THE SPORT OF KINGS

Racing Stories

BY

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Author of "What Will the World Say?" "Only a Woman," "Some Little of the Angel Still Left," "Uncle Phil," and "Frank Logan."

"The happiness of any life is the proper perfection of that being; and hence, as the perfection of beings differ, so do their felicities."—PLATO.

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THIS LITTLE VOLUME
Is respectfully inscribed to

LOVERS OF THE THOROUGHBRED HORSE,
The only true aristocrat.

"His royal blood flowing in his veins with pristine
purpleness after the passing of centuries,
He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted:
neither turneth he back from the sword."

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WHO RODE LA SYLPHIDE?

I.

A STORY OF THE LEXINGTON RACE COURSE.

Near the Phoenix Hotel, more than twenty years ago, two men chanced to meet. They were "Old Sports," so designated; for while disconnected with the respectable, legitimate turf, they earned a precarious livelihood by doing business on lines—not always commendable—incidental to turf matters: and perhaps no other calling fixes its impress with such unerring certainty.

It is not the gorgeous waistcoat and flashy necktie emblazoned with a golden horse shoe. Nor yet the gleaming diamond on the left-hand fourth finger so much as the facial expression engendered by constantly recurring alternations of intensified hopes and fears—the elation with winning, and the dejection of losing.

They shook hands, and reciprocally asked: "How is times?" Fortune had been kind to both, and they said so; but the inmost soul of each man was burdened with a tormenting mystery. With a single exception there had been no turf secret that they had not been able to probe to the very bottom. This ex-

ception was the occasion of humiliating sorrow, and indicated, as they feared, failing powers—hence, the anxious enquiry: "Has it been found out yit who rid La Sylphide?"

The answer was delivered slowly, reluctantly:

"Not as I have heard on for dead certain; but there is some that lets on that they suspicion it mought have been a woman."

" 'Twarn't no woman. I seed him tolerable clost when old Mat fetched him outen the weighin' room. He was eenmost as black as a nigger, and he was a puny chap, and looked half-dead with the breast complaint, chokin', coughin' and sneezin' alarmin.' I had right smart money on the mare, and she bein', as every body knows, a difficult mount, I was tore up in my mind considerable about her jock. So me and some other fellows tried to crowd in to git near enough to size him up, but old Mat let fly at us the worsts' language I ever hearn—he's got a moughty rough aige to his tongue; and what surprised me was the sugerry way he spoke to that thar boy—so onerary lookin' too—and lifted him up to the saddle jest as keerful."

The exceeding beauty of a Kentucky stock farm cannot be adequately described when the trees are in the graceful foliage of early summer, the glowing sun, in generous profusion, pouring down the warmth of his golden light all over the living sheen of the luxuriant blue-grass. And beneath the azure sky fresh and fragrant are the breezes wafted over sweetest flowers. The butterflies dance and glance, mak-

ing a gleam of tangled colors as they come and go, flashing hither and thither, or settling to feed on the rich hearts of blooming plants.

Within the ten counties distinctively the "Blue Grass Region," there was no lovelier estate than the one over which Jack Chetwyn is conducting his blue-eyed, new-made wife toward the training stable to exhibit to her, as he proudly said: "The most beautiful creature on earth—save only you *ma mie.*" Assured of the sympathy from the new partner in the firm, he continued: "With the paternal acres I inherited the race stock, and have always had my fair share of fliers, and I have one now that leads them all. But she has the drawback of an uncontrollable temper, and she is full of such freaks as are past finding out. And she has in her time caused bitter sorrow to many a gallant plunger; though all the while when we were in New York, so gaily fluttering away our honeymoon, I had repeated letters from my trainer saying that she had turned over a new leaf, and doing as well as heart could wish. So well that he had entered her in a mile-and-quarter handicap, and had backed her for every cent he could raise. As a rule, I do not bet on my horses, but catching the infection from Davis, who is rarely over-sanguine, I sent on a large commission, and, dear"—he continued rather sheepishly—"that's not all—I did so want to buy for you that lot of diamonds you admired at Tiffany's—but the price was too steep for my means. However, the great news about the mare so exhilarated me that I gave my I. O. U. for them."

"Oh, Jack," she said reproachfully, and almost in tears, "I really did not care for the diamonds so very much, and if I did, it was only a passing fancy. Now should the mare not win I shall feel like a horrid wretch."

"Don't worry, dear; La Sylphide—is not that a pretty name?—will certainly win." His tone carried conviction, she felt reassured, she believed in her Jack. And it seemed to her that his admission about the diamonds was very magnanimous, and then and there she resolved to be on even terms with him in open-heartedness. She, too, would make a confession:

"Jackey," she said deprecatingly, "don't be shocked, but once upon a time I was a terrible tomboy. When I left school I was delicate, had a cough, and papa sent me down to Uncle Ben's cattle ranch in Texas, where I stayed a whole year and learned to ride. I took to horses, and horses took to me—I have broken many a colt no one else could do anything with. And many a race I have won over the prairies with my cousins—and beat them—the horses would run freer for me. Uncle Ben often said of me and my mount that we did not seem a pair, only just one embodiment. There was such unity and friendship. You do not understand."

"I do understand," he answered; "there never was a time when I was not fond of a good horse. A good horse I regard with profound admiration. Many of his traits tally closely with the best traits of the noblest human; faithful, loving, courageous—even when writhing under an injury so ready to forgive.

For a kind word he will put forth his best efforts. And forsaking his kind he will give all, willing to labor, to suffer, to die." Suddenly the panegyric ceased a panoramic view of the stable environments presented. "Hi! yi! What's going on? There seems to be a shindy."

Jack Chetwyn's blood almost froze in his veins seeing what he saw. A beautiful bay mare, held with difficulty by two stout stablemen, was prancing, kicking, wheeling, jumping, backing, in short performing, apparently simultaneously, every action within the compass of violently energized and tremendous muscularity. Mr. Mat Davis, the trainer, who was standing near, his countenance faithfully portraying combined anger, horror and despair. These emotions were quickly communicated to the face of Mr. Chetwyn as he rapidly arrived at the scene.

"What's the matter, Davis?" he asked. "What ails the mare?"

Old Mat, with great presence of mind—he had pride in his manners—bowed to the lady, whose fleetness of foot rivalled her husband's, before answering gloomily: "In my opinion, it's a case of all-possessed, gone luny all of a sudden. She has been goin' kind as a suckin' dove—the littles' boy in the stable could exercise her. But jest now she comes out of her stall in sech a fury as never was, and she throwed boy arter boy as fast as we could fling them into the saddle. This stable is turned into a hospital. There ain't a sound rider left." This melancholy statement receives confirmation: groans and lamentations com-

ing from some half-dozen small-sized humans scattered around in various stages of ruin. "And what we are going to do—the races not three weeks off—I don't know. But it all could be rectified ef that blasted mare—I beg your pardon, mum—hadn't throwed us over. We that had sech awful good prospects! We stood to win a fearful pile of money. Now, every thing has gone to blue smash. Ef steamboats was sellin' for ten cents apiece we couldn't, collectively, buy a yawl. And worse yit. Oh, Daniel the Prophet! there's my sister that I persuaded, I felt so sure of that infernal mare—I beg your pardon, mum—to take the long odds with that hard cash she had saved up to pay off that mortgage that's h'isted on the house over her head." Completely overcome, he turned away to hide the moisture gathering in his eyes.

It was not merely the contemplation of the pecuniary loss, great as it was, that so moved him, but the sudden demolition of hopes, the dearest and sweetest, which he had allowed to curl, twine, and to take root in a heart that had few affections, and fewer weaknesses. How many times had his gaze wandered over the beautiful mare with rigid scrutiny after she had been "called on" in her work. Not a muscle from stifle to fetlock escaped his hand, light and sensitive, to detect puff or strain, and unblemished, she remained sound as a dollar, with appetite unimpaired. It was human-nature to shut his eyes, and in fancy hear the roar of the ring rampant in victory. And to hear the multitudinous congratulations that would be showered upon him. Ah! how

bitter was the awakening. How hard the sober reality, now to face. There seemed nothing before him but the misery of defeat.

"Don't fret, Mr. Davis," said Mrs. Chetwyn kindly; "the darkest hour is before day."

The trainer shook his head, refusing comfort, but he watched the lady with some interest as she fearlessly approached the fractious steed after a concentrated gaze lasting not over thirty second, unheeding the warnings of the two men who were being dragged about like children, that she would have "her brains kicked out." Without hesitation she placed her pretty hand on the mare's arching frothy neck, gently cooing in her soft voice, "Soi, soi, you beauty." An instantaneous impression was made on the heart and mind of La Sylphide, and she lowered her head to be stroked, testifying unbounded approval of the newcomer, who, taking the reins in her own hand, commanded the attendants to let her go. And pulling the off stirrup over, bounded into the saddle, and galloped away through the open gate, and out upon the track.

Helpless, Mr. Chetwyn looked after her, his heart in his mouth.

Once, twice, thrice the frolicsome pair careened around the mile course. The lady then cantered back, and gleefully springing to the ground, exclaimed: "What a glorious creature she is! She moves like a bird! I am in love with her." Her affections were fully returned; La Sylphide had never been so happy in her life, and seemed ready to jump out of her skin with delight as she gambolled and

frisked around, and fawned upon Mrs. Chetwyn, who laughingly said: "Behave yourself, you dear foolish creature; I am going to put you right back into your stall. The mare submitted with admirable docility.

The lady then returned to her husband, whose appearance did not indicate approbation, and she promptly began: "Now, don't scold, Jack. It was such a pleasure."

"A pleasure," he replied with asperity, "that I shall take especial care you will not enjoy again. I never was so terribly frightened in my life."

"Well, don't beat me," she said, with a merry laugh. Her gaiety was so infectious that his brow cleared. "Now, Jackey," she continued in a mellifluent tone, "don't make an old woman of yourself, but go and have an all-round look at the horses, while I attempt to comfort poor Mr. Davis. I believe he is weeping."

She carried the trainer off with her for a little distance. What she said to him nobody heard, but she talked long and earnestly. When she turned to come away no one could have said that Mr. Davis was weeping. But he looked like a man sentenced to death. Mrs. Chetwyn, on the contrary, seemed in the highest spirits, her face wearing a commingled look of exultation and resolve—such as probably glorified the face of Deceus when he made his heroic plunge, sacrificing life for his country; or as looked a noble martyr sublimely marching to the stake to meet a fiery death for the hope that gilds the world.

As Jack Chetwyn's wife came smilingly to meet

him, he thought that she had never looked so bewilderingly lovely. Pardon him, reader, he is yet in the idiotic state incidental to initial matrimony, and he hoped that she was not going to ask to be allowed to ride La Sylphide again. He feared that it would not be possible to deny any request that she would make. She did not ask to ride La Sylphide, but she said, and her voice was low and sweet: "Jackey, *my darlint*, Aunt Rebecca is a good deal complaining, and she wants me to pass a week or two with her. I do not like to refuse her, she was so kind to papa when he was all broken up after the war. It was her money that started him in business. But you will be busy with the horses and won't miss me."

"I will though, but I suppose Aunt Rebecca must have her way for this once."

"Of course she must. Now don't be a goose, Jack. You can expect me to go with you to see La Sylphide win her race."

As they walked homeward, *promenade a deux*, her beguiling tongue brought him to a very hopeful view about the prospect of his horses: "They were all sound, and some hints had been given Mr. Davis, without wounding his feelings, about the management of La Sylphide."

Truth is mighty and will prevail, and it is useless to deny that Jack Chetwyn, left alone without the bright, buoyant presence which had so soon become to him what sunshine is to the flower, that his spirits sank rapidly. There is a popular superstition among horsemen to the effect that when racers by extraordinary good luck, which, in plain English, means good

management, are brought up sound, and in blooming condition till the time is near at hand for them to face the starter, then, should one go amiss, a baneful epidemic is communicated, which will go through the stable. Also, that unfortunate I. O. U. forged to the front insistantly. "I don't know," he communed within himself, with commendable veracity, "what made me such a simpleton. I knew the dear little soul wasn't hungry for diamonds, but I had a yearning to give them to her. Well! well! if the worst come, I will sell the horses, and maybe some of the acres. Meanwhile I'll look sharp after the horses. And wouldn't it be a joy if La Sylphide should win."

Going to the stable he found old Mat in a horrible humor, apparently without cause, for the racers were taking their work well—only the mare was not visible.

"Why is not La Sylphide out?" asked Mr. Chetwyn.

