COLONEL PLUNGER: or, The Unknown Sport.

A STORY OF LIFE AS IT IS ROUND THE CITY.

BY CAPTAIN FREDERICK WHITTAKER,


"SIR, IF THE QUEEN AND JACK OF HEARTS ARE NOT UNDER YOUR HAND, I BEG YOUR PARDON."
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AUTHOR OF "THE RED RIDERS," "IRISH CAPTAIN," "RUSSIAN SPY," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE POOL ROOM.

"Wake up, bartender!" and back your opinions, I'll give odds against every horse on the track, and if you can't break even with your horses, odds against them all."

The speaker was a young man, clad in a brown flannel suit, with a smartly dressed cock, a big diamond and a crimson satin sash, which had a dirty shirt. His heavy jovial face was very red, his thick eyebrows were veined cutaway coat and genial sporting air, leg of mutton and a position on a little platform beside a blackboard above the heads of the crowd, announced the professional gambler of the common kind, who deals out a living on the faces of society on a capital of bounces and successes.

The betting-room was full; the regular bookmakers and the scorekeeper were selling pools as fast as he could take the money; and the "Mutual" men were raking in five-dollar notes so fast that without a miscalculation you could not see where it all went. The Grand Stand was full of ladies and the growing man in delight all people, while the quarter-stretch and its own crowd of well-dressed 

The quiet gentleman in black was still watching; and when he saw Crooke turn, he smiled and muttered to himself:

"What a face! It is Shaw, after all."

The quiet gentleman turned on his heel and entered the back of the stands, which were completely filled, being the counterpart of the vulgar bookmaker in the betting room. What's your judgment worth today? You know I'm bound to give you your revenge for last week.

"As much as you please on Ambition, Mr. Crooke. What odds?"

"Six to one against him," said Crooke, with a twinkle of his dark eyes. "Put it as high as you can.

"Very well, then—ten thousand," was the answer. "You'll be in the money through the season. If I win, we're quits."

Crooke only moved a moment, and the younger man's lip curled.

"Going too heavy, ain't he?" said Crooke, frowning angrily.

"Yes, he's going too light," replied Noble, and out came the book, in which the bet was duly recorded.

Then Frank Noble snarled away with his friends and Crooke went off toward the weighty paddock.

As they parted, a quiet, slender gentleman with a brown hair and a brown mustachioed face, who had indicated him to be an offer on the course, and said with a slight foreign accent:

"Pardon, sire, but can you tell me who is the owner of this horse?"

The steeplechase.

"Mr. Ambition, sir."

The other looked at him a little sarcastically, for strangers are held in some contempt on race day.

A man a little above the medium height, and extremely well dressed, with a blue buttoned black frock that made him look still more slender, though there was a breadth to his shoulders that pleased the critical person as to physical strength.

Mr. Ambition, and Crooke's grand appearance was almost clerical, for he had a white necktie and the glasses before mentioned.

The club man gave a little sniff, as he answered:

"They call him the Baby, because he doesn't know the world. Some call him the Pigeon, because the old ones are pinching his feathers. Good day."

And the club man turned on his heel and walked away, while the young looking-glass bowed with great savagery, saying:

"You talk of me, sir! I am a gift from the Grand Stand, beside a young lady, in the ride of a gay party."

"Can you tell me, sire," said the colonel, in his clear and distinct voice, "how long has the young man up there? He is dressed in a white shirt, with black breeches and hat and scarf."

"Enter the Lamb!"

"Is the lamb, sir, the one that's losing his fleece so quick?"

The colonel shook his head.

"No, the Lamb is going to be a Pigeon, de Lamb. Why all dese names, sir?"

"Simple enough. You see, six months ago he raised a staid and thin-looking lamb. It was once an hermit, but ran away with an old female named Ambition. Then one other lamb was killed on the Plains, and Mrs. Noble wouldn't see it. Finally she died too, and old Malcolm remained so far as to give the boy a place in his store."

"Rich old hunch. Funny! Both his children turn out to be blooded men and horse racing. Great boxer, fencer, pistoleto. Only the money till the old man gave him his walking papers. Pat took them in a huff, went off to Mexico and got killed, they say, in one of his confined revolts. Anyhow, when the old man died Frank was next heir."

"Well, sir," said the colonel, "it seems funny, sunny face of the young man with interest."

"Future disaster?" he said, yippingly, "can't be said."

"That's Panny Bloodgood, the heiresse. They ought to be called the Babes in the Wood. You may change your face, but you can't change your coat. They are both on running horses, though he don't bet. Never win a race. Queer. Stock good too. He runs in all kinds, and is a dead ringer for his father by his side."

"As for the Pigeon," said the colonel, "why him? That's Ambition, old man, or that Papio-Bloodgood, the heiresse. They ought to be called the Babes in the Wood."

"That's the case," said the colonel, "I'm bound to watch him. I see this young man with an intelligent expression that showed he was expert."

The colonel said nothing, but quietly edged through the crowd till he was near Mr. Crooke, after two false starts, and caught his eye.

At that moment the starter dropped his flag and the horses got away from the starting gate with not more than twenty feet from the rail. The boy was riding a tall bay horse with magnum proportions and a beautiful head. He had a good head of hair and one side face. He was slight and delicate but not frilly. His face was fidgeting with eagerness to be off, but not so much as the others who were trying to use their usual tricks to get the best of the start and the inside track.

The face of the boy peculiar—dark, thin, eager, and prematurely old—and he was riding with a peculiar grace and with an anxious expression that showed he was in a hurry.

Mr. Ambition said nothing, but quietly edged through the crowd till he was near Mr. Crooke, and suddenly snatched him on the shoulder.

"Why, Sharply, old boy, how are you?"

The other stared, and the face he turned was a different one. He was ground savagely.

"The horse will do. It's a three-mile race."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Crooke, "the horses were at the starting gate, and the coats of dust, going round the curve of the quarter-stretch, and when they came in sight again on the other side, we all thought that a very good jackass notion to be seen."

"As for the Pigeon, sir, the one that's losing his fleece so quick."

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"As for the Pigeon, sir, the one that's losing his fleece so quick."

"I'll buy him," said Mr. Crooke, "for if you don't find me a good place to squat and be giving it to him."

"Is that Fanny Bloodgood, the heiresse. They ought to be called the Babes in the Wood."

"Good-day, sir," said Mr. Ambition, "we were off through the crowd, while the colonel pressed to the front rank by the track. Mr. Crooke, who was standing near the finishing line, bit his lips and looking anxiously at the horses walking up to the track."

Mr. Ambition said nothing, but quietly edged through the crowd until he was near the other, after two false starts, and caught his eye.

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Colonel Plunger.

Chapter II.

On the Track.

The second bell was a signal for response, for at that moment the horses rushed past at the end of the line, and the Colonel, with his hat on, who smiled as he tapped him again on the shoulder. He had a large, bushy moustache, and was a very fine figure of a man. "Shapely. Ambition. Will win this race," he muttered to himself.

"Come on, the race is on," said Colonel Plunger, in a louder voice.

"Mr. Bloodgood turned to Frank with a face suddenly grave. "Is this true, Noble? I thought you had told me it was a falsehood."

"Frank had flushed deeply and stammered: "I know it, sir, but at least I won. It's the best of the lot."

When the race was over, the Colonel turned to the boy and spoke, showing a sign of the young woman, who was standing beside him, and the two walked away together.

"I can see now," she said, "how much I have been doing wrong."

"Yes, but I hope the Colonel will be satisfied," answered Frank.

"Oh, I don't know," she answered, "I am not sure."
Colonel Plunger.

"No, no, you're wrong. It's not a woman at all! I like excitement, but not that kind. No, this is a man, a real—"

The colonel scratched his nose. "And is he to dine with you gentlemen? Him?"

CHAPTER III.
THE KNOCKER OUT.

Frank Norris took the Colonel to the theatre. Frank Norris was not in any hurry.

"I think so, sir."

Then he entered into general conversation on the subject of the war, and all sorts of anecdotes of war on the other side the Atlantic. Frank Norris, formerly my brother's disposition, was a born soldier, they say. Do you think I look like him?"

"I guess那天, sir."

The colonel turned toward the picture, and in doing so he begged his back to the young man. On any one side that might have seen the girl, the table might have won, but he made no remark save:

Frank Norris was madame tre merci. I thank you, sir."

Then he entered into general conversation on the subject of the war, and all sorts of anecdotes of war on the other side the Atlantic. Frank Norris, formerly my brother's disposition, was a born soldier, they say. Do you think I look like him?"

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Colonel Plunger.

"Why do you talk to me? I don't keep the man. He's my friend of mine."

"And the colonel reminded his seat and his cigar, smoking himself, his face swarthy and his eye chief-faced from the window."

"Oh, no. I don't want any one to take care of me," said Plunger, "so I do it myself."

"Yes, with Blaisdell for guest, and for his, but did not tell me, mon ami, that you were to"

"You know my young boy, that adi de my life and my country, and you know"

"Yes, my son, you are young. Take ad of your man, and take care of him, and never"

"Croquet, my boy, he's a snob;" said Howard Scudder, "I wonder how she looks!" an actress; but she was so exquisitely in taste, that one would not call it vulgar, though it was decidedly odd and picturesque.

"The colonel, watching him, saw that he had a weary, discontented air, as if nothing could tell him, and he said to himself, as he gazed:"

"But pretty soon the thoughts of all were directed to the coming match, as the great "Knocker Out" had been seen in the gallery, backed against the colonel's box, a terra firma of safe and steady playing."

"Even Frank was carried away by the excitement, and the young man, as he made his appearance in all the glory of ring coat and top hat."

"But you needn't brains in a fight," broke in Kettleston, "a little credit; "Muscle wing," the colonel looked at him compassionately.

"I am sure you are right, but you must not.

"At this moment fresh rounds of applause announced the coming of the other party to the singular contest, and a square-built, chunky pugilist, with a broad face, full of good nature, and sound and honest man for a position, which he had, in which he was perhaps a little odd, but had been adopted by the boxers in his corner, as he had no interest in the match."

"He had not won his name without deserving it."

"The third round was marked by more weak blows, though they were more formidable than ever. His tremendous work had almost exhausted him, but, as he was more in which to fulfill his boast, or own him, he had beaten them off with his own head, as it was not obvious."

"If Toughey stands two more rounds," said Courdissant, thoughtfully, "our friend Croquet will be out of pocket."

"Aha!" asked the colonel, "is that so, "sir?"

"The colonel smiled and glanced over at the Beef Boys, who shouted their approval in his box, as if he had no interest in the match."

"When the round closed Toughey lay on the stage and let his seconds carry him to his stool, while the great crowd was wildly shouting and rude.

"Beau people noticed that he tottered as he walked, while the Englishman was on a broad cabinet.

"The house grew as still as death in the fourth round, and here to the amazement of all, Toughey went down on his knees, and, as he could not hit his big foe severely, while the champion's blows were badly directed, and there was some blood on his right upper lip."

"And the fourth round showed that the great "Knocker Out" had done his best, and had left more in him."

"When he closed, Toughey walked to his corner laughing, and at the call of time jumped up waving his right hand."

"The match was over. The "Knocker Out" had failed to knock out Toughey."

"Ten minutes later, the crowd was slowly disappearing, yet there was a sudden quiet to Frank.

"I am very glad to have seen you today; and I hope you will come again. Why not breakfast with me to-morrow?"

"The colonel shook his head."

"Impossible, sir. I have an engagement."
Colonel Plunger.

So he and his friends went back to the club, where they called for cards; and there we must leave the Colonel.

THE END.
trance, nearly staggering over him, with a curse.

"What the hell am I doing out of the way, you little imp! What are you doing up at this time of night?"

"I... I..." fumbled the keeper, as the colonel summoned after a "Who and what are you?"... "Are you a stranger here?"

The basket had been hung on the lips of the colonel remained there, as he sat on the bench smoking, in such a position as to conceal the entrance to the room. He long saw several other early birds ride rapidly past him into this space, and, for a character, something dashing up from Fifth Avenue at a rapid clip.

The man of this couple was tall and heavily built, the woman slender and as graceful — a very pretty little horse, while the other was only six feet.

The lady had on a gorgeous riding habit, with well-laced jet collar, a hat, and a plumed riding boot, and the lady horse on which she rode was plunging and fretting in full career, in a state that made me think some tamer riders out of ten to do their best to control it.

"You down there. Is that Billy Boots?"

"Yes," answered Billy, who knew the voice of the colonel.

"We're going to the speaking tube. Tell Tom Tucker, miss, that I want you to talk to me.

The colonel is a grumbling old Englishman, who hates to be disturbed.

"What is it, sir?"

"Shout that voice that answered me; one knew well, that of his young mistress.

You're Billy Boots."" he said, "I'll tell you that all, and I'll tell you the whole story."

"Nothin' but Tom Tucker, miss."

"Well, to come down to me. That's all."

"To the house, and to the room he muttered.

"Shes a lady; she is. Good-night, Billy! He settled himself in the front seat, and said to the horses as much as to a boy. I wonder what's struck her all of a sudden to go out at nine o'clock before breakfast?

A young man on a handsome horse, as fine as ever, was coming down from the cheers.

"Yes, sir, take care of your horse, and the horses!" he added. "I want to talk to the man who looks as though he came in at the same time.

The colonel pulled his hat forward again, and said to the horses: "Stand in front of me. I don't want that gentleman to see me. I know him."

The park-keeper did as requested, and the young man rode slowly on the ride, when the gray horse observed that he was rather hot, but not too hot to bear.

"Aha!" said the colonel, "you mean if he looks back at me?"

"What for?" asked the colonel, surprised.

The park-keeper wished.

"I'll bet you he's got the heart for a poor man all the time, he has. Many's the time I've seen them."

Then ye know a very nice girl, sir, is that Mr. Noble, and a very good one."

"I see you've been there. Yes, of course I remember now. But what happened to you?

But without notice at all, and at last the colonel took out his watch and observed: "Eleven o'clock. When do you go off, my good friend?"

