't you know,' says a third, 'that Jameson has been scouring England for something to win the Cup with, and this is the result of his labours?'

"I put up with it for a while and then got mad, and offered to bet each and all of them a level tenner that I finished in front of them in the race for the Manby Cup, which was promptly taken by four of them.

"Then I caught sight of Mabel Manby, who had been captured by my *bête noir*, young Burton, while I had been obliged to keep dodging about for fear of breaking someone's leg, and yet I dare not go near her. At length hounds moved off to the covert to draw, and I sneaked away down a narrow boggy ride, from which I thought I could get well away when hounds found, and so avoid a crush at the gate, when someone was sure to be kicked. I managed to ensconce myself in a quiet corner, when the Master cantered by with a cheery greeting and a pleasant smile; but his genial face clouded as a yelp caused him to look round in time to see Harlequin limp away from Lucy Glitters' hind leg.

"My dear boy, you really should not bring a kicking horse among my hounds. Take her outside the covert.'

"What was the use? I should only kick a man or a horse instead. However, I moved away to the edge of the covert again and lit a cigarette. Then a sweet voice sounded in my ear that made my heart go pit-a-pat, and my face to blush like a girl's. 'Twas Mabel Manby, and she had that beast Burton with her. 'Why, Mr. Jameson,' she said, 'you've never been near me to say "how d'y do" this morning, or to inquire after The Geisha.'

"I managed to stammer out some sort of a reply about

a new horse, rather fresh, and kicked at other horses sometimes.

“ ‘But what an ugly horse it is, Mr. Jameson!’ continued Miss Mabel. ‘Where and why did you buy it? I suppose it is a very good horse, though?’

“ ‘Don’t you know this is the horse that Mr. Jameson has bought to win the Cup with, Miss Manby?’ chimes in Burton. ‘It’s not a wonder to look at, certainly.’ Burton gives three hundred guineas apiece for his horses, and dare not ride them over a sheep hurdle. But fortunately further conversation was stopped by old Streamer’s note in covert, proclaiming a find; another and another chimes in to swell the chorus; then Sir John’s cheery voice is heard calling to his hounds, and a minute later a shrill scream from the first whip announces the fox’s departure.

“Anxious, as usual, to get away on good terms with the hounds, I dashed my heels into Lucy Glitters’ flanks, and a moment later found myself lying on my back in the mud and gazing up at the sky. The mare had resented my impetuosity, and had promptly kicked me over her head, amid a roar of laughter from Burton and others, while even Miss Manby could not refrain from a smile. Strange to say, she made no endeavour to get away, and allowed me to mount her without any hostile demonstration. By the time I reached the gate at the bottom of the ride there was a tremendous crush, of course, but young Maltby, the farmer, who was just in front of me, sent his four-year-old at the fence a few yards from the gate, and popped over neatly, an example quickly followed by Lucy Glitters, whether I would or not, and she cleared both fence and ditch beyond in splendid style.

“’Twas a pretty sight that now presented itself. The pack were skimming like white-winged gulls over a sea of grass, racing with a breast-high scent; about a dozen

men and women—which included both Sir John and his daughter—were in close attendance, while the bulk of the field were tearing down the slope from the covert, and at the bottom a frowning bull-finch with a ditch on the take-off side was spelling disaster already. Several have refused, many turn away unblushingly, while two loose horses are tearing after hounds, their owners footing it in hot pursuit. A strong detachment is following old Hardacre, who knows every gap and gate in the country. Burton is making a half-hearted attempt to send his horse at the fence, with no desire whatever for him to jump it, and he, too, will turn for the line of gates in a minute. Maltby steadies his horse as he nears the thin place he has selected, and the youngster jumps it cleverly. But not so Lucy Glitters. She has got her head up, and so I fail to make any impression whatever on her mouth, goes forty miles an hour at the fence, takes off a couple of yards too soon, and, while I am making up my mind for a toss, lands well over the obstacles in a marvellous manner. She certainly can jump, but one likes to have a word or two to say in the matter, and not have to be taken at a racing pace at one's fences, whether one wants to or not.

“A few fields brought me up with the leaders, the mare so far having made only one mistake, by slightly over-jumping into some plough; but she had quite got out of hand, and I was anxiously speculating as to how it would all end. Then all at once my heart went in my mouth, for hounds threw up in a road, and pull as I might I could make no impression whatever on Lucy Glitters. We went past the Master like lightning, the mare waving her head in the air as I tugged frantically at the reins, flew hedge and ditch in superb style, and landed in the road among the hounds, whom she scattered right and left. Some unjumpable rails on a bank were on the other side

of the road, but Lucy Glitters charged them gamely, and with a sickening crash we fell into the field beyond. After witnessing as fine an exhibition of fireworks as need be, I found myself on my back, gazing up at the sky, with my mouth full of dirt, a hat as flat as a Gibus, and a flood of eloquence from Sir John ringing in my ears the while. Lucy Glitters was quietly grazing a few yards off.

“This little incident seemed to quiet her a bit, and as we raced over the vale I soon realised what a vast amount of good there was in the mare in spite of so much vice. But now came an opportunity to try her at open water, for we were running straight for the Freshley at its widest part. Already a number had turned off to the left, where there was a ford about half a mile off, but the hounds were streaming away over the grass on the other side, and I saw that the Master, his chesnut-haired daughter, and the first whipper-in, charging in a line, meant having it at all costs. The former blunders over and falls the other side, the whipper-in’s horse jumps it cleverly, while The Geisha skims over with her fair burden in superb fashion I must be with her or perish in the attempt. Two scarlet-coloured coats have already disappeared into the coffee-coloured torrent, and I see that Maltby is safely over (I remember mentally calculating what he would take for the four-year-old). Now for it! Fool that I was! if I had left her alone all would have been well, but in my anxiety I crammed in the spurs once more, up went her heels, and over her head I shot into the icy depths of the Freshley. And just at that moment Miss Manby was looking round to see how it fared with her father.

“Wet, tired, and dispirited, I was jogging homewards when Maltby overtook me. The Master, Miss Manby, a man in scarlet, the whipper-in, and he were the only people to see hounds run into their fox a mile and a half

from the brook, and he was in high glee, for Sir John had given two hundred guineas for his youngster.

“‘That’s a good mare you are on sir,’ he goes on, ‘but spoilt, I fear.’

“‘Yes; if it was not for her fearful temper I should call her a wonder; but I must part with her, I fear.’

“‘Don’t do that, sir. I overheard someone say that you had bought her to run for the Cup. Now a snaffle bridle and some kind treatment would very likely put her temper right again, and from the way she gallops and jumps it should be a gift for her. She seemed to go kindly enough with you at times.’

“‘Yes, she went well enough with me *at times*. But I can’t be bothered with her. Ah! happy thought! I’ll tell you what, Maltby: you might do with another horse now Tip Top is going. Will you take and train her for me? I shall want her to ride with hounds sometimes, but shall leave her education entirely to you.’

“Maltby agreed, a bargain was soon struck as to terms, and in a few days Lucy Glitters was transferred to some snug quarters at Newington Manor. Great were the strides she made under Maltby’s careful and quiet treatment, and many a gallop I enjoyed on her back, with a snaffle bridle in her mouth, and no rowels in my spurs. Her temper was still a bit doubtful, and it was generally best to give everyone a wide berth at the meet, and to take a line of my own with hounds. Her fencing was perfect, and if I let her mouth alone she was not difficult to control; but once start a pulling match, and you were at her mercy in a moment.

“After my horrible exhibition on the day of Lucy Glitters’ *début* with Sir John Manby’s hounds, I scarcely dared to approach Miss Manby, and gave the Towers a rest from my once frequent visits; the young lady, too, was rather cold and distant for some time, but after a while

we not only returned to our old relationship, but were closer and better friends than ever. Sir John was, of course, terribly angry for a time; but he, too, came round, and as the eventful day of the Steeplechases drew near, my hopes, both of winning the Cup and a wife, mounted high. But win or lose the Cup, I had made up my mind to put the momentous question at the ball that Sir John was giving at the Towers the night of the races.

“Dry work, this yarning? I must have a drink before I go on again. Fill up yourself and drink to the memory of Lucy Glitters.

“The great day, the day that was to be the pivot of my future life, arrived at last, but I can tell you little or nothing of what occurred before the race for the Cup, as I seemed to be like one in a dream. Lucy Glitters was walking about in a remote corner of the paddock, looking as evil—yet as fit—as could be. All the old associations of the racecourse seemed to have crowded back in her mind, and she looked just as she did at the time I bought her. Maltby, however, was certain of success.

“‘Just you sit as still as a mouse and leave it to her, sir. She’ll pull you through, never fear. There’s nothing so fit on the course to-day, and not one of them can touch her for galloping and jumping if she will only try.’

“If she will only try. Ah! that was the question. My fidus Achates, Charlie Mortimer, was just as sanguine; said he had backed her for all he was worth, and even Sir John had wished me good luck, and told me the mare carried his modest investment. He was in capital spirits, having discovered that morning that my uncle in Brookshire, whose heir I was, turned out to be the Lindock Marchmont who was his bosom friend at Harrow and Cambridge. Mabel seemed a little pale and anxious; it was a warm pressure of the hand that I received on leaving her father’s drag for the paddock,

and the pretty lips trembled as she wished 'Good luck to you and Lucy Glitters.'

"There were eight starters for the Manby Cup, a piece of plate given by Sir John Manby for horses that had never started in a handicap or won a race of the value of a hundred sovs., and that had been regularly hunted with the hounds. Gentleman riders only. Captain Devereux's Starlight was made favourite, while Lucy Glitters was nearly friendless at 15 to 1.

"At the post she nearly kicked another horse, and my spirits went down to zero, but I patted her neck and soothed her, and was delighted to find her jump off readily when the flag fell, and at the second fence we held a clear lead of three or four lengths. I rode without whip or spurs. Going past the stand the first time I was nearly half a field to the good, and I was told afterwards that her galloping and jumping brought her many friends, though many opined that she could not last at the pace I was making. About three-quarters of a mile from home the field began to draw up gradually, but the mare was still going well within herself, and two fences from home when I patted her neck and shook her up I was agreeably surprised to find that she responded readily. Two or three horses were coming up hammer and tongs, and though I jumped into the winning field first, the hoarse roar from the crowd told me I was not to have it all my own way.

"'Lucy Glitters wins!' 'Lucy Glitters wins!'

"'No, Starlight wins!' 'Happy Jack's coming!' 'Happy Jack wins for a hundred!'

"I dare not stir. A thunder of hoofs behind me. A horse's head reaches my knee, and slowly forges ahead. The jockey is using his whip, and as the pistol-like shots fall on the mare's ears she falters in her stride and her ears go back as of yore. We are side by side. He is past me! The mare's



her ears go back as of yore



temper has lost her another race. But no! Of a sudden she seems possessed of new life, and like an arrow from the bow shoots past her rival. Is the effort too late? I know not, as the crowd shouts now the name of Lucy Glitters and now of Happy Jack. But Sir John comes up with jubilant face to lead me in.

“‘Let me congratulate you, my boy,’ he says; ‘I never saw a better ridden race in my life. Had you moved an arm or a leg you would have lost. The mare was watching for you to use the whip or spur, and finding you meant to treat her well, she made her effort. I believe she could have won by a field if she had liked.’

“I weigh in satisfactorily, no objection is lodged, and Lucy Glitters is returned the winner of the Manby Cup by a head.

“Need I tell you of the reception I met with when I returned to the drag? Maltby is there to drink the mare’s health in champagne. Charlie is in raptures, while Mabel’s face no longer looks pale and anxious. She has won gloves to last her for years, she says. (So the little puss had backed me!)

“Burton comes up to offer faltering congratulations; he had backed Starlight heavily, and it was a painful operation with him to part with money.

“The ball at the Towers was a great success, and before the night was over Mabel Manby had promised to be my wife. We were married in the autumn; two years later my uncle died and left me all his fortune, and the following year Sir John retired from the active mastership of the hounds in favour of his son-in-law.

“What became of Lucy Glitters? She died from the effects of a kick from another horse nine months ago. She carried me to hounds for several seasons, never giving me a fall, and the handsome bay yearling colt you were admiring this morning is her legacy.”

## A DISTINGUISHED STRANGER.

IT was one fine, brisk morning of the first week in November that a smart mail phaeton, drawn by a dashing pair of dark grey horses, might have been seen wending its way by high roads and narrow lanes to certain cross roads, known to the neighbourhood as the Hawthorn Dale Four Ways. The occupants of this neat equipage are a lady enveloped in furs, and a gentleman in a drab driving coat, the outer garments of each concealing from view the smartly cut habit of the one and the scarlet coat of the other. It was the all-important opening day with the Hawthorn Dale foxhounds, and from time immemorial the first meet of the season had been at the cross roads, whither our friends were bent. A real hunting morning it was, too. There had been a slight frost during the night, but the sun had removed all traces of it, except a stickiness of the roads, and a slight mist hanging here and there; altogether it was one of those exhilarating mornings when one feels that there must be a good fox, a good scent, and a good gallop.

The couple in the phaeton are Lord Healingborough and his sister, Lady Winifred Hainton, on a visit to him for a week or two's hunting; he, a soldierly looking man of about five and thirty, and she, his youngest and favourite sister, a neat little woman some twelve years his junior, not handsome, but with a kind, bright little face and honest blue eyes that won admiration everywhere.

"Well, Charlie," she is saying, "from all accounts you have not a very high opinion of your new Master."

“ I have not,” replies her brother ; “ in the first place he is a snob, and you know how I abominate that genus ; moreover, he knows nothing of the science of hunting, and he is deficient in pluck.”