Had old Mat been struck between the eyes, he could hardly have shown greater exasperation, but he answered: "I got her worked, somehow, yearly this mornin', by herself, to keep her quiet." Scowling fiercely at the owner, he continued, "See here, Mr. Jack, I've got on my hands the biggest contract about that cussed mare that ever a man had; and if her race was well over, I'd eenmost be willin' to work for you the rest of my nateral life free, gratis, and for nothin'," he sighed deeply. "I've got to, no backin' out, to keep on with her. And I am goin' to do it my own way, and don't you interfere. I'm doin' all a man kin do, and we've got a chance to win—ef Providence don't split on us."

Mr. Chetwyn had got "his office." To oppose a trainer is against all traditions, and the days passed bringing unmitigated discomfort to him, principally owing to the sustained ferocity of Mr. Davis's temper. What was being done with La Sylphide he did not dare to ask. For whole days he would sit on the topmost rail of the enclosure around the stable-buildings, gazing dumbly at the mare's closely locked door. He missed his wife. He pined for the comfort she would be sure to give him. And how happy he felt on the day of her expected return—the eventful day of the mare's race. But in place of Mrs. Chetwyn, came a note, expressing regret, but saying it would not be possible for her to return home till late afternoon, and without her he must go to see La Sylphide win her race. Jack Chetwyn crushed the note in his hand, lost heart, and almost decided not to go to the races at all. A frightful picture rose before his eyes —La Sylphide brought on the track and acting like mad. In a despairing mood he walked to his stables, where there was a silence of death. He was briefly informed by Mr. Davis, who seemed the incarnation of rage, that only the mare would start to-day, and that she had been sent to the Association's track. "And now, Mr. Jack," snarled the trainer, "I've got before me the hardest day's work mortal man ever had, and I won't be pestered with you. Jest you take your place in the grand stand, and stay there, *no matter what happens*, till our race is over. What's goin' to happen the Lord in Heaven only knows. But I wish I was dead!"

The Kentucky Association is the oldest living rac-

ing club in America. Organized 1826 by about fifty of the prominent turfmen of central Kentucky. These gentlemen, passing away, were succeeded by others, who, in turn, made way for their successors. For long years here was the best racing in America, and characterized by decorum and fairness. Bar accidents, the best horse would win. Each jockey knew that he must ride fair, and win if he could.

The world's best fighters had their moments of fear, and Jack Chetwyn had a strong inclination to "flicker"—to keep out of it, but with an effort he nerved himself to face consequences. But he could not remember of ever previously feeling so utterly miserable as when he passed through the entrance gate and made his way to the grand stand. Unsociable, he did not respond with cordiality to the many efforts made to engage him in conversation. "Excuse me," he said, hurrying on. "Well, stay," was persisted, "long enough to tell us who it is with the outlandish name that is going to ride your mare."

"I really don't know. Somebody that Davis has picked up," answered Chetwyn, hurrying away. Looking after him a puzzled turfite said discontentedly: "I wonder what is the matter with Jack Chetwyn. He ought not to have got married if he's going to turn rusty on his old pals." A grave voice responded: "I have heard that his mare has been playing the dickens. That is a dispensation few can bear up under jovially—I have been there myself."

It was some minutes after, Mr. Chetwyn finding a seat, looked at the program held loosely in his hand. Thoughts of La Sylphide filling his brain he began

to hate the mare and to wish that she had died in infancy. Then he was conscious of a feeling of compassion for the unlucky chap going to ride her, and mechanically he sought out the name; and it was plain to read: "John Chetwyn's bay mare, La Sylphide, by Fellowcraft—dam Sylph by Imp. Glenelg; jockey Pheohki."

Jack Chetwyn was a high-minded, high-bred American, and if he did not aspire to be dashingly courageous, he could always be decently collected, but he felt strangely unnerved at the sight of that name; it seemed instinct with sinister warning—it affected him in a harassing way, as if some one he dearly loved were in peril. But the thought that his wife was safe with Aunt Rebecca, and that he would soon have her to himself again, enabled him to shake off the depressing influence—measurably.

Second only to the inviolability of the Masonic secrets, supposed to be, were the affairs of a training stable. But let a horse go wrong, the birds of the air—the breezes of heaven seem to divulge it, and La Sylphide's misconduct had leaked out, and deeply anxious were those who had made investments about her. But of late the earth might as well have opened and swallowed her up, so little enlightenment had been obtained. It was now known, however, that in the early morning she had been brought to her quarters on the racing grounds. But no one had seen her. Not even for the preliminary gallop had she been brought out. And, unambitious of a broken head, no one had asked questions from Mr. Davis who, looking like vengeance, sat in a splint-bottomed

chair, tilted against the mare's door, and when the order came to bring the mare on the track, his only reply was a brief mention of the place of torment. But when his own split-second timer informed him categorically that he had not an instant to lose, with a deep groan he arose, unlocked the door, and brought out the mare, giving her in charge of one of the men. Then he brought out a lad completely wrapped in a large coarse cloak. Little of him could be seen. From his blue cap his black hair descends in whisks, almost concealing his face. At the scales the cloak was removed, but a blue scarf swaddles neck and face, the boy coughing and choking as if he would burst a blood-vessel.

"He's got a cold," explained Mr. Davis gruffly, "and there wasn't no time left to change riders;" adding sardonically, "these jocks 'round here ain't none of them too keen to pilot this mare."

When lifted to the saddle the boy dropped into an ungainly lump. While the racers were lining up for the start, old Mat, with firm hold of the bridle, said: "This mare is vicious. I wish I may die if she did not eenmost clean out that Favordale colt at Fordham. I'll take her back'ards, and let her loose when the field is off—to prevent accidents."

When the start is made, the horses off, the jockey on La Sylphide, still in a lump, made no effort to decrease the wide gap opened. The mare's backers were excited and wrathful, and a perfect storm bursts from a frantic mob.

"Go along, boy! What are you hanging back for? Are you going to sleep?" Some of the desperate

ones would willingly revive the obsolete *argumentum ad lapides.*

"Bump on a log! He's going to milk!" roared a jubilant plunger whose money was not on La Sylphide.

The mare and jockey, seemingly of one mind about the pace—a "bad last" having no terror—take the "heart-breaking hill," where so many good horses have given up the ghost, so to speak, inexhaustively. But the hill surmounted then comes a surprise—the vast multitude almost ceased to breathe. The boy on La Sylphide uplifts himself, and sat down to ride. The willing mare, given her head, and rapidly passing her tiring field, shoots to the front, and comes flying down the stretch at a flight of speed never witnessed before by the oldest race-goers, and reaches the winning post an easy winner.

People look at one another in amazement when the time for the mile and quarter is hung out: 2:7½—the fastest time ever made on the Lexington track—and not since equaled.

After the weighing in, old Mat, like a whirlwind, pounced upon the boy, and throwing the cloak around him and carrying him in his arms, thrusting him into a waiting carriage, shouts to the coachman: "Drive like lightning."

A wondrous joy lights up his homely face as he receives into his own hands the bridle-reins of the gallant mare.

Winning a race in marvelous time does not constitute the best and purest joy, but it is very dazzling and seductive.

Old Mat's dream of victory is realized with its corollary of felicities. His name is shouted, and congratulations galore. Many rush eagerly to touch his hand. Others, that cannot get near enough, reach over and touch him with their walking sticks.

Catching sight of Mr. Chetwyn, he shouted: "We win, Mr. Jack-"

II.

WHY THERE WAS NO SERMON AT MOUNT GILEAD.

"When God erects a house of prayer,
The Devil always builds a chapel there,
And t'will be found on examination,
The latter has the largest congregation."

In bygone days, owing to the high estate of its principal patrons, Old Hickory at the head, racing was very fashionable in Tennessee; and the love of the thoroughbred horse pervaded all classes, masses, and ranks. Even the clergy did not escape the contagion—perhaps it had got into the constitution, and had to run its course in a modified form.

The Rev. Hubbard Saunders owned the broodmare, Rosy Clack, and bred, among other distinguished performers on the turf, Tennessee Oscar who, like the English Highflyer, and Major Ball's Florizel, never paid forfeit, nor suffered defeat, or felt the touch of whip or spur.

The dam of the noted quartet—the "Four Tennessee Brothers"—Madam Tonson, was the property of the Rev. H. H. Cryer. When she died he had her respectably buried, and that she should not be forgotten, published an obituary notice. Small wonder then that some of the honest sons of toil—the back-

bone of a country—should follow the lead of their betters. Notably, were two small farmers and neighbors, namely, Hiram Jones and Jason Smith. Each, owning a few thoroughbred broodmares, trained and raced the produce.

As their hearts were in the business, nothing calculated to ensure success was omitted, and they prospered accordingly. But the strange thing happened to both, that while in Nashville, attending a race-meeting, and attracted by motives of curiosity, went together to hear the preaching of that extraordinarily eloquent Methodist divine, Maffit. It was as good seed sown on rankly good ground. In brief, they were converted, became members of the church; and in the glow of a newly awakened and fervid faith, horse-racing which had been to them the ultima thule of terrestrial joys, now appeared as one of the most powerful allurements of the Evil One to win over souls to everlasting perdition; and on returning to their homes, sold the thoroughbreds, and energetically began to walk, trot, nay, gallop in the new life inculcated by a radical change of heart. Nor was it enough to feel that they were making their own calling and election sure; there were other souls to be saved, and they went about pleading, praying, exhorting, until the entire neighborhood was metamorphized into a religious community. Logs were cut, a church erected, and application made to the General Conference for a preacher. To them was sent Brother Amos Peacemaker, and never did clerical garb sit on worthier shoulders. To his sincere piety was added a herculean frame and a courageous spirit,

and to begin as he meant to hold out, on the first occasion of his ministration he announced, that no backsliding, no slothful, no lukewarm Christianity would be tolerated, that he would have none other than a sober, decent, God-fearing congregation.

Brothers Smith and Jones, in their capacity of presiding elders, were very zealous, inspired by the feeling that as especial brands they had been plucked from the burning and were chosen vessels, appointed, and divinely commissioned to aid in the glorious work of saving souls, and they were ready to repeat what that great Apostle said almost two thousand years ago: "Though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee"—yet we all know what happened to him before the crowing of the cock. Human nature at its best can rarely stand the trial, as it were, by fire, and "let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off." All too soon the Tempter cunningly prepared a snare, by means of which, to enter into the habitations so newly swept and garnished, and to battle with, and to drive out the angel.

The Sabbath day was rarely beautiful. The branches of the trees were outlined clear and distinct against the pale, pure blue of the morning sky tenderly flushed with the faintest rose-pink. There was no sound far or near save the rythmic whisperings of the gentle breeze, and the sweet wild-birds caroling their tunes of praise to Him who hath said: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." The little church, Mount Gilead, was filled to overflowing with worshipers awaiting in decorous silence the com-

ing of Brother Peacemaker to open the services. 'Twas then that Brother Jones, seeing the opportunity, invited Brother Smith to withdraw from the church when they could, out in the open air, have a full, free, private, and prayerful interchange of views upon a certain church matter left to their decision. Both desirous of the best means for the greater good, an agreement was soon reached, leaving some time on their hands—Brother Peacemaker unaccountably delayed.

Ah, the pity of it, but not till the millennium shall have come, and the lamb can lie down with the wolf, and the child may place its hand on the cockatrice's den; and the malignant Spirit of Evil chained for a thousand years, will he lose his power for the tempting of the saints.

Oh, Brother Jones, oh, Brother Smith, take heed to your selves. You have not overturned the salt, nor sat at table with thirteen, nor seen the new moon through foliage of trees, yet, even now, you are overshadowed by an evil influence, and the Arch Enemy is near. Gird on your armor to resist valiently—you are in a danger unseen, unsuspected.

"Brother Smith," said Brother Jones in a pained, faltering voice, "I want your prayers. I need 'em, fer latterly, at times I am troubled in my mind. Doubts and fears and misgivings comes a-creepin' and a-crawlin' over me, leastways, arter being so run mad 'bout the savin' of other people's souls, I mought myself become a cast-a-way."

"Brother Jones," replied Brother Smith, feelingly, and in deep contrition, "I will confess to you that I,

too, have been afflicted with jest some of them same sort of senti-ments. In groanings of sperit I have wrastled agin it, but now and then I look longingly back arter the flesh-pots of Egypt."

A compassionate and friendly hand was laid on Brother Smith's shoulder, as Brother Jones replied, his voice quivering with earnestness: "That old sarpint, Sattin, has been a chunking of me too, and it mought be bekase of a consentin' ter sin—when I sold my race stock, I kept back Patty Puffs' yearlin' filly, which I hadn't orter done. But she was a rale beauty and I couldn't make up my mind ter part with her, which I had oughter done. In course, I didn't 'low ter train her; but I thought she'd make a capital ridin' nag fer Betsey."