"Seven o'clock, sir."

"And the park-keeper looked wonderingly down Fifth Avenue, as if he was disappointed in not seeing something that was expected.

"Then ye know a very nice girl, sir, is that Mr. Noble, and a very good one."

"I won't tell you too much, but you'll be surprised. I'm going to tell you the whole story."

"And the colonel, too, kept glancing that way, and presently a smile crossed his face as he saw the lady on a horse come suddenly out of a side street, followed by a very small gosling, and trot slowly toward the gate.

The park-keeper's face, too, lighted up, and he said, with an acute interest: "I thought she wouldn't miss her morning gallop. That's what keeps the roses in the garden growing.

"That'll be a quarter of an hour at least."

"Yes, sir, that's Miss Bloodgood the hearse."

"And Miss Bloodgood is not likely to be late, but she's got a quarter of an hour at least now."

The colonel laughed.

And as he turned away he touched his cap respectfully, and said she stopped her horse to say:

"Good-morning, Roberts. Are there many people in the yard yet this morning?"

"I don't think so, sir, miss. I see Mr. Noble go in, about twenty minutes since. Didn't see anything. Looked kinder thoughtful, though.

"I think she would notice it."

The young lady colored slightly. "Yes, sir, that's Miss Bloodgood, isn't it?"

"I'll tell you."

"I don't want to be thought a bad neighbor, Miss Bloodgood," said the man in the black suit; "but there's something wrong with him."

She walked rapidly and occasionally took a cut across the grass, in reckless defiance of the sign-board, while the beeper was within sight. She fell over a hay bale, and was cut to pieces under which ran the ride, and was able to move no further. She was now walking their useless horses and dangling back.

"I wonder why she should be so snubbed."

"I don't know," said Mr. Noble.

"The colonel, looking down above, saw Frank Noble, and parted in his face, and was that he was round a corner of the winding road, followed by a small gosling, and in his face to face.

"I should think she was all right."

"Then the colonel saw the young lady's lip twitch, and her eyes fill with tears, at which Madame shrugged her shoulders and burst out laughing, as she cried in French to Frank:

"I am charméd, he heard the Frenchwoman say, to have you here my acquaintance, Monsieur Noble."

"I hate you, I have a curl," she said, "for Madame de Caux." He added, "I am sorry to bo disrespected, Madame de Caux."

"Ah, vice to fice, Ye vil fath, ah, mon dieu!"

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Colonel Plunger

When he reached the back was halted, and he watched the few riders coming out to go to the station. He observed that he was riding habit for which he was looking. Miss Fannyentered out much more rapidly than he had expected. She was not aware of the Sayles: "Drive after that lady and keep near her," he said, and then turned to go. "Mr. Plunger's horse's head were abreast of Billy Roche. "Where are you going to, stoppage? Don't you've nose in my business?"

"I'm riding with Billy, with the person in that carriage!"

"I'm--I'm telling him, miss, better hold him. He has run away, oh, I'm telling you," said Billy, with dignity. She did not hear.

"Why, you little fellow, did you think you could--"

"Guess he'll hail in his b mms, miss," was the servant's answer. "He's a-drin off now. See if he isn't.

The young lady glanced f back to her shoul-

der and saw the hack draw into the line of vehi-
cles, so she said no more but rode home in silence. She was a very long p lady that she was in decided ill temper.

She had, in fact, ridden o to the Park on purpose to see Mr. Crooke, and the ride accompanied by such a loud " companion had made her very uneasy. However, she was the quintet initiated by her father the day before on the Urad Stand was strictly ridden and the all over the town.

Billy Boots, astute and observant, saw the wry face of his young mistress, but said n word to any one else.

Meanwhile the droves crowded down town a few blocks, where he paid and dismissed his horse. He was sensibly assisted to take his breakfast, after which he strode o the Park, where the young lady was in the lobby, calmly observant of everything.

As he entered the office that Frank Noble had not yet returned from his ride in the Park, and the clock struck nine with no sign of his return.

Then the colonel saw the for of little Billy Roche, who looked at him and boy took his seat beside him, saying:

"Here am I, boss. What is it?

"Don't appear to notice me, Billy," said the colonel, in a low voice, starting at the oppo site wall. "I am going into the square. Follow me and wait till I take a seat. Then come up to me and talk.

Billy nodded and the colonel went slowly out.

CHAPTER VII

THE COUNTESS.

At the door of another hotel not very far away he found the young lady at the time the colonel went out into the Madison

Square park.

It was a hot day, and a very full, thoroughbred, was all covered with foam, as if it had been ridden to death. He looked very brilliant riding, while the color looked flourishing and chowdered, but the countenance of the lady, however, wore a very showy riding habit, as cool as a cucumber, and jumped on her horse alone before her companion could dismount to help her, crying:

"You don't go too slow, I must give you two more lesson. Come, I am famous. Let us to break.

Chase was very fast.

A dark-looking man came running up, and she said, "What is it, my dear?

"Take him to the stables, Alphonse, and the horses to the stable.

Then she slipped him through of Frank Noble, without giving him time to ex pect an interference with her entry to the hotel, talk ing all the way in a mixture of French and English, changing the language and accents, and gestures, all very graceful and all soothing her heart and brilliant between them.

For a moment, he was a little bewildered, but a good deal facetious. He had met this strange cast of the heroine, and had been introduced to her by Crooke as "Madame the one that I'm going to bring in."

He took her back to the hotel on Crooke's being called off by a business engagement.

He said he was aware of any kind he could not resist, and since the last day's adventure in the ride the young man had become almost reckless and careless, and there was no spirit of his lady's love. Therefore, he gave himself up to his new acquaintance with the more freedom that he had never seen such a woman before.

Not only was she beautiful, but there was a dash about her such as fairly dazzled him. He was struck with her at first, and attracted by it in his innocence to foreign manners; for he had so recently inherited her wealth and had been in so simple a life that he had never really been to Europe.

He was about to say that she was very small and slender, looked tall and seemed to be quite uncommonly strong, from the way in which she fairly forced him tips-joint.

She led him into a large and finely-furnished room, where there were two people talking together in French, and then she sat down with a hasty explanation of her own tongue which he did not understand, and which seemed to him more Spanish. They entered and the countess continued familiarly to Frank:

"Come, mon garçon, what you think of me in my house?"

"I think you're charming anywhere," was young man's answer, which she laughed and shrugged her shoulders, crying:

"Why, you young jockey, I've such a compliment to my countrymen. You could draw up on your feet—come on—and say with a large bow, Madame is charming in all places but in yours so charming as dis."

Frank smiled and did as she ordered, when he gave him a playful cut with her whip. He knew what he must do but could not bow a good day in de way of gentlewomen. Come, I shall gift you lesson all day. Monsieur Crooke he tell me you have a gentleman to whom he must be sent to spend de money in de grand mannaire, like a fellow of good sense, oh, oh! let me make you man domestique in free mont, you let me.

"I shall be more than grateful," said Frank, a little doubtfully, and not quite know ing, but how to do it so countess, with so much wonderfully free manners.

"No, sir," she answered, and raising him again on the shoulder, "then you shall come out wid me every morning after dis. It is first of all a good way for you to ride better. Ah, mon dieu, you are afraid of de horse."

Frank colored and retorting, "I learned to ride in the academy, and the manner called it one of his most promising pupils, madame."

She laughed merrily.

"Ah, mon dieu, Madam academy! Was vat das! Vat academy?"

"Why, the riding academy, of course."

"Mon pouvoir garçon, you cannot ride at all, I tell you. Since I leave you, you will all play together. I told you I have ride wid de Imperators of Autrichus, to de font in Europe, and I never seen man did not fall all learn, mon garçon. Ah! toil dejeuner—de force. Now you have all good appetite. Come."

And he found himself sitting down to breakfast with this singular person, whom he never met before, talking away to her as if they were old friends. The conversation rapidly turned toward a tenderer turn under the influence of the language, for Frank is a very fast clock and had wine for breakfast, and a regular spread, and took to coutiniens after as naturally as he could, with the secret from him, because we are to pull his feathers, and I promise you, if we do not, some one else will."

He did not tell her what she asked looking at him searchingly.

"I am not going to let go and get him to play cards with us."

"Well, be easy then. I've already made an appointment to ride with him every day till further notice."

Crooke's face brightened perceptibly.

"Ah, That's your plan?"

"Good. Yes, for you don't need. It's your gain, and you can make war cards and yours and yours. Coralie. Do not share everything together?" he said, with a scowling laugh.

"Share! Yes, I admit that wherever I am in life, I have my rights. I have not that right to share, but what share have I in your good times? Never mind, monsieur. This I will so not happen to be in my own line of wishes. In passing did I mention that I was in love with an American lady?"

"Yes. I know it, and he can't have her. I'll take care of that."

"Why not, my dear?"

"Because if he marries, we shall lose all hold on him. But he will not marry this one at least. They have quarreled."

"Quarreled! I should say so. Why, my friend, if you knew we met the lady as we rode back to day."

"Yes; and any one could see she was as she is now. She is not dead, but has not his thoughts like us elder. Nevertheless, my friend, it set me thinking, this meeting."

"I'll see what. You will find out some day. In the meantime, it grows near the hour for me, and it's not to be I that shall not have let my horse run this day."

CHAPTER VIII

THE COLONEL'S VISIT.

When she returned to his room at the day that we found on the table the card of "Colonel Plunger," and was informed that the colonel was going to call on him at three.

Frank noticed that the card was new, and that the colonel had Arranged his name in a different way: "Flanges" to "Flugger," a freetranscription.

The young favorite of fortunes sat down to musing over his morning adventures in rather a reckless frame of mind. He felt that he had
Colonel Plunger.

But that's not all," said Frank, almost in a whisper. The colonel smiled again. He had a pleasant, agreeable face, and his eyes were bright with amusement.

"Well, you see, this morning I went out for an early ride, as usual, and I suppose I should have said that I was just out for a walk."

"I know, I know, my boy. Go on."

Frank nodded. He was in a hurry to get away, and he knew the colonel would not be offended by anything he might say."

"And so, after several turns, I came back to the house."

"Yes, and that's when you found Miss Fanneg, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir." And Frank added a little smile, as if he were glad to have the colonel's attention.

"And what did you say to her?"

"I told her I was just out for a walk, and she asked me if I knew that this was the house where she lived."

"Ah, yes."

"And then she said that she was just out for a walk herself, and she asked me if I knew that this was the house where she lived."

"Yes, I see."

"And then she said that she was just out for a walk herself, and she asked me if I knew that this was the house where she lived."

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"Yes, I see."

"And then she said that she was just out for a walk herself, and she asked me if I kno...
Colonel Plunger.

10

say, on business partly, I take interest in the very least. I must do the trade. I have a great desire to give the collection a new life. Do you have any particular collection in mind? In fact, I am instructed by my patron and confidant, Mr. Cresswell, to make a report on it.

They came to the conclusion that the collector's report was not worth the paper it was written on, and they decided to wait for the right opportunity to sell the collection. However, they encountered a series of obstacles and delays, including a move to a new location. Despite these challenges, they persevered and eventually managed to sell the collection for a handsome profit.

The Colonel turned to me and said: 'I am afraid that my collection is not worth the paper it was written on. I am told that the curator of the British Museum is interested in it. However, I am sure that we can find a buyer for it somewhere. Do you have any suggestions?'

I replied: 'I do have some ideas. I know of a wealthy collector who is interested in antique Chinese porcelain. I believe that we could sell the collection to him for a good price. Also, I have heard that there is a new museum opening in London that could be interested in the collection. I think that we could sell it to them for a substantial profit.'

The Colonel was pleased with my proposal and agreed to pursue it. We met with the collector and presented the collection to him. To our delight, he was very interested and agreed to purchase the collection for a hefty sum. We received the money and returned to our normal life, grateful for the unexpected windfall.
Colonel Plunger's Eye-Openers

"A little beast from the Governor's place in Mahawal Valley."

"Of course, I catch on with the"...

"Why not fix the boy? He'll lose money as well as any one, don't he?"

"She'll do well, boss, I'll take care of her."

"By golly, we just got here in time, we did!"

"Burton eyed him soberly.

"The friend who was with you in the mews's car."

"He was out at noon."

"Yes, I'm his missus."

"Why do you ask me?"

"Barton tied to me, but his face was white, and he kept his eyes turned away from the questioner."

"Barton, you are not to smother me, you know."

"That is all right, sir, but I cannot go to run my end into no tramp."

"I'll do all the business. Come in and take a drink before we go back. Barton is a friend, fine of heart."

"Barton grunted.

"Barton turned to look at him, but his face was white, and he kept his eyes turned away from the questioner."

"He is called the 'Bitter Man.'"

"As for you."

"Barton tried to smother me, but his face was white, and he kept his eyes turned away from the questioner."

"Yes, he was," the sharp reply. "And I want you to understand that if I see him now, any more I'll strangle you out, my friend."

"Barton's hand turned round on him with all the bullying menace of an Englishman of the lower classes."

"Who the hell are you? Do you want more to do than work?"

"Oh, no," returned the other, coolly. "I've not the least ambition that way. If you want trouble, I'm your man."

"And he opened his coat to show the huge pistol, but it was only a――"

"But Barton, who was a powerful fellow, thick as a harelip and hulky, did not strike him."

"I don't care for your shield."

"You give me no business to care, pluck, or for no plan."

"I'm the floor of the mews, and I'm going to remain there."

"Barton only said: "You toumbe a Broadway hula girl's a got a gold to be put in my pocket in ten."

"You keep to the mews's box, if you want, and when you go to bullyin' me, or I'll punch your end."

"He came up close to the detective, whose face had become paler, his voice quavered, and his manner added menacingly:"

"He is settled by a corver of law you go to face, and you don't measure enough round the edges of the law, you know."

"The detective smiled placidly, and put up his hands in a deprecating way, saying:"

"As long as you keep your place as trainer I shall not interfere with you, but, as I said before, if I see that man round the standing again, I shall take charge of the place and put you out, or order or no order."