“ Then why on earth did you get him as Master ? ”

“ Why, you know, when poor Tom Beverley came to grief after his uncle’s death, his cousin Robert, who came in for all the old man’s money, simply stepped into Tom’s shoes by buying his house, and offering to hunt the country in his place if they would guarantee a subscription of £2,000 only, which was certainly a generous offer. I was in India at the time or should certainly have opposed it, for Spencer Thornhill would willingly have taken the country, though, no doubt, he would have wanted a bigger guarantee. However, the committee, mindful probably of their own pockets, thought fit to accept his offer, so now we are saddled with as incompetent a Master as one could well find. It would not have been so bad,” he goes on, “ if he would let Mason hunt the hounds, but, like a good many more of them, he thinks it is only necessary to sit on a horse and blow a horn to be a huntsman, and we have killed ten brace of cubs fewer than last season in consequence.”

“ Is Mr. Robert Beverley popular in the neighbourhood ? ” asks Lady Winifred.

“ With a certain few,” replies her brother. “ He stuffs them with dinners and makes a lot of them, but though I have only been down a fortnight, I can see that the best people do not care for him ; and he has quarrelled with the farmers, too, the idiot, and there is wire up this season where there never has been in the memory of man.

“ Poor Tom ! ” he continues, “ what sport he showed us the three years he was master. I wonder what became of him ? Poor old chap. A better fellow never walked.”

“ Has nothing been heard of him ! ”

“Nothing, though I caused every inquiry to be made. Do you know, Cis, I used to think he was rather fond——”

“Oh, here we are at last,” breaks in Lady Winifred, “and all the dear old familiar faces. How are you, Captain Hampton? Good morning, Mary! Got a new hunter, I see, lucky girl!”

The two are soon divested of their wraps and mounted on their favourite hunters, Lord Healingborough riding a good-looking weight-carrying bay, while his sister is carried by a thoroughbred chesnut mare, the model of a lady’s hunter.

“Good morning, Lord Healingborough,” draws a voice behind him, “May I—ar—be presented?”

“Oh, good morning, Beverley. Winifred, this is our new Master. Lady Winifred Hainton—Mr. Robert Beverley.”

“Delighted to meet Lady Winifred, I am sure, and to see her following my hounds. Look well, don’t they?” to Lord Healingborough, “but shall have a more level pack next year, don’t you know.”

“Going to draw Rapsley Gorse, as usual, Beverley?”

“No, not this morning; we are going to try Tom-tit wood first.”

“What! Not draw Rapsley, Mr. Beverley?” says Lady Winifred. “Why, that has been a standing dish on the opening day for years.”

“Don’t like Rapsley. Beastly thick covert, don’t you know; hounds can’t get their fox away. Must have a quick find and a good gallop on the opening day, don’t you know. Time to be moving off, so good-bye for the present. Show you some good sport, I hope, Lady Winifred.”

“No, he doesn’t like Rapsley,” said Lord Healingborough, “as he is so horribly afraid of getting scratched in covert, and the foxes generally go over the Vale; two big a country to suit his fancy. Well, what do you think of Tom Beverley’s cousin?”

“An odious man! But is he really his cousin?”

“I think so. I remember poor Tom telling me he had one of his stamp.”

“Hounds are moving off; just pull a bit on one side,” he continues. “Ah! good morning, Mason,” to the first whip and kennel huntsman; “so we are not going to keep up the old custom.”

“No, my Lord, and there are a good many other old customs being given up, I am sorry to say.”

The Hawthorn Dale is as good a pack as one could find away from the ultra-fashionable countries, having been careful bred from Bröcklesby and Belvoir blood for several generations, showing plenty of bone and substance, and lots of quality, too; thanks also to “the race of Rutland and the nose of Yarborough,” they were able to run fast on a good scenting day, and to work out a difficult problem when the mysterious agent is conspicuous by its absence. However, the new Master being of opinion that “those crocky old packs” are played out, intends in future to breed on entirely new and original lines.

But they have by now got over the two mile trot to Tomtit wood, and with much horn-blowing, whip-cracking, and unearthly yelling, the Master is waving the pack into covert. A young hound whimpers, and a hare dashes across the ride.

“Ware hare! Ware hare, Hopeful! I’ll draft that ugly useless beast!” roars the Master, unconscious that the hound happened to be last season’s prize-winner at the Puppy Show, and usually very steady. A hare jumping up under her young nose frightened her into giving tongue slightly.

“Leu in there! Yoi wind ’em, little bitches! Get in there, Stylish, get in!” Stylish takes no notice, but feathers down the outside ditch, and then suddenly gives a scream of delight.

“Hoich! Hoich to Stylish!” now cries the Master, and

up rush more hounds to verify her announcement of a find. Then, just as the whole pack crash out with a grand chorus of canine music, a shrill scream and a "Gone away!" from down wind conveys the intelligence that the fox has faced the open at the bottom corner. "Get away, hark! get away on for'ard," and the Master plays such a solo on the horn as the old woods have never heard before, and dashing down a ride, with many cries of "Huntsman, please! Let your huntsman get to his hounds, if you please," gallops through an open gateway and is soon in hot pursuit of the flying pack.

"All on, sir!" says Mason, and the run has commenced. What a scent! Heads up and sterns down, they race nearly mute for two fields, wheel slightly to the right, and, descending a slight incline, point for the undulating sea of grass, the cream of the Hawthorn Dale country.

The front division consists of about a score of choice spirits, among whom are Lord Healingborough and his sister; the beautiful chestnut, handled to perfection by its fair burden, sweeping along with an easy stride and popping over the fences like a bird.

"Confound it!" mutters his lordship, "he's taking us to Rapsley Gorse!"

And so it seems, for that snug retreat looms in the distance, at the corner of which they see a black-bearded gentleman in a tweed suit and butcher boots, mounted on a jet-black horse. The pack run to within thirty yards of where he is standing, check, swing themselves, and then, with Adelaide at the head of affairs, dash off to the left.

"Hang you, sir!" shouts the Master, "you've headed the fox! If you don't know better than to stick yourself in the way like that, you had better stay at home!"

The stranger's eyes flash as he turns aside, and as the pack settles down to race with a breast-high scent, takes a line of his own wide to the right of them.



“Hang you sir! You’ve headed the sor!”

W. ALLAN, D.C.



“A very good thing he has headed him!” says Lord Healingborough; “now there’s nothing for him but Raspberry Wood or the main earths at Birkett Hill, for there’s not cover enough for a wren in Willingham.”

“I wonder who the fellow is!” he muses. “Didn’t see him at the meet, so he must have slipped on to Rapsley thinking we should draw there first. The beggar rides, too, and its a good fencer he has got; reminds me of poor old Tom’s Midnight. Do you know our friend on the right, Beverley?” he asks.

“I neither know nor care,” snaps the master, “but he’ll be overriding my hounds directly, and I’ll make an example of him.”

“Not he. I’d give him leave to override them if he can;” for the pack are skimming over the country like white-winged gulls, a good field in front, and the pace quickening each minute.”

The jumping had been fairly simple hitherto, but now there are some rasping oxers, a couple of brooks, and the river Thissendine between Rapsley and Birkett Hill, and Mr. Robert Beverley’s heart begins to fail him. Thanks, however, to some easy places in the fences and his good luck in striking the Beltford brook in a narrow place, he is able to keep well with hounds, his hunter—a good one—being equal to anything jumpable; but now come big ’uns, and he deliberately “funks” two fences in the line, which loses him his place.

“Isn’t this glorious, Charlie?” says Lady Winifred, as she leads well over a stake-bound fence with some ox rails on one side and a ditch on the other. “We get nothing like this with our old slow-coaches.”

The pace and the oxers have reduced the front rank to a dozen; then the Master nearly comes to grief at the Welbeck, having hesitated and pulled his horse out of his

stride; it was only by ignominiously hanging round his horse's neck that dissolution of partnership was avoided.

But nothing comes amiss to the bearded stranger, whose horse, handled with the skill and judgment of a perfect horseman, is fencing beautifully. Straight through the Willingham plantations the the pack drives without a check, and in a few more fields are seen racing down the meadows that fringe the bank of the river Thissendine, whose waters are rushing down at no mean pace after the recent heavy rains.

"Yonder he goes!" cries Lord Healingborough, as he views the fox toiling painfully up a hedge side, a good field to the right. "We shall have to go to Nixon's bridge, Cis, so come on."

The hounds have now crossed the river, and having shaken themselves, are casting themselves up and down the bank, but all to no purpose; and the stream having carried the exhausted fox some distance down before he could effect a landing, they failed to hit off his line. The Master has gone off with the rest to Nixon's bridge, while the whip is trying to force his horse into the water. But see! that stranger in the tweed suit is already half-way across, gains the opposite bank in less time than this has taken to write, and is calling the old hounds to him by name. He had waited to see if the hounds had really crossed or not, and realising that not a moment was to be lost if they wished to kill their fox before he reached the earths, little more than a mile away, leapt his horse into the river without delay.

The whip starts as he hears the voice: "By Gad, it's the old Master!" he cries. "Get away to him, hounds! get away on for'ard!" and being himself successful in crossing at last, is soon galloping to the stranger's assistance. But before he can get there the hounds have flown to the holloa, and having been lifted a field forward, hit off the line with

a cry of delight, and are fast overhauling their sinking quarry.

Witchcraft and Strivewell get a view, and then Abigail and Stylish are straining every nerve for first grip, and they roll him over not two hundred yards from the sanctuary he was striving for.

"Who—whoop!" cries the stranger, leaping from his horse to save the tattered mass of fur from complete destruction, and Mason comes up to find him with the remains of poor Reynard lying in front of him, and the pack baying around.

"Is it really you, sir?" asks the whip eagerly.

"Hush! Don't say a word yet," replies the other, "but let's get this old fellow broken up first."

In a few minutes Lord Healingborough and his sister came galloping up, with Mr. Beverley hurrying in the rear. Gracefully raising his hat, the stranger approaches Lady Winifred and tenders her the brush.

"May I ask Lady Winifred Hainton to accept this souvenir of a good gallop?" he asks.

"You, Mr. Beverley!" she exclaims. "It's not you!"

"Yes, Lady Winifred, it is I. You see, I happened to remember when I landed in England yesterday that this was the opening day with the dear old pack, so I could not resist the temptation of a gallop. Capital run, was it not? A ten-mile point from Rapsley, and quite two more if you started from Tom-tit wood. But I forgot to take the time: fancy an old M.F.H. forgetting to do that! George Powis lent me old Midnight."

"Tom, you dear old fellow!" exclaims Lord Healingborough.

"Charlie," says the other, as he grips the outstretched palm. Then, turning away, he takes the tattered remains from Mason, and amid the chorus of "Who-woops!" completes the obsequies of a real good fox.

“What the devil are you doing with my hounds, sir?” roars the Master as he gallops up. “How dare you usurp my position! Who are you, sir?”

“I am sorry I have offended you,” says Tom Beverley, “but as you were nowhere to be seen, I thought an old M.F.H. might perform this little function.”

“Tom—you here!” gasps the Master.

“Yes. I landed yesterday. You seem surprised to see me. The fact is, I came over on receipt of letters from my lawyer and from Freeman, our late uncle’s valet, in order to attend to some most important business in connection with his will.”

The Master turned deadly pale and moved away.

“We shall not draw again to-day, Mason. You may take the hounds home.” And without another word he rode off.

Many were the congratulations that Tom Beverley received on his return.

“You will come home with us, of course, old fellow?” said Lord Healingborough.

“Thanks. I had already anticipated your invitation, and my gladstone is at the Towers now. Finding you had started this morning, I trotted off to Rapsley; but to my surprise you were not there, and I was cogitating what to do, when I heard the glad cry of hounds, and lo! there was our vulpine friend just whisking round at having caught sight of me.”

“Now tell us what has brought you among us in this unceremonious manner this morning,” says his friend, as the three jog homewards.

“Well, as you probably guessed, the Two Thousand quite broke me, and when Uncle James died a week later, and left all his money to my cousin Robert, I had nothing for it but to bolt. My astonishment was great, as I had been brought up as his heir; and I always

thought he abominated Bob. I left instructions with my solicitors that everything was to be sold, and I have since heard that every penny I owed has been paid, though it only left me with a couple of hundred; but that was more than I expected."

"We heard you had been drowned in South Africa," said Lady Winifred.

"Drowned; not I! Though 'John Lawrence' was nearly potted by the Matabele once or twice, confound them."

"What! Were you the 'John Lawrence' who, with ten troopers, held Barker's homestead against overwhelming odds, and whose name was in everyone's mouth?" exclaims Lord Healingborough.

Tom Beverley laughed. "I expect so," he said. "But never mind about that now. Not long ago I received a letter from Freeman, who was Uncle James's valet, saying that he had found a will dated three years ago, and that he had every reason to believe that the will read after my uncle's death was a forgery."

"To make a long story short," continued he, "Freeman went into the library to turn out the gas the night before my uncle died, and was surprised to find Bob busy writing there. He seemed rather embarrassed, as it was very late, and Freeman remembers he tried to shuffle some papers out of sight. After leaving the room, Freeman heard him, as he fancied, retire to bed, so went in to turn out the gas once more, and finding some books lying about on the writing-table—no doubt left there by my uncle before the fit seized him—returned them to the shelves. Among the number were some belonging to another room, so he put them there. Then he heard my cousin return and relight the gas; and when he looked in to ask him if he would mind putting the gas out, as he was then going to bed, he found he had taken several books from the shelves, and was

busy looking for something in them. The next morning, in changing the blotting-paper in the library, he found some one had been practising signatures, and noticed both his own and that of John Ash, the butler; they both had witnessed my uncle's will. Like a wise man, he put the blotting-paper in his pocket and said nothing to anyone. Now, a short time ago my cousin decided to make a doorway from one library to the other, and Freeman, who had remained in his service, came across the will as he was removing the books, sent it to my solicitors, and here I am!"