"Wall, now, that's quare, it rely is," said Brother Smith, "but that's eggzackly what happened ter me 'bout a yearlin' filly of Madam Tonson's stock. I never seen a finer figger of a filly—and, to-day she is Eliza Jane's ridin' nag. Brother Jones, it was a solemn and a bindin' pledge we made when we promised ter keep ourselves unstained, and unspotted from the world, the flesh and the devil. It was easy at fust. I was so lifted up with speritual rejoicin' that I clean lost sight of cawnal hankerin's; but now, sometimes—I do fight agin it—but it comes over me that hoss racin' is goin ter be ter me a stone of stumblin' and a rock of offense. I know it's a fallin' from grace; but ter save my life I can't always put away from my mind and memory the delights of them wicked days, its heart-breaks nuther"—he sighed—

"the sperit is willin', but the flesh is weak—moughty weak."

"That's so," said Brother Jones. "Them was days when we was in the bonds of sin, and the gall of iniquity. But they pester me yit. I fergits nothin'. I kin shet my eyes and feel jest the same misery I felt when that Kaintucky hoss, Rodolf, beat out Tennessee mare, Angora, in that match at Louisville—Kaintucky agin Tennessee—five thousand dollars a side."

"Brother Jones," replied Brother Smith, "that same vision has riz up, mor'n onct, ter worry me. I was right smart out of pocket, as I know you was, and I didn't want to lose my money, *but 'twarn't nothin' ter see our mare beat.*"

"She hadn't orter been beat," was the quick response. "She was plenty able ter win. But the mare was off, bekase of trav'lin' and change of water, and bein' amongst strangers. Though thar was plenty of her friends that come along with her, and ready ter back her through thick and thin. But it was our day, when Wagner beat Grey Eagle—"an enjoyable grin spread over his face—"I had histed myself on the top of a shed whar I could see good clean around the track, and when our hoss had his number hung out, I jest stomped, and hollowed with a perfect loudness."

"I hollowed too," said Brother Jones, gleefully. "And was jest half crazy, and come nigh throwin' my pool tickets away—not knowin' what I did."

Both men were now completely dominated by the turf fever—rampant on account of having been

rigidly suppressed. Other races were recalled, and gloated over, or regretted, till the climax was reached in the laudation of horses each had trained and raced. This was progression on thin ice, and led, as might be expected, to a catastrophe.

After a reminiscent sigh, more of pleasure than pain, Brother Jones remarked: "The common notion is, that hoss racin' is a ticklish business; but, I hold that when you've got the old, true racin' blood, and stick ter it, you'll most ginerly be thar, or thar-a-bouts. And, foolin' with nothing but Rosy Clack's stock, I have always had my full sheer of luck; but it was the surprisinist thing ter me, Brother Smith, that you done as well as you did, projekin' with that Madam Tonson stock. "She warn't thoroughbred." A blow between the eyes would not have so instantaneously and thoroughly exasperated.

"You're a liar!" burst out Brother Smith, with flashing eyes. Brother Jones' good right fist shot up instantly, but instead of descending, remained arrested in mid-air, by a sudden and violent diversion of interest, hereinafter to be related.

Sister Jones, whose family had preceded her to the meeting house, concluded her arrangements for the Sunday cold dinner—always a thorn in the flesh to the southern stomachs—and then tied on her bonnet, somewhat loosely, in her haste, before going out to the stile-block to mount the descendant of Rosy Clack, more nearly, Patty Puff, patiently waiting, ready saddled.

It so happened, that Sister Smith—who had also been detained at home on account of household mat-

ters—was then passing by, riding a female offshoot of Madam Tonson, whose immaculate purity of blood had been assailed, maugre she had given to the turf the celebrated brothers, Monsieur Tonson, Sir Richard, Henry and Champion. These estimable women were pleased to meet, and, after neighborly greeting, expressed the pleasure naturally afforded, by journeying together to meeting. They were elderly, and of irreproachable character; good wives, good mothers, and model church members, but each, by ordering of Providence, had come of a sporting family, and had inherited an eye for excellence of horse-flesh, hence the remark made by Sister Smith: "That's a likely nag you're on, Sister Jones."

"She is indeed," was the reply. "She goes back to that well-tried, grand old mare, Rosy Clack. But you are ridin' a smartish nag yourself, Sister Smith."

"Sartinly, I am," was the immediate and decided answer. "She is a descendant of Madam Tonson. No better stock."

Sister Jones looked at her companion pityingly, while replying, with what she deemed Christian forbearance: "Of all the brood-mares born on top of this earth that Madam Tonson had the most luck. Them four colts of hern did win many a race, onaccountably, seein' they was not of the ginnywine racin' blood."

"Sister Jones," said Sister Smith, sharply, "you air not only talkin' 'bout what you don't know, but you air insultin'. Madame Tonson was jest as well bred as Rosy Mack, or Rosy Clack, whichever mought be her name."

Sister Jones got red in the face, her anger was rising; still she endeavored to answer with moderation, and failed lamentably: "Sister Smith, may the good Lord have pity on you for bein' a no-sense fool."

Sister Smith, too, got red in the face, and choleric. Her ancestors had seen service in the Revolution, and by nature she was combative and daring.

"Fools is plenty," she snapped, "and talk is cheap, but I dar you, here and now, ter let the nags lope erlong four miles till the meetin' house hoves in view —we can then draw rein—and it will be seed which nag has had the most starch tooken outen her."

Sister Jones looked serious. The banter was enticing; but it savored of racing—it was racing, and there might be peril in it to her immortal soul. So, she shook her head.

Sister Smith looked at Sister Jones contemptuously, her Revolutionary blood intolerant of cowardice. "I knowed you'd be afeard ter resk it," she said jeeringly.

Sister Jones' forbears had also been Revolutionary soldiers, and it was not in her nature to remain quiescent under such a taunt, so she spoke up, bold as a lion: "I ain't afeard ter resk it. And when you say, Now, we'll break, and never ease up tell the meetin' house is in sight; and, in my way of thinkin', your nag will git thar on three laigs—if she don't die on the way."

"Blood will tell," and, at the word, the high-born animals bounded away, and in three jumps were racing, side by side, neck and neck, and for a mile neither

could get one inch the better of the other. Then, owing to some impediment in the road, the descendant of Rosy Clack had the misfortune to stumble, and lost yards. "Go on, mare!" shouted Sister Jones, applying her riding-switch vigorously. The mettlesome animal, recovering her foot, and straining every nerve, forged ahead, passing her adversary.

"Go 'long, brute!" cried Sister Smith, lashing the relation of Madam Tonson, who struggled on unflinchingly till she reached that pretty lean head in her front, racing like the wind. Now it was anybody's race. First one, then the other showed in first place—they were doing all they knew how. Sister Jones' loosely tied bonnet flow off. Quick to follow it was Sister Smith's alpaca cape. This defection of those articles of their attire was deeply felt by the ladies, who at once became morbidly anxious to instantly discontinue the contest, and tugged at the reins. But the hard-bottomed stock had not yet enough of it, and out of hand, raced on till, mistaking the church for the judge's stand—owing to want of education—of their own accord pulled up—a dead heat.

It was the first glimpse of the coming racers which had suspended the disamenities between Brothers Jones and Smith, without protest, or power of resistance, and with breathless interest they watched "the finish."

Nothing on earth is better calculated to induce obliquity of vision than the close finish of a well-contested race.

"Hooray," shouted Brother Jones, flourishing his hat. "My mare win!"

"No sech thing," yelled Brother Smith. "My mare win!" to emphasize his assertion down crashed his fist against the hatless poll of Brother Jones.

The blow was returned with savage energy. Both were athletic men, and immediately commenced, what pugilists would call, a beautiful "two-handed fight": but it's one and one character changed.

The clatter of hoof-beats had brought out the congregation as if stirred by a wind. Brother Jones had friends, so had Brother Smith. Fighting is catching, and a merry little mill was in full blast when Brother Peacemaker rode up.

He was a muscular Christian, and prompt. He jumped from his horse, and with consistent, impartial and well-delivered blows soon conquered a peace.

"Pretty church-members you are," he cried, stamping. "There is not enough Christianity in this whole congregation to rattle in a mustard seed. Go home, kneel and pray, and chastise your wicked bodies, and macerate your wretched spirits, and perhaps the good, all-pitying God, knowing your weakness, may pardon you, and with humble, penetential hearts come to meeting next Sunday. *There will be no sermon at Mount Gilead to-day.*"

III.

THE BISHOP'S DAUGHTER.

In the trimly kept *plaisance* of the Episcopal residence at Louisburg underneath acclimated exotics stands a young girl. The sunbeams that flicker through the graceful foliage of the evergreens dance on the golden head—glisten in the soft blue eyes—tinging with the faintest pink the tender oval of her delicate cheek. Her well-formed figure, slight and agile, is slightly bent in an attitude of wistful expectancy as from a heart not at ease about some one absent. Her face brightens at the sound of a familiar step, but loses its brightness, catching a glimpse of the anxious, careworn look of the man who approaches not with the joyous animation of a lover to a rendezvous, but with the lagging steps of a bringer of bad news.

"Has anything happened to the mare?" she asked, advancing with quick steps.

He takes the two hands extended to him, and holding them in his clasp for a few moments, released them with a sigh.

"Helen," he said, "the whole round world does not hold so miserable a creature as you now see before you. When we parted yesterday—I was almost too happy—I saw my way to you. But now," he added

bitterly, "I might as well hope for the brightest star in Orion's belt."

"Has anything happened to the mare?" again she asks, her lip quivering.

"Nothing has happened to the mare, but Sam, her rider, too honest to be bought, has been reached in another way. Neither I nor the trainer know how it happened, but the boy has been got hopelessly in liquor, and won't be fit to ride for a week—and our race is to-morrow."

"Can't you get a substitute?" she asked in a choking voice.

"No, there is not another jockey between the Atlantic and the Pacific but Sam that can ride her—or will dare to—she fights her jockeys like a demon. But she lowered her colors to Sam, showing for him a freakish fondness. But even so, her moods are notoriously changeable as the wind, and the bookies are afraid of her—that's why I obtained such long odds about her. Helen," his face flushed, "I have a mortifying admission to make. I have been so extravagant that my father, when he died three years ago, deemed it best to constitute a trust, and I do not come into my property till I am thirty years old, and here I am at twenty-eight an infant in the eyes of the law. My allowance has been liberal, but it was not enough. It takes a deal of money when, besides ordinary expenses, you keep a yacht in commission, and a string of race-horses—and back them. But it has cost me infinitely more—backing friends. With the money lenders there is hardly an autograph so well known as mine—my I. O. U.'s are scattered around

thick as autumn leaves. To pay, sometime in the future, was a matter of course, and it never disturbed me till I had to face the Bishop, your father, to ask his consent for our engagement. He was not particularly hostile, but said it was "absolutely useless to speak to him on that subject till I was a free man, and a man who owed money was not a free man.

"Therefore it became an urgent necessity to relieve myself from indebtedness. In two years I will have my property and could then clean the slate. But two years is an eternity to wait; besides, I have dabbled over-much with race-horses not to know that, occasionally—mundane conditions favorable and Providence concurring—astonishing coups are made. I had Fairy Queen, but on account of her witchwork, for it seemed nothing else, had little idea of being able to do anything with her till Sam happened along and the two struck up a wonderful friendship. Then a fair vision rose of being able in a few months to free myself from liabilities and to gain you. I told you this, dear, and made you a willing promise, that if things went well for this once the turf should know me no more."

The speaker was a tall, gracefully formed man; though about his face there were no remarkable points of beauty saving a very brilliant pair of dark eyes, but from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet he was palpably thoroughbred, all the way through. After hesitating a moment, he raised his head defiantly, as if visibly confronting a physical danger, proceeded—his voice was musical and clear, though low and inexpressibly sad:

"Situated as I am, dear, it would be unmanly, dishonest, to exact the fulfilment of your promise—the current is setting too strong against me. I release you from your engagement to me."

The girl came closer to him, a steady light in her blue eyes: "Percival, I refuse to be released."

A yearning, wistful look swept over his face, yet he had the courage to say:

"You do not know, dear, what that would mean. I care too much for you to take you at your word. Success is the touchstone of the world's regard; for failure there is no excuse. Spendthrift is the slightest term of reproach that will be applied to me. I shall have a lot to bear—but I will bear it alone. Not a shadow shall rest on you."

This was a very noble speech, though some may sneer and ridicule as excessive sentimentality such heroics when resigning a sweetheart. Yet, in truth, there are in this world of ours steadfast hearts, of either sex, whose affections when once given cannot be recalled, but will cling to its object through every vicissitude till death.

"Percival," she said, "when I promised to marry you I did not take into consideration wealth and luxury, or the converse, poverty and toil, nor the world's approval or censure, but I was willing to share your life—as I am now."