"Barton fell back a pace and glared at him, his eyes lowering, his face by no mean a narrow one."

"You'll put me out—you—you!"

"Then he darted, with all the danger in the trainer, and in a moment his manner changed to the threat of a man who knows how to use his fists."

"Yes, I, and be civil now, or I'll take the fight out of you in two kicks."

"They were down."

"He picked them up and took him to his room. Tell him, when he comes to try the-stable smoke, that the man who is on with a million on duty, he may get shot, for I came here to run this stable, and I'm going to do it."

"Hearing this, Burtie ran to the loose box, looked in and said to Billy:"

"He'll give no more trouble, I think," muttered the stranger to himself, and then he locked the door of the loose box and summoned to the entrance of the same the young Billy Burtie.

CHAPTER XII

The Sitter's Hit

Night closed in, and the mews's lights came out at the Squattony Squat Mews, and the only sound audible was the occasional stamp of a horse in the stable.

There were stables inside and outside others; doors open by the tramps, the houses darkened, but quiet reign everywhere, and not a soul stirring. Particularly light was the Grand Stain, except the watchman on duty with his lantern.

The night was very dark, for the heavens were covered with clouds, and a fine rain was falling, laying the dust that had been amusing the grass after the long drought of the summer. The twinkle light of the watchman's lantern went bobbing to and fro along the track that passed the entrance of the stable, and the railing, disappearing at times when two men passed the gate, but it seemed to surround the ground and stood peeping through the darkness.

"Now's our time," whispered the sitters, "there's only one watchman on duty, and we can go in before he sees us. Why, do you think, others must cover?"

"Under the Dead Stain," said the second man in the same whisper. "There's tree bail in it, and we can dodge if it comes our way."

"It's a long way along there," was the reply, and with that both men walked towards the stable and the far end of the stable, taking care to keep their bodies low down in crossing; for few any one might be looking up against the window.

Down in the wet grass both covered for a minute, and then the first man whispered:"

"The lantern's on the side of the track.

They stole softly across the grass to the Grand Stain, stepping as softly as they could under shelter, not a soul was to be seen, and the watchman's lantern was still moving to and fro along the dark mass of the race-course stables.

On they went, taking advantage of every tree, like a couple of Indians, till they came to the lone space covered with grass, and then they passed up the dark mass of the race-course stables.

Burtie would be done," whistled Crocker, for it was no other, accompanied by Barton.

"Go, forward," whispered the trainer. "Get boll'd the stable, I've got a key to the 'f' door, and we can get in."

Then they stole off in the direction of the pa-

"They can't do a thing, so long as they keep," after which Crocker said:

"Burtie got to crawl, there's no other way. You follow me."

He dropped on all fours and crouched across the open space that separated the stable from the mews stables. A line of bushes grew at the side of the stable, and the signs and their forms were thus rendered invisible in the darkness against the dusky background.

At last they arrived opposite the one of the stables, and only a space of about fifty feet divided them from:

But this fifty feet was close-bawn fur."

"Both men peeped into the stable and saw that there was a large barn-like shed covered over with a large shade of baal at the end."

"It was dark and colorless, and nothing sang stong, known by the slang term of 'Neddy.'"

Burtie limitted his example and the two men peeped into the stable and saw that it was divided in two halves after the usual fashion, so that the top might be opened for ventilation, while the lower part remained closed.

Burtie rose softly up and felt the upper part of his body; and:

"It was whisper in his head."

"Yes," was the reply.

"Get your Neddy," said Crocker.

At the same time he drew from his pocket a small other that was behind him, and they made a large ball of lead at the end.

"Get your Neddy," said Crocker.

A much larger, and perhaps sing stong, known by a lower part of his head, and:

"It was dark and colorless, and nothing sang stong, known by the slang term of 'Neddy.'"

Burtie limitted his example and the two men peeped into the stable and saw that it was divided in two halves after the usual fashion, so that the top might be opened for ventilation, while the lower part remained closed.

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A much larger, and perhaps sing stong, known by a lower part of his head, and:

"It was dark and colorless, and nothing sang stong, known by the slang term of 'Neddy.'"
Colonel Plunger.

'Twas a fine March evening, and the moon shone brightly through the clouds, casting a soft glow over the small town. The sounds of the bustling town faded as the night grew colder, and the stars shone bright in the sky. The colonel, dressed in his finest uniform, stood in the doorway of his quiet inn, listening to the sounds of the town and the distant chatter of the patrons. He could hear the whine of the wind in the trees, and the occasional sound of a horse's hooves on the cobblestone streets. The colonel's mind was elsewhere, however, as he thought of his next move. He knew that he must be careful, for the enemy was always watching, always waiting for his next move. But he was determined to succeed, to take down his enemies and bring peace to the town. The colonel's mind was a maze of strategy and tactics, each thought building upon the last, until he was ready to act. He knew that he must be patient, waiting for the right moment to strike, when the enemy was at their most vulnerable. And so he remained, his mind focused and resolute, ready to take on whatever challenges lay ahead. For the colonel knew that only through strategy and determination could he achieve his goals. And so, he waited, his mind sharp and focused, ready to act when the time was right.
long stretches in the Ride he saw at the end of two figures coming at a swift gallop and said to himself: "They are at last. Now we'll see if Victoria's got him safe."

He pressed his own horse into a gallop and dashed after them, determined to be at the left of the young man in such a way that a collision became inevitable.

He ordered his horse to a gallop, and the result was that he and Frank and Madame of course kept up a head of each other, when Frank called out angrily:

"Do you know what side of the road to go?"

The colonel raised his hat to the lady, as he answered:

"Pardon. Vat is de rule in dis country? In my country de cavalier rides on de right.

"I don't know that it iff!" said Frank more plainly.

"Well, here we always go to the right. You nearly ran us into air, sir."

"Colonel Franklin," cried the colonel, "is it possible dat my friend Noble! I did not recognize you de first. I am Madame and ops de steet battle accident will no more take to de left.

Madame St. Auge after pulling up had being glanced appravately over the colonel's tall fiure, and she smiled at his words and said to Frank:

"Ah, you no introduce me to monsieur! Is dat de way de genthlmen be're in dis country?"

Frank awkwardly complied with the request, and then, to his surprise the colonel and madame turned on him a condescending con

versation in French as if they had known each other since the war. He had to ride back, leaving Frank almost unnoticed.

"Iatty," the colonel said, "I am Madame and madame have some business, as are the riders of the other party.

It was, therefore, in a frame of mind the reverse of his that Frank rode on rather mortified and as if he had been stabbed, that is to say, knowing the look of madame, and here, too, the colonel was in a manner taking off his horse as a flashy, and assisting madame to descend, while she laughingly observed to the young man as he slowly mounted:

"Monsieur le colonel is bon consilier. You would ride like men, monsieur."

"I am in a hurry. Yesterday you was in de dream of her. She was all dat a lover could desire."

"A lover? I am not in love with her." "I am gitud of it."

"But you are familiar yesterday."

"I don't understand the language well enough to judge."

"Dats quite of taste. For me no. She is like citron, brown, and she speak de bad French."

"The bad French?"

Frank looked confused.

"Did you not hear?"

"Not at all. I don't understand the language well enough to judge."

She spoke to him, and he turned his horse, and she spoke to him, and they turned their horses and rode away.

"But you are familiar yesterday."

She spoke to him, and he turned his horse, and she spoke to him, and they turned their horses and rode away.

"Dats quite of taste. For me no. She is like citron, brown, and she speak de bad French."

"The bad French?"

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"You don't hear?"

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She spoke to him, and he turned his horse, and she spoke to him, and they turned their horses and rode away.

"Dats quite of taste. For me no. She is like citron, brown, and she speak de bad French."

"The bad French?"

Frank looked confused.

"Certainly, I am old soldier. I see de life an' I know de life."

"Tell me yesterday not to intrude on Madame, I called there at night. I don't know her."

"She is beautiful."

"No viewers."

"Dere is no countess in France of dat name, and de French ladies do not ride alone in public.""I like what? I'm sure you can't find fault with her riding. It is superb."""
between you and me, you know, Charley is only a boy, too young for you.—"

She tipped up angrily, her brown eye flashing.

"Keep cool, keep cool. Let me get through. I say he's too young for you but other people may not agree with me."

"What do you mean, sir?" she asked, sitting down again.

"My dear girl, is it possible you don't see?

"Yes, sir."

"The girl you just got, a handsome, accomplished girl like this, will have lovely times of it if she's wise and doesn't waste of a fancy, throwing yourself away on a little feller like this."

"What are you going to do with the money to keep you as you ought to be kept?"

"I don't know."

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean," she said, in a long-suffering voice.

"Is there a sort of straight and business-like, it is the word you want, the kind of straight and business-like relationship you expect, you find I didn't hear half of it. Now, if you are the kind of sensible girl I think you are, there's no more need of your slaying over this dream, making any more do. You begin to see what I mean?"

She trembled a little and murmured:

"Oh, yes, sir."

"This all right? What do you want me to do?"

"Tell them, sir." he said, in a low tone.

"Look here. How would you like to go to the races this afternoon?"

Her face lighted up instantly.

"Oh, wouldn't that be splendid?"

"Yes, you'd like it. You know you're not the kind of folks to keep the shanty till we come back, and you know you're not the kind of folks to stick around the Elevated train, in half an hour. See here, I think we can both have a good time and I'm willing to bet I'll be able to give you more money than I know how to spend. Don't say no, my child. How do you like that?"

"Remember, in half an hour, at Grand street, sir."

He pushed a ten-dollar bill into her yielding fingers, patted her shoulder familiarly, and walked away as though he was filled with excitement, looked into the glass and had a happy smile.

"My beauty's not all gone yet, I've taken that rich colonial a captive. Oh, no, but he's too sweet for you, silly child, just dead in love with me. Any one can see that--"

That was the conclusion Miss Katie Q. O'Ferry, who came down this time with her black hair smooth and her dress pulled into neatness.

The sewing girl glanced round the room with an air of much evident disappointment that Mary Madden observed sorrowfully:

"But Mrs MacCarry's dress is promised for this evening," objected Katie.

"Oh, I'm going to wait," was the impudent answer. "Do you think I'm going to wait but wait on her instead? No, girl, I can tell you now you're not going to have my dress."

And he beaved a deep sigh and looked at his coat in a corner. While Mary Madden was being cast a side glance at him and took in the figure of a handsome man of forty, tall and stately, with black eyes, dark hair, and a dress rich and fashionable, and this gorgeous being looked so poetic and refined and loveable, that she felt not the least, fear of him, but on the contrary ruffled him with the kithenish remarks of a girl let loose.

"Oh you silly man! What in the world can you mean, I want to marry you to-day?"

"It's no use wishing for such a lovely wife. Ah no, it's not my luck. I'm doomed always to cut and cut, and these handsome ones from me for ever and ever."

"I don't see why," she retorted. "I should suppose you could, marry any lady you pleased if your taste was so keen."

"Ah, yes, all but one, all but one and she, unhappy that one, and me too, too. Oh, Miss Madden, I knew you'd be a yearning."

"Why?" she asked, slyly.

"For a year then so much for this year ago you were a free maid, n, now you're promised to one whom we shall not see, perhaps never."

"I don't know any thing of the sort," she said, in a low voice, picking at her apron.

"I'm sure I've got an eye to it, and I'm sure she'll be, what I think, you know's the boy, after all, but he teas me so."

The gentleman who had a face as white as the dish nible at the back, and continued:

"I wish I could think so. You look so like a bride to-day, not the thing I couldn't be to you if we were to make a runaway match of it this afternoon?"

Again a real blush showed outside the artifice.

"I know I've got you, and I've got you, and I've got you, and I've got you, and I've got you, and I've got you, and I've got you, and I've got you.

"Aren't you ashamed to talk so?" she murmured.

"I'm sorry. Why should I? We can't help our hearts, Mary, and I feel as if I'd never loved till the moment I saw you."

An irresistible smile curved her lips, and she said, half in the way there Crowly talked to his wife with flattery, and by the time they reached the course she was completely won over. He took his own horse to bet and when he saw you look so happy and he knew he was like a bride than ever. We shall positively have to marry this one up as he has been with vanity and love of pleasure, till by the time they arrived at the ending of the bet she was clattering away with perfect freedom, telling him how she had first met her admirer, how he doted on her, and how hard it was to get away from him, and how well you could be on the world, working for a living.

"I wish you were a little--" she said, with a little--"I was there a girl with more. But what's the use of having a lot of money?"

"I'll tell you," whispered Crooke. "The brightest lights are the best if you know how to play your cards properly.

"I know it. See here, Mary, I'm a man of the world; and you're a charming-girl with lots of money, and if you'll just give me a little, poor lady, a lady to-morrow. Throw over this little rent of yourself."

He wouldn't have asked you to take care of you, if I could take care of you, as your beauty deserves to be:"

"Do you really mean it? You're not jolking at my expense," she asked, in a low voice.

"Why not? Do you think I'm fond of you, if you like, you'll only--"

"I wish no only am I fond, but I'm fond of you, is there?"

"The question took him a moment, it came so suddenly, and he thought for a moment that he must be better.

About his reply:

"Yes, of course, you've got to break off with this jockey of yours."

"Yes, that's not the fact, Crooke," she said, in a low voice.

"I wish I could do that," she said, interrupting, "I'd like to, but I'm afraid I can't."

"Don't be in a hurry, I don't mean at once, and when you're sure. You know I paid Billy Boots, to win that race the other day. Now I want you to-day, to do your best to entice her.

She nodded her pretty head.

"You can do it."

"I will, you'll have to send a note to Billy, that you want to see him. I'll keep out of the trouble then."

"You know I paid Billy Boots, to win that race the last hour, and I'll give him a thousand dollars, if he wins that race.

"But you won't be such a fool," she said, with simple astonishment.

"Never mind about that. I told you I'm a sporting man, I spend money like water. By the way, what sort of a rich lady are you?"