Next morning a groom came over post-haste to the Towers with the startling intelligence that Mr. Robert Beverley had been found dead in his bedroom, a revolver, from which one cartridge had been fired, lying by his side. He also brought a note addressed to Tom Beverley, which he had found on the table. In it the dead man begged his cousin's forgiveness, confessing that he had forged the will that had made him his uncle's heir, at the same time stating that he had always feared that his crime would be found out, as he had not destroyed the original will, which Freeman informed him was now in safe keeping. Freeman, he said, surprised him at his work, and he had hastily shuffled the will between the leaves of a book on the writing table; he had searched through every book in the library without finding it, and feared that Freeman or some one had it to produce when they thought fit.

Of course, after the excitement of the recent events had abated, it became necessary to appoint a new Master of the Hawthorn Dale Hounds, and what more natural than that Mr. Thomas Beverley should once more take up the reins of office, which he consented to do the following year; then, having built new kennels on his own estate, he took over the hounds entirely.

The following notice also appeared in the papers in due

course: "We understand that a marriage is arranged, and will shortly take place, between Mr. Thomas Beverley, of Beverley Hall, the popular Master of the Hawthorn Dale Foxhounds, and Lady Winifred Hainton, youngest daughter of the Earl and Countess of Roxton."

They both ride as hard to hounds as ever they did, and though many a good run has been seen from Tom-tit Wood and Rapsley Gorse, they never forget the day when a bearded stranger in a tweed suit swam the Thissendine, and killed their fox for them near the earths on Birkett Hill.

## BILL'S CHANCE.

“WELL, Daubeney, do you fancy your mount?”

“Yes, sir. I think that McGregor has them all safe. You know he can stay, sir, and he is as fit as hands can make him. Have you seen him yet?”

“No, I've not seen him since he made such hacks of his field the last time he was at Newmarket. But do you think he can carry the weight?”

“Oh! yes sir. Bonnie Marie is now the only one we are afraid of, and they have let her in very lightly; but I don't think she can stay the distance. Here he is, sir.”

The two speakers were a well-known owner of racehorses and a young jockey who was rapidly pushing his way into the front rank. Steady and reliable, an excellent horseman, with a fine knowledge of pace, his services were in frequent requisition by others than the stable which had first claim, and it was becoming more and more apparent that on a nervous or bad-tempered horse he had few superiors.

“Well, Ferguson, you mean to pull off the cup with McGregor, Daubeney tells me. I must say that his looks do you credit; he looks fit to run for a man's life.”

“Yes, Mr. Dalton, the Dainferry stable has turned out the winner of the Didcot Gold Cup three times in nine years, and I think that this is the best horse I ever trained for it. He's a picture, isn't he? and a child could ride him. You see, he is so even-tempered, he never bothers about anything, and that's worth two pounds. He's as game as a pebble too,

and though not fast, can go his own pace for ever. He'll wear them down, sir, never fear."

"What horse does he remind you of, Daubeney?" said Mr. Dalton.

Daubeney smiled. "I can tell you the very horse in one guess, sir—Blue Rock. I've got a picture of him at home, and every time my wife looks at him she says, 'Bill, that's the horse that gave you your chance. Bless his old heart!' Thanks to that horse and your kindness, sir I've never looked back since. I'm earning a good income now, more than I require to live on, and I've got a good bit put by in investments."

It is of that horse, who laid the foundation stone of young Daubeney's fortune, that I am about to tell. But before doing so, I might mention that MacGregor won his race cleverly. Laying last, or nearly so, the greater part of the distance, Daubeney found his horses gradually coming back to him, so making a supreme effort a hundred yards from home, which was nobly responded to by the generous animal, he passed the post a half length to the good, the winner of the Didcot Gold Cup with the heaviest weight that had ever been carried to victory in that race.

The beginning of my story dates back some four years previous to the event mentioned above; the time an early hour on a bright morning of the dying summer, and the scene a breezy upland. Picture, then, a rolling sea of springy turf extending as far as the eye can reach, the landscape broken by occasional clumps of trees, and by an extensive wood, while here and there one catches the glint of the morning sun on some distant church spire, or a curling wreath of smoke indicates that a household is astir.

In the foreground of our picture stand three figures, all mounted on horseback; the elder of the three, a dapper little man with keen grey eyes, a shrewd though not unkindly face,

hair and side whiskers to match the honest eyes, and mounted on an iron grey cob to harmonise with both hair and eyes and even the suit of clothes that he is wearing, is Mr. John Fielding, one of the most successful trainers of the day. "Natty" Fielding, as he is generally called on account of his extreme neatness in dress, and indeed in every detail of life, began his career in a training stable, developing eventually into a jockey, and riding with no little success till the offer of the post of private trainer to a nobleman induced him in middle life to send in his cap and jacket for good. On the death of his patron, Fielding launched out on his own account. The best type of racing men sent their horses to him, feeling sure that the utmost would be made of them; and now behold him in the flood tide of his success, eagerly watching a rough-and-tumble gallop between two youngsters, with a couple of old hands thrown in "pour encourage les autres."

"Here they come," he says as he makes out with his glasses the four horses sweeping round a clump of trees, and up go the glasses of his two companions. The one nearest to the trainer, and mounted on the thoroughbred mare, is Mr. James Dalton, who has been introduced before. Mr. Dalton was about forty years of age; he had been bred and brought up in the country, and but a few years before had relinquished his stool in a Government office on inheriting a deceased uncle's wealth. Passionately fond of racing and the breeding of throughbreds, he was at last able to indulge his taste to the full; in his paddocks were some of the best matrons and most promising youngsters of the day, while Fielding had in his care a few horses belonging to James Dalton that were a bit more than useful. 'Twas a great blow to young Dalton when on leaving Harrow he found that instead of spending his life at home with his father as "the young squire," he must turn out and earn his own living. The estate

had been mortgaged by his grandfather, and bad times had compelled his father to sell it and his racehorses, and to break up the well-known Barnetby Paddocks from which so many classic winners had been turned out. His taste for racing increased as years went on, but not till his uncle's death, by which time he had risen to the head of his department, was he enabled to indulge in his hobby to the extent that he longed and hoped for.

By his side, likewise riding a "clean bred 'un," for Dalton would have scarcely anything else for riding purposes in his stables, was his friend and some time school chum, Major Coveney, a smart light cavalry officer, but to whom, as he has little to do with our story, further reference is unnecessary.

Two of Dalton's horses were taking part in this "rough-up," one a two-year-old of which great things were expected, and the other a four-year-old called Blue Rock, and Dalton, who lived some eight miles away, had ridden over, as was his custom occasionally, to see how the horses were going on.

"What's that leading, Jim?" said Coveney, as the quartette drew near.

"That old thief, Blue Rock," replied Dalton, "and the Letty Lind filly is lying second. I suppose you don't know anything about the weights, Fielding, do you?" he added to the trainer.

"No, sir. I should guess that Blue Rock is giving your youngster a stone, at least; the same to Corisande, and a few pounds to Monkswell. But I told the lads on the old horses to bring them along at a good pace, and that the youngsters were to keep as near them as possible."

"What a racehorse that is!" said Coveney, as the four swept by. "How is it you can't win races with him?"

"Blue Rock, do you mean?" For he it was who sailed in well in front of the other three, with his head in his chest,

and showing no signs of ever having been asked to do his best. "Oh! the old beggar always cuts it on a racecourse. He never will finish first, if he does get as far up the course as the winning-post, for he occasionally gets rid of his rider at the post or else bolts. It's heart-breaking, Fred," he continues. "Here is a great good-looking horse, that's fit to win one of the Autumn Handicaps, flatters me to the utmost at home, but will not do his best in company."

"He seemed to go very kindly with the lad who was riding him," said Major Coveney, "and a nice rider he appears to be, too. I don't know much about these matters, but why don't you let the men who know most about the horses ride these funny-tempered animals in their races? You put up a jockey, good enough in his way, no doubt, but knowing little or nothing of the ways and wiles of his mount, and then you lose your race after all. Why don't you give the lad a chance? You can only lose again, and racing is not bread and cheese to you, as it is to many."

"Well, Bates, the first jockey of the stable, has ridden him lots of times, both here and away, and the horse seems to hate the very sight of him," said Dalton. "He has a job to get on without being savaged. Then he put down Harrison at York, and bolted twice with Graham at Newmarket. Oh! he's hopeless, I'm afraid."

"Ask Fielding what he thinks of my suggestion," said the Major.

"Major Coveney has an idea, Fielding, that Blue Bock would run kinder with that lad than the man we pay such an extravagant retaining fee to," remarked Dalton, as the trio wended their way towards the trainer's house and breakfast. "What do you think?"

"Well, sir, he couldn't do much worse. And really the idea entered my own head, too. The horse has done wonderfully well since that lad has ridden him, and very much the

boy has improved in his riding as well. He'll make a jockey some day."

"Have you had him long? I seem to remember his face, and he looks a cut above the ordinary run of stable lads."

"Not more than six months, sir," said Fielding. "He's a good working lad, and will get on. His father had a big farm in Lincolnshire, but came to grief, and the boy had to turn out."

"What's his name?"

"Daubeney; William Newcombe Daubeney."

"Why, there was a Newcombe Daubeney with me at Harrow; he came from Lincolnshire. Turned out a great steeplechase rider afterwards. I shouldn't wonder if this is his son. I remember how I envied him when I was glued to that stool in Whitehall, and he often used to send me word of a good thing to back over sticks. I should like to do the son a good turn for the sake of his father."

After breakfast, while making a tour of inspection, the trainer sent for the subject of the foregoing conversation.

"Mr. Dalton wishes to speak to you, Daubeney," he said.

"Mr. Fielding tells me that you come from Lincolnshire," said Dalton. "May I ask if you are any relation to the Newcombe Daubeney who was a contemporary of mine at Harrow?"

Daubeney coloured slightly. "Yes, sir," he replied. "I told father that I had charge of one of your horses, and he said that you were at school with him."

"I am very sorry to hear that your father, who was once a great friend of mine, has fallen upon evil times, and if I can help you in any way I shall be pleased to do so, for his sake."

"Thank you, sir. If you could get me the chance of wearing silk some day I should be much obliged to you. I

feel sure that I only want a start and then I could get some riding."

"Well, we'll see. How about Blue Rock, now? Do you think you could induce him to pull off the Cesarewitch this autumn?"

"If he couldn't win with me, I don't think he would with anyone," replied the lad stoutly. "Anyhow, we would make a big bid for it."

Mr. Dalton smiled. "You have plenty of confidence in yourself and Blue Rock, I see; but what makes you think that he could win with you on his back?"

"Oh! he and I have become fast friends, now, and I know he'd try to win with me. I've had some experience of bad-tempered animals, as father could not afford to be particular, and some of the worst-tempered were the cheapest to buy and afterwards made most money for us. But Blue Rock can gallop and stay for a week; he's just splendid. I wish you would throw your leg over him some day, sir; you would be delighted," said the boy, carried away by his enthusiasm.

"No, thanks," laughed Mr. Dalton, "I'll leave him to you. By the way, how is Mr. Daubeney, and what is he doing now?"

"Oh, he was very well, thank you, sir, when I last heard. He has taken a little place near Grantham, and breeds and buys a few horses."

"Remember me to him when you write, will you? and tell him I shall come and look him up some day. And we will think about you and Blue Rock for the Cesarewitch." So saying he shook hands with Daubeney, and left that young man in the highest state of delight.

One evening, a week before the Newmarket Second October Meeting, a young couple might have been seen talking at the gate of an avenue leading up to a farmhouse

about a couple of miles from New Barns, the residence of "Natty" Fielding, the trainer. He in the brown suit, breeches and leggings was our young friend Daubeney, a slim, smart little fellow of eighteen or nineteen, with a bright gentlemanly face, and manners that had gained him the nickname of "the Duke" among the lads at New Barns. Popular as he undoubtedly was, it was only after he had thrashed a couple of them for undue interference that the rest discovered that he was not half a bad fellow if allowed to go his own way, which, however, was not quite theirs. They admired him for his pluck and fine riding, and forgave him for his want of judgment in not making any of them his bosom friends. His companion this evening was a young lady of about his own age and height, fair-haired, blue-eyed, and, without being a beauty, with a winning little face that made most people take a second look at her, and left a pleasant impression on their minds.

Bessie Wentworth was the only child of bluff old Tom Wentworth, a man of no little influence and importance in the district, and generally looked upon as a good sportsman and a good fellow. He had once farmed in Lincolnshire, and knew Newcombe Daubeney well, so that a letter from the latter concerning our young friend at New Barns soon brought about a kindly invitation from Tom Wentworth to come over some Sunday to Hartleigh Manor. This was gladly accepted, the old man was pleased with the youngster, who had struck out a line for himself, and by degrees young Daubeney quite wormed himself into the kind, bluff old farmer's affections. With Mrs. Wentworth, too, he was a great favourite, his quiet, gentlemanly manners proving much to her taste, and he always found a ready welcome whenever he called at Hartleigh. And the other member of the family, Bessie, the pride of the old couple's hearts, and the apple of their eyes? A friendship that had commenced at the very

first meeting soon developed into real affection, and by the evening on which we find them together at the drive gate they had become very dear to each other. They had been for a stroll to look at Mr. Wentworth's young blood stock, that gentleman keeping two or three brood mares and generally making a fair price of their offspring; but he had now walked across to his foreman's house, leaving young Daubeney to escort his daughter home. It was time for that young man to be returning to New Barns, and he paused at the gate to say good-bye. Both were staring at the setting sun, and a long silence ensued before young Daubeney spoke.

"Bessie," he said after a while, "my chance has come at last; not a very great one, I fear, still it is a chance, and there will be all the more credit if I pull it off. Mr. Dalton says I am to ride Blue Rock in the Cesarewitch. Bates, of course rides our first string, and the favourite, King Hal, but Blue Rock is receiving 3lbs., and on his form at home ought to win easily; the question is, will he try? I really think he will run better with me than anyone else, and with 7st 2lbs. he ought to romp in, and then I shall be sure of some riding in the future."