Percival's eyes grew misty and he felt that he would like to kneel down and kiss her feet. "I am not worthy of you," he murmured.

"I do not expect," she said, "that question will ever come up between us; but let us now face facts:

If you lose this race, how will you stand—I mean in a worldly sense?"

"I can hardly bear to contemplate it," he replied. "I shall be owing more than I can pay. I cannot face importunate creditors; and I will have to leave the country for two years. Then, after a settlement, there will probably be enough left to buy a cattle ranch in Texas. That is the best I can offer you—should your patience hold out so long."

Without a moment's pause she answered, "That will be plenty enough. To gallop with you over the prairies herding our cattle is the life I should prefer—even should the mare win."

"Hardly a chance of that," he said, frankly. "Though when she is in the humor there has been nothing since Flying Childers that can race with her. But her wild Barb blood is so pronounced, and so well known, that even when she was going well, with Sam up, the odds were one hundred to one against her. Now," he added, bitterly, "I shouldn't wonder if it is not five hundred to one—and no takers."

A flash like a sunbeam passed over the lady's face. "Just wait here a minute," she requested, flying toward the house. The minutes were few ere she was back, almost breathless, and fluttering a crisp $500 note. "My bishop papa," she said, "gave me this to buy new clothes. I want you to invest it for me about the mare."

"No! no!" he persisted. "I fear you would have to go without new clothes."

"That's my concern," she replied; "and Fairy Queen has got to carry my money—to bring you luck.

Sometimes, Percival, I have clairvoyant fits, and I feel it now in my bones that the mare will win. Any how, if our ship goes down I'll go down with her—I don't care to be saved on a raft."

"Well, you can't say I didn't warn you," said the gentleman, reluctantly putting the note into his pocket.

"Now, won't you do something for me?" she asked.

"Dear, if it pleased you to ask for my head, you should have it. I promise you anything and everything, without reservation."

"That's a promise," she said, laughing and crying. "As yet, I don't want your head separate from the rest of you; but I do want you to cheer up. The darkest hour is ever before day, and vast are the potentialities of the future; and in my mind I have a jockey—not a professional rider, but just a boy who can ride the Queen. I did him a favor once—a little of the Good Samaritan industry—he was grateful and I know I can count on him. Now, don't go near the stables to upset the trainer's nerves—he'll do his best. And to-morrow get a good place in the stand to witness our race, and"—she continued as if pleading for life—"remain there till the race is won or lost." She caught his hand spasmodically, gripped it tight, finishing with a childish little pat, then she burst away, calling back in a choking voice: "Goodbye, sweetheart, goodbye."

The day was fine, the track fast, and no larger assemblage had ever congregated on Cherry Down.

Five races were on the card, but the last one was the principal attraction—a four-mile dash.

Percival Warfield had wedged himself in a corner of the crowded stand, where he could command a view of the whole race-course. Impassively, without interest, without using his glasses, held loosely in his hand, he had watched the four preceding races; but when the order was given to clear the track for the fifth race, he became rigid, great drops of moisture stood on his forehead, and his heart beat almost to suffocation—less than a score of minutes will make or mar him. His vision is at first blurred, then it becomes preternaturally clear, and his hearing is painfully acute.

When the bell rings for the appearance of the horses Fairy Queen comes first, and she looks a picture with her head well up and her delicate ears pointed as she watches the gathering of her field. As Mr. Warfield's eager glance rested upon her jockey he is surprised into an exclamation of dismay. Never in all his life had he seen such a popinjay to ride on any racetrack, and he muttered between his teeth: "He must think that he is going to ride in a circus." It was consoling, however, to observe the manner in which the lad sat his mount, and the workmanlike pose of his hands. And certainly nothing conducive to the brilliancy of his exterior had been omitted: from the white leathers of his racing boots upward his costume was dazzling in the extreme, displaying in the highest perfection the ornate uses of "blue and blue."

The boy's complexion, dark as a Spaniard's, was

flushed with a healthy red, and a heavy down covered cheek and lip; jetty curls, falling below his glistening blue cap, hung around his face; heavy eye-brows overshadow eyes so vividly bright that their color cannot be decided with certainty; the blue silken jacket unbuttoned shows the snowy cambric underneath; a broad blue sash, loosely girt about his waist, was tied behind into a huge bow—the spick-and-span newness of the whole "outfit" ultra-conspicuous.

Fairy Queen moved up a little way, looking picturesquely handsome with her arched, swan-like neck, her gleaming chestnut coat set off by silver-white points.

She steps daintily along, coquettishly conscious of her showy attractions. That she has a temper of her own is betrayed by the unsettled glances of her false, glittering eyes, always on the outlook for mischief. Well she knows why on this particular day her hay has been limited in quantity, and why she has not been allowed to slack her thirst freely from the stable bucket. But she dearly loves a race, albeit a freakish way of showing her fondness.

Presently the brightening of her eyes and the quivering of her ears denote that she has caught the hoof-tramp of a horse. A big brown comes along, but being in—for her—an unusually composed frame of mind she merely shakes her head at him disapprovingly, otherwise meaning to treat him with merited contempt; but she tosses her head wildly as a group of other racers pass. Aware that the time for the start is near, she becomes so exhilarated that were she of less aristocratic blood she would neigh

aloud for joy, but she contents herself with a subdued snort, and lowering her graceful head, makes a ringing music playing with her bit. But when more racers crowd around, she can contain herself no longer, and stands erect, on fire with excitement. Next she lashes out viciously at an unoffending bay with two white hind legs. Filled with the spirit of insubordination she makes herself excessively disagreeable in a variety of ways.

The numbers are up. What a field of horses for the long distance event—no less than nine.

From closely packed carriages in the field, from densely crowded stands, from serried masses lining the course, thousands of eager faces watch for the favorite; and thousands of voices are asking: "Which is Nicodemus?"—the good thing of the year. Here he comes, striding along hard held, his coat glistening like polished ivory; his muscles steel, his crest iron. A smile is on the face of his jockey, who steadies his mount deftly—he has taken off nine pounds to ride in this race, and if judgment, science, and horsemanship can land him, he will be first.

The clapping, stamping, howling of the ring begins: "I'll lay against the field! Bar one." That one is Nicodemus; but close to follow him is a dark brown horse powerfully and compactly made; broad flat legs, massive quarters, betraying enormous propelling powers—a small, plain head admirably set on a clean-cut throat and a strong neck; this is Bachelor, strongly backed for place.

The old aphorism, that "all is fair in love and war," has no application to a well-conducted race-

course; yet, sometimes, devious methods are brought into play. Pending the excitement and confusion incidental to starting so large a field two of the jockeys have drawn their mounts somewhat aside and are hurriedly whispering. Said one: "I've got my very boots on Nicodemus." "Same case here," answered the other, "and I hope there may not be a screw loose with our horse. I have just heard that down there"—nodding toward the betting shed—"they are making Bachelor favorite." "Stuff!" was the quick answer; "at the weight he can't come near Nicodemus. But I'm afeard of danger from that pair," indicating Fairy Queen and her rider. I busted right out laffin' when I fust laid eyes on that chap. Did you ever see sech a dude? He's putty enough for a dime show. He must be a ferrin' chap, and larned to ride wh'ar the race horses grow. But, I wush I mayn't laff on tother side of my mouth. The minute I see him fling hisself inter the saddle I knowed he had a chance if that mare behaves herself anyways decent—she can run a bit, and, I say, not ter run any resks, let us lock-horns and shet him out—our mounts ain't got Tom Tutt's chance ter win." "I'm agreeable," was the quick answer.

This unholy alliance was redolent of trouble for the chestnut mare. Of a very unsusceptible nature she had never in all her life indulged in even an evanescent fancy till the sudden cardiac stirrings for the unstable Sam. Therefore when a substitute was thrust upon her, her ire was excited, and the primary thought was to pitch him over her head. But, in the equine mind there often arises a fine train of inductive

reasoning beside which the complicated mental effort of the most gifted human is a fool. And after what she deemed a requisite protest against change of riders without her consent, she determined to frankly place herself under the guidance of the newcomer—to admit a derogatory truth, as he stood for an instant at her head carressing her before mounting, her feminine eyes had been captivated by the extraordinary splendor of his costume.

The drum tapped. The field is off; yet loud ringing shouts rise above the hoarse bellowing of the now frenzied mob: "I'll lay against the field! Bar one"—the blooming flower of our plunging youth was riotous on this backer's day.

As the field dashed off to a fairly good start, Fairy Queen made a lunge to get well forward, but yields to a gentle check. Though a moment later observing a pair of horses with seemingly no business in the race except to be in her way, her anger is aroused, and she ardently desires to clear a road for herself by means of teeth and heels; but the idea is still to the fore that she will test the exquisite joy coming, it is said, from a virtuous line of conduct; so again she yields to a hint to bide her time.

The pace is made a cracker. Two of the contestants have singled themselves out from their companions, and are racing far in the front—apparently there is nothing else in the race. Entering the third mile Fairy Queen, still impeded by a slowly moving barrier, becomes very impatient, and her good resolves are about coming to a hasty conclusion, when in rounding a turn one of the obstructing horses

through an inadvertance swerved a little—not much, hardly enough for an opening. But, like a flash, her rider drives her through, clear, without jostling or impeding. This feat of horse and rider is scarcely noticed, so intense is the interest concentrated elsewhere. With but a scant half-mile from home, Nicodemus leads. He has led from the start, but not two furlongs from the post something happened, within the knowledge only of his rider; but that experienced jockey, knowing what it is, resolutely sat down to ride to place, if possible, one more race to the credit of the great horse. Batchelor, inspired by the blood of a long line of illustrious ancestors has never faltered, but unflinchingly struggles on, creeping up inch by inch, reaches the neck of Nicodemus, then side by side they race for life or death, each noble horse doing all that lies within the compass of flesh, blood and bones, and animated by a spirit to win or die. Every eye is fastened on them with painful intensity till a cry is raised: "Look out! here comes Fairy Queen."

With an open track she begins her race, going easily within herself till there are but fifty yards more. Then she is let out for all she is worth. And springing forward goes at the rate of forty miles an hour.

"By George! but she is a flyer," said some one standing near Percival Warfield. The chestnut mare landed the race.

Pandemonium seems to have broken loose. Shrieks, howls, yells burst from the multitude: "The lady!" "The lady!" "Fairy Queen wins!"

IV.

HONORS ARE EASY.

Weary is the lot of the very poor, and especially weary is the lot of that aged woman bed-ridden from chronic rheumatism, the result of over-work and exposure. Her surroundings are a pitiful showing of gaunt want in all its hideousness.

In a clime less genial her dwelling, almost a ruin, would have been a poor defence against the heavy rains of summer and the chilling winds of winter.

Yet, thanks to the good God! she is in the possession of a spontaneous blessing, not purchasable by the aggregate gold of the universe, in the all-absorbing, self-sacrificing devotion merged in the person of a youthful granddaughter—her daughter's daughter.

This child, a robust girl of fourteen, is bending over her, striving with roughened fingers to gently stroke the grey locks. "Granny," she said in the full tones engendered by outward air, "you ought ter have more kiver over you, and better things ter eat, and 'intment ter rub on your j'ints. Ef I wasn't a gal I could go out and work. I am big and strong and can do lots of boy's work. But I ain't handy about a house. It's quare, but my twin brother Bob was more delicater, and as good agin about cookin'

and tending ter you—it is not 'quare,' because heredity is independent of the Salic law—I do try my best, but I am so rough and ork'ard that many times I sees you squirm when I teches you. Brother Bob was sesh a beauty, and so finiky in his ways. But he took that thar fever—and we los' him. Nothin' hurts me," she added viciously, "but bein' a gal I can't do nothin'."

"Don't talk that way, dearie," answered the invalid, who, it was evident, had seen better days, and the pains and privations brought on by a train of misfortunes not in her power to avert she bore with patience, but it was torture indescribable to her to see this child, who might have been the pride and ornament of a respectable household, growing up in such ignorance and want—great are the woes of the well-born poor. "Don't talk like that, dearie. Your brother Bob was a dear good boy, but too delicate for rough living; while you are so strong, and with the best heart in the world, and so brave. The work of these little fingers"—pressing them to her lips—"has kept me from starving. Ah! if you could only have an education."