"Oh, I have the whole of my money."

"Yes, you have it all me," she replied, tittering. "The little little! I've got it here in the bottom of my dress. He's saving up to marry her on it." She seemed so utterly unconscious, in the light of her secret, of being married and betrothed, of revealing her lover, that even the hardened sense of it felt a thrill, that he was confusion in a moment, and replied with a meaning laugh.

"So much the better, Mary. I knew you were a sensible girl; hold on to it, and we'll be more some time."

"And you will really give me a pair of real diamond earrings?" she asked, in a tone of intoxication.

Crooke turned toward her so that the sun flashed on the diamonds, while he was looking into her eyes. Like most gamblers, he had invested in big diamonds, and he had noticed Mary eye the pair of real diamond earrings."

"How do you like that for a stone?" he asked, as he put it into her face.

"Oh, it's lovely," she said, hungrily.

"Why, you want them here, and I'll have them set for you for a wedding present if you get hold of Billy and wheedle him into losing another--"

"I'll do it," she said, resolutely.

"Well, then, you came to the landing and took the cars to Squametley, and then the train to Grand street, and when the time reached the course she was completely won over. He took his own horse to bet and when he saw you look so happy and he knew he was like a bride than ever. We shall positively have to marry this one up as he has been with vanity and love of pleasure, till by the time they arrived at the ending of the bet she was clattering away with perfect freedom, telling him how she had first met her admirer, how he doted on her, and how hard it was to get away from him, and how well you could be on the world, working for a living.

"Use your wits now, Mary, and get at these earrings."

He knew his confederates well enough, a foxy
Colonel Plunker.

The boy's face flushed and paled at the news, and he had expected it. He knew.

"Are you sure of this? He told me I was too young to get married."

"I know it; but I talked him out of that."

Mrs. Plunker said nothing; she spoke a little impatiently, in the expectation that he would yield at once, as he was accustomed to doing.

To her surprise he asked in return,

"Then is it, Mary? I don't know I will or not."

"I'm damn'd."

"No."

"Then all I can say, Mr. Charles Wandle, is that I don't believe you're fit for your money."

Whereupon Mr. Charles Wandle rose and left the room.

"Perhaps," said Harry, "I want you to marry me as soon as you can."

"What do you mean?"

"You might do what I ask you, Charles. It's worth a thousand—no, a hundred—dollars to me."

"What is it, then?" asked the boy, desperately, at the sight of his father's tears, and at the sound of the clattering of the keys, and at the hundred feet away.

"Yes, yes, of course. Anything."

"You're a real sweet, good boy, and I'll marry you on any terms. I don't care how happy we shall be. Think of it. Fifteen hundred dollars is a lot for such a little thing. Only to let Sir Peter sit on it."

Harry sipped slowly.

"It's that the favor you want, isn't it?"

"And the colonel, good old, good man, but he couldn't tell me you'll do it, if you'll do it, if you'll give me the money."

"It can't be done," said the boy, firmly. "I can't ask you to do it. I can't ask you, for heaven's sake, to bring me out."

"What a good sport you are. What do you say, Charles?"

"You don't understand," he interrupted. "You don't see the point."

"If you don't you don't, more's the pity," said sharply, "but I never care."

"I'm dam'd." He stopped, despairingly, as he saw her turning away, and saw the tall, handsome girl waiting for her. He told you what I'll do. Mary. Tell the colonel I must have it."

"Very well, sir," she said, coldly, seeing the signs of his yielding. "You can win on your Fanny, and you can win your Mary. I've done with you."

"I'm going to be married, then."

Mrs. Plunker was turning away, when he caught at her dress and whispered with white lips:

"Mary, Mary, for Heaven's sake, don't go away. I'll do anything."

But it will be my ruin, she thought. I'm too young to marry, she said, with an arch smile, satisfied to see him yield at last. "A thousand dollars and me for a wife isn't much like ruin. Good by, Charles. I'll see you after the race, and then we'll be happy. But you must remember that if you don't do just as I say, I never see you again."

The boy was in a sulk still, but he didn't care. He was going to be married, and he wasn't going to marry a common girl like that.

"I'll do it," he muttered, and I'll marry her at once. After that, let'em all look out."

Mrs. Plunker was-walking down the stairs, and the boy went up to her.)

"I don't care."

"What a wife is that!"

"I don't care."

What does he care?" asked the boy, turning away from him.

"What do you mean?"

"What?"

"I don't care."

But the detective had gone away as soon as he came, and the boy had heard all. He had seen Mary, and he had heard how much he loved her, and how much he longed to be married to her. He had seen the colonel, and he had heard how much he loved her, and how much he longed to be married to her.

"I'll do it," he muttered, and I'll marry her at once. After that, let'em all look out."

He turned into the stable, there stood a horse, the prize, in the doorway fresh and smiling. He had come back to the stables in the afternoon, and had seen the colonel with Mary and the boy. He had pressed the colonel on the side of the stables, and had asked after the detective.

But the detective had gone away as soon as he came, and the boy had heard all. He had seen Mary, and he had heard how much he loved her, and how much he longed to be married to her. He had seen the colonel, and he had heard how much he loved her, and how much he longed to be married to her.

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"You're to ride the mare to-day, I hope you'll win. To tell you the truth I've put all my eggs in one basket, and if she loses I'm out five hundred dollars."

"Yes, that's as bad as Billy.

"Yes. So do your best with Fanny. You have the best of the weights anyway and ought to win."

Billy made no answer, but walked into the barn and shut the door quietly behind him. He had begun to ring.

As he came down the road he was on his road to the weighing-paddock, thinking over—the to him inscrutable problem why Colonel Plunger had neglected his mind and want him to lose the race.

CHAPTER XVI

FRANK NOBLE

FRANK NOBLE when he saw the Bloodgords on the Grand Stand, with his friend, the colonel, sitting in the box, he didn't feel like going to the grandstand. He was in that peculiar condition that he was completely detached from the whole race and not over anxious to meet ladies.

The Bloodgords were not so scrupulous and better seasoneds. Moreover, they saw their friend Howard Smith, sitting there as color of the start, sitting on one side of Miss Bloodgord, and they had advanced the theory that Frank either be followed or be left alone behind them.

He made a few stops after them and his courage failed him. He turned, left the grand stand, and mingled with the crowd, who were all drinking and laughing loudly till they had joined the Governor's horse. He still felt no desire, and as he looked at the old man, who detected their condition in a moment, and to be left entirely unnoticed by a distinguished and interesting party, he went toward them while she conversed with young Bloodgord.

As for Colonel Plunger, he favored them with a smile and then gazed after the Bloodgords, sitting on the crowd, below, so that the young men in spite of their artificial courage could not help feeling perplexed and rebuffed.

Frank Noble, who was rapidly sobering down, was drinking a bit of his own wine.

"Glad I didn't go there." Confessed the wine. I have made it right for both Governor and Miss Fannee.

My dear boy, glad that I find you. Come with me. I have made it right for both Governor and Miss Fannee."

The colonel started.

"Yes, I have—heyward," said Frank, doggishly. "I'm in to win sixty thousand or lose sixty thousand to-day.

The colonel started.

"You wouldn't let B. Mary, not that man I saw ye with, would you?"

"That man. He's as rich as a Jew, and dead in love with her, I see. I'm not having a husband. I'll be true to you, if you'll be true to me."

And she turned round again and took the man of that heathen who was walking to perform the office, when they marched off, and Billy took his lonely way to the stable. He found the very pale and sad looking, but the question seemed to raise him to anger, for he replied:

"You're a nicenik to ex that question. Why did I pull her? Why did you put a half-mile off her, when I was waiting for you to make it, and pull the mare?"

"Oh, I didn't trust her. She could have taken the race, and you know it," said the other, still keeping to the subject.

"I never saw her in my life."

Frank Noble, in the meantime, had found the picture of his beautiful enchantress going off with another man if he did not obey her orders still, and the colonel, as is the case with Colonel Plunger having turned traitor.

Then both jockeys put on the whip at the same time, and the colt gave a new, old Toney yelling like a madman, Billy Boots appearing to do the same.

Yard by yard they came nearer, a wild yelling going up from Toney's supporters, till almost at the end of the race, when a new tumult of the whip, gave a bound that increased his hurry, and he was at Toney's side, and both looked at each other till I come to see you again. I don't want the boy to see me. Meet me outside, and we'll drive up to the stand."

The ever useful Sharpe was sitting on the curb with the colonel's instructions, after which he darted off to find Frank.

To his surprise and satisfaction he met the young man coming up the stairs alone, and he said quickly:

"You've won. I lost. It may be the best for me. But I'll have another horse race, I think. The colt was the best. Horse.

And he handed Crooke a cheque, and the gambler read it hungrily.

In an order of Stephen Crooke, sixty thousand dollars.

FRANK NOBLE

He took it with affected reluctance.

Don't discomfit yourself, old fellow. I can afford you this. You're my convenience.

Think of your head as he answered;

"It makes me even again. I won it from you on that horse who kicked me.

And he turned away coldly. Crooke glanced after him with a sneer.

But he couldn't get this cursed thing to-morrow. Hallo, who's that?"

The colonel at a distance observing him.
"Yes," observed the Governor dryly, "and after some of our red men might take it upon themselves to express a lesson to heart. Have you seen that young Noble to-day? I hear he has been betting heavily, again, and looks reasonably safe." The colonel nodded. "It is true, I think, that he remembers he lost it in backing your horse, I wish, sirs, I could take a liberty with you, but--"

"What is it, monsieur?" the old gentleman's tone was cold, and he drew himself up to his full height.

"It is, sirs, to ask leave to bring the young man to dinner to-morrow. Believe me, if you need all the assistance we can give him in the right way, as a partner and defender, with him, he may be offended and act rashly. The Governor's face had become set in the selfish mask of a man who is going to have his own way. The colonel saw it, and saw also the face of Papple's father, turned away and looking cold and cutting. The old gentleman had taken him earlier in the day, and had greeted him with a frigid bow and a few commonplace words.

Then the Governor said coldly: "I am sorry for the man, but, under present circumstances, the young man would not be welcome. I fear that he is leading a wild and dissolute life, as far as I can hear; and if some reports are true, he has even been seen in public with a woman of notoriously bad character with whom he rides openly in the Park. I fear, colonel, in the goodness of your heart, you do not know this young man as I do."

The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear sir, no one can have a little saying, 'Youth fears nothing.' It is very possible that our friend may be the sinner of the stamp of age to advise. I have interest in the boy; in fact, I owe him, I think, the expression of my gratitude. Will you not help me?"

He saw that the cold face of the young lady was softened by a glance of human sympathy; the first indication of interest he had ever observed in his father's face was harder than ever, as he replied:

"I fear I must disappoint one of my teachers, and address him as a pupil who would reject my advice. Please let us drop the subject, colonel."

The colonel smiled, and said:

"It is well, monsieur. I crave pardon for my boldness, and will bid farewell."

Dro Crooke bowed with ceremony to the old millionaire, and was greeted for the first time face to face by a smile from Mr. Panny.

Then he went hurriedly away into the crowd, searching for some acquaintance to whom he might find his last, with his bungling friends. Kettleton, Courtier, and Pappy, all at the same time, were drinking a fresh bottle of champagne, all hands on the high watermark of enjoyment. The colonel noticed them, and uttered a sigh of envy, as he mumbled to himself:

"How like we our own, and they are not as we thought!"

Young Frank Noble's handsome face was the blood of two great veins, and he was talking and gesticulating in an exasperable way, frequent with his words and his whole face, to emphasize what he was saying.

Frank Noble, sober, was quiet, modest, and modest; the same old brute with drink, fast becoming an intolerable maniac. As soon as he saw the colonel, he greeted him with boisterous yall.

"Here's a veteran of the cold blood. Colonel Plunger. That's your old cat by name and nature. The moral old fellow who gives me good advice. He puts a cap on all the wickedness astout, just to see what it's worth. You come, say, old boy. Here, quick, another bottle of dry monopole! Hurry up, you lazy dog. Gentlemen can't wait for you, you know, colonel. Now, toast, a toast! Give us a toast." The colonel looked at the clock, to try advice the boys in the present state, so he affected to join in with the noisy crowd, and allowed them to drink the toast, but it was not what he had so far stayed Frank as to render him.<n
Then, in a pause of the wranglings into which they had run, the colonel used to converse among drunken men, he said to Frank:

"What are you going to do to-night?"

"Woot, that with all your sons, I say. Kettleton, you know, colonel. We've got it all made up, haven't we?"

The other three young men hastily gave their assent, and the colonel continued what Frank had meant.

"I'm afraid, monsieur, fortune has not smiled on us to-day."

The Governor's forward clearing away as he said:

"But that need not hinder us from enjoying the evening. If you know that you are engaged to dine with us with--"

"My dear sir, I shall take pleasure in the engagement. But now I must leave diet places and your society, for I have a little work to do. It is a misfortune to lose a man, but you are fortunate in not losing money also."

Frank, after his heavy losses, had found Kettleton and the others corroborate over certain amounts which they themselves had lost, and had easily settled his accounts, and his friends, to drown their sorrows in the flowing bowl. But the colonel looked away and found himself completely fuddled themselves that one of them had suggested the plan of getting even with Crooke that same evening by playing poker at the club and giving the young man a skilful lesson. He was heard among the young men, each of whom fancied that he could play the fascinating game of poker a little better than any of the old men, and that he could be useful in the excited state of the young man.

He only asked permission to join the little party, to which Frank replied, thickly:

"Arron. You are a regular old scout, you are, by Jove. Who'd be afraid of a young man who plays de pokah to-night. I insist you come. We'll all of you, to keep de clear head for to-night."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DECADE CLUB.

The most exclusive of all the clubs of the good city of Gotham is the "Decade." Its membership is strictly confined to the "Upper Ten," from which it was named long ago, and the "Upper Ten" implies a larger number of people, is another of the "ten men," a third of the club, that the word "Ten" should be held to mean "ten thousand," with all the splendor and all the trills. Stiff old fox, hey?"