"Oh, Bill, I do hope you will win. Father says you ought to if only the old horse will try, but he never will. Mr. Fielding told him this morning that you were going to ride, and he seemed so pleased."

"If only I can get some regular riding I shall get on; and then in a couple of years or so, Bessie, who knows what might not happen?"

Bessie held down her head and blushed.

"May I have that rose, Bessie, it is such a beauty?"

"Yes, Bill."

"Good night, Bess. Say good night to Mrs. Wentworth for me. I won't go in again."

"Good night, Bill."

You need not have held her hand so long, young man, nor have pressed it to such an extent. Ah! well, it's the way of the world, and even stable-boys get wounded by Cupid's darts.

The scene changes to the saddling paddock at Newmarket. Bates, on King Hal, is the centre of an admiring crowd, which makes way for the trainer, "Natty" Fielding, who, having seen that all is well with Blue Rock and his jockey, goes to lead the favourite out and give final instructions. It had been an anxious time for young Daubeney, Blue Rock having put on his usual racecourse manners, though in a slightly modified degree, directly he entered the paddock. While superintending the saddling, the horse caught hold of the young jockey's arm, not with his usual vigour certainly, but he bit hard enough to make the lad wince. However, he did not move till the horse relaxed his hold, and then he patted his neck.

"Now, old man," he said, "I know you don't want to hurt me. We've a big job in front of us, and we're both going to do our best, aren't we, old fellow?"

"It's astonishing how lamb-like you've got that horse, Daubeney," said the head lad. "I'm blest if I don't think the old beggar means trying to-day. I've backed The King, of course, but I'll save a bit on your mount, my lad."

"Now, Daubeney," said Fielding, who came up at that moment with Mr. Dalton, "Mr. Dalton says you are to ride Blue Rock just as you like. You know as much about him as anyone, and as Mr. Dalton has declared to run both horses on their merits, win if you can. Neither he nor I have got a shilling on either."

"Feel nervous at all, Daubeney?" asked the owner of the favourite. "Will you have a glass of champagne?"

"Not very nervous, sir," replied the jockey, "and I'll come for champagne when I've won the race, if I may."

“So you shall, my lad. And now good luck to you.”

“Now, Bates,” said the trainer, as he led the way towards the starting post for a short distance, “you know your orders. Don’t overdo the pace, but keep with your horses, and come with one run at the finish.”

“What about him?” with a jerk of his thumb towards Blue Rock.”

“He rides as he likes, and both horses run on their merits.”

“Umph! The old brute can beat me if he likes. All right.”

Blue Rock fidgeted about a bit at the post, and looked like showing temper. Once he put his back up, but Daubeney sat quite still.

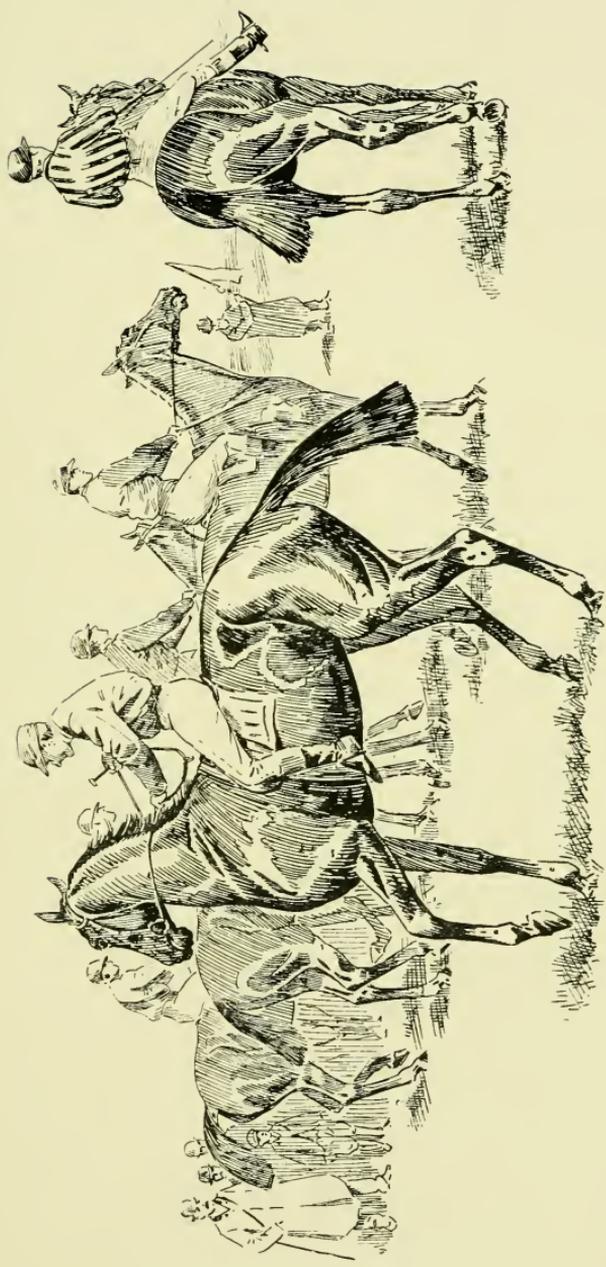
“Steady, old man,” he said and the back went down again.

“They’re off!” No, Blue Rock is showing temper.

“Now! A good start, very.”

Blue Rock is going well, sweeping along with an easy stride, and lying about the middle of a field of twenty-one horses, King Hal being some five lengths in front of him. At the starting post for the Rowley Mile some are already out of it, and now they have entered the straight for home. At the Ditch Mile stand Peterkin is leading, but King Hal has him safe, and next to him come Chips, Blue Rock, and Old Madrid. Nearer and nearer come the field, and every jockey is riding his hardest; whip and spur are applied everywhere except in the case of Blue Rock, and Daubeney is riding him with his hands for very life. He is conscious that the horse is doing his best, but still he does not gain on the two leaders. Is he going to be beaten after all, and on his merits, too? Stay—he is gaining on Peterkin! “Good old horse!” cries his jockey.

Yes, and though Blue Rock’s pace does not increase, his



'Blue Rock is showing temper'

W. J. ALLAN & CO.



rider can see that King Hal is fast coming back to him. A few more strides and he is clear, passing the post a winner as he himself can see, though a second or two after the colours of Old Madrid flash past him. It was a near thing, but the old jockey on the 20 to 1 chance had timed his rush half a minute too late.

Bill Daubeney had had his chance and made the most of it, and never did a man enjoy a glass of champagne to the accompaniment of hearty congratulations more than did Blue Rock's happy jockey. That horse never ran again, as it was discovered that he had broken down badly the moment he passed the post.

Young Daubeney, however, never lacked mounts after his excellent riding in the Cesarewitch, and three years later he was in a position to ask for the hand of Bessie Wentworth, a request that was readily granted by her parents.

## SCRAPPER.

SCRAPPER was not a fighting dog. That is to say, Scrapper was not an aggressive dog, and never provoked a fight. Scrapper has been known to slink away from a yapping little cur half his own size; yet when cornered and a fight forced upon him, it was an unfortunate affair for the aggressor. Scrapper, when he did fight, invariably fought to a finish. As he had had a few scores of personal encounters, it may be concluded that some members of the canine race had suffered; some, in fact, had thought life not worth living afterwards, and had shuffled off to another world in search of a Scrapper that they could lick.

Scrapper's nervous, shrinking manner was a great inducement to the rest of his race to attack him; whether he adopted it with a view to adding yet another scalp to his girdle I know not, but many and many a dog who had no pretensions whatever to being able to fight a bit had been taken in by it, and what a delusion and a snare it always proved! Scrapper might be slouching along with his head down, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and apparently thinking of nothing but going the nearest way, and with least possible trouble, to the place he was bound for. He might pass the big retriever at the Grange without the slightest recognition on his part, and only a side-long glance from the retriever; yet they had been very intimate once for five or ten minutes, at the end of which time Scrapper had lost part of an ear, and the retriever had only one sound leg on which to return to the drive gates.

Farmer Houlton's collie would hear the pit-pat of the dog approaching, and time his rush from behind the laurels to a nicety, but the "woof-woof!" died away instantaneously on discovering who it was, and a retreat with tail between legs was effected with a despatch as dignified as possible under the circumstances. Tim also had known Scrapper once, and did not desire to renew the acquaintance. But Scrapper had neither quickened his pace nor swerved an inch from his course, nor had he deigned to notice the presence of the other.

Dr. Forcep's bull-dog, the baker's spaniel, Lady Beauchamp's borzois, the sweep's rough-coated terrier, and the parson's St. Bernard would all be passed in much the same way. Then all at once round the corner dashed butcher Hick's cart with the red-haired boy driving and a big cross-bred retriever, a new-comer, running behind. The boy pulls up at the side-walk, a big basket of meat on his arm, and the pleasurable anticipation of a few minutes' chat with the divine Mary in his heart, just as Scrapper comes trotting past. At him goes Peter Jackson with a will. He has only been in the neighbourhood a fortnight, and has had nine victorious fights and innumerable skirmishes in the time; here was a great ungainly Airedale that looked like taking a hiding quietly, so while red-headed Billy is flirting with Mary, the kitchenmaid, he may as well be keeping his hand in with this craven-looking creature. The first rush nearly upsets Scrapper, who apparently was not looking for it, but he merely grins in rather an ugly manner and plods on. Another rush, which Scrapper avoids by suddenly stopping; then he tries to make a detour, but Peter Jackson plants himself in the way. Scrapper looks at him, more in sorrow than in anger, and tries the other side. Once more Peter Jackson bars the way.

"Will nothing make you fight, you coward?" thinks

the black bully; "well, perhaps a nip will stimulate you." So at him goes Peter, and grabs him by the back of the neck. Scrapper gives a slight cry of pain, but shakes himself free, and still tries to continue his journey in peace. Once more to the attack comes the valiant retriever, and closes with his opponent with the intention of giving him a good mauling and then leaving him to think about it.

Scrapper sees that he will have to fight; it is an awful nuisance, but there will be no peace for him until he has taken Peter's number down, and peace is all he wants. Peter suddenly finds his near hind leg in a vice-like grip; the next moment he is on his back and experiencing sensations that he never did before. Scrapper is roused and fighting like a fury. Over and over they roll in the dust, with a chorus of growls and cries of pain; but the cries of pain do not seem to come from Scrapper. Red-headed Billy hears it, and hurries away from Mary's fascinating charms, for the four-year-old is pulling at the cord that fastens him to the rails, and Billy will get a hiding on his return to Bentley if as much as a buckle gives way.

"Hi! stop it, you brutes! Peter, give over! Come here, you ugly black beast! Miss Ethel's dog 'll kill yer if yer don't!"

Peter would like to, but he can't; he's busy just at the moment. "Copper Nob," as Mary invariably calls her devoted admirer, sees a hiding looming in the distance if Peter should go home mauled, seizes his whip and dashes into the *mêlée* with a view to giving Scrapper "what for" and making him leave go. It has the desired effect, for the Airedale leaves the retriever to make a dive at his fresh antagonist's legs; it is only a feint, for Scrapper never misses his point, but as the boy jumps back out of reach, the retriever rolls himself into a ditch and lies there howling. Scrapper



'but the cries  
of pain do not seem  
to come from Scrapper'



approaches him, and the howls redouble, so he gives him one parting shake which draws fresh cries of anguish from the blusterer of a minute ago, and then continues his journey, slouching along as before, and looking anything but a conquering hero. The four-year-old has broken nothing. Peter Jackson sees the canine tornado disappearing round the bend, limps out of the ditch, meekly hobbles after the butcher's cart, and peace and quietness reigns opposite the Hollies once more.

"I thought you'd cop it when you met Scrapper," remarks Copper Nob. "Yer won't be so keen o' tackling 'im next time yer meet."

This was the usual thing with Scrapper; he passed all dogs, and all dogs passed him, without the slightest sign of recognition. When a new one came there was a row sooner or later, always ending in the same way, and things once more went on as before.

Scrapper was not a beauty; he was a bit too leggy to start with, was rather ragged about the hips, part of one ear was missing, and sundry bits of skin as well, from various parts of his face and body; moreover, his movements were not graceful, and his hang-dog expression as he slouched along—that expression which was so deceptive to dogs new to the neighbourhood—convinced many old ladies that he was mad, and most people that he was a surly, ill-tempered, but cowardly brute.

One person, and one person only, woke Scrapper's dormant spirit into life, and that was his mistress, a dainty little maid of eighteen. At her approach Scrapper was another animal; he leapt to his feet with an energy that otherwise was only displayed when his patience was completely exhausted, and a fight was forced upon him. Scrapper's eyes were then full of expression, full of love and devotion to the frail young thing, whose tiny white hand his rough

red tongue licked as tenderly as if a breath would bruise it. Scrapper never forgot how he came into Ethel Lawson's possession. Some three years before, she had been shopping in the village, when an unusual din of juvenile voices proclaimed that something out of the common was in progress, and round the corner came a wretched, ragged little Airedale puppy, a tin kettle tied to its tail, and half a dozen lurchers and a score of excited urchins in hot pursuit. Into and out of a garden the terrified creature rushed, caught sight of a compassionate little figure in a white dress, and hurried to it for protection, only just in time, for a vicious little terrier seized it just at the moment that it reached the dainty tan shoes. Then did there rain on the back of that unfortunate terrier such a hail of blows from a white silk sunshade, and such kicks did it receive in such rapid succession from those dainty little brown shoes, that it fled precipitately. Up came young Barnard, the rat-catcher's son, in haste to seize his prey, but the little damsel fell on him too, and cuffed him to such an extent that he first gasped in astonishment and then bellowed with pain. Next came a bevy of British matrons on the scene, drawn thither by the noise, more ears were boxed, the meeting dispersed in disorder, and the little white figure was found seated on the ground with the bedraggled puppy in her arms, a flood of tears raining on its upturned, piteous face.