"You ain't ter blame, granny," the girl burst out; "you done your bes' ter larn me. But arter choppin' the wood, and workin' in the crop all day, when night come I was so dog-tired that I couldn't take none of it in. But I wants lots of things worser than edication. I wants a good house fer you ter live in; and good vittles fer you ter eat; and good close fer you ter w'ar." A sudden thought seemed to strike her. "Granny, it looks like that Brother Bob, who was

so harnsome, and had sech saft ways, mus' have took arter his mammy, who was a rale lady; and 'twas me that took arter great-gran'-dad, who j'ined the Culpepper Guards when he was fifteen, and riz ter be a kurnel on the Werginny line. Great-gran'-dad was a gentleman; but wasteful, as I have hearn. Dad was a gentleman, too—but more wastefuller than gran'-dad: land, horses, and mules—everything slipped through his fingers, and he didn't leave nothin' ter us but this old shanty and a patch of pore ground. The worstes of it all was when his race-horses was took. Oh! granny, ef we jest could have kep' some of them critters—I could ride the baddest of them. Dad said I was a nateral-born rider. But I'm a gal, shucks!"

The hot tears rushed to her bright, dark eyes, and angrily brushing them away, she walked rapidly to the open door. The prospect without was not enlivening. The little plantation of corn for their bread, over which she had toiled so faithfully, did not promise an adequate return, small ears on spindling stalks—and the prevailing drought had dried up the garden. She looked upward at the blue sky in a mute protest against hard fate; but the hero-blood that coursed in her veins did not counsel to sit down and weep; but urged her on to action, and strengthened a resolve she then made against adversity to wage a hand to hand fight, and to conquer. A hard look of earnest purpose settled over her face as she murmured: "Granny must be took keer of—and I must do it the only way I kin."

Returning to her grandmother's bedside, she began

a rapid whispering, too low for even the gentle breeze to catch and to brazen forth to a carping world. The pain-tortured woman was too enfeebled to urge more than a faint remonstrance; a thrill of admiration was irrepressible for such devoted courage. "Perhaps you are right, my daughter, there is no pathway, however perilous, over which a brave, strong spirit may not walk in safety. God's blessing and mine go with you. And may the tender Father, who sent Raphael to Tobias, send one of his holy angels to keep you in charge."

A training stable may be non-public and on private grounds, yet when the racers are brought out for their morning work it is difficult to imagine a more bustling, animated scene; and that training stable in the far southland owned by the veteran turfman, Col. Ware, on this particular morning A. D. 1825 is in a state of abnormal excitement owing to the bad behaviour of Flirtilla, the pride, pet, and ornament of the stable.

She is a beautiful bay mare, closely resembling her renowned sire, Sir Archy, in the standard of physical form required for the making of a phenomenal racer; but she is not well-principled, and wanting in the higher and nobler attributes of mind and heart, her conduct was frequently very reprehensible, not infrequently evincing an evil temper utterly impervious to the most subtile blandishments or cajolery. Without provocation, and without compunction, she would pitch her rider over her head, plant her feet, and decline peremptorily to join the

other horses in their gallops. This is now what she has done with more than usual determination.

Her owner stood looking on, not able, as the saying is, "to see his way." At length, hardening his heart, he said to the trainer, "Put Gip up, and let him use the persuaders."

Gip was head groom, and general factotum, and rough-rider in ordinary, whose business it was to risk life and limbs when ordered.

Two of the most courageous among the stable-helpers, approaching the mare warily, seized her flowing reins; then Gip, with dexterity hardly to be expected from that little, weazened, dried-up old man, leaped into the saddle. Before now Gip, who had been mounted on many a rebellious steed—and bore on his person irrefragible proofs of his daring—instinctively feeling that she was the "wustes of them all," cautiously gathered up the reins, and gave the mare an encouraging cluck.

Flirtilla, still as a marble block, had been watching out of the corner of her eye with a pensive expression, beyond the reach of augury; now she gently raised her left fore foot, and after several times waving it gracefully around—the beautiful silver white rim above the coronet flashing in the sunbeams—placidly replacing it on terra firma, once again becomes statuesque.

"Give her the whip!" shouted the exasperated trainer.

Obedient Gip—he never flinched orders—gave her a stinging stroke. Without question the mare was intensely infuriated; but she was full of surprises,

and instead of the violent demonstrations confidently expected, she breathed a sad sigh, and quietly laid herself down. Fortunately for Gip, he was seized by two alert grooms and dragged clear, not giving the mare time to carry out her intention of turning over and crushing the life out of him. For full sixty seconds Flirtilla lay quite motionless, then she got up, shook herself defiantly, to show that she was unconquered, and prepared for still greater length.

A shabbily dressed boy, who had been lounging near, now came up to Col. Ware and said: "I kin ride that mar', ef you let me."

"Who are you, boy," demanded the gentleman, somewhat sharply.

"I belong to granny, Mrs. Loxley, Col. Montgomery's grand-darter—and she knows I'm out," was the frank and commendable answer.

"I know about him," said the trainer. "He's Bob Loxley's youngster. Pore Bob, arter losin' his wife, and gittin' inter a powerful bad streak of luck, got ter crookin' his elbow too often, and went ter the bow-wows, and gittin' sick, was took off sudden, leaven his old mammy and two kids with next ter nothin' ter live on. The racin' fellers was willin' ter chip in and help. But, my gracious! that old lady, proud as Lucifer, fired up, and wouldn't take no help—charity, she called it. Though arterwards, when th'ar was a funeral, the nabors did drop in ter do the buryin'. I thought it was the boy they planted, but I must have been mistook, for here he is alive and kickin'."

"Well," replied Col. Ware with a short laugh, "good blood in horse, man, or boy is no disadvan-

tage." Curiously he watched the newcomer, apparently fourteen years or less—no one opposing him—as he edged up to Flirtilla in the sinuous way of a necromancer going to work. Catching hold of the stirrup-leathers he fearlessly pulled himself up into the saddle, and with unawkward fingers adjusted the stirrups to his length. With a caressing movement he grasped the reins, and passing them through his fingers, asked: "How shall I take her?" The mare, lowering her exalted head, began champing the bit playfully.

"Wall, ef that don't bang Banager!" commented the trainer; "but business is business, and right you air, sonny, always ax orders. And this perticular time, ef you've got a neck ter spare, jest take that mar' three times around the track fer all she's worth—ter sorter settle that devil inside of her."

Like an old hand the boy settled himself in the saddle only slightly inclining his body forward; after a joyous shake of the bridle his hands sunk to Flirtilla's withers, and like a bird she bounded away, and in three jumps was in a full run. The eyes of Col. Ware and those of the trainer were riveted on that rioting pair careening around the track, once, twice, thrice; the mare then pulled up, come in with an easy swinging trot.

"Where did you learn to ride, boy?" demanded Col. Ware.

"I ain't never larned yit. But dad said I had the makin' of a rider in me—sometimes he'd let me canter a bit; but I ain't never been on critter-back befo-jest now sence I los' him," answered the boy, putting

his knuckles over his eyes to hide something unbidden that glistened there.

"Don't let that boy slip through your fingers, Col. Ware," whispered the trainer.

"What is your name, my lad?" asked the proprietor.

"Bob."

"Well, Bob, how would you like to engage with me for an exercise-boy?"

The shrewd look coming into the boy's face made him look quite old—it was a momentous thing, this first business venture; but he attempted no shilly-shallying, and answered promptly: "That's what I come fer—granny said I mought. I wan't ter work ter make money ter take keer of her, ter git her things she needs. An' mebby I mought have er chance fer some schoolin'—granny is so sot on it"—adding, with a flush of pride, "my great-gran'-dad was er officer. I could git here by broke er day, but I mus' stay with granny nights."

The bargain that was then concluded Col. Ware soon began to think was the bargain of his life. Besides Bob's wonderful knack of getting on with the horses, he was truthful, honest, and industrious—ready to turn his hand to anything—with all so well behaved that he soon felt a genuine attachment for the boy, and spared him several hours each day to receive instruction from the tutor of his own children.

Contentions between neighbors have existed since the world was new; but so long as it's "hands off,"

and exemption from the guilt of Cain, no harm is done; and the spirit of rivalry emulous for the best, is not to be discouraged, for it leads to excelsior.

The claim made by the denizens of the North of having the most superior thoroughbred horses, was rampantly denied by the denizens of the South; and from this difference of opinion grew the ultimatum: "To put up, or shut up." Therefore, frequent matches were made between the two sections. October, 1822, Mr. J. J. Harrison, of Virginia, publicly offered to run Sir Charles against Eclipse, four mile heats, over the Washington course, for five or ten thousand dollars a side.

The challenge was promptly accepted by Mr. Van Rast, who chose the large sum—half forfeit. The forfeit money was deposited by each gentleman, and the 20th day of the following November set for the contest.

On the day and hour for starting, Eclipse and Sir Charles, riders mounted, appeared on the course; but Mr. Harrison announced that his horse had met with an accident, and he would pay forfeit. Though rather than the immense assemblage gathered should be entirely disappointed, he would run Sir Charles a single heat of four miles—fifteen hundred dollars a side.

The offer was accepted, and the horses were started. Sir Charles broke down, leading, the last quarter of the last mile. A banter was then made by Col. W. R. Johnson, of Virginia, on May, 1823, to produce a horse to run four mile heats against Eclipse—twenty thousand dollars a side—over the

Union Course, Long Island. There was a prompt acceptance.

For this great stake the party of the South met with a series of disasters. In primus, John Richards, selected to run in the race, cut his foot. Washington, the second choice, was thrown out of training. The most signal misfortune of all was the sudden and violent illness of Col. Johnson, on whose management of the race success, in a great measure, depended. This gentleman was called the "Napoleon of the Turf." He never lost a race when success was possible, and by superior management frequently won when to win did not seem possible.

On the eventful day, Betsey Richards and Sir Henry were both prepared; but about half-past twelve Sir Henry appeared on the course, the champion of the South.

The concourse was immense—the stands crowded to excess—not less than sixty thousand people were computed to be in the field.

The first heat Sir Henry, piloted by a young lad, led from the score, and beat Eclipse away off. He lost the second heat by the injudicious riding of the same lad. His rider was changed for the third heat; but he was then no match for his older and stronger rival. Eclipse was powerfully made, and nine years old; while Sir Henry was under fifteen hands, and lacked almost two months of being a four-year-old.

Before the closing of the day, Col. Johnson challenged to run Sir Henry the ensuing autumn against Eclipse for any sum from twenty thousand to fifty thousand dollars.

The challenge was refused.

The Southerners at large were deeply chagrined by these repeated disappointments, and "to set matters right," became a sectional desire which burned vehemently in the heart and mind of Col. Ware. Of late, the pleasing hope had suggested itself that such an honor might be his—if—if—if Flirtilla could be brought to reason. But she was of the unfortunate sex proverbially inclined to unreason. Though it has no less gone into a proverb that feminine nature may be safely trusted to go to the most amazing length where the affections are concerned: witness the blackened eyes and bruised features that have, on a witness stand, so often confounded judge and jury and perverted the ends of justice, and Flirtilla's fondness for her rider, Bob, was patent to any observer. It had been sudden, almost like the lightning's freak, but it was strong, and seemed to be without limit.

To match Flirtilla against Ariel—daughter of Eclipse—then running like a meteor in the North, and confessedly at the head of the turf, took an insistent hold on the mind of Col. Ware. He longed passionately to defeat this thoroughbred queen on her own ground. Could he but pluck the laurels from the Northern Ariel, and bestow them upon the Southern Flirtilla he felt that he would almost be willing to die.

"Bob," he propounded one day, "how would you like to go North and ride Flirtilla against Ariel?" The boy's face glowed, but became serious as he answered:

"Our mare can beat anything without wings when she runs kind. And now she don't get into her tantrums near so often as she did—hardly ever unless something goes wrong with her. But she is high-strung and will have her own way; though in a match it will be easy to let her run to suit herself. I could sleep in her stall with her to reconcile her to being away from home and among strangers. You know I'll do my best."

It could be truly said of Bob that he had improved his opportunities; uncouthness of language and manners had entirely disappeared, and he had become an inimitable rider. This was attributable, his employer thought, to the good blood in his veins. Col. Ware believed in blood as firmly as he believed in his God.

"I do, my boy. And if Col. Johnson will agree to manage the race, I'll banter for the match. And, hark-ee, Bob, if it pleases heaven to let us win, it will be five thousand for you."

"Five thousand for me!" repeated the boy; "why that means a good house, and going to the Warm Springs for grandmother"—he no longer said "granny."

Col. Ware smiled approvingly, and said: "Thoroughbred."

The match was made—three mile heats, to be run over the Union Course, Long Island—twenty thousand dollars a side. To throw the helve after the hatchet, Col. Ware negotiated two small pieces of business—five thousand each.

It was a great betting race. Many persons who

had never previously indulged in such folly were now eager to back the favorite—a question of nativity.

There was no fault to be found with 31st of October, 1825; it was an ideal day—the sun shining warm and bright over the many thousands congregated from North and South to witness the sectional contest. The betting still went merrily on—no odds asked or given.