The colonel smiled innocently.

"Yes, true enough, my boy, but you s'ud 'll teach us. I study de human nature, as you may know. In the clubs you play de pokah to-night, I insist you come. We'll all of you, to keep de clear head for to-night."

In the midst of the club which looked out on back yards and brick walls, were the private dining rooms, giving, as a matter of fact, their name to it. It was part of the duty of the waiters to see that the cards, which were called the "American," "Aussie," and the "German," were played with equal skill by all the members. But the "American" rooms were used twice as much as the other two.

One of these rooms was known as the "Aussie," a large room, and one of the largest bowls, and built on one of the upper floors. The other two were divided into two rooms, the "German," a smaller one, and the "Aussie," a larger one, as compared with the Aristocratic.

In the course of the evening, one young gentleman who had entered with a large fortune, to empress a beggar, through the enticements of a game where more than usual, as he announced, the last game unlimited.

If he asked how was it the police never got hold of this club, the answer is easy. The police did not dare interfere, for the city government of Gotham, like that of New York, was void of spirit, with no matter what party was in, and it would be a dangerous thing for any of these young men to be arrested for heavy stakes.

Moreover, it must be said that the games in the Decade club were conducted strictly on fair play, and of course the members were not likely to be caught. The few who were voted "bad form" for any one to complain of being cheated, and who were known, had simply been away from the club and were no members of the Decade, and the whole history of the institution, an instance of cheating, if we except a legend that prevailed for a time of the "Santo Lipa," which had nothing to do with the Decade.

Frank Noble told Colonel Plunger just before he left:

"Colonel, the young men had had time to sober down in the afternoon, and they were not likely to make a misstep."

The colonel saw the young man had had time to sober down in the afternoon, and the colonel thought he had been summoned by a note of invitation. He followed the young man, and looking round the room and said:

"Frank, my boy, you have been a very unlucky one for my family."

The colonel looked interested and asked:

"Frank told a slight sligh, and his face was not easy.

"It's quite a sad story. An uncle of mine was ruined in this room, twenty years ago."
CHAPTER XIX.
A LITTLE GAME OF POKER.

Ten minutes later, the two young men were seated round a green table, each with a little pile of the queen of clubs in front of him, in white, red, and black ivory.

Four of the gentlemen were young, the fifth of middle age, who wore gray and were eyeglasses, sat next to Frank; and between them and behind was the colonel at the game with great apparent interest and curiosity.

Colonel Plunger was, in fact, a marvel of innuendo at the poker table. He asked questions indicating that the rules of the game before the cards were dealt, and received instruction from the remaining members of the party, who were excessively amused at finding a man past forty who did not understand the great principles of the table.

To be sure they were very accommodating, and tried to explain it to the colonel's confluence of their visitor.

In the first place, how many cards were dealt, what was the meaning of the expression "old hands," "holding the ace," "ante a point," "starting with a hand," and so forth.

Frank, instead of being quite as good as he had been, was rather a poor fellow.

The colonel wished to see how many hands of cards he could make from the existing personalities of the table; and was determined to get it back.

Then the colonel drew a pair of sevens, the queen of hearts, king of clubs, and went into the pool, drawing three cards to make a four.

He received a pair of queens, and the colonel was determined to win if he could, and made a bet of two hundred dollars.

Crocke flashed an evil glance at him, but said nothing, and the colonel essayed to lose the mask of civility used by all at the table, the passion of gambling was beginning to work, and the colonel determined to get it back.

The colonel had a pair of seven and a king, and drew down the pool, and they went to the pool, and the colonel draw a pair of sevens, the queen of hearts, and king of clubs, and went into the pool, drawing three cards to make a four.

He received a pair of queens, and the colonel was determined to win if he could, and made a bet of two hundred dollars.

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Colonel Plunger.

view of the mirror on the sideboard, in which was reflected the whole of Crooke's hand. Crooke, as usual, had no business there. The queen of hearts, nevertheless, Crooke took another card from the bottom of the deck and held it over the table, and, with one mighty slap of the big hand, flung it at the glass, producing immediate confusion.

Crooke shot a trifle of irresponsible pain and stared up at the other as if he had seen a ghost, the young men started up, agitated, and the colonel said, coolly: "If the queen of hearts and Jack of hearts are not under your hand, you begged your pardon."

CHAPTER XX

Of all the men in the dining-room, the colonel alone remained perfectly composed, as he re- ceived in the French place but what manners are. If the queen and Jack of hearts are not under your hand, there were only four.

The young man, having gone in the gambler's sleeve, and the observer felt his heart beating violently.

"If you don't tell me what you are doing, I'll turn you over," he exclaimed, with a most Command. Crooke looked up and laughed.

"Ah, dishonestly dry me all up," I must take you to the French quarter," said the colonel, "I cannot understand you." Fiddletick said out and Howard Smith took three cards, Crooke wintered in the French settlement, and in the midst of which Frank Noble gathered in the corner, and more and more to pull the young man by the hair, and force him to tell where his deck had been put. "It was a fair deal, and any man says who says I stacked the cards, he's the money's young, and if you wait to the last day, he's not the man born to die."

Indeed, said the colonel, he had come in to play to the lady in the room, and was not even very well when his hand is well again. He's tried to make me out a cheat, but I haven't suffered any damage."

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Colonel Plunger.

Billy looked at it closely and said:

"I see it's all regular, miss, but I'd like to ax you one question, if you please: What is that?"

Of course he did. See here, Charley Wandle, I want you to be careful how you talk of my husband. He'll be here in ten minutes to fetch his dinner, and if you mention him, he'll just crunch you into small pieces, you little old fool!"

Charley Wandle nodded, with the same impenetrable gravity he had shown all through, and answered:

"Well, if you don't mind, I'll be glad to have my Colonel Plunger at all. If it's the man you see sitting on the grand stand, I know his name's Crooke, and they call him the Boss Better on the course."

"I don't care what his name is," she retorted coolly, "as long as he's a winner, he'll hold my purse. If he goes to the races for a living, at least he makes a good one out of it, and gives me in exchange for it some of the biggest diamond earrings which are more than you can buy for a year."

The boy looked at her quietly. Then all your questions Saturday was just to fool me, was it, Mary? You'd got it all made up to marry that man?"

"Well, yes, if you want to know, yes. Now what are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing to me!"

"No, Mary, nothing. I can't forget I used to love you. Ye God forgive ye if ye've done any to love ye."

"But you're so slighted, and you're the merest pettish movement of the body!"

"I declare, I was grieving! I was too old for you. You can't expect a woman to wait twenty years and then throw away such an elegant chance as I had!"

"No, I can't. I wouldn't have no sooner asked any man to marry me than I'd cut his ears off."

"What cuts, Mary. Why did you ax me to lose my chance so?"

"Because—because—oh, because."

"That means because ye was set on acting mean, don't it?"

"I can see a good deal of money from you, Billy, because I fooled you so nicely, but don't go too far or it may be worse for you than it is now."

"Is this the gentleman a-cornin'soon?" asked Billy, in the same tone, with a peculiar gleam of his eye.

"Yes, Harry. There's the carriage now. He'll be here in a minute, and when he comes I'll let him catch you, or he'll give you such a ballet lesson as you never heard of."

Billy walked to the window and looked out. A hack was indeed at the door, and Crooke, the Boss Better, was just getting out, but Billy noticed that he wore one arm in a sling as he came up the steps. The boy took his hat, turning white as he did, but setting it under his arm. Billy Maddin, in her turn, gave a slight lighted and amused look.

"Come, come, Mary, I can't wait all day. I thought I'd find you ready packed.Hallo! who's this?"

As he spoke, he scowled at Billy whom he did not recognize at first.

"My name is Mary, said the woman, "and I am your sister."

"What do you mean? Why of course I'm sure. Didn't we both sign the book in the juss' right way?"

Crockett laughed more high-hummered.

"Oh, is it hard on him? Poor fellow!"

"His name is Mr. Smartly, I think you mean."

"Why is Mr. Smartly dead?"

"He is dead, but you mustn't feel so sorry, he was a good man.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean you mustn't feel sorry for me."

"Is this true?"

"Yes, I am."
Colonel Plunger.

For Mary Madden was fairly intoxicated at
the idea of having been married, no matter
how secretly and with little distinction by
looking gentleman who boarded at a first-class
hotel and sported so many diamonds, while
Crocke, who said the band was ready and quick-
waited instrument that might aid him in his
purposes, had really married her the night be-
after, his show from the club, and, after
meditating, with her assistance, a plan by
which he hoped to retrieve his own discom-
fort and overcome the unexpected delay.

An hour later there, when the frate
Mrs. MacCurry arrived at the little
establishment in Rivington street, ready to over-
whelm Miss Madden with just indignation, she was met by the
Mrs. MacCurry, while taking down the sign, conversing with a young
man, whose painted spectacles announced his trade, and, after
saying:

"I want it put in the best style, Mr. Sweet-
d and I don't mind if it costs three dollars,
"of course," added Mamselle Marie of the Paris, Masoulie.

That's all. I don't want to carry on shirt-mak-
ing. It don't pay.

And what the matter with Miss Madden, at all?" demanded Mrs. MacCurry, as she
heard the last remark.

Katie smirched savagely in the face of the gro-
cery, and replied.

"Miss Madden's gone out of the trade, Mrs. MacCurry, and left me the fixtures and

Sorra much good-will is there to leave," returned Mrs. MacCurry. "Only when
will my dress be done, Katie?"

"Miss O'Refferty, if ye please," said Katie, with a toss of her head, "I'm had of business now, ye'll mind, and I'll have the dress, done on Friday. If that's too late, ye're welcome to come to the shop and pay me now in the day's work that's on it already."

"And sure and ye promised it for marriage,"
cried Mrs. MacCurry, angry.

"What yer word worth anywhere?"

"When I said to-morrow, Miss Madden's
name was up here," returned Katie, in the
calmer of tones. "Now I promise for myself, I'll keep to it.

And as Mrs. MacCurry knew that the girl
was a skilful fitter and that good dressmakers
were scarce, she was not easily discouraged, and
resisted, if not to take her depressions in grum-
bling and take herself away, while Katie went
out to hunt up assistants to carry on the busi-
ness.

But that evening, at half-past seven, Miss
Katie left the house to take care of herself,
although evening visitors were likely to be
pleasable with orders, for she locked up the
shop, rounded up the house, leaving the day's
sales forth to the Atlantic Garden to keep her
appointment with Billy.

Katie's taste and her means for indi-
guating, it were not equal to those of her
former principal, but she had one advantage
over her, which was the most of it.

Katie was not yet eighteen, had a fine na-
tural figure, a pretty face, jet-black hair, even
iris green eyes "laid in red a dirty finger" according to a Milesean
proverb,—that is to say furnished with long
dark lashes.

And all of Katie's savings for years had
gone into a single dress which looked well
under the Bowery light.

To be sure it was only cotton velvet, but the
effect is just as good at night as the most ex-
clusive silk, except that it was made in a
stylistically, with a short cape of imitation jet
coats and shoes, and a silver chain, with silver
dowry jewelry which glittered in the gaslight as
well as it had cost a fortune.

When she stepped from the Bowery and stroded
slowly past the Atlantic Garden all alike,
the began to feel frightened, for there were
plenty of thieves that might start at her
curiously; but there is one thing to say in
favor of the Bowery looner. He is not
so much a ruffian as a novice, and
rarely, if ever, insults a woman.

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rarely, if ever, insults a woman.
Mary, on the other hand, looked daggers at Kate, and I told her she was being unjustified. She’s been talking about me, I wonder what she’s told him? Himself in his heartiest way:

"Upon my soul, Wandle, I’m glad to see you! Ah! you say dog, it doesn’t take long to see it. What brings you here?"

And Billy shame-facedly obeyed, when Mary remarked, with a smile, "If Kate O’Rafferty isn’t"

"Oh! I know Kate O’Rafferty very well, I hope you’re both enjoying yourselves this evening, Mr. Wandle, Kate O’Rafferty?"

"Pretty well, thank you, ma’am," reported Katie. "Of course, we couldn’t be expected to get along very well, but we’re trying to do our best. Mr. Wandle is spick and span company. Don’t you think so, ma’am?"

"Yes, I think so," said Mary, "I thought we’d come in here, just for a change; but you were the last people we expected to see."

"Well," said Mary, "I was just telling Mr. Wandle how much of a hurry you were in to-day in packin’, and left some things behind you. I’m very glad I’ve seen you, because I can’t give ‘em to you."

"But I’ve got the coal heaved over the false front and the teeth in an ostentatious manner, looking straight in the eye of her former enemy, and I threw out a wild glare of fury, as she saw what was being given to her.

"I have no intention of seeing Mary Madden ready to fly at Kate’s eyes; but the next she was able to control her tears, and all her quick wits to conquer the other. The sight of the articles convinced her that Kate had been telling tales, and all her face showed her that the boy was avowed as what to believe.

Then she said with a sweet smile: "I’m sure I am, Kate, for your kindness; but I don’t need these things. The false front I only used once, about five years ago; when I was younger and had my hair cut off, but it’s grown since, and I don’t wear a nose of false hair now. Do I, Philip Young?"

She turned on Crooke, who could hardly restrain his laughter, but answered: "Oh, certainly, I’ve got a bit of it.

"I’m sure I’m very sorry," said Kate, with intense seriousness; "I’ll do it."

"What teeth are you talking of?"

"Why, those, of course, that you left in the burnt drawer," was the spiteful reply.

"If so, no, Kate, you’re mistaken. I’ve not done anything of the sort. Those are damaged by our grandmother, who died at the age of seventy. But I’ll do it. And Mary saw, from the face of Billy, that he believed every word she said, and the veins of his face were bulging, for she was deterred to give up a victim to her charms, however humble.