"Don't cry, Miss Ethel; it's that little limb of mine's doings—I'll skin him when I catches 'im, and that there young Barnard and Scruffle's boy. You give it to young Barnard propper, and Mrs. Scruffle is a-dusting her Bill's jacket for him now."

"Poor little doggie! Whose is it, Mrs. Hopkins?"

"Bless yer 'eart, I never set eyes on it afore, Miss Ethel. But it's all along a-letting them children have 'olidays on Saturdays; they seem brim full o' wickedness them days."

"If no one owns it, I shall take it home, Mrs. Hopkins. Look at the poor little mite, all dust and blood," and she set to work on the ragged little mite with a lace handkerchief just a size larger than a postage stamp.

"Ere's yer ma coming, Miss Ethel. 'Er Ladyship'll wonder what you've got there."

"What made you run away from Downer's, Ethel? I told you I would call for you when you had done your shopping. And what on earth have you been doing, and just look what a state you are in?" Then Miss Ethel was aware that a carriage and pair had drawn up beside her, and that her mother, Lady Adelaide Lawson, was eyeing her through her long-handled glasses with an expression of horror.

"Oh, mamma, just look at the poor little thing! I heard a noise when I was buying that wool at Downer's, and when I looked out I saw a horrid lot of boys and dogs chasing this poor little doggie, and I was only just in time to rescue it."

"But what an ugly dog it is. You can let it go now they have all gone, so make haste and get into the carriage; we shall be late for lunch."

"Oh, no, mamma. I'm going to keep it. They would be after it again directly we were gone."

"Keep it, certainly not! What should we want with an ugly thing like that? Come, let him go. Well, give him to Mrs. Hopkins; perhaps she would like a dog?"

"Not for worlds, yer Ladyship. I've got a large family, and they're trouble and bother enough without a dog."

"I *will* keep it, mamma!" with a petulant stamp of the dainty brown shoes; "and if I may not have him in the carriage with me I shall walk home and carry him."

"Oh, for goodness sake keep the little beast, then. But we need not take that kettle home with us; you can leave that, I suppose. Here, get in, child, and don't let the dirty little thing come near me; it's full of fleas, I'm certain.

Just wait a minute, and I'll get the wool from Downer's, and then we can start."

And that's how Scrapper found a mistress. Ethel's Sandhurst brother gave him the name of Scrapper, and though she tried hard to call him Hector, no one else ever would, and she soon began to call him Scrapper too.

"Colonel and Lady Adelaide Lawson are entertaining a large shooting party at the Manor House, which includes the Earl and Countess of Thanet, Lord Axholme, Lord and Lady Attenborough, Sir Wilfrid and Lady Hunt, Colonel Flint, Major and Mrs. Lee-Metford, Mr. and Mrs. De Trop, Mr. and Mrs. Ryby Parke, Captain MacGregor, Mr. Townend, Mr. Albert Gaite, Mrs. and the Misses Marbell Arche, the Misses Belgrave, Miss and Mr. G. Longshot, and Mr. Newton Strange."

And Mr. Newton Strange. The last name on the list in the local newspaper, yet the first man in the house party. Never was there so charming a man. Young Lawson had met him in Cairo, found him a most delightful companion, kept up the friendship on their arrival in England, introduced him to his friends in town and invited him down to Bentley Manor "to have a bang at the guvnor's pheasants." Here Colonel Lawson received him with cordiality as his son's guest, Lady Adelaide expressed herself as charmed to be his hostess the men found him a capital shot, a splendid billiard player, and a smart raconteur of amusing stories; the ladies raved about his singing, his handsome face and charming manners; everyone fell down and worshipped him.

Everyone, did I say? Everyone, that is, except Miss Ethel Lawson and her dog Scrapper. The former, a girl in her first season, a girl without the slightest knowledge or experience of the world, declared that his manners were artificial, said that she did not think that he really was a gentleman, that those handsome dark eyes were shifty and deceitful, and that she got the creeps when he spoke to her. What could a mere child know of such things? As for Scrapper,—well, he was only a dog,

and a disreputable specimen of his race, too; looked more like a tramp's dog than the property of the beauty of the county. Beauty and the Beast they called them; and they were almost inseparable. But Ethel said Scrapper never made a mistake, and the unmitigated dislike which he showed for Mr. Newton Strange confirmed her in her own opinion of him. If Scrapper disliked anyone, he usually avoided them, and never displayed any pleasure when they patted and made much of him for his mistress's sake; they never did for his own sake, and Scrapper seemed to know it. But to Mr. Newton Strange he was positively hostile, and growled in an ominous manner when that gentleman once patted him. There was an ugly gleam in the dark eyes, but their owner kept clear of Scrapper in the future. Mr. Strange was an American with no fixed abode, immensely rich apparently, and with all his money invested in shares, so he said. He did not like being tied to one or two places, but preferred "to roam about looking at the beautiful things in this beautiful world," as he would remark when people asked why he did not buy an estate and settle down. His father made his money out of oil, "an unpleasant thing to think of, but one should not grumble," he said; "it enabled him to live the life he liked, and to buy what he liked; what matter where the money came from?"

One evening after a long day's shooting the men were gathered together in the billiard room, and their conversation turned on burglaries. There had been one in the neighbourhood the night before, the vicarage having been despoiled of most of its silver and other valuables.

"I've never been in a house while it has been broken into," said one.

"I have, though," said Strange. "Do you remember the robbery at Shepherd's Hotel, Frank?" he added, to young Lawson.

"Rather!" replied Frank Lawson. "'They got most of my little valuables, but I believe you suffered considerably."

"Yes, I did. Then again, I happened to be at Tapping Court when that was broken into, and there, too, I lost many little trifles that I valued rather. I hope, Colonel," added Strange, "that you won't have any uninvited guests while I am here."

"Not much fear of that, Strange," replied his host. "These robberies that take place at dinner-time are generally managed through the connivance of the servants of the house, and I have every confidence in mine."

"What about the visitors' servants?" hazarded a young man in the party,

"To suspect my guests' servants is to insult my guests," said the Colonel sharply.

"I've had my man Drake for ten years," said Strange "and I've never found him fail me." And one after the other each extolled the virtues of his own servant.

"My system of electric bells," continued the Colonel. "is so perfect that it is impossible for anyone to break in at night; besides, my watchman comes on at ten, and servants are all over the house till nearly midnight."

"Well, let us hope there will be nothing to disturb the harmony of the party, one of the most delightful and enjoyable that I was ever a member of, and one which I shall never forget. Good-night, Colonel and gentlemen all. May I have a word with you, Frank?" said Strange, as he threw away the stump of his cigar, and, having finished his tumbler of grog, moved towards the door.

"Certainly, old man," replied young Lawson, as he followed him out of the billiard-room.

"Don't you think that it is rather a dangerous thing, Frank," said Strange, as they walked slowly down the passage, "to have that savage dog so much at liberty

in the house? I don't speak for myself altogether, though I know he has taken a dislike to me, and as a rule dogs make friends with me at once; but I was thinking of the ladies."

"Bless you!" laughed the other. "Why, old Scrapper would not hurt a soul; he won't even fight another dog until he is half worried himself, and then he goes at it like a fiend. Besides, all the ladies adore him, in spite of his beauty; and, another thing, he always sleeps on a mat in my sister's room at night."

"Perhaps it's my fancy, but I have got rather a dread of that animal; however, it does not matter. Good-night, old man."

"Good-night. By the way, Strange, do you ever walk in your sleep?"

"Walk in my sleep! No; why?"

"I could have sworn that I heard your door open last night, but I could neither see nor hear anything when I looked out."

"The effects of that last whisky, old fellow," laughed Strange. "I told you you would dream if you had it. When I go to bed I fall asleep at once, and sleep like a top till Drake calls me in the morning. Good-night, Frank. Take my advice, and don't have another whisky when you get back into the billiard-room, or you will see snakes or burglars or something. Ha, ha!" and, slapping his friend on the back, he retired into his room.

It was the middle of dinner the following day, and Strange had just hurriedly left the table with his handkerchief to his nose, murmuring as he passed Frank's chair: "My nose again, old man. Please apologise to Lady Adelaide. Don't bother; I shall be in again in five minutes or so."

The hurried departure had caused everyone to cease their conversation and look up, so that Frank's remark was audible to many of the guests: "His nose has been bleeding all day, and has just come on again, He'll be back again directly."

Conversation flowed on for another ten minutes or so, then all at once Ethel started to her feet. "Hark!" she cried, "what was that?"

There was a sudden silence.

"I can't hear anything, Ethel. What was it like?" asked her father.

"It's Scrapper. I can hear him now; he's fighting. I must go to him. Come with me, Frank."

Just then there was a sound of revolver shots just outside the house, followed in half a minute by a violent pull at the front door bell, and as the male guests flocked into the hall they were met by an inspector of police with a sergeant and several men.

"There has been an attempt to break into your house to-night, Colonel Lawson; but we have captured three of the gang and their horse and cart outside; the leader is in the house, and one of your guests."

"What!" thundered the Colonel. "What, in Heaven's name, do you mean?"

"That Newton Strange, *alias* Walter Molineux, *alias* Percival Lampton, *alias* Slimy Bill or Flash William, is now in your house, and collecting jewellery and whatever else he can lay his hand on, to lower to his accomplices outside. What's that disturbance upstairs?"

"Frank! Frank!" shrieked a female voice. "Come at once!"

Upstairs they rushed pell-mell, and in Lady Adelaide's dressing-room a strange sight indeed met their eyes. In the centre of the room, and opposite the open window, stood

Newton Strange, struggling with the dog Scrapper, whose teeth were fixed in his throat, while his right hand, in which was a revolver, was firmly held by Ethel's two little white ones. "Quick!" she cried, "he'll shoot Scrapper!"

On the floor lay a bag which had been upset in the struggle, and from it had fallen rings, bracelets, watches, and other jewels, while a long cord was attached to the handle.

One glance told all. Just as the foremost of the party dashed into the room, the struggling group swayed and fell with a crash to the ground, the sound of a revolver shot rang through the apartments, and when the smoke had cleared away, Scrapper was seen standing over the prostrate form of the man. With a look of pride he turned on the party, gazed round the room, and then with a long-drawn howl flung himself on the motionless form of his young mistress.

The rest is soon told. "Flash William" had been so mauled that some little time elapsed before he could be brought before the magistrates; when he was well enough to appear he was committed for trial for having been concerned in no less than five burglaries, he being the head and moving spirit in one of the most daring gangs in the country. He was eventually tried, found guilty, and sentenced to a long term of penal servitude, his accomplice Drake and the other men being committed to various terms of imprisonment. Ethel Lawson had only fainted, but it was some time before Scrapper would allow anyone to touch her; then he followed Frank, who carried the light little burden to her own room, and there he sat, allowing no one to approach her except the girl's own maid. A crimson stream was trickling down the white satin dress, but it was found that the bullet had only grazed the girl's

arm below the elbow ; nevertheless, she will carry the scar to her grave.

The police had planned their descent well, but had it not been for the dog's interference it is believed they would have been a minute or two too late. Scrapper himself was a little hurt in the struggle ; his fame spread far and wide, his portrait, being depicted either as a sheep dog or a fox-terrier, came out in the illustrated papers, and his mistress worshipped him more than ever. Yet he bore his honours in the most nonchalant manner, conducted himself as he always had done, and to the end of his days remained, as he always had been, slouching, hang-dog, ugly old

SCRAPPER.

## THE POACHER'S REVENGE.

"Got anything to do next week, Frank?"

"No, nothing particular. Why?"

"Because if you have nothing on hand you might run down to Manby Towers with me for a few days. It's my Puppy Show on Tuesday, and a few whiffs of country air will do us both good after the racket of the past month or two."

The two speakers were standing in the bay-window of a St. James's Street club, gazing out at the shimmering heat which was fast driving the lingerers in London to cooler and breezier spots.

"Many thanks, old man," replied he who was addressed as Frank; "nothing will suit me better. When do you go down?"

"On Monday," returned the other; "we leave King's Cross at 11.30, so you had better meet us there a few minutes before the train starts."

"Is Lady Middleford going with you?"

"Yes. The little girls have been there with their governess some time, and she wants to see them before we go to Scotland for the grouse."

"Well, good-bye for the present," said Captain Frank Charlton, as the two shook hands at parting; "hope you will have a good entry of puppies to show me."

"Above the average, I think," replied the other; "but you must judge for yourself."

"Who was that man talking to Charlton?" asked another

occupant of the room, a rising barrister; "his face seems familiar to me."

"Oh, that's Lord Middleford," replied his friend. "Has a place in Marlshire, and keeps a pack of hounds there too."

"Now, I know him," said the young lawyer; "I was defending a ruffian at the Hillingborough Assizes some time ago, who had nearly killed one of his gamekeepers. He was an idle brute of a fellow, who lived by poaching, and he was very bitter against Lord Middleford, who had been particularly active in suppressing poaching, at which art my esteemed client was a past master. Lord Middleford had also evicted him for non-payment of rent. He had not paid a ha'penny for years, and the cottage wanted rebuilding. I shall never forget the threats that he hurled at him, and he looked as though he meant them."

Monday evening found Lord and Lady Middleford and their friend Captain Charlton at Manby Towers, and after dinner the two little daughters of the house came into the dining-room to say "good-night" before retiring to bed. Two bonny little maidens they were, with their chestnut-tinted hair and merry brown eyes. Marcia, the eldest, aged nine, at once flew to her father, while Olive, her junior by two years, made for Captain Charlton, always a favourite with children.

"Do you know whose birthday it is to-day, Daddy?" said Marcia to her father.

"Haven't the slightest idea. Yours? No, it's in April. Olive's? No, that's next month. Perhaps it's mother's or Captain Charlton's?"