At the sound of the bugle, one o'clock, every heart on the grounds throbs and bumps. There is no delay. "Saddle!" "Mount!" "Come up!" The drum tapped, and the partisan racers dash off, both hard held, the bay Flirtilla trailing close in the wake of her gray antagonist. Entering the second mile Bob, on Flirtilla, looked keenly at Col. Johnson, who ordered: "Take the track!" The bay mare, given her head, leaped forward and, as if by a single bound, was three lengths ahead of Ariel who, being called on, came rattling up, but try as she would, could not reach that phenomenon racing in her front. The third mile entered, Bob was ordered to: "Hold her steady, and let her go." The rate kept up was tremendous; at the last half Ariel was full twenty yards behind, then, then, as by magic, she came flying up—challenged Flirtilla—took the lead, all in a run of forty yards. In her surprise and displeasure, Flirtilla stopped short. Her known disposition was resentful, never compounding an injury; she should, therefore, have shown her adversary her heels, if not given them to her. But the immortal gods alone can account for the vagaries of the female mind. A lonesome, homesick feeling coming over Flirtilla, she

stuck out her two forelegs, and began nodding her head—evincing the most determined obstancy in her grief. Hot tears were in Bob's eyes as he leaned over her neck caressing and imploring: "Oh, go on! go on, my beauty!" But her better feelings remaining untouched, she declined to budge a single step. At length, however, she was prevailed upon to get in motion, and barely dropped within her distance.

When taken to the cooling ground the indignation of her party knew no bounds, and though trained in a school to manage words the exaction was severe. But hard words break no bones, and to the storm of invectives the mare remained callous in the extreme, till Bob, putting his arms around her neck, burst into violent weeping, then she seemed touched, and lowering her handsome head, rubbed his face with her nose.

Her spirits then rose rapidly, and at the proper time she trotted gaily to the post, and at the tap of the drum jumped right out in the lead, setting a killing pace. Bob had been ordered to "let her run," and she flew along, with her beautiful fairy-like stroke —her backers were jubilant—till within twenty-five yards of the winning post, then, alack and alas! without premonition, again the horrible homesickness began to gnaw at her vitals, and overcome by grief she stopped short. "Go on, lady! Oh, go on!" pleaded Bob. And if ever there were tears in anyone's voice the limpid fluid was then in Bob's. "Kill me if you like afterward, my darling, but win this race."

The rider who on Ariel had lost all hope of winning the heat, and only praying to be able to save his distance, seeing that something in his front was amiss,

with whip and spurs brought Ariel up with racing speed, and she seemed like a winner. Only at the last moment Flirtilla, commiserating Bob's agony, moved languidly up, winning the heat by a scant head.

When starting for the third and decisive heat Flirtilla was in high fettle, as joyous and frisky as if she had never known ill-humor or despondency in her life, and racing away with her fleet, tireless feet, winning the race easily by one hundred yards.

A wild roar burst from the jubilant Southerners. "Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted Col. Ware, "honors are easy."

But you had a tight squeak for it," answered a Northern turfman.

V.

THE MEXICAN EMPIRE STEEPLECHASE, OWNERS UP.

Once upon a time, in mid-summer, a king's favorite expressed the wish for a sleigh-ride, and *mirabele dicta!* the following day's rising sun disclosed miles of the principal drives of the city of Paris white with sugar and salt to simulate snow.

A transformation as wonderful was wrought in that fair landscape in the vicinity of the old city of Teuschititlan, the metropolis of the Astec empire—now called Mexico City—midway between the Atlantic and the Pacific and on the summit of the Cordilleras, and secluded from the outer world by a mountain barrier.

Southward and eastward, rising in their eternal glory, are the ever snow-crowned Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl—the "White Lady."

With the backing of the Imperial will and unlimited French money a course had been constructed to meet the requirements, in the most approved way, for the running of the Mexican Empire Steeplechase—a race in which Maximilian and Carlotta had shown much interest, affording as it would diversion for the many army officers and the distinguished visitors from many countries.

Ditches had been dug, fences erected, embankments

thrown up, all more or less difficult to negotiate with four miles of running. Of the thirty jumps and leaps the most formidable is the "big double" before the final run in.

To witness this contest, for gentlemen jockeys only, besides those who had arrived in saddle and on wheels there is a great affluence of pedestrians. On the sunny side—abandoned to the proletarian—has gathered a mottled throng of divers nationalities, and gathered in great force are the mestizos to see the show, and to indulge in their racial craze for gaming.

In the center of the grand stand erected for the aristocracy is the Imperial box, draped in red, white and green, and surmounted by the shield of Mexico.

With punctillious politeness their Imperial Majesties had arrived early, preceded, of course, by the *elite* of city and country. And a French chasseur in hot haste enters the royal box—his mission is too exirgeante for ceremony—and addressing the Empress, said: "I have marked your Majesty's card. From the best information I have been able to obtain, the winner will be one of the four to start—St. George, Beelzabub, Star of Empire and Belladonna. The mare *can win* if she will, and I have backed her heavily. But she has oddities. So, to be safe, I have put a few doubloons on Star of Empire. I know his breeding—he goes straight back to the Darley Arabian. Now which of these horses will be honored by your Majesty's commission?"

She answered: "Put ten doubloons for me on Beelzabub—his name is potential."

"Yes," conceded the officer, "he is a good horse,

and it would be a safe investment, only, as your Majesty is aware, owners are up, and Beelzabub will have no better pilot than the Honorable James William Balfour—that torpid Englishman—never more than half awake."

"*No obstante*," replied the Empress; "I'll hold to my choice. Providentially Mr. Balfour may for once wake up. Or, perhaps, the good horse may run away with him."

The French officer darts away, and in a short time a bell rings, and the numbers go up—one, two, three, four, five, and so on, up to twenty-three."

"My!" exclaimed the Emperor, "what a field of horses, and we shall have sport."

A mighty roar bursts from ten thousand throats as more than a score of the best horses in the world, ridden by the best riders in the world, are being brought to the start.

First to come is Belladonna, fine as a star. With exclamations of delight thousands of field-glasses are turned toward the beauty. She is indeed, perfection of form. Her sloping shoulders, deep girth, flat legs, round flinty feet, full well-turned back, and mighty quarters denote speed unqualified, and staying powers without limit. Such is the goodly outside, but her inner-self is sadly marred by temper, moods and freaks such as were never even dreamed of by any other horse, of either sex. And withal, she is absolutely defiant of control. Of this no one is half so well aware as her owner, Count Cugner. But, with some men the love of a good horse is the ruling

passion, and who will, despite adversities, cling to hope as the guiding star.

Before springing to saddle, instinctively the Magyar threw a quick, anxious glance to mark the portent of Belladonna's expressive eyes. But those orbs are modestly cast down, and she stands without motion save for a rippling quiver under her glossy sides. Superficially there is a promise of peace, but Count Cugner's heart sinks; too well he knows of the deceitful calm so often before a raging tempest. But not to throw a chance away, he resorts to soothing methods; and gently patting her curving neck, in endearing accents he murmurs: "Soh! Soh! lady. Beautiful one!"

The "beautiful one," however, turns a deaf ear to cajoleries, and gives her undivided attention to her gathering field. She shakes her head disapprovingly at a great raking chestnut horse that comes tearing into line like a steam engine, but otherwise makes no hostile demonstrations to others of her competitors till St. George, a very handsome bay horse, comes trotting along very gently to take his place. Him she regards with an instantaneous and unfounded dislike so intense that she rushes toward him with set teeth.

To preserve the precious harmony, so requisite to the occasion, St. George adroitly allows an advancing brown horse of massive proportions to intervene. Belladonna's conduct now becomes atrocious. No horse ever born was ever so disagreeable.

"Get a gun and shoot the brute!" shouted an angry gendarme.

At this crucial moment a lightning-like change takes place in Belladonna's versatile mind, and dropping her evil courses, comes gaily on with that jaunty, easy, swinging gait—horsemen so admire—to take her place beside Star of Empire. To this horse she experiences a sudden liking, and in exuberant spirits rubs her pretty face against his puissant shoulder, But the time is too short for frivolities. The flag drops, and the great field of horses off, a flashing kaleidescope of colors. Star of Empire and Belladonna bounded off in the lead, racing side by side, the field well up—all but one laggard.

Such a number of magnificent horses had never before met in a race, and never before had a steeplechase been run so fast. On a downward lie of the course, leading to a fourteen-foot ditch, the going is fifty miles an hour. Star of Empire, running like mad, takes the leap in his stride. Belladonna bounded over like a deer leading, with her four hoofs bunched cat-like in a cluster, and the pair race on neck and neck. One bay horse, with spots all over him like a circus horse, refused the leap, but his rider's strength of hands and will prevailed, and the animal, making his effort too late, crashing against the farther bank, goes down. Horse and rider scramble up separately, but the rider has never let go the bridle-reins, and with foot in stirrup swings up to saddle, and assays to go on; horse and man are sick and dizzy, and soon fall back definitely and finally out of the race. With this exception, the other racers cleverly surmount the ditch and continue the running at a pace too good to keep, and drop back by twos and threes.

Last of all is Beelzabub, hard held, rebellious, and fighting for his head, but he has never been able to get away one hair-breadth from the iron hands that have never left his withers. The Honorable Mr. Balfour has planned how to win the race, and so far nothing has occurred to disturb his plans, and he is riding patiently and well, intently watching the two leaders. The Star of Empire and Belladonna are racing as one, still very fast, though the horse begins to show fatigue, while the nonpariel at his side is flying along like a bird.

Count Cugner's heart gives a joyful bound. He feels that the race is his, and he can scarcely refrain from shouting—shouts before victory are portentous. Just then, by an ambition that over-leaps itself, St. George felt throbbing within the nobler part of himself an unconquerable impulse to be the leading horse, and collecting all his powers for a desperate effort, comes rapidly up and challenges Belladonna without counting the cost of his temerity. The infuriated mare seized his bridle-bit with a savage energy that almost broke his jaw. Her vengeance not satisfied, wheeling, she used her heels like a cyclone.

In the veins of poor St. George there must have run a doubtful and contaminating cross to account for his cowardice. Without an effort to defend himself he turned and fled—a roar of contumely following the unfortunate horse.

After the indulgence of so much wickedness, Belladonna, incited by a latent instinct of virtue, rushed on, meaning to win the race. And so she would

have done—Star of Empire had shot his bolt—and it were easy to pass him. But there was a big bay horse, with star and one white foot, coming up from behind so furiously. His head liberated, he comes on and passes Belladonna like a thunderbolt, and runs on, and on. Nearing the "big double," his blood is up—the best blood of England—and tearing at it like a wild horse, leaped over, covering eleven good yards, and keeps on, his career unchecked, when something happened that never occurred on a race course before. So absorbing was the interest in the race that an eager crowd had been allowed to encroach dangerously upon the course, and a mertizo, whose every claco is on Belladonna, and wholly frenzied seeing Beelzabub coming first, with unspeakable brutality seized his *mager*, by his side, and with all his might threw the woman in front of the advancing horse, fully extended.

To most men this would have been a poser, but not for an infinitesimal part of a second did the Honorable Balfour lose his nerve. He tightened his grasp on Beelzabub's reins, and lifting the horse's head, jumped fairly over the prostrate woman, who at once raised the cry: "I am killed!" Beelzabub was carried on without pause till pulled up winner of the Mexican Empire Steeplechase; Belladonna second. If ever she had a chance to win it was flittered away by the indulgence of her unfortunate temper; but, without doubt, she had made a beautiful run, and when pulled up, in a spirit of excessive self-esteem, feeling that she had lost the race by no fault of hers,

but through one of the unavoidable accidents of life, she cantered gaily back to the judges' stand, and looking up at the gentlemen with such a confident, bewitching air, she was applauded beyond her deserts.

The affair of the scales concluded, the Honorable James William Balfour, still in silk and leathers, and retaining his whip, and deftly avoiding congratulations, and with marked less languor than usual, made his way back to the Mestiza woman, who by now is on her feet and surrounded by sympathizing amigas, and screaming loudly: "I'm dead!" Her scowling husband, who is lounging near and concerned only for his lost clacos, is indifferent to her wailing—not even glancing toward her. By the Honorable Mr. Balfour he is seized and jerked to an open space for the unobstructed application of the old-fashion implement in hand—all listlessness for the time in abeyance.

The Mestizo man howled, writhed, shrieked and struggled; but he could just as easily have got away from an embedded sheet anchor as from that small, sinewy, detaining hand.

The Mestiza woman ceased her screams as if by magic, and throwing herself on her knees, implored mercy for her unworthy spouse so abjectly as to excite the ire of a stalwart woman of Irish descent, who was constrained to urge pursuasively: "If 'twas me I'd have the liver out of the spalpeen who struck me marn!"