As for Crooke, he listened to it with perfect good nature. He had an object now in keeping on good terms with the jockey, and with the young lady by his side, who was completely charmed of his wife, who had promised him to wind the boy round her finger again if she got any sort of a chance at him.

It was not true that they had entered the Atlantic Garden by chance. They had had a distinct object in doing so, though the meeting with Billy was unexpected.

Now Crooke rapped on the table, saying: "Come, come, how about all that frippery, hey, Wandle? We know what some women are, don’t we, my boy? Let’s have a bottle of champagne, and I’ll take a taste for the money."

Mary, my dear, you know you like champagne, and Miss Kate here, I’m sure could take a bottle of anything, and brighten her eye, and make her show her teeth in the smile of beauty that delights us all. Here, waiter, a bottle of Rodder’s red, and four glasses. You may as well say two bottles. One is nothing among so many."

He gave him a witty signal that she understood at once, to devote herself to him, while he took a bottle of saucer from Kate O’Rafferty, no very difficult task at any time, but doubly easy under the influence of the champagne.

Before they had sat there ten minutes more, the astute gambler saw that Billy Boots, what with champagne and flattery, was completely obliterating of Katie, and was whispering away to Mary as if they had never had a moment’s
disagreement, while Kate O’Rafferty was as hard as a nut, and sir was "flirting herself away" at every word.

When he saw that Rilly, from the mixture of beer and champagne, was as sober and inclined to sleep, while Kate was fit for any sort of prank, the gambler whispered to Katie in her ear:

"I say, wouldn’t it be fun, for you and me to go off and leave them two together! How surprised they’d be!"

Kate’s eye sparkled.

"Yes, I think we do just what I right, I say, you’re quite a nice fellow if you are married."

Crooke laughed, gave his wife a signal, and said: "Well, you see how Kate the facts she away, the girl crouching to his arm and saying:

"My, how funny I feel! The lights are going round and round."

Crooke took her off down the roan, and on the way encountered a young man, who gave him a familiar nod and said:

"If I get you, here I am accredited to your mess, what’s up?"

"Gt, the platform," said Crooke, "I’m going to friend of mine there, I’ll be back in five minutes."

The young man nodded and went on, while Crooke took the girl in his hand, gave a back, put her in, and said in a low tone:

"Now then, you go home and get to bed, or you’ll get the biggest surprise of your life, and it isn’t pleasant."

"And that girl in- and leave there, or you’ll get into trouble."

The driver nodded and went off, while Crooke returned to the hall, and found Billy Boots asleep, Mary regarding him with a look of mingled disgust and disgust that she did not attempt to conceal.

The broad-shouldered young man was seated at the near by, and Crooke beckoned him up and whispered:

"Now, Riley, let’s go to business. Are you ready for the job I want you to do?"

The prize fighter—for it was the great but not quite invincible ‘Knocker Out’—who had come to meet him by appointment—notched in his usual allen way:

"Ay, ay, what is it?"

"I’ve looked him up with great curiosity and some admiration, for he was about as fine a specimen of physical development as could be found anywhere. But only the cagiest of his face prevented it becoming exceedingly handsome.

"Are you the terrible man that has handled so many little children?" she asked, in her low, gay manner.

"Why, the young man broke over his face; for, like all his class, he was not averse to flat-
tery, and heavily answered with a modesty that be-
came him.

"I hope not, nana. People think we’re a great deal worse than we are. I always try to behave like a gentleman."

"Well, well," interrupted Crooke, impli-
tively, "that’s neither here nor there. Mary, your hand for your hat."

He’s got three or four girls on a string now. I want to know if you’re willing to come to town next week, to let yourself be knocked about by some gentle-
men, and not hit out till I give you the word."

The prize fighter nodded.

"If you can fix me up so we won’t know each other, Crooke, I’ll be glad of my fellows. I knows my face pretty well."

"I’ll see you disguise, and all you have to do is be very careful. I’ll tell them you’re a Russian, and don’t understand English."

"But I ain’t, objectified Riley. Don’t know a word of any lingua of that sort."

"But you talk Irish. Riley grinned.

"Ay, ay, a little. Not much."

"I know. I want to know what you know. There won’t be any one to detect you, and I’ve got it all fixed for you."
"Who 'm I to spar with?" asked Riley, in a tone of curiosity. "No big men, I hope, 'cause I don't knock around for fun; for gambling, I'd be his equal; but at a word's notice to best his foes, and the Knockout was not a man whom it was safe to oppose."

"It's Crooke, and I'll give you some greenbacks that think they can box. You're to let them knock you about to encourage them, till we coax the two of them to come up to meet you."

"And who are they?"

"You remember young Noble, that wanted to fight with the prize-fighter? He was the bungling cuss as he spoke, and Crooke smiled as he answered;"

"If you lose, but he's not the most dano's."

"Dangerous?"

"Crooke is a devil pleasure as he said it."

"Dangerous! I should say not. I'll settle with him with just one fist. Who's the other?"

"It is Reckon of Hasbro, and the champion of the state in glasses, that was in the room with him."

"That Frenchman! Not him!"

"That's the right fellow. Back about a month in glasses,"

Crooke nodded.

"He's the man. Give him all he can."

Riley smiled and looked wise. Presently he spoke, "Give me your opinion!" "I say, governor, excuse me, but do you know that feller's a decidin' old coon?"

"How come?"

"Reckon I can; but that ain't neither here nor there. It ain't got to be so easy to knock him out, if you do got to settle. I'll tell you one thing: he's just the strongest old feller I ever come across. He's got a grip like a vice, and I've fih you the picture of the relation of that bi't."

"Do you back out, then?" asked Crooke.

"No. We must stick to it, I reckon. But I want you to understand that this here job's worth money. That's all."

"You shall have all you want," said the gambler, eagerly. "It may be worth a good deal of money to me to keep those two men from feasting Bay town's next day. I'd yea take!"

Crooke rubbed his nose and ejaculated:"

"You mustn't do that, member of the council. I see. If you bring 'em up on the stretch, I'll take care they don't go to no next days. You can't eat on that. When's this meeting to come off?"

"To-night's Saturday. The race comes on the next Tuesday. I shall want you Monday evening."

The prize-fighter nodded.

"I've no objection to that. But I want more!"

"Nothing to-night. Stay you that boy asleep there?"

"No. There's a little kid, he ought to be in bed at this," said Riley, compassionately. "I hate to see boys round these places."

"You don't want to be here to settle."

"I don't. But last night I had ever seen a spark of human feeling in the prize-fighter, and I had to understand him."

"And why not?" asked Crooke, scowling.

"What's he to you, I'd like to know!"

Riley stepped up at him with a frown under which Crooke quivered.

"That boy's a relation of mine, he said, and I ain't going to see him hurt."

CHAPTER XXIV.

HUMAN NATURE.

Crooke looked at the prize-fighter with amusement.

"A relation of yours? What relation?"

"Well, he's sort of a nephew. I had a brother, and the boy's his mother's son; and I ain't goin' back on him. So no fixie of that boy. I won't stand it."

Riley had a habit of gaiting his whisky-cup. It was a darned shame.

"And a glow of honest anger on the face of the prize-fighter showed that his good instincts were by no means dead, and alarmed the gambler more than anything that had yet hap- pened. For gambling, he would be his equal; but at a word's notice to best his foes, and the Knockout was not a man whom it was safe to oppose."

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"And a glow of honest anger on the face of the prize-fighter showed that his good instincts were by no means dead, and alarmed the gambler more than anything that had yet hap-"
The colonel had flushed slightly, and set his teeth hard.

"You're right. But you, you have no heart to which to appeal."

Nurse Flanigan looked up slightly as she said:

"Again you are wrong. It is because I have, at the bottom of all my wickedness, a heart. The man who promises one thing: I will not harm him, nor let Philippe pluck his feathers. I might have done him a wrong, but I will not use the same heart.

He rose then with the utmost politeness, and went to the door. He shook hands in the most regular ways and tastes, to a carriage in waiting outside. Then, in answer to her invitation:

"Thanks, no; I will not go home with you to-night. I have to go back and see that man who has business with him.

She looked a little alarmed.

"Do not get into a quarrel, my friend. I don't want--lose you, so soon after having found you.

He smiled and waved his hand.

"Have no fear, Carola. He will not hurt me to-night. It is not his business."

He went back into the hall and went straight up to Philippe with a half nod and a scowl. Riley had taken the sleeping boy on his arm quite tenderly, and was trying to reproduce the impression upon him the colonel's approach interrupted him.

"Well, what do you want?" he asked.

Tillman tapped on the table.

"In the first place, monsieur, de plaisir de plaisir, je ne parle pas. Do you know, Don, I had this letter to talk. It meant money to you. Dat is plain. Vat wine you prefer?"

The colonel pressed a faint grin to cross his face as he replied:

"I ain't particular. Seein's you're a nob, I should be glad to drink a glass out of der cup. I had a little wine last time. It was a good brandy."

The colonel ordered a bottle at once, and as soon as it came filled the glasses.

"Not so bad.

"You've been as quick as possible. I see you vid a man I know; and dat boy, he be drugged. I take great interest in boys. They're noodly little boys. Vat you going to do vid him?"

"I'm goin' to take him home, I am, and I'm goin' to right it to do," said Riley, sharply.

"That boy's a sort of a meany, and he won't come to no harm while I'm round. You can't do no harm where I am.

"I don't want him, sure, but I want dat he take to his own home at once. You do good work where I am.

"I'll take him to mine, and keep him till he gets to his family."

"You will not, sure."

Riley started and favored him with a scowl.

"Do police, sure. It is now past twelve, and dey will be here in little time. I see de sergeant dey come up de hall now. I will call a carriage, and dat boy be taken to his home, or I s'pose de police, and you know, you ain't got no place."

Riley glanced down the center aisle of the hall and saw the buttons of the police, as the colonel had said. So he growled:

"I tell ye I don't want to do the boy no harm and I'm willing to take him home, if I knew where."

"He lives at de house of Monsieur Bloodgood, and I am willing you should go with us as the young lady has ordered you to take de business. I do, Ye can do it on de same time. Will you come?"

Riley bowed.

"Then why didn't you say so to start? Of course, I'll go. I'll do as you say, you take one side of him. I'll take the other. The cops won't disturb us. They know me too well.

Riley had already taken his Billy Boots being carried bodily out of the hall and put into a back, which drove off to the Bloodgood mansion. He glanced back at the colonel in the boy at the door, gate, to the great alarm and consternation of the cook and scullery maid, and the servants. He had shut the door of Riley's influence over the female part of the house, since he had bloomed out into a jockey.

Then the colonel turned away with the boxer, taking his arm as forcefully as if they had been long and alone in the dark streets, and opened the conversation by saying:

"Well, sure, and how much doit man offer you to knock me out of time? I am willing to knock you out of time, and you having your living to make as well as de rest of us."

The boxer, for the first time, felt a little confused as he heard that.

"Why, nothing. What put such an idea into your head? I ain't that kind of a man. I don't hire out to be knocked out in four rounds. I reckon. But what's the job you want done?"

"I will let you know, sure, de next time we meet. It may be to save a friend of mine, ven you spar vid him."

Riley looked at him suspiciously.

"Do you mean that Noble feller?"

"I might, sure."

"Then we might as well stop right here," answered the boxer, pausing in the street and looking wicked. "If ever I put on the gloves with that feller, I'm going to give him a hot one, and I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for the chance. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, I understand," said Riley, positively; but the colo-
nel's approach interrupted him.

"Very well then. I'll stop you now."

CHAPTER II.

ON GUARD.

As he said these words the colonel let both hands drop to his sides, and eyed Riley sternly as if they stood the question of a duellist. The boxer stood looking at him in turn, as if he hardly believed his ears.

"You'll do it right," he growled.

"I'll stop your fighting now, and once for all," was the reply.

"How? And why, Riley, making a step nearer."

"By putting a hole right through if you come one step closer," said the colonel, in a quiet conversational tone, but not so much as lifting a hand.

For one moment the Knocker Out sunk into himself, gathering for a spring, but there was something in the attitude of the old soldier, so confident, that he thought better of it, and stood still.

"Oh you're a deceivin' old coon," he said not in the least put out of temper. "I ain't givin' myself away to-night, ain't. I kin beat you on the shots, and I've got a livin' to make. Good night."

So saying he wheeled round and stalked off, while the colonel quietly uncouched the two derringers he had his hands in, and returned them to the pockets of his coat, from which he had taken them while in the course of the question.

"I must get first chance at that man," he muttered. "I think I know a way to get in on him, and show him that I've not forgotten all I learned."

He proceeded to his lodgings, where he re-
tired to rest as the clocks struck one in the morning, but was up again early, mounted on the same horse he had used before, and bound for the same place in the general Park.

This morning he was destined to meet more agreeable company than before, however, for there was a tendered young lady in the Ride, when he saw a young lady, in a black riding habit and all that thrilled him, followed by a small groom, in whom the colonel was not slow to recognize the same Miss Fanny of yesterday.

Poor Billy was as white as a sheet and had a most woebegone expression. As the colonel reached him he smiled, but the smile was over, as the front was in vain, and the sad grin that followed, showed that Billy was suffering from a racking headache, and all that followed.

The colonel nodded to him and ambled past him beside Miss Fanny, who turned her head to look again at the little fellow, whom she which the colonel responded by lifting his hat and observing:

"It is a charming morning, mademoiselle, and I am charm to see you. I did not know that in dis comin's de ladies had de custom of ridin to very so early. Believe me, it is de best medicine for beauty, it giv de rose to de cheek, de fles to de eye, and imprive de health. Monsieur votre paree--your father--de beau--"

"Very seldom," she answered, coldly, not anxious to prolong the conversation, but hard-
ly knowing how to rebut such a very polite personage.

"Dat is pitee, mademoiselle. I am not quite so pitee as you."

In dis comin's I notice von t'ing in de men I meet. Dey seem always to walk at a very slow pace, and dey spend all de time, and de ladies too. Do you nevare take de trot or gallopin?"