"You know it's yours."

"Mine, I didn't know I had one."

"Oh, yes, you have, and I hadn't forgotten the day—although mother reminded me. I have it down in my birth-

day book. Now, Olive," continues the little lady, "have you the parcel?"

"Daddy dear, this is a birthday present from your little girls. Guess what it is?"

"Couldn't possibly."

"Well, it's our pictures, *mintures*, Miss Pope says they are. Mother got them done, you know, and she said we need not pay for them. But it's our present just the same."

"Thank you very much, my darlings," said Lord Middleford, "they are capital."

"We couldn't pay for them, you know," breaks in Olive, "because of that poor woman?"

"Now, Olive. You know that is a secret," said her sister

"What's this wonderful secret?" asks Lord Middleford.

"Oh, we couldn't possibly tell you, could we, Olive?"

"I think we might tell Daddy," returned the other.

"Well, if you will promise not to tell anyone, Daddy, you shall hear about it," said Marcia. And then with due solemnity she began: "First of all you must know that Miss Pope says that when we do good actions we should do them as secretly as possible and not make a show of them so that everyone may say how kind and charitable we are; and that is why we don't tell anyone."

"Except you, Daddy," observes Olive.

"Don't interrupt, Olive," says her sister severely. "Well, we found out a poor woman who was living in one of those tumble-down cottages by the old water-mill, who has been very ill indeed. She has a little girl, just as old as Olive, who has been ill too, and they are so poor that they can't buy food and things, so we take a basket of eatables—soup, you know—every day. And," lowering her voice, "we gave her all our money, when Miss Pope was not looking."

"The sovereign that Lady Cordeaux gave us, and all our pennies, too," said Olive, with conscious pride.

"Olive! I'm telling Daddy the story, not you."

"Well, Miss Pope knows all about the poor woman," continues Marcia, "and she says that her husband is a bad, wicked man, and has been sent to prison, and that the poor woman has been too ill to work, and that she and her little girl were nearly starved when Dr. Treaves found them. She asked us our names yesterday, but we wouldn't tell, because we want to do good secretly. And she cried, and said we had saved their lives, and that Heaven would reward us, for she never could."

"And we saw the bad, wicked man yesterday. He——"

"Olive!"

"Oh, all right, go on. I won't interrupt again."

"Just as we were coming away, a horrid ugly man came out of the bushes and stopped us and asked us what we were doing there, and said we had no business prying round poor folk's houses. And he stared so, and told Miss Pope to keep her own side of the hedge in future. And then Olive began to cry, and Miss Pope took hold of our hands and hurried us away."

Lord Middleford frowned. "What's the name of this interesting family?" he asked.

"The woman's name is Mrs. Jackson, and the little girl's is Mary, and Miss Pope says that the ugly man must be the bad, wicked husband who has been to prison."

The frown deepened. "You mustn't go there any more, children."

"Oh, Daddy!"

"I will see Dr. Treaves, and tell him to get the poor woman and her daughter everything that is necessary, and I must tell Miss Pope not to take you there any more."

"Very well, Daddy," with sorrowful voices; "but be sure that Mrs. Jackson get her beef-tea, won't you, Daddy?"

"I'll see about it. And now you must be off to bed."

Daddy's so pleased with the present you've given him. Say 'good-night' to mother and Captain Charlton."

Later on Lord Middleford remarked to his wife, "That scoundrel, Jackson, is back again, and the little ones encountered him yesterday. They have been looking after his sick wife and child, but I think they had better not go there any more. You remember how he threatened 'to pay' me, if he swung for it."

"Miss Pope told me about it, dear," replied Lady Middleford, "and she said she would not take the children there any more, although Mrs. Jackson did not know who they were. She says she is such a nice woman, and the child a dear little thing. Dr. Treaves said they have been at death's door and want a lot of nourishment, so he mentioned them to Miss Pope as deserving people for the children's gifts. She knew nothing of the husband, except that he was in prison."

"Now, you good people," said Lord Middleford the next morning at breakfast, "I am going to ride over to the Water-meadows Farm, to look at some shorthorns. I shall then go on to the Kennels, so you had better meet me there. The judging begins at twelve o'clock."

It was a beautiful early autumn morning, and harvest in full swing; and as he gaily cantered along on a new purchase, a five-year-old hunter, well calculated to carry his thirteen stone weight to hounds, his mind naturally wandered in the direction of cub-hunting. Ah! he would soon be at work again amid the dew of the early morning, rattling the cubs about, and returning with such an appetite for breakfast. Then he flushed a covey of partridges, and his thoughts turned on the next week's prospects on the moors, the possible show of October pheasants, and then to his head keeper, Smythe, only just recovered from the murderous onslaught

of the desperate poacher, Jackson. Lord Middleford turned into the woods, and pulled his horse into a walk, as he reached a shady ride. Jackson. Ah! that man would certainly have his promised revenge. But how? Would he strike at him through his children? A shudder passed over his frame. Heaven forbid! Far better that he himself should be the victim. Wrapped in thought, a sudden swerve of his horse called him to himself. And then, like one in a dream, he saw an evil-looking face gazing straight at him through the bushes, not five yards away, a gleam of triumphant malice lighting up the malignant countenance, for the owner of that evil-looking face held a gun in his hand, and was pointing the muzzle straight at him. A spasmodic clutch at the reins threw his horse on his haunches. There was a flash and a report, and both went over backwards.

It was half-past twelve, and the judging had not yet commenced. Where was the Master? The young dog entry were promenading the flags under the critical eyes of the three huntsmen who were to act as judges, and the admiring glances of their own huntsman and whippers-in. A keen and appreciative audience of farmers and gentry surrounded the rails, all anxious for the proceedings to commence. What could have detained his lordship? He was always punctuality itself, especially in matters relating to fox-hunting.

Presently Captain Charlton, who had been in consultation with Sam Raven, the huntsman, and the judges, was seen to cross to the corner where Lady Middleford, her daughters and their governess, and a few friends were seated. "Oh, Lady Middleford," he said, "Sam thinks we ought to be making a start, as two of the judges have to catch their trains directly after lunch, and time is getting on. Will you, as Mistress of the Revels, give the word to begin? Charlie will be sure to arrive soon."



  
J. & W. G. BALLANTYNE & CO.

'there was a flash & a report



"By all means let the judging commence," said Lady Middleford. "But what can have kept him, I wonder? I am getting quite anxious."

"Don't worry; he's sure to turn up directly," said Captain Charlton. And then the proceedings commenced.

The dog puppies were a wonderful level lot, and the competition was a close one. Legs, feet, back, ribs, and head were all passed in review. One judge fancied this hound; another thought that one's shoulders were a little the better. At last the number was reduced to three. "We will see them on the grass, please," said the judges. And then it was announced that Warrior, by Brocklesby Acrobat, was awarded first prize, Flinger and Herald being next in order.

Still no sign of the Master. What could have happened to him? Lady Middleford's face began to wear an anxious look. "Do you know if the new horse, Macauley, is a quiet one to ride?" she asked Captain Charlton.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "but then your husband is a superb horseman, and can ride anything. I expect Hocklin, the herdsman, has detained him, and he will be here directly."

Now came "the little ladies'" turn, and a stream of white, black and tan was turned into the yard. A beautiful lot of bitches they were, too, as the descendants of such Belvoir and Brocklesby ancestors should be. The competition was again a close one, but eventually the prizes were awarded; and then a door opened, and Lord Middleford looking somewhat pale, and showing signs on his clothes of having had a tumble, walked into the yard.

"I must apologise, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "for being so late; but I had a spill in the woods, and my horse got away from me, so I fear I have missed the judging. Ah, these are the prize winners, are they?" as Raven handed him a marked card. "We'll just have a look at the old hounds, and then we'll go to lunch."

A few words to Lady Middleford set her fears at rest, and the luncheon, with the usual toasts and songs, passed off most successfully; the Master was in capital spirits, and seemed none the worse for his fall, which he was careful to explain, was due to his horse's rearing and falling back on him. But to return to the woods for an explanation of the late appearance at the Puppy Show.

When Lord Middleford regained consciousness, he found himself lying on a bank, his hands bound behind him with a leather strap, and his horse gone; whilst just in front of him stood the poacher, Jackson, carefully loading his short-barrelled poacher's gun.

"Well, this is a hunexpected meeting," he remarked; "'oo would 'er thought 'er seein' you 'ere?"

"What are you going to do with me?" asked Lord Middleford.

The man grinned sardonically. "I'm in yer debt, most noble lord, and I think now's a good hoppportunity for squarin' matters."

"Do you mean to murder me?"

"Put it which ever way yer Lordship likes," replied the man: "if yer wants t' say yer prayers, ye've jist sixty minutes t' say 'em in, and then we're quits."

A little leather case, lying on the ground, caught his eye as he spoke.

"'Ullo! what's this?"

Lord Middleford saw it too, as the fellow stooped to pick it up.

"Give that to me," he cried, "let me look at it before you kill me."

"'Old 'ard, guv'nor, 'old 'ard; my turn fust."

He rested his gun against a tree and proceeded to open the little red morocco case; in a moment his victim had leapt to his feet and was vainly struggling to undo his bonds.

But the man was too quick for him; his long powerful arms were round him in an instant, and Lord Middleford found himself dashed violently to the earth, a heavy knee on his chest, and bony fingers clutching his throat.

"No yer don't. Not jist yet, any 'ow!"

"Let me look at that case, and I promise not to move till you have finished your bloody work."

"Yer seem strange an' anxious about that there; I'll have a look at it mysen' fust;" and he once more picked up the little object, keeping his eyes fixed on the prostrate man the while.

The man started somewhat as he opened the case, and then he looked fixedly at his captive.

"'Ose kids are these?" he asked.

"Mine."

"Yorn?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Them kids saved my missus's life, and the little un's, too. They was very good to them while I was in quod." His brow grew thoughtful. "S'pose yer wery fond of 'em?"

"Don't torture me, man."

"An' they're wery fond of you?"

No answer. A pause, while the man looked steadily at the sweet little faces of the miniatures.

"Be quick about your work, fellow."

"'Old 'ard. Don't be in a 'urry. S'pose I let yer go, ye'd blab, I s'pect?"

"What!"

"Would yer put the slops on my track if I let yer go?"

"Do you mean to say that you will let me go?"

"Yes, if ye'll promise not to split on me. Gimme yer word and I undoes yer."

"What do you intend doing yourself?"

"I'm orf out o' the country, if I ken git. I only comed ter say 'good-bye' to the missus and the little 'un."

The ruffian's face twitched.

"'Ow much brass 'ave yer on yer?" he asked presently.

"About twenty pounds," was the reply.

"Yer mun let me ha' it."

"Very well."

"An' this 'ere an' all."

"If you will."

"You've got to thank these 'ere kids for this. An' now I'll undo yer."

So saying he bent down to loosen the strap that bound the wrists of the captive.

Just at that moment there came a shout from behind; then another in the opposite direction, another and another, on either hand. The man leapt to his feet like a hunted animal at bay and snatched up his gun.

"Blast 'em," he cried, "they've got me!"

"All right," said Lord Middleford, "I'll put it straight for you."

"Yer can't, guv'nor. They wants me for murder. I slogged a warder and sloped the night afore last."

The shouts came nearer, and men in the uniform of the County Police, as well as some gamekeepers, were seen approaching on all sides.

Jackson gazed wildly around him, but no escape seemed possible.

"See, they're slops!" he cried, "an' some o' your chaps wi' guns an' all. 'Taint no use showing fight." An oath escaped his lips. "They shan't take me alive, any'ow, I've spared you; now look that my missus and the little 'un don't come to want."

Then putting the gun muzzle in his mouth, he pulled the trigger.

Simultaneously with the report a sergeant of police, followed by a constable and a gamekeeper, burst through the bushes.

"You are not hurt, my Lord? Thank God, we were just in time!"

"The man was just about to let me go when your shouts disturbed him," said Lord Middleford.

"To let you go!" exclaimed the sergeant, as he unfastened the strap that bound his wrists.

"Yes, thanks to those miniatures. The kindness shown by my two little girls to his wife and child saved my life. The poor wretch is quite dead, I suppose?" asked his lordship.

"Yes, my Lord. The top of his skull is completely blown off."

More policemen and keepers came up, and, having made arrangements as to the disposal of the body, Lord Middleford awaited the arrival of his horse, which a man had already gone in pursuit of, mounted it, and then rode off to the Kennels, arriving in time for lunch, as we have seen before.

As might be supposed, the widow and child of the murderer were duly cared for by Lord Middleford, and in one of the gate lodges at the approach to his Highland home, far from the scenes of their former unhappiness, they began a new life.

Each year brings its Puppy Show, and as his lordship sees the young dog hounds on the kennel flags, he never ceases to remember his strange adventure in Warrior's year.

## BOB HAMILTON'S MAIDEN RACE.

THEY were talking at the Club the other night about the now defunct Stonebridge Meeting—the name of some bygone 'chasing hero having called it to mind—when suddenly the Major chimed in with—

“Do you know, you fellows, that I rode and won my only steeplechase over that course?”

“You, Major?” was the general chorus. “We didn't know that you had ever donned silk for an exhibition between the flags.”

The Major chuckled, and beamed at us through his pince-nez. He was one of the worst riders in the Army, and though he had plenty of pluck, generally made a terrible hash of it, both on his charger and in the hunting field. As to the possibility of Major “Bob” Hamilton ever being successful in getting over a steeplechase course, and particularly such an one as the Old Stonebridge used to be, why, we never dreamt of such a thing.

“Tell us all about it, Major,” said young Dudley Hardinge.

“Very well,” he gaily responded, “just ring the bell and tell the waiter to bring me a whisky and soda, and then I'll begin.”