The Mestiza wife only redoubled her pleadings, and to add greater force, declared that she had thrown

herself in front of the horse *of her own accord.* Whereupon the Honorable Mr. Balfour smiled feebly while murmuring the Moorish proverb:

"A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree,
The more you beat them the better they be."

VI.

MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.

The little city was named Inland, and from it, in every direction, stretched the richest and most gracious soil of the beautiful Blue Grass region of Kentucky—the state of states, and the pearl of the Union. Here was the home of wealth and cultured refinement. First settled by Virginians whose forebears had come from the Mother Country, bringing with them from over the seas the love of the thoroughbred horse.

The sport of kings had not, however, successfully held its own without grave vicissitudes; for, in common with all mundane affairs, it is inseparably connected with abuses. Still, every fair-minded person must concede that it is a fine, manly, outdoor, public pastime, eminently adapted for a national amusement.

Of course, then, Inland had its race-course, and it was well patronized, although in the community there existed a somewhat strong feeling adverse to racing. There always have been, since history began, and will continue to be till futurity ends, people who are not satisfied with letting well enough alone, and are a disturbing element, by their efforts to convert this lower sphere into Utopia. Let them go on and succeed if they can, but it will end the business of life and bring on eternity.

The agitators received colossal support from the minister of one of the largest congregations, who had lately come among them.

He was of small stature—but that does not count against him—some of earth's greatest heroes have been of insignificant size—austere in habits, of sincere, earnest piety, and great kindliness of heart. From his arrival he headed the crusade against racing, with its corollary of vices: gambling, drinking, general demoralization, and, worse than all, its corrupting tendency of the youth. But not making headway commensurate with his wishes, he determined to let loose the thunders of his church. A race meeting being near at hand, and one particular race exciting unusual interest on account of the number and celebrity of the horses engaged, he made the announcement from his pulpit of his intention to withhold the communion from such members of his church as should attend the races.

This attitude was regarded by the zealots with high favor. Others—liberal Christians—deemed it a stretch of his authority—a muzzling of the ox that treads the corn—and savoring of the practice of the Romanist clergy; taking entire charge of the consciences of the people, intolerant of private Biblical interpretation. No little argumentation ensued, and some of the influential members went in a body to reason with their minister on the inadvisability of the position taken by him, and that, in the opinion of many, he had out-stepped established boundaries.

He was inflexible. "I am here," he said, "the shepherd of my flock; and no position is so false as

the position which entails responsibility without conferring authority; and by the wisest of mankind, our present state of existence is thought to be one of preparation; severe perhaps, but necessary for a loftier and less material state of existence. I cannot endure lukewarmness. I have the irrefragable dictum: 'He who is not for me is against me.' 'You cannot touch pitch and remain undefiled.' 'Thou shalt not touch, taste, nor handle the unclean thing.' Thus I am taught, and thus is my belief, and I will hold fast to my principles. It pains me to be at variance with any of my people, but there is no alternative. I must perform my duty as I see it—always looking upward to the Immaculate One for guidance."

The church-members accomplished nothing by their mission; but they went away convinced that, though their minister might be a bigot, and narrow-minded, but he was an honest man, and a Christian, and thoroughly in earnest; but whether sent to them as a blessing or a chastisement from the Over-Ruling power, time would show.

It is unfortunate when rectitude of purpose fails in giving repose to heart and mind. The minister was sorely troubled by the widely diverging views of his congregation. To reconcile and unite the opposing factions he feared would require a miracle—and the days of miracles were past; although there sometimes did occur a miraculous reversion of sentiments, such as he now prayed for.

Time passed, and so perturbed in spirit was the minister that he determined on a solitary walk in the

suburbs communing with holy Nature, whose voice is popularly supposed never to mislead or to plead in vain. Yes, the landscape is fair enough under the glowing sun; it all seemed so strangely alluring, so mystical and wonderful—the golden clouds floating in an atmosphere of crystaline blue hazes. "So peaceful," he murmured, "the very gateway of Heaven." Ah! minister, do you not know that is only to the eye of man, that there is calm and peace in the nether heavens, where suns blaze, and comets whirl, and that no shots from cannon fly as do the planets fly? And have you yet to learn that on this earth we inhabit there is no peace? And have you forgotten that even after the Israelites—Jehovah's chosen people—had crossed dry-shod over Jordan, there was no peace: Caleb, the son of Jephanneh, claimed Hebron for his inheritance, although it necessitated driving out the Anakims, the race of giants, by force of arms?

In our days, we can hardly expect better times, and should prepare, as best we may, to take the rough with the smooth.

The minister's thoughts, having soared upward to the congenial realm of altruism, it was a rude descent in store for him. Coming from a small cottage were distressing sounds of sobbing, imperious words, and entreaties. A physician standing in the open doorway said: "Come in, minister, and talk to Jim. Maybe he will listen to you—he won't hear us—and it is a matter of life or death."

A sick man, a very sick man, half-risen in a bed, was struggling with a weeping woman, and a couple

of small children, using all their strength to withhold the husband and father from rising and clothing himself, as he was endeavoring to do.

"Minister," said the doctor, "this is Jim Sedley, a race rider. He's been down with a fever, and to-day is terribly worse, but says he will get up to look after his horse. He owns Wade Hampton, and was to ride him in a race to-morrow; but he would be a dead man before he could get to the race-track. And I am going to turn him over to you. I can't do anything with him! I wash my hands of him. There are other sick people who need me, whom I have a chance to help."

He walked quickly away.

The minister approached the bed, and laying his hand on the race rider's shoulder said:

"Will you not try to compose yourself and listen to a few words from me?"

James Sedley, with an effort to become quiet, turned a lowering and sullen brow to the newcomer: "Well, what have you got to say?"

"Only this," replied the minister, in his gentle voice, "you are very ill, and it is my duty to ask, have you ever thought that you have a soul to save?"

The man growled: "Jest now I am thinkin' a sight more about winnin' that race ter-morrer than about savin' my soul, which ain't in any wus fix than the souls of a good many others."

"That is too true," said the minister, sighing, "your calling with its corruptions and temptations——"

"See here, parson," interrupted the jockey, roughly,

"ef you want me ter listen ter your pallaver, listen fust ter mine. It's not everybody that kin ride ter Heaven in a C-spring shay; but it is every pore body's job to earn his own livin'. I never had no schoolin', and bein' wantin' in heft for contract work, and not wantin' ter steal, I had ter do what I could. I ride honest. Jim Sedley has never been accused of throwin' off a race. I do cuss, but that's a light fault in a good man. So did the apostle Peter, as I have hearn tell about; but nobody ever catched me denyin' my Lord and Master; though I haven't paid as much attention to him as I would have done ef I had more time. And, I do bet, but I hold that every man has a right ter do that, ef he acts on the square —and it is mighty amusin' when a chap comes along makin' out he knows it all, and don't know nothin', ter tell him ter put up, or shet up, and arterwards ter rake in his coin—a heap of them fellers has got more money than gumption. And I do drink—sometimes—of necessity—when I'm reducin'; thar's whar the liquor craze comes on. As fer temptations What do you know about temptations? Have you gone hungry fer days, weeks, and months, never knowin' what it was ter have a full meal, and your insides doublin' and twistin', and tormentin' you, and your head light as a cork; then have ter pull yourself together for all you're worth, to ride all sorts of horses —riskin' your life in every race you ride?

"I allow that whiles some jocks start fair enough, graderly they fall into bad company and willainous ways; but them sort is soon found out, and they can't git a decent mount.

"I've been honest from boy to man, and done well at it; but bein' a jockey did not hender me from wantin' Molly and a home—though a race-rider ain't got no right ter sech—but we've loved each other—haven't we, Molly—and the babies?"

The woman, whose arms had never left his neck, tightened her grasp, now burst into violent weeping.

"Don't cry, Molly," said her husband; "it worries me. And I must nurse my strength for what I've got to do ter-morrow." Turning his eyes, which had rested on his wife, toward the minister, he continued: "We couldn't er bin happier ef we had been rich. But bein' pore it has bin hard scufflin'—the babies weakly, and Molly worn ter a frazzle from over-work. And ter make matters wus, I got ter havin' quarish feelin's as ef I might drap off any time. The house is paid for—it ain't much, but it keeps off the rain. But how ter leave Molly with a few dollars pestered me lots till I thought I seed my way when I got Wade Hampton. He was a good race-horse, but onprincipled, and sometimes acted ridiculas. His owner got so out-done with him at Newor-leans, when the horse, winning in er canter, stopped short, not mor'n a yard from the post, ter nibble at a bunch of grass he seed. It showed great want of judgment; howsoever, I got him cheap. And somehow the critter took a likin' ter me, and has behaved his-self so well, that I had confi-dence in him, and put him in that race that's goin' ter be run ter-morrow, and backed him for every cent I could raise in the world. The house is mortgaged and every stick in it. I *must* ride in that race to-morrow. To win, and leave Molly and

the babies with a shelter over their heads, and above starvation, I am willin' ter die. I *must* ride." His eyes, glued to the minister's, had in them the look of a wounded wild animal when he turns at bay.

The minister shook his head.

A tear glistened in Jim's eyes—the first since childhood—as he tenderly fondled Molly's hand. "I must ride," he repeated. "I will die, Molly, tryin' ter fend for you and the babies."

"Oh, no! no! no!" cried the woman. "I am strong, Jim, and can work for you and the children." Her white, thin face utterly contradicted the statement.

The minister, whose compassion was easily roused by sights and sounds of human woe, felt a great pity, as the sick jockey began his story, his voice faint, sometimes almost inarticulate; but with the strength of will that had in his profession so often triumphed over bodily weakness, he kept on till he had had his say. But as the story went on, and the minister listened, there was a strange resurrection. Memories that had withered and died from shame years ago, stirred uneasily, came to life, vivid and strong. His countenance changed, its serene expression giving place to eager excitement. His temples throbbed! The hot blood galloped through his veins.

"Jim, do you remember Larry Mason?"

"Of course I do. He was the best rider that ever was on the earth. But something must have happened him. He disappeared all at once. Oh! it was grand the way he handled his mount. Lookin' at him, the people would go wild, and nearly split their throats hollerin'."

The minister's face flushed. His eyes brightened. In a moment the work of years was undone. At a moment's notice an old passion had returned, and grappled him by the throat. It would have been as easy to escape from the entwining folds of a boa-constrictor. He was mad to be again in the saddle; to feel the fleet bounding of a good horse under him; to hear again the frenzied roar of applause. "Jim, I am Larry Mason. I will ride your horse."

The sick jockey started up in bed crying: "Saved! Saved! Saved! That beats all I ever heard of. Molly, you and the children flop down on your knees and kiss his boots. I wish I could shout glory, hallelujah!"

The minister looked bewildered, frightened. He had spoken in an ungovernable outburst of momentary insanity, which passed away quickly as it had come; the promptings of that Spirit of Evil, ever roaming, seeking whom he may devour, and ever ready to spring upon his prey. "Oh! what have I done? Oh! what have I done?" he cried piteously.

"You have promised to ride my horse in his race ter-morrow," said James Sedley bluntly.

The minister writhed as under torture.

"It is not possible, James. It is not possible."

"It is posserble," affirmed the sick man—a set expression on his face—"you promised, and I will hold you to your promise. I begin ter think," he added, speaking with a brutality he would not have used in speaking to the lowest stable-boy, "that turnin' parson has turned Larry Mason inter a mean, cowardly sneak. But, you have got some of the looks of a

man about you yet, and I don't suppose you'll clean go back on your word, arter promisin', volunteer."

"Don't, don't, talk that way, James. But I can't. Think of the scandal and the injury to my church."

"I ain't thinking erbout anything but Molly and the childern."

"James," pleaded the minister, "so soon as I am able, I will make good to your family the loss of the race."

"A bird in hand is worth two in the bush. And ef you lie now ter me, a dyin' man, it will be jest as easy as fallin' off a log for you to lie to Molly and the childern. I will hold you ter your promise—your promise—your promise." The minister had covered his face with his hands—his breast heaving—and the great tears rolling down through his fingers. Unrelenting, James Sedley went on: "I don't suppose it will be easy, the way you take it. But, in my opinion, the better sort of people will think none the wus of you for stickin' ter your word, and ridin' the horse like a man. Look at Molly, scursely able ter stand, and them puny childern. Do you think Old Master will be hard on you for helpin' them? You kin do that much good, ef you never do any more." In the intensity of his feelings the sick man, who had pulled himself up on his elbow, now, from exhaustion, dropped back to his pillow, his eyes fixed upon the cowering minister with the same fatal glare cast by a pair of glittering eyes through a bush on the fluttering bird, powerless to escape.