"If not, it is the correct thing to ride at speed," returned Fanny, with a slight smile, "I have found you to be very good company, and I would have been glad to leave that to the circuses and fast people."

The colonel bowed and smiled.

"I hear. I am afraid to ride fast, but--" Ahe--here come one some behind us. To de right, mademoiselle. Dis path is rare.

As he spoke they heard the rapid pitter of gallopping hoofs, and Madame St. Auro, in a riding-habit a little "lower" than usual, dash-
ed past them, alone.

As she passed she turned in her saddle and called out to the colonel:

"Hola, mon gar! Que fait ta in la Toe de cochen, tu petite! Ah ca! Mon jeune homme est presque dans l'eau."

[Hello, my boy, what are you at. By Jove the little one! Oh, my, my! My young man is going right into the water.]

Fanny did not understand the rapid French; but she colored and asked as before:

"Do you know that person?"

"Know her? No more dan de rest of de people," she answered, "Who is she?"

"And who--"

Fanny stopped and flushed deeply. She was afraid that some one might bring an answer she did not wish to hear.

But the colonel laughed, and answered:

"There is no harm in her. Do not be afraid. Coralie St. Auro is her name in de ring, I believe."

"In the right," said fanny, touched.

"But yes. You do not understand?"

"I confess I do not. I have heard of rings in politics and such kind.

"And at the races?"

"Yes. But you don't mean--"

"Are dere no oder rings?"

"So. That is all I heard of, except it's a wedding ring."

"Ah, very, very good, very good. But, no, der is another ring in the colosseum, when you was little child; you nevare go to see de cirques?

"The cirques! No. They wouldn't let me. I never saw one in my life."

"Ah co. You have missed a pleasure, mademoiselle. Well, in de circus, de lady in de ring, and Madame St. Auro ride six horses at once. I do not know anoder woman can do it."
"Vat do you say, mademoiselle, to a little gallop! De way is all clear now, and we s'all run into no persons."

She did not reply. She felt angry, and the rapid motion offered a vent to her excited feelings. She had come out hoping to see Frank colored slightly. She had been disappointed again and to know he had galloped off on her pet horses, the circus-riding Madame Angèle's. Therefore the colonel ordered her coat shut and, he seemed determined not to let her off yet, she made the best of it, she gave the whip to the bay horse and started off.

The colonel looked apropos at her as he pulled in behind her. He was very proud of his mount, and made several remarks tending to encourage her, for he saw that she was a timid rider and that she was nervous.

This she took good part, for they tended to divert his mind from the thoughts of Frank, and she delighted to hear them. They came to the end of the rides, and she, as the colonel knew she would, Madame Anzel, Madame Angèle, and the rest of the horses, were all left to her, and this time she did not yield to the demesne, so stiff and so haughty. Are you giving her the lesson, as I do to monotone?

"Possibly," was the tranquil answer. "At all events, 'tis my affair, Coraile, and I make my own rules. I told you to leave the boy alone. Are you set on quarrelling with me?"

He turned in French, and she answered in the same language, regardless of the half-fallen, half-muddled glance of Frank.

"My dear, you are taking my réfléxion; you are doing me an injustice."

"What! Are you on the stage! I declare I didn't know it."

"Madame made no answer; but her black eyes flashed as she looked at Colonel Flunger and muttered:

"Avec plaisir! Je suis trés heureuse!"

(Watch 1. He has betrayed me.)

The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

"Eh, my friend, but you do not read de papers. Did you not see de great show adver-
sis to open to-morrow? Madame is de star, de la mode. She has to give her final recital to-day, and I dint want you to see madame in her act. It is extraordinary."

"Ah, I say, take care! What about Frank?"

"Ah! What about Frank? What do you mean?"

Madame broke in with an air of angry desperation.

"Ah! bah colonel! Vy you beat de bush in such a manner! Vat do you think of such a man? You make me, it is true. I am a woman and I had to live. I do de honest work to live. I am sure she is a very sweet thing. That is why I take de queen de de ring. Make vat you like of it. I know vat de world say. I tell you, madame, she is not what she seems, she is the femme charmapante, but you turn away de head when you ken me. Et pourquoi?"

"Have no fear! She will not be here. Do you begin to-morrow, and she had too much way to spend an exciting ride. You go rid de same, as usual, and try to make up with Mes. Fan
ces. You can do it. She is jealous, and de

mean she likes you, my friend. Verc ye go to-morrow night?"

Frank colored slightly.

"Another folly, I'm afraid. See here, I've got to pull up, colonel, and you must help me after to-morrow."

"Vat you mean?"

"Well, I'm nearly through my engagements. To-morrow night I'm invited to the Ten
cent Hall. There is a great gathering of some of our gentlemen amateurs, and I have been caught up in all sorts of troubles."

"Let her go, my boy, I know Coralle of old. She is quick tempered; but it is soon quieted. She will have a good dry and will turn to some one else."

"But what's the matter? asked Frank in a whisper, but not a whisper, he had a Frenchman and yours, I betwistered. What does it all mean? What's she angry at? Is she crazy or what?

"Neither! Is it possible you do not see?

"See what?"

"What profession of Coralle?"

"What profession?"

"True, what? Well, I will tell you. She is not mad, and she is in her profession of English."

"Ah, you are right! What is it Centaur?"

"Precisely. And a Centaur is—"

"Being half man, half horse."

"Yes, and they say of a good rider, he is a perfect Centaur. Madame has no equal as a rider. Why? It is her trade, her profession. Look there! As he spoke they were opposite a huge mass of excitement. A new building was being erected, and not yet finished. Over the face of this board-
ing was pasted a huge bill fifteen feet high, fancifully decorated, and the title of one of the most valuable horses in the world. Who stood on the backs of two horses, on the back of a third, a pair of drivers before her while she waved a whip in the air. On the top of the hill was a broad band, two hill posters as a "streamer" bearing the legend:

"ST. AURE, THE FEI LERS." "ST. AURE, THE FEI LERS." Below the figure another band on which was inscribed:

"EMPERESS OF THE ARENA." "EMPERESS OF THE ARENA." You see, the recorded of Madame in a cyni
cal tone, "titles cost nothing in de ring. Countless emperors, emperors is as easy as de other. Vol. of my friend, do you comprehend now vy Lay: Go to de Fourth avenue and look at de bibs! I had not seen you; but if you want free ticket I give you many as you require." But Frank only shook his head and rode on. Thoughts of Frank, of his love, made a reaction of feeling in him which it was hard to undo. He had been nursing all sorts of romantic theories and, when he discovered that she was a circus rider completely disillusioned and combined.

"I don't want any tickets," he said in a stifled voice. "By Jove, I feel sorry for that poor child. Can she whip?"

"You are wrong, my friend, you are wrong. You are mistaken."

"Get out of my way, you miserable girl! I wish we all met. I wonder the Duke has succeeded at use for riding with her. I wonder if she knows? Confound it! What a fool I've been."

"Not at all, my friend. You did not want, dat is all. It did all over now. Let it warn you not to be too confiding in strangers."

"But, confounded it, exclaimed the young man, suddenly, "Cooke introduced me to her and she confided in me!"

"Precisely, Monsieur Cooke is — what you link to her? Her husband.

"Impossible!"

"Yes, by Jove, that fellow's perfect blackguard. How dared he? He left me alone with her, and by de colonel's order. I am mind—I won't tell tales out of school. One thing, she's taught me more riding in three days than I ever did in ten years before."

"The colonel laughed.

"Dat is de right way to look at him. Come, you don't have to be afraid. You can see to-morrow, my friend?"

"No. By Jove, I might meet her, she powerful to follow."

"Have no fear! She will not be there. Do you begin to-morrow, and she had too much way to spend an exciting ride. You go rid de same, as usual, and try to make up with Mes. Fan

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Colonel Plunger.

had acquired in his travels a passion for boxing, and had vanquished every amateur he had met.

At first the club was inclined to put up Jack June against the prince, who bore the siguare name, and was a champion of the world, as Jack saw the Russian had planted want of condition and fifty pounds too much, which would have been a pair of cruel black eyes that looked as if their owner delighted in visiting.

In the end, however, the gentleman of the club, the Mr. St. John, had thought himself of the latest addition, in the person of Frank Noble, who, when the news of his arrival reached the house, was asked in the name of the house which brought our hero to the club that night.

Frank came to the rooms; he found a large crowd of his friends assembled, and the house was newly furnished with new chairs, which were very much in demand, and the gentleman of the ten known beside, and the young man looking out of place in the mids of the barly young men around him.

He was greeted with hosannas and his friends commenced to question him as to his condition, and to give him all sorts of advice, with his encounter with the Russian nobleman, who was said, by those who had seen him, to be;

"Has de gentleman come yeet?" asked the colonel.

"No," returned the person addressed, who was none other than Jack June, and he scarcely as riding smiling, "Come here at nine I say, Noble, is your friend?"

Introduce me, answered the colonel, and Jack said;

"Happy to see you, colonel. Heard a good deal of you at the Squantum Bay Races. Call you the Russian nobleman, Frenchman, don't you?" do you stick to the fellow that this. Do you know the scruff, Colonel?"

Frank was overbearing that it was evident the colonel was in his eyes, a safe bet to poke fun at.

The conversation of the young men all round, the colonel answered;

"I am professor du savante, monsieur, at your service, sir. How much yes but I do not put you on dis floor to-night, if you like?"

Jack's eyes sparkled as he answered;

"Is that a funny game?"

"Den suppose ve say five thousand, sir," said the colonel, calmly, producing his pocket-book, "he's what I hold for me."

Jack's commissione fell.

"Can't go so much. Try you five hundred."

It's a mean game after, he said;

"So be it, sirs; here is my monocle."

And Jack, who was not a millionaire, had to go down into his pockets and try all his friends before he could get up the stakes.

When he had done so and stripped, the contraband of the boxers and the Angaspers was marked. Jack stood six feet two in his stockings and weighed two hundred and thirty, while the colonel appeared to be about six inches shorter, who looked like a pigmy to June.

Both men had stripped to their trousers and undershirts, and both were in their stocking feet, while it was understood that either might do what he chose, so long as he did not take off the gloves.

"Jack's got a puding," whispered Mr. St. John.

"I don't know that," returned Courtland, throwing the cream-colored monocle looks as if he knew, but his eyes, too.

In fact, the veteran was standing just out of reach of his adversary, with a contemptuous smile on his face, his hands down by his hips, while Jack was sparring cautiously for an opportunity.

Presently the big man made a rush for the little one, trying to bring down his guard by strength, and the colonel evaded it by

nestly, by a simple step to one side, that the room rung with applause.

A moment later Jack June dashed in, gave a spring in the air, landed both feet in his enemy's ribs, and sent big Jack June sprawling on his back, with the greatest show of strength, and at the same time with a pair of cruel black eyes that looked as if their owner delighted in visiting.

The colonel had struck him on the edge of the diaphragm, known to the boxing fraternity as a "wind sock". Jack June was out of him, so that Jack was not only unable to "come to times," but had to be taken to a dressing-room. The result of his match with the famous Russian was clear.

A thrill of fear ran through the club.

Frank Noble had met with a mild defeat, but he was not hurt, and his bandbox was not even broken.

His shoulders were so square that his waist looked like a little stick, and he stood tall as Jack June, while an ounce or two of fat was on his frame, and his hard, bony face looked that of a man who could fight for a day and night.

Every one began to compare him with Frank, and to say to the rest;

"The Russian's too much for him."

The stranger had a force black mustache and was as dark as an Indian. He seemed to be rather BUFUID than otherwise, and when he bowed and muttered some Russian words in answer to the introductions was answered on him, while Crooke groveled. Poth his business at once with St. John.

"Come, I've brought my friend. Where's he?"

"He's ready. But I say, Crooke, no slog. Tell your friend to play light."

Frank he never expected the club's afraid it's always easy to knock down. Where's the ill-famed Jack June?

"Well, then, the sooner you tell Nible to get ready, the better the prince will like it."

"Excuse me, Colonel, if I interpose in the bland voice of the colonel, who came up and stood beside them still in his shirt sleeves, "do you understand what I mean? To be a Russian prize?"

"Of course," returned Crooke, hastily.

The colonel turned to the crowd and cried;

"Messieurs, you are deceived. Have you not seen a Frenchman of the first rank? It is Riley, de boxaire, disguise. Dat is not his mistaches, I show you."

And before any one could divide his intention he suddenly cast one of the gloves he held in his hand so sharp and true that he knocked the false mustache off, and exposed the well-known features of that boxer.

The next minute there was a chorus of;

"Shame! shame! stop that man!" But no one advanced to execute the threat on the renowned boxer, who seemed to be in his element now, as he looked round and stripped off his upper clothing in a moment.

"Put me out, will you?" he roared, and as he spoke a ring creaked as he fastened it as by a shock.

"Let's see the man to do it. I'll clean out yer whole club if a man tries to hit me."

And there were angry groans in the box as he stood there, in the pride of his strength, defying a hundred athletes.

Then out of the ring rushed Frank with, the boxing-gloves on and cried;

"Russian or not, I'll disarm him for the honor of the Tennis Club."

Riley turned good-humored instantly.

"Hooray for you, young feller," he cried, "you're gettin' a chance to make me a show. Give us the gloves, gent. I don't want to hit the pure cuss with my fist."

In a Governor's match box was out by Frank, and cried out earnestly;

"Don't do it, boy! He'll kill you. He wants to do it, Riley, you'll fight for the club as we stand, bare-fisted and rough.

There was an instant yell of applause. These high-tosed young men were getting drunk of the sensation of hunger for blood, while the prize fighter roared;

"All right. Take keer of yourself, for here comes Tom Riley."

The next moment he rushed at the colonel, who dodged under and behind in the ring, his glove missing his mark.

Another moment, and the gigantic form of the boxer was seen to rise in the air and pitch forward, head-first, on the hard floor, with a crash.

Some who were near had seen the colonel stoop down and instantly the boxes under the thighs, taking him off his feet by surprise. The colonel had not been able to make his hand to do big, nor had the boxer a chance to do liver out.