His wants being supplied, and having settled himself comfortably in his lounge chair, he commenced as follows:—

“It was just sixteen years ago that this momentous event took place, and I can assure you that it created no little stir at the time. My race was without doubt the most popular one of the fixture, and the ovation I received when I returned to weigh in would have turned most brains. Yours would

not possibly have stood it, Dudley," he chuckled. "But I must begin at the beginning," he went on. "I was spending Christmas with an old friend of mine, Hartopp—he's dead now, poor chap—whose park ran up to a portion of the course. In the billiard-room that evening conversation turned on the annual 'chases that were to take place in the spring, and our genial host invited us one and all to stop with him for the meeting. He had a house full of shooting men at the time, but some of us who were fond of hunting and racing eagerly accepted his invitation. We were a jolly party, but there was one who did not seem to be quite one of us, a new-comer in the district, a man by the name of Hodgson, whose father had made a fortune out of soap or candles, or something, and who had bought a small neighbouring estate for his young hopeful. Hartopp, like the good fellow he was, always did his best to be neighbourly, so had asked him to shoot with us that day, when he had made himself conspicuous by the masterly way in which he missed his birds, and by the strength and variety of his expletives.

"Having drunk more than a reasonable allowance of wine at dinner, where his vulgar jokes and the inordinate boasting of his wealth and achievements had thoroughly disgusted us, we had by this time summed up Mr. Hodgson as an out-and-out bounder. Talking of racing soon brought riding up as a topic of conversation, and then some of my more intimate friends began chaffing me on my skill in the pigskin. It was much the same as it is now, my dear boys. I don't think I have deteriorated a bit. Hodgson, who had joined in all the conversation and expressed himself freely on every occasion, soon chimed in with a few specially selected and extra refined jokes at my expense, so that it is no wonder I got nettled. We had often met in the hunting field, where he was a very fair performer, though rather devoid of pluck, and where I grieve to say he had witnessed some of my unique per-

formances. I do not profess to be an Arthur Nightingall, and never mind the good-humoured chaff of my friends; but to be made the butt of this vulgar braggart's jokes was a little too much to bear. I noticed, too, that our host was getting annoyed at the way he was making everyone his common game, and presently he beckoned me to him, while Hodgson was making a stroke at billiards, and slipped a piece of paper into my hand. On it he had written in pencil, 'Offer to back yourself to beat him over the Cup Course here at the Steeplechases for £50 aside, he to ride one of his own horses, and you one of mine.' Dare I? Hartopp's eyes said 'Yes,' so after the next piece of witticism I fired my challenge at him. Hodgson stared, and then burst out laughing. 'Why ride one of Hartopp's?' he said. 'Ride one of your own high-bred gees, and I'm on; and I'll bet you £50 to £5 you don't get over the first two fences.'

"'No, no,' said our host, 'that's no match at all. We all know that Hamilton hasn't a horse that is fit to meet one of yours. Besides, you were making fun of his riding. It is not a matter of horseflesh at all. I shall be delighted to lend Hamilton The Camel if he will ride him, and will undertake to bring him fit and well to the post on the day of the races.'

"This seemed to meet with general approval, and although Hodgson tried to wriggle out of it, and to have the match arranged on his own terms, it was eventually decided that I should nominate Mr. Charles Hartopp's chesnut gelding, The Camel, to run Mr. Frederick Hodgson's bay gelding, Limerick, over the Cup Course at Stonebridge on the second day of the annual steeplechases at catch weights, for £50 a side. Now that all was settled, and I cooled down somewhat, I began to mourn for my £50. Given a Cloister to ride, I should of a certainty tumble off, and what did I know of The Camel? He might be a good hunter, but he looked an ugly beast, and a slovenly jumper, too, when I had seen Hartopp riding him

to hounds. However, I had done it now, and must put up with the consequences.

“‘There is one thing I must insist on, Hamilton,’ said my host. ‘As the result depends to no small extent on the behaviour of my horse, I shall stand half of the £50 stake, and I am ready to take some fancy bets, too. Hodgson, will you bet me £200 to £100 that Hamilton does not beat you?’

“‘Done,’ said Hodgson, whipping out his pocket book. ‘I’ll have that too, if you’ll lay it me,’ said I. ‘Good,’ said Hodgson; ‘will anyone else?’ No one seemed inclined to accept his offer, so with increasing boldness he turned to me: ‘If you are keen to back yourself, I’ll bet you £50 to £25 you fall off before you get half round the course, and an even tenner you come off at the first fence.’

“‘Very well,’ said I, ‘I’ll take you.’

“‘So will I,’ said Hartopp.

“After that things simmered down a bit, and in a short time we took ourselves off to bed. Hartopp tapped at my door on his way up to his room; his was a bachelor establishment.

“‘May I come in?’ he said.

“‘Certainly,’ I replied. ‘A nice mess you’ve got me into, old man.’

“‘Not at all,’ he replied. ‘We’ll give Master Hodgson a lesson that he won’t forget in a hurry, and one that will take some of the brag out of him.’

“‘Why, my good fellow, much as I value the opinion you have of my capabilities—and I myself have but poor hopes of ever getting round the course—I don’t want you to lose your money in that foolish way. Besides, can The Camel beat Limerick?’

“‘Give him a two stone and a beating,’ replied Hartopp; ‘he won no end of races in Ireland before I bought him; he jumps like oil, and a child could not fall off him.’

“‘Oh, that’s all very well,’ I said testily. ‘But I shall find the way soon enough.’

“‘Not you,’ he replied. ‘Now, you get yourself as fit as you can, and get as much practice at racing at your fences as possible before the event, and a week here, with a few gallops on the Camel, will put the finishing touches.’

“The eventful day arrived, and our match was the last item on the two days’ programme. I had got myself as fit as I could according to my own methods, and had done a course of racing at made-up fences, and tumbled off more often than not; but I found it was easier to sit a racehorse who caught hold a bit, and went fast at his fences, than my sticky-jumping hunters. Having gone the round of my racing friends for my lessons, I had gained no little experience. A week’s schooling on The Camel had, as Hartopp said it would, put the finishing touches, and if I did nothing else, I had provided my old friend with no end of amusement by my acrobatic performance in the saddle. Certainly The Camel did ‘jump like oil,’ and I never in my life rode an easier or safer conveyance.

“We weighed out, and Limerick was made a hot favourite at 4 to 1 on. Evidently the public did not value my chance very highly. Both horses were to carry 12st 3lbs., and the distance was three miles. Hodgson, in his light blue, dark blue sleeves and cap, looked as though the race was already over; he had offered to bet me that I fell at the water, but I thanked him and declined. I had enough money at stake. My colours were black and white hoops, black cap—Hartopp’s colours. He superintended the saddling, but just at the last minute sent my groom to the weighing room for another whip, as the one he had brought was broken.

“‘Just let me shift the saddle cloth,’ he said. ‘I see it’s a bit too forward. Now, up you go. And mind this: let The Camel go at his fences just as he likes, and you sit back and





hold fast to the saddle, if necessary. He knows better what to do than you do, and if you leave it to him and stop in the saddle he'll pull you through.'"

"What sort of a gee was Limerick?" asked Boucheret, as the Major paused for a drink.

"Big bay, sixteen hands, practically thoroughbred, and a good hunter. Not fast enough for a 'chaser, though," replied Hamilton.

"And The Camel?"

"An ugly liver-coloured thoroughbred chesnut, 16-1, capped hocks, good shoulders, and galloping quarters.

"The flag dropped and we were off. Limerick cut out the work, and The Camel went sailing away with an easy stride a length behind him. At the first fence I forgot to catch hold of the saddle, and nearly fell off. Hodgson thought I was off, and seemed a trifle disappointed. But the next and the next were safely left behind, for I let The Camel have his head, sat well back, and took a tight hold of the saddle. The first time past the stand Limerick was still a length or two to the good, and both horses had been fencing faultlessly. A mile from home, and I began to feel a bit blown; my seat in the saddle, too, was even less secure than it had been. Three fences from home, and oh! rapture! down comes Limerick. Then at the next fence, lost in my pride, off I tippie, too. Luckily I kept hold of the reins and the good old horse after dragging me a little distance, pulled up and stood like a cow while I remounted with difficulty. But Hodgson had remounted too, and we jumped the last fence side by side. Once more in my exhausted state I nearly tumbled off. Then the old horse woke into life, shot away from Limerick like an arrow from a bow, and with his rider hanging in a limp condition with both arms clasped round his neck, passed the winning post three lengths to the good; then he stopped suddenly, and his burden fell to the earth.

“I can just remember weighing in, and the clerk of the scales pronouncing me ‘all right,’ when Hodgson dashed in with his saddle on his arm.

“‘Has he drawn the weight?’ he asked.

“‘Yes, Mr. Hodgson,’ said Hartopp. ‘Why?’

“‘Oh, nothing,’ replied the other, looking scared. ‘I thought someone said he hadn’t.’

“‘Now, old man,’ said Hartopp, as I eagerly gulped down a tumbler of champagne, ‘I must tell you that I have sacked your groom, so we must see to your traps ourselves.’

“‘Sacked Morton!’ I exclaimed. ‘What on earth do you mean?’

“‘When I came on the course to-day, I saw Hodgson and that bright young man in close confabulation. Noticed that something passed from the former’s hand to the latter’s; thought there was something up, so decided to keep my eye on both. I wondered why my man Dale was not there to saddle The Camel, but I said nothing. Your astute young gentleman had sent him on a wild goose chase to look for me, and he only turned up as you left the paddock. Moreover, I was just quick enough to see Morton abstract a pound weight from your weight-cloth, and slip it under the rugs on the ground. I took it from under them when I sent him for another whip, having been careful enough to break yours, and I managed to replace it unseen by anyone. Now you know all about it.’

“‘But by Gad!’ he added, ‘I shall never back you to ride over a steeplechase course again. If you can’t stop on The Camel, you can’t stop on any horse.’

“And that’s the history of my first and last steeplechase, boys. Hodgson paid up all right, but I never saw him or Morton again, and poor Hartopp dying while I was in India, I have never been to Stonebridge since.”

## THE OLD HUNTSMAN'S STORY.

“ MAY I come in, Tom ? ”

“ Come in ? Of course you can, and welcome you'll be. I've had no one in all day, and it's not often I'm fixed that way, so that I'm doubly pleased to see you.”

“ I saw the front door open, so I thought I'd walk straight in, Tom, and I knew where I should find you, It's cold when the sun goes down.”

“ Yes, sir, it is, so my granddaughter fetched me in ten minutes ago.”

“ Have you had many people in to see you this week ? ”

“ Yes, sir, a very fair number. Sir Charles and her Ladyship came on Monday, Ben brought the hounds when out exercising on Wednesday, and there's been two or three gentlemen every day. Very well the hounds look under my grandson, and he'll make a good huntsman some day. He's the third Brown in succession to hunt the Hazledean.”

“ When did you come here, Tom ? ”

“ In '45, sir. I'd been riding second horseman in Lincolnshire before that, when old Will Smith hunted the Brocklesby. Rare men there were in those days—Tom Brooks, Field Nicholson, Jack Skipworth, Colonel Tufnell, the Upplebys, and the Nainbys, and the rest of them. I had a year or two here as whipper-in, then went, among other places, to Sir Richard as first whip, and came back here as huntsman, after a spell with another pack, in '60. I gave up in '82, my son Jim hunted them till he caught cold

and died in '93, and my grandson has hunted them ever since."

"Will you tell me the story about Miss Amy that you promised me the last time I was here?"

"Yes, sir, I will this evening. But it's dry work talking. Mary, bring some glasses and water, will you, my dear? Would you mind unlocking the liquor stand, sir? and that tobacco which Sir Charles sends me is very good, I think.

"It's a sad story, sir," said the old man, shaking his head, "and I don't often refer to it, seeing that my own daughter was mixed up in it. Well, you must know that it was in '67; Jim was twenty-three, and second whipper-in, and poor Bess was nineteen, as bonny a lass as one could wish to see. Miss Amy was about the same age, and while all the young fellows of our own station in life were wild about Bess, the best blood in England was tingling for Miss Amy. Both of 'em had two lovers who were first favourites, so to speak, but, like most girls who are much sought after, they could not decide which to have, first favouring one and then the other. My first whipper-in, Tom Day, was one of Bess's two, the other being young Harwood, the farmer's son from Eastleigh, while Captain Doyle and Mr. Onslow were the two that seemed to be Miss Amy's favourites. She was a wildish creature was Miss Amy, a terrible flirt, so I'm told, and had a manner of her own that drove the men crazy about her. But how she could ride! Take a line of her own and cross any country with the best of 'em; never wanted a pilot; all horses jumped with her, and the worst tempered went kindly in her hand. Captain Doyle was a real nice young fellow, and a great favourite with everyone; he wasn't particularly handsome, but he had a fine honest face, and a great strapping chap he was, too. Mr. Onslow was smaller,

and quite slim built; he had black hair and a black moustache, and fine white teeth that he was fond of showing, and was altogether a handsome man. Both were rare men to hounds—Miss Amy wouldn't have looked at them if they hadn't been—but Mr. Onslow had better cattle than Captain Doyle, being the richer of the two, and rode a two-stone lighter man as well; but then Captain Doyle, though quite as bold, was the best rider, and took more care of his horses. He always got off at the covert side; you would often see him walking by his horse's side, and he never bucketed them over heavy ground if he could help it."

The old huntsman paused to take a pull at his grog; then he proceeded:

"I remember it well; it was February, the best month in the year, to my mind, for sport, and that year we had an exceptional run of luck. That evening, after a capital gallop of over an hour, hounds having steadily run up to their fox, and killed him fairly and squarely in the open, Tom Day came in to ask if he might have a few words with me outside. I had been obliged to find fault with him two or three times that day; he had seemed inattentive and sleepy in his duties, yet as a rule he anticipated what I wanted, and a nod or a whistle was all he required. As it was, I had to tell him two or three times to turn hounds to me, and more than once when I wanted my hounds to try up a hedge side, he would get between them and the hedge, while once he let a fox go away right under his nose, and he would never have seen it if a gentleman had not said, 'You've given him two fields' law; hadn't you better holloa, Tom?'