The minister, feeling utterly undone, helpless, and a mark for the opprobrium of all the world, and for

divine vengeance, in a blinded way, groped to the window, leaning out, choking. He was a good man and a devout Christian, but not the first, nor yet the last, devout Christian that will fall into a snare insiduously prepared for his tempting by the enemy of mankind.

As was said ages ago, in the direst case, it is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of man. So the minister, raising his eyes, prayed from his heart to the Mighty One, who alone can bring good out of evil, and will never fail or forsake any who cry to Him in their distress. To the minister's stricken mind there appeared the vision of Jacob, who saw a ladder reaching from earth to Heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending, and he felt comforted, as from an assurance given t hat in his bitter trial he would be sustained, and that in some miraculous way good would come out of the evil.

With no longer bowed head, but standing upright, he repeated the declaration:

"*James, I will ride your horse.*"

"You are a good sort," said the sick man, "and I take back them hard words I said to you. And arter you have done this thing for Molly and the babies, I will be easy in my mind, and ef you think it worth while, you can try your hand at savin' my soul—you might do somethin' at it—ther's lots wus men than me."

The warm sun was shining down with dazzling brilliancy over the race-course, thronged with an exhilarated multitude. The news had come that Jim

Sedley was too ill to ride his horse. On the programme Wade Hampton was colored to start—but a ——— represented his jockey's name.

The bell rings and the horses appear on the track; last to come was the minister on Wade Hampton. Hitherto he had zealously avoided observation; but precautions were bootless now. Apparent to all beholders, among the jockeys, was the minister in the saddle.

Had the earth opened a yawning chasm, or had a flaming chariot and horseman appeared in the sky, the astonishment could not have been greater.

The multitude was stricken dumb; there was a dead silence. Then burst forth a storm, a tempest, of derisive howls and hisses.

The minister had declined to put on the jockey clothes, nor would he wear his clerical attire, but was clad in a closely fitting suit of dark gray.

As the roar of contumely fell upon his ear his face flamed scarlet, but instantly paled to a dull opaque white.

The comments were innumerable, principally to the effect that he had "lost his senses," "gone crazy," or "had been a wolf in sheep's clothing." Others, observing more closely, marked the expression on his face of patient suffering and steady resolve; such as is often seen when standing at the side of a wounded soldier after the surgeon's knife has gone through nerve and bone; or seen in the Dark Ages on the face of a martyr chained to the stake. And though appearances were all against him, yet they would suspend judgment, and give him the opportunity of

speaking for himself, of explaining. But what explanation could he make? And to add to the obloquy he did not sit his horse like a novice, but like a well-trained, professional rider.

The rabble is a dangerous animal when let loose; and the discontent rapidly changed to savage anger; loud voices shouted: "It's a shame." "An infernal shame." "Knock him off his horse! Beat him to death—the shameless hound!"

"No, you don't," sung out Jake Stoner, who, by universal acquiescence, was dubbed "a hard party." He could drink more whiskey and use worse language than any of his compeers. But also he had the reputation of being able to fight his way through wild cats, and was respected accordingly. Waving a ponderous hickory stick aloft, he shouted in a ringing voice: "I have done took that thar parson under my protection, and any body that hits him, hits me. It ain't common, but ef the parson wants ter ride, he shill ride."

"Look at him," he muttered to himself. "In my opinion, he ain't ridin' in the natural course of events, but for some secret, under-ground purpose, unbeknown, and ter help somebody—mebby it's ter take pore Jim's place—I'm glad I thought of that, and and I'll back him," and he began shouting in a stentorian voice: "Any even money on the parson's mount!"

The race, a three-mile dash, had filled well—no less than nine starters. It was conceded to be Wade Hampton's race if he would run—but, if he would, was known only to the saints above. Leaving him

out as an unknown quantity, narrowed the probable winners down to two, Princeton and Lady Jane. However, two of the other starters were destined to play an important part in the race. To give a clearer understanding, it is well to give the names of the jockeys who were to pilot them—Sam Hifney and Pete Mosure—a pair of very black sheep.

The minister having fought out the hardest battle of his life, and retreated behind the strong defences of an arm that is not of flesh, was enabled to see things by the light of an inward faith, leaving things of earth in the shadow. But, oh! how hard it was to line up for the start in that heterogeneous company.

Two or three false starts are made, by the instrumentality of the above mentioned black sheep, to effect a whispered and hurried conference. "Pete," said Sam Hifney, "when I hearn that Jim was sick, and couldn't ride his horse, I plunged on Princeton, and piling money agin' Hampton. But look at that parson; he sets his mount like an old jock of the first water. The minute I seed him layin' leg over horse, I knowed I had blundered. And ef you will jine in with me ter keep him back, I'll go halves with you."

"Nuff said," was the concise and comprehensive answer.

When the drum tapped, Princeton, a great raking chestnut, comes tearing along in the lead, pulling like a steam engine. Lady Jane, neat as a pink, and game as a pebble, is next to follow with her dainty, swinging gait, every foot-print planted accurately in place. Other horses crowd up; their points are not exceptionally good, but from sheer condition would

be safe for place did not their jockeys err principally in not knowing how to wait, and in making the running too strong at first.

The minister, not to throw a chance away, endeavored to get off in a good position, but was kept back, last of all, by a pair of coarse-looking brown horses. If he made a move to come up on the right, these horses met to shut him out. Then, at the risk of rousing Wade Hampton's temper, and certainly losing ground, he essayed to pass on the left, only to be again foiled by that brown barricade. He then made a last effort to pass through the center. But it was all the same, the brown horses held him back, keeping him virtually not in the race.

But there is one backer who has not lost heart, and the ringing tones peal out: "Any even money on the parson's mount!"

A race without noise does not meet requirements and the scattered murmurs at the stand deepen into concentrated cheering; wild, louder and wilder becomes the roar of the ring.

Two of the three miles have been run. The brown couple, with no other business in the race than in detaining Wade Hampton, are doing their work well. Entering the third mile, Lady Jane, darting past Princeton, shoots to the front, the ring yelling and howling like mad: "The Lady wins!" "It's the Lady's race!" Twice Princeton comes up to her girth, but she slips away from him. Still that ringing voice is heard above the clamor: "Any even money on the parson's mount!"

The minister's pallor has deepened into a yellowish

tinge; he is feeling ill from the hopelessness of the situation. It would be too dreadful not to win, after all he has suffered—the sin and disgrace. Not to win after the price he has paid! And the price he has yet to pay! Great beads of sweat stand on his forehead, and his heart leaped in an agonized cry for help to Him who marks the sparrow's fall. It would seem that his prayer had penetrated the Heavens and brought relief. Sam Hifney, very much excited by the aspect in front, turned his head to watch the minister. In some way—no one ever knows exactly how such things happen—he bumped against the mount of his evil companion, and horses and men go down together in a heap.

Sam Hifner lay on the track with a broken collarbone. His misused horse, with ruptured tendon, made ineffectual efforts to rise. Pete Mosure and the brown quadruped scramble up simultaneously and separately. "Mount, you duffer!" screams Sam, "and after the parson! Cut him down!"

The opening had been made, and Wade Hampton was then striding along in magnificent form, hard held, a subtle understanding existing between horse and rider, and the dumb animal promised to do his best.

A fearful gap stretched between him and that nonpareil racing in the lead; it did not seem possible for anything without wings to overtake her.

The yells and screams of the people baffle description. Still, high above all, rings out: "Any even money on the parson's mount."

Gradually, inch by inch, Wade Hampton was

brought on till within six hundred yards of the winning post—the limit to the powers of the best horse when fully extended at the top of his rate—then, given his head, he rushed along like a whirlwind.

With interest so intense that it is painful the multitude watch the bay horse, with star and white hind foot—Princeton is passed—the mare reached. She is game, and runs on. But Wade Hampton runs the longest, and wins the race.

Sunday has come, and the people go to church. Though the minister has not been seen since the race, no one has been so much talked about: "What would he do?" "Would he come to church?" "Would he attempt to preach?"

In a conference, holden outside the edifice, it is the concurring sentiment that should he attempt to preach he should not be allowed to do so. It would be an insult to the people and profane to God.

Jake Stoner is not a church member, far from it. He listened, without an attempt to conceal his impatience, till the decision had been made, and publicly announced. Then Jake is heard from. "I know," he said, in elevated tones, "I am votin' outside my precinct, but that thar parson has, in my opinion, got more of the ginnywine, true religion in his little finger than a forty-acre field full of the rest of you. In my opinion, he's got a good reason for what he's done; and ef you give him a fair hearin' you-all will feel p'int-blank ashamed of yourselves for talkin' agin him. Here he comes now, and ef he wants ter preach, he shill preach, or there'll be some

pretty tall argufyin' with these two fists of mine."

More than the eloquence of Jake Stoner, the appearance of the minister disarmed opposition.

He walked with a firm step, but with head bowed down as from deep grief, as he passed through the people, who opened a way for him and silently followed. He kept on through the body of the church, and ascending the pulpit knelt in secret prayer. He rose from his knees with transfigured face, even as the face of Moses after he had talked face to face with the Holy One of Israel. Without pause, and placing his hand on the closed Bible, he said, with infinite pathos, "God's ways are not our ways. Sometimes he leads us through troubled waters for his marvellous ends, and woe, woe, to any who refuse to follow His beckoning finger." His face flushed to a vivid red as he continued: "I had hoped never to be compelled to allude to my boyhood. Of its sins I have repented and made such atonement as was in my power, and I deemed that in mercy Divine Goodness had covered the frightful past with the broad mantle of charity and oblivion.

"But my tears and sorrows were not enough to satisfy Omnipotent justice, and I was called upon for greater expiation"—upraising his shining eyes —"I accept my punishment as the chastisings from a loving Father—deal with me, oh, Almighty Power, as thou wilt!

"To this congregation I would say I was born in what is called the higher rank of life, and even as a little child horses had an inherent attraction for me, and before my young legs could reach the stirrups

I could ride and control the most unmanageable steeds. The passion for horses deepened into a craze. I ran away from home to enter a training stable, and in time became a noted jockey. My father, after fruitless efforts to reclaim me, gave me up—but it broke my mother's heart.

"One day. Many years have passed since that which one day happened to me. The recollection is still fresh; the memory will never leave me, but will stay with me for my torment till I go to my appointed place. My heart was seared as with a red-hot iron; the effect can no more pass away than trampled, withered flowers can recover fragrance and bloom.

"I had just dismounted, after winning at Louisville with Austerlitz when a tiny slip of yellow paper was handed to me. It was from my father, saying: 'Come home, if you would see your mother alive.'

"In a moment my entire nature changed—what had been so dear to me was now hateful. I was only conscious of a consuming longing for my mother and home," his features quivering and tears rushing to his eyes.

"It was not far, and still in my jockey clothes I obeyed the call. Oh, friends! friends!" he burst forth, "you that have mothers, love them, and bless God for them! I saw my mother alive, but speechless. On my knees I cried in agony: 'Mother! forgive me, mother!'—her loving hand clasped mine, and she was gone.

"In the hope that it might, in some way, please her, and in the hope of meeting her, I became what

I am, a humble laborer, doing my Master's work for the saving of souls.

"Can you now wonder that I viewed racing with horror? Can you wonder that I should strive with all my might to arrest others from a pathway that had been so perilous to me?

"What has so lately happened was not of my choosing; but a fiery ordeal through which my frail humanity could never have passed, save for the help that always comes in our greatest need. That I have rescued a piteously helpless family from indigence, I count as nothing. But to have rescued an immortal soul, I count as a crown of glory. James Sedley received from my hands the rites of baptism. He died peacefully, knowing that those precious to him were safe from want, and with the glorious hope that makes it easy to die.

"I have now made the statement due to this congregation, and should there be any here who deem that I have sinned beyond forgiveness, and who cannot, in conscience listen to my preaching, they can now withdraw, and I will begin my sermon from the text: 'Let him that is without sin, cast the first stone.' "

There was not one to leave, and no sermon was ever listened to with more profound attention.

When he stepped from the church door, the congregation, which had gathered *en masse*, with uplifted hats raised a cheer. It was not riotous nor unholy, but the irrepressible outburst when a people's deep heart is stirred to its utmost.

A certain church member, who had been loudest and most virulent in his mutterings, approached the minister with humbled head, and said, in a voice quivering with emotion:

"It was a most Christian, noble and brave thing you have done. Nothing grander was ever done on earth."

"I am grateful to you, my people," he meekly replied, "for your approbation, but the world's honors and applause to me are but as dross. Here I am but a stranger and pilgrim, having no abiding city, and humbly striving to do my Master's will. My kingdom is not of this earth."

Jake Stoner, who had wept his bandana limp, expressed himself: "I always knowed he was true blue, and backed him through thick and thin."

THE END.