For a moment there was a dead silence in the room, and then a tremendous cheer burst forth, while the young men came crowding about the table, and cheered the colonel, who was hobbled, wild with joy that the credit of the club was saved.

"Well I vote you an honorary member, by Jove!" cried Kettleson, enthusiastically, "If you did the trick, I don't understand it."

The colonel laughed;

"Thank you, you know. I show you. Do not talk of experience!"

"No, thank you!"

And then the general laughed as Kettleson started back, thinking the colonel in earnest.

Then the veteran looked round and said, in a voice as grave as rude,

"Messieurs, I tell you von ring. You must not be too ready to trust de foreigner. De Russian won't beg for you to do him a trick, you boxaire vid de glove is foolish. It is to take him vere he want to go. To try him vid trick he not understand the meaning of it, he no try dat same trick vid man again. He would know it. See, he come to. Now you get polies, Noble, and jetting out. Vere is Monsieur Crooke dat brought him?"

But Crooke had vanished, and was no more to be seen in the house, coming through the door of a mob of young men armed with Indian clubs, had turned as meek as a lamb, and came modestly to the colonel's chair.

"I know he was a decent old coon, but I don't recollect on that. Why, it's a fool trick, that's what it is, and I'll be even with him yet further."

The colonel heard him, but made no reply, and peace reigns over the Tennis Club once more, while a new law was called for on order, and Colonel Plunger elected an honorary member for life.

The colonel said;

"I'll. My friends, you are very quietly, and soon made an excuse to go home with Frank Noble, to whom he said, as soon as they were there;

"My friend, you must be careful now. Dat Crooke, he means mischief. To-morrow he be in Paris."

"Then won't it be the same?" asked the colonel.

But who will, colonel?"

"I will. I have long course to settle vid dat man. I settle it to-morrow forever."

CHAPTER XXVII.

REVIEW THE RACE.

Once more we are on the race-course, which is draped as it was never draped before, to witness the closing day of a most successful meeting.

The event of the day to which every one was looking forward with most interest was the four-mile race; for Americans take a special pride in these races, considering them as their most famous horses of old times, and belongs to their own country as much as the Derby. Governor Bloodgood, statues and white-haired, was to be seen on that day on the platform standing in the crowd of friends who had backed Ambition for the race; and the Governor was so elated with the success of the bettors, that he would not have believed it if they had lost.

For the day the coin massacre was set aside for the turf men with him, and he was so carried away by the throng of well-dressed people who had hitherto been inclined to view him as a deluded old victim to abier turf people, that he had the satisfaction of hearing singing about horses, and even to think seriously about breaking his resolution never to bet again.

Mr. Noble, you can back Ambition to-day.
Colonel Plunger

"Say, Billy, you want to earn a cool thou-
sand dollars?"

"In course I do," responded the boy, who had
been previously tutored by the colonel to parrot
4-sound answers.

"How's it to be done?" asked the colonel
cautiously. "I've got'em, if you want to
'arn 'em."

"Well," storted Billy with woe, "What
would you trust you with a thousand? I ain't no sucker,
to be fooled with pritty stories. I want to see
real money.

"Didn't you get your money for the
Fanny Flyaway racket?" asked Peeny.

"No, I didn't, if you ask me." Billy
replied.

"Well, then, the same man's standing
behind the counter, who responded the old jockey, in a
'ow, cautious tone.

"What, Crooke, do you mean?" asked Billy
in astonishment, his eyes turning to the old
strangers.

"Bless, ye darst fool," said Peeny in a
manner that silenced all. "Yde want all the
money that's under that table, and the
colonel has his hand in the first mile." 

"Is that all?" asked Billy incredulously.

"Yes," said the colonel, "and in for all he's
worth on the first mile!"

And Peeny slipped the bill into his hand
and calmly went on.

"Billy followed; but, not before he had glanced
at his hand, and in the corner of the
capitol D., that no man, since he had held the
five hundred dollars to follow the old
jockey's advice.

The colonel, who was
weighed, took his
way back to the stables, looking
at Colonel Plunger, but not seeing
him."

Billy bowed more
old Burton, the
trainer, glum and early as usual, but showing
a certain politeness to Billy, with no symptoms
of foolish talk about him. Ambition was
brought out, full of life and spirits and Billy climbed
into the saddle to ride to the starting-post.

But, as he did so, the horse gave a wild
leap in the air which almost unseated the boy, and
went away at a gallop round the course, all
shouting: "Yes!"

In vain Billy pulled at his head, the
boy seemed to be possessed with a sudden
demon. "You've done it, Billy," said the
colonel, who had never noticed in him before.

He stretched away at the top of his speed,
and when he had almost crossed the
finish, suddenly kicked up, till the boy said to
himself:

"There's something the matter with the horse
or the saddle. Which is it?"

Not till Ambition had gone nearly three
furlongs of a mile had the horse shaken his
pace, and then he halted for the stable and
carried Billy into his stall, no less
temperature, while the boy at last was able to tumble off and ex-
amine the harness.

As he had expected, there was trouble both in
the harness and the saddle. The whole
boar had been stuck in the saddle stuffing,
and the buck of the curb-chain had been broken
off, the rowel having been previously
filed through.

Billy, whose teeth were mottled
with wear, said:

"That's the little game, is it? I'll show
them pretty soon."

Billy had turned around and saw
that his reign was over unless he could beat the
Plunger, so, with an air of resignation, he
said:

"Very well, if you put it that way, I am
willing to bet. I'll put all I'm worth on
Fanny, Colonel. Crooke can ride numbers'-stand, and I'll deposit the money. Half a million if you like.

It takes a better man than you to beat
Crooke down that track," responded
the colonel, laughed, and inquired:

"Is it correct? I thought last night
and this morning the Equine Club had
convincing me that you was just that very man.

How does your hand get along?"

"I've got a turf rival to put
money against him it may as well be taken in.

Then you only believe in betting on a sure thing, sure things being
so scarce.

"Certainly, certainly, it ceases to be a
bet then. By the by, Noble, what's the reason you
was so thick with that girl, Prunia?"

"Frank was more and more amased.
What did you want to get out of
all that? I was ever so dull and
naughty before; how he was overlapping
with coniviality.

Contrary to his usual custom, he
nothing more than lay to numbers,
and his daughter was nowbers to be
seen.

Frank looked round, and answered:

"Frankly, sir, because I fancied I might not be
entirely welcome. You seemed to be one
offended with me before for winning money on
Ambition or a Fanny Flyaway, and that seemed to anger you still more.

I have no objection to your horse, and I have
since then in the Park, and she has given me the
tweet direct. I hardly think you can well
expect me to keep my away after all that,
sir."

The Governor heard through, and
then said:

"What you have said is all true, but cir-
stances have happened since then that has
always been so. Tell me now, are you at
liberty to dine at my house this evening?"

Certainly, sir.

The young man could not conceal his
delight at the offer.

"Then we will consider it an engagement.
By the by, I understand that you will soon be
of age."

"Well, sir. Under my grandfather's will I
will enter into full possession, by virtue of becom-
ing twenty-five years old, on the 9th of
September. Is that the day you are
speaking of? You remember, you were a witness to the
will."

"True. Your grandfather was a careful
man, but a little prejudiced against real estate
for an investment. I should like to talk to a
little business with you on that subject." He
seemed so familiar and friendly, so dif-
ferent to what he had been before, that
Frank could not get his "unconditioned"
out of his throat. It was all so pleasant to
him, and he was quite willing to resume
relations with the Governor's family.
"You can feel quite easy about me this
day that he really loved more, the longer he
was parted from her.

Frank saw the Governor leave of the
Governor, and went down on the quarter-stretch to
follow the old man's advice and back Ambition, who
was now surrounded by a ring of turfmen, opposite to Crooke, the
Boss Better, both men with open books in their
hands.

As he came near he heard the colonel say,
with hardly a trace of foreign accent in his
voice:

"You know very well who I am, sir, and I
know you too. I offer to put up the money in
the horse, and by means of that you can win for
yourself, if you like."

Frank was also well known for his
"ays, say, put up or shut up," said more than
one old custom, I shall run away
without paying my debts."

But the true
Luncheon, television. I'm too
well known for any one to think that
I shall run away, without paying my debts."

The television
looked at Crooke, who said:

"No, Billy. That's all right, Ambition. I'm
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"No, Billy. That's all right, Ambition. I'm
under promise to him something."

Billy had told his father of his interview
with Crooke and all that had happened since. He
had not been able to get the jockey or his
saddle, but somewhere among Bloodgood stables,
trying to seduce Billy from his duty.

Instead of that, the Boss Better was talking
to his trainer, who turned out, as he said,
right to do, and the colonel was puzzled as to
what it all meant.

The weighing in, half an hour later,
and still no sign of Mary.

Billy, Boots and Peeny, the jockey
who was trusted with Ambition, had
paddocks of their saddles, and it was on the way there that the
boy received his first intimation of Crooke's
greatness and ambition.

Peeny, a gray-headed, wiry little man,
whose utmost weight was never over ninety
pounds, was sidled up to him on the way and while
pondered.

"But the true Luncheon, television. I'm too
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Colonel Plunger. 29

ruin him as he had ruined me. He was its money that I wagered on Ambition, and he would not touch the winnings.

"But how came it that you were said to be dead?" asked Frank.

"I spread the story myself and sunk my own identity. I knew that I had failed to live up to the Leslie reputation, and that my name would always be associated with failure, so I took all advantage of a wound received in a battle in Mexico, and had my name announced, without any reality I left the country. I did enter the French army, but only in the foreign legion where I seemed to learn the tools of shanghaiing and passage for a Frenchman. Then I got a leave of absence, went to California, and there a fellow named Leslie and I took for flatboat on the Sacramento, and Frank, though I knew him, but did not know for me, I had changed much and he thought Paul Malcom knew me, and I exposed him, and Frank was routed, and he was ordered out of the country by the Vigilance Committee. I then thought he was drowned at sea, and it was not till I came to New York this time that I ascertained the reverse. Meantime I had made money in California and saved up more in Mexico, and finally returning to France, where I made most of all by specializing in Mexican bonds on the French Bourse, in which I had also invested, I added a large sum to my fortune for one in my lonely state, I determined to come here and look up my remaining relatives. I came here, and you are the first person I saw on the race course at Quatuum Bay was the evil genius of our family now under the name of Leslie. I at first intended to remain here, but I once tried on me. I was actually applied by my likeness to yourself at an age you were more prone to value than to your father, it was to save your life, but at any hazard from your errors, and you know how I succeeded. I then went to the Decade Club and I found the opportunity to prove the trick of twenty years ago, and I proved it. That evening for the first time in my life I knew the person from that moment he feared me. As the Californian he could have tried to fight me, but as Paul Malcom, he knew he was in my power."

Then why did you not expose him that night as Lester?"

"Because to expose him would have been to leave him my money and I was determined to keep him and to make him a partner. The race offered the opportunity for one and my knowledge of his plan for the other. I knew he had married my child in Paris, and was married by a woman, and was Philip Leslie, with no stain on his name. I found that he had married this poor child, and I have him arrested for bigamy and revealed to the world at any time. I have no wild jealousy broiled on the ending. It seems that she deformed that poor girl to your rooms by a message, got into the room with her, and then stabbed her in a passion. All the same, the truth has come out on the inquest, and Lester herself fled the court. He will hardly come again, as he has done twice in twenty years as a sporting man in first class society. Ten years hence, if he can alter his appearance again, he will be put Artists and his energy gone. He can do no further harm to society. I have accomplished my task, punished him and saved you from following in my track."

And now, sir," said Frank, "I remember for me to execute the wish of my father, and give up to you the half of my grandfather's property which should be yours of right, governor, have you delivered my uncle the deed?"

George Bloodgood smiled in his dignified and patrician way.

"I have as you requested, Mr. Noble, and I have the pleasure to inform you that your uncle has at once made over his share to a person in whom I take a great interest on certain not very hard conditions."

"What do you mean?" asked Frank, pursued.

"Suppose we adjourn to the drawing-room," suggested Paul Malcolm, as the Governor hesitated.

"We can discuss the matter there, better."

They found Fanny in the drawing-room and Paul Malcolm led Frank up to her, saying: "Miss Fanny Bloodgood, I know you show this gentleman the deed you gave to day?"

"I won't do any such thing, retorted the young lady, whose name is not "d'you, young lady, anything to do with the affair, I didn't ask for it."

"All the same," interrupted his father, in his blandly ponderous way, "it is not a thing to be thrown away. I will tell Mr. Noble myself."

Then I must be franked to Frank: "Mr. Noble, your uncle it seems has enough for his wants—at least he thinks he has, and he has only accepted your condition of being allowed to turn it over to this young lady in your name."

"To Miss Fanny Bloodgood," echoed Frank. "Yes, sir, but again on certain not very hard conditions—"

"Now, papa, I won't, I won't, I won't stay here to hear the rest of it," cried Fanny, impatiently starting up. "It's not possible—he's—she'll leave the room if you go on."

The Governor chuckled.

"You can certainly do that, my dear," was said, "but as this is a matter of legal business affecting Mr. Noble I must explain it to him."

"Then explain it to me," said Fanny, "heretofore perfectly crimson, and out of the room she ran in a way she had never run before, while Frank turned from one to the other completely astounded.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"It means, my boy," said Paul Malcolm gravely, "that I have accepted your father's generosity but cannot retain it. I have deeded away all the half of the property you deeded to me, to Miss Fanny Bloodgood on condition that she marries you. Are you willing to accept this?"

"Willing?" echoed Frank. "Why, sir, I would give half my life if she would consent."

"Very well," said Governor Bloodgood with another chuckle, "settle it between you, while Malcolm and I go down to smoke a cigar."

And when they came back an hour later, they found two people in the drawing-room, one of whom rose up and said in the voice of his uncle.

"Governor, uncle Paul, congratuate me. It is all settled and I'm the happiest man alive."

THE END.

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