"To finish up with, when coming home he opened a gate, went through himself, and let it slam right in the face of the hounds. Then I ripped out: 'Confound it, man, what's the matter with you? You've been no more

use than an old woman to-day. Are you ill, or what's the matter with you ?'

" 'I'm all right, sir,' he replied ; ' I'm very sorry, sir. I'm a bit worried, that's all.'

" 'Then don't bring your private worries into the hunting field,' I said. 'When you go out hunting, you want to worry about nothing but hunting.'

" Well, when we got into the feeding house, he said, ' You gave me leave a month ago to speak to your daughter, sir, and I did it, and she refused me. I asked her again last night ; she laughed in my face, and said she thought she could do a little better than a hunt-servant. I told her that I had spoken for the last time, and she replied that it was a good job, as she was getting tired of being worried by a lot of clodhoppers and rough-riders. I then asked her if she was going to marry Fred Harwood, and she said indeed no, she was going to marry a gentleman of position. Had he spoken to you ? I then asked, and she replied that he was going to take her up to London and marry her there, and then send word down as a pleasant surprise to you and Mrs. Brown. I begged her to be careful what she did ; that if the gentleman meant to marry her he could have come to you in a straightforward and honest manner and asked your consent, sir. She told me to mind my own business, as the gentleman was keeping it secret, as his own friends would object. Now, sir, that's what upset me to-day. I can take my refusal like a man ; but you have been a good master and a good friend to me ; I love your daughter, and if I can't marry her myself, I'll see that no one harms her if I can help it. Now, sir, is Bess safe in the house ? I ask because I saw a carriage waiting at the end of the lane just now, but it drove off before I could get to it, so I ran across the paddock, and just got in time to see it

pass down the Hellingford road. I distinctly saw the face of Mr. Onslow, but I could not see whether anyone was with him.'

"'Mr. Onslow!' I cried. 'Why the dickens did you not say this before?' I demanded angrily.

"'Because I don't know even now whether Bess is in the house or not. A nice thing if I'd said, "Bess has run away with Mr. Onslow in a carriage from the end of the lane," and then she had been in the house all the time.'

"'Wait!' I cried, and rushing into the house I shouted to my wife—'Mary, is Bess in the house?'

"'Of course she is,' replied my wife. 'She went to bed an hour ago with a bad headache, and said she should not want any supper.'

"'Just run up and see how she is—say I want to speak to her.'

"Down came my wife in less than a minute. 'Tom!' she cried, 'she's not there. Her bed's never been slept in, and there's this note pinned to the coverlid.' I tore open the envelope.

"The note said she was running away to be married to the man she loved, that her destination would be kept a secret, and that we should hear from her as soon as the ceremony was over.

"That marriage ceremony never took place, and we never heard from her for two years, and then it was to say she was dead. She left a letter at her lodgings to be forwarded to us before going out to throw herself over London Bridge at midnight.

"But to go back. Directly I had read the note she had left in her little room at the Kennels, I rushed out to Tom. 'Tom!' I cried. 'You're right, she's gone! Put the old mare in at once. We may save her yet.'

"'Hellingford road, you said, Tom, didn't you?' as we

dashed off into the night. 'Then they've gone to catch the train there to put us off the scent.'

"Of course we missed the train, but we found that no lady and gentleman had gone by the express, which was stopped by signal for London passengers, except Mr. and Mrs. Newbold and two servants from the Priory.

"'They must have turned down the private road through the park and gone to Bentley after all,' said Tom.

"Sorrowfully we drove there, but could gain no tidings of the runaways, as a great many folk had gone to London this Saturday evening, a custom of many of our hunting people, and they returned either on Sunday night or Monday morning.

"'What is to be done, Tom?' I asked.

"'Follow them to London, sir,' he replied.

"I shook my head. 'No use, my lad. There's only the slow train at a quarter to eleven to-night, and we might as well look for a needle in a bottle of straw as expect to find Bess in London.'

"'We might go and see if Mr. Onslow is at The Lodge,' he remarked, all of a sudden.

"'So we will,' I replied. And off we went to The Lodge, Mr. Onslow's hunting box. Trueman, the butler, answered the door, and stared no little to see who the callers were.

"'Why, what on earth brings you here at this time of night, Mr. Brown?' he asked, with surprise.

"'I want to see Mr. Onslow,' I said.

"'Well, I'm afraid you can't, to-night,' he replied, 'because he's gone to Sandford till Monday.'

"'Are you sure?' I asked.

"'Certain. I heard him tell Parker (the coachman) that he wanted the carriage to catch the 9.20 express from London, and he told me himself he was going to Sandford, and would not be back till Monday morning. His horses are to meet him at Becklington station, and his valet is to pack

and send his hunting things to the Stapleton Arms in the dog-cart, where he will dress.'

"Then his valet did not go?'

"No.'

"Who drove him?'

"Lamming.'

"Oh! By the way, that reminds me, I want to see Lamming. Will he be gone to bed?'

"No. He's just had his supper and gone to look at the horses again.'

"Well, good-night. I'm sorry Mr. Onslow is away; but I shall see him on Monday, as we meet at Becklington station.

"If Lamming drove him, Tom,' I remarked as we went round to the stables, 'we shall learn nothing. He's one of the biggest scamps unhung, and sure to be well paid to keep his mouth shut.'

"Nor did we. Lamming stoutly averred that he drove Mr. Onslow direct to Bentley, that he picked up no one by the way, and that his master caught the London train with five minutes to spare.

"That man's lying, I'll swear,' said Tom between his teeth, as sorrowfully we drove homewards; and I need not tell you that we all, my wife, Jim (who was up at the Hall when we started) and I, spent a most miserable night.

"The next day I told Sir John, who was most kind and promised to do his best for me; but, after all, what could he do? On Monday we met at Becklington Station, and there, sure enough, was Mr. Onslow and Lamming, with his two horses, Parker having driven the dog-cart there with his master's clothes. With so little to go on, what could I say to the man, especially as later on he came up to me and said he had heard of my trouble, and that he would be glad to do anything he could to help to trace the girl?"

The old man's voice grew husky, and he gulped down a glass of grog quickly.

"Come, come, sir," he said, "you're getting nothing. Help yourself, now do."

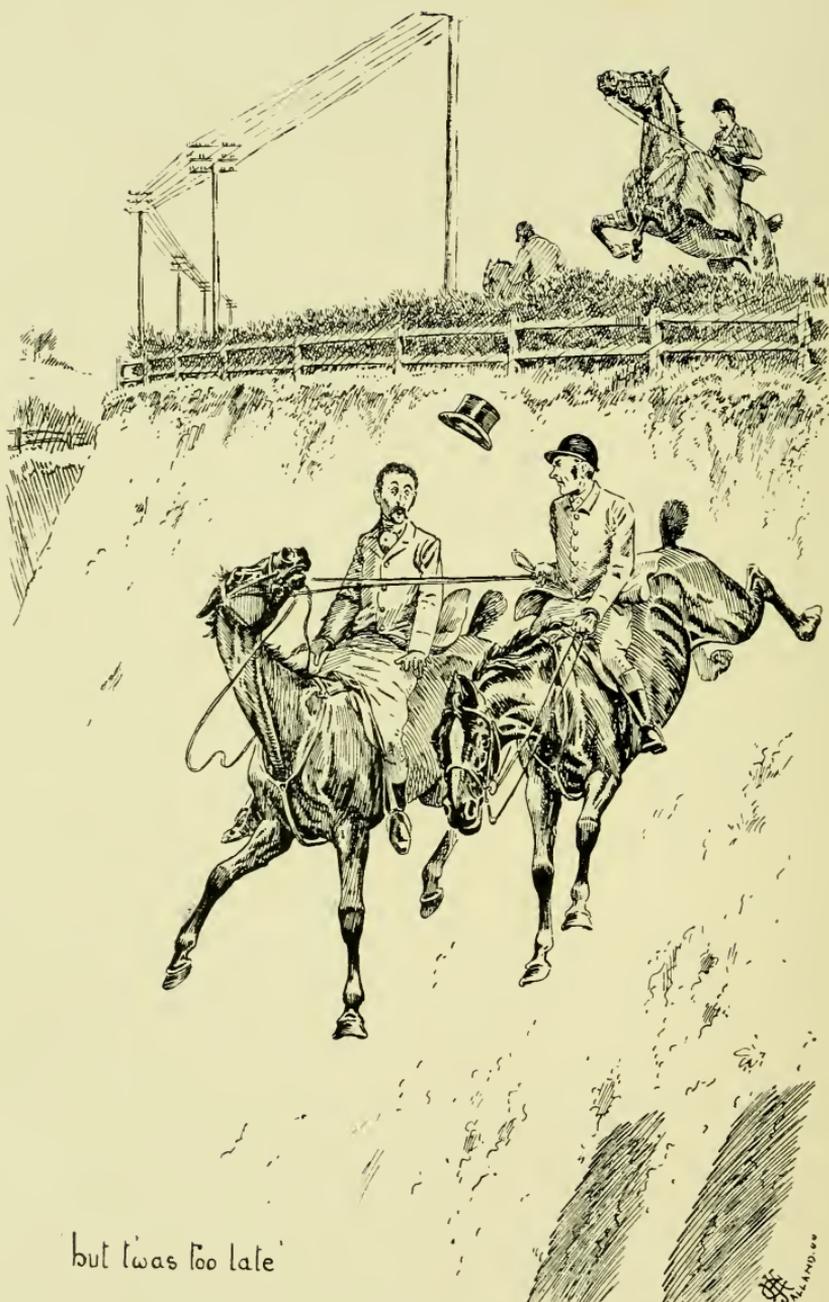
Then after a vigorous blowing of the nose he began again.

"Time went on, and, as I said before, nothing was heard of my poor girl. Miss Amy married Mr. Philip Onslow, and, from various rumours, she did not have a happy life of it; he had bought Newport Longdon Hall, a big hunting establishment, and both went as well as ever. Captain Doyle had been ordered to India with his regiment, where he greatly distinguished himself, and died a Colonel only a few years ago.

"Then came the last letter ever written by my poor girl, and the news of her death was in every morning paper the same day. She said that for some time she believed herself a married woman, a ceremony of some sort having taken place, and then shame kept her from communicating with us, her parents. For some time Onslow treated her kindly, and spent a considerable amount of his time with her; then his manner changed, he became more and more brutal, and finally cast her off just before his marriage with my master's daughter. He gave her a fair sum of money, which of course soon went; after that she got some sort of employment occasionally, and just before her death was earning a few pence a day by making artificial flowers; but starvation, misery, and disgrace made her resolve to end her wretched existence.

"I shall never forget the effect the news had on us; poor Tom Day cried like a child. I was for going off to see Sir John at once and branding the man, his son-in-law, who had wronged me thus, but Tom intervened. 'Leave him to me for one day, only one day,' he pleaded. 'No, Tom,' I said, 'it's my affair. Don't do anything in a hurry, then. Think





but 'twas too late

W. H. ALLEN

of Miss Amy (we always called her Miss Amy, even after her marriage); at least wait till to-morrow.'

"And glad I am that that poor girl died without knowing her husband's true character. What Tom Day meant to do we shall never know, but his revenge was complete and terrible, and it was made all the more horrible in that it involved an innocent person.

"We met that day at Dawtry Hall, and Tom soon contrived to get a word with Mr. Onslow, when most of the people were in at breakfast. He asked my leave to have a few words apart with the man, and they rode a little distance away. What they said to each other no one knows, but on their return I heard Tom use the words 'Coward! cur!' and his last words were: 'Then follow me to-day if you dare!'

"We found in the gorse at once, and Tom, who viewed him break, got away nicely on the right of the pack, holloaing cheerfully to Mr. Onslow to 'Come on, sir!'

"Onslow looked very ugly, but he crammed on in pursuit. He never looked after his wife now, but Miss Amy was always well mounted, and generally took a line of her own. However, on that day she was riding a rather sticky jumper; he was a good hunter, but rather given to refusing a big place unless another horse gave him a lead, so Miss Amy generally followed close behind her husband when riding him. There was a rare scent, sir, and hounds fairly raced that day, and it was as much as I could do to keep with them; but Tom Day and Mr. and Mrs. Onslow were a long way first. You know the line, sir. Dawtry Cover on the right hand, Templeton village on the left; then we bent slightly to the left for Foxholes, but the earths in the spinney were closed and hounds never paused. On up the slope we went, hounds getting still further in front, past the little church—on our right—jumped the flight of rails running from the Round covert, crossed the next two fields, and then I turned to the left

though hounds still went on, for we were running straight for——”

“The railway cutting,” I cried.

“Yes, sir, straight for the railway cutting.

“‘Tom!’ I shouted, ‘you can’t get over!’

“‘It’s all right!’ he shouted back. ‘Come on, sir,’ to Onslow; ‘I know a way.’ What madness was he up to? Then I saw him draw back to Onslow as the latter slackened his pace; he leant over and spoke to him, then, raising his whip, he flogged the man’s horse unmercifully, as he at the same time crammed the spurs into his own mare’s flanks. A few paces from the hedge I saw Onslow slacken his pace, but Day leant over him and seized the reins, a cry of terror broke from the unhappy man, and both horses with their riders disappeared.

“But our horror was not yet complete, for there was Mrs. Onslow making desperate struggles to stop her own horse, who was bent on following the others. Dashing in the spurs, I raced to her assistance, in the hope that I might cannon into them and stop the fatal leap. But ’twas too late; my own horse swerved from the fence, and over to her death went that fair young thing.

“That’s all, sir. They were all dead when somebody got to them, both horses and human beings.”

## NOTE.

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