

...at their practice to discuss all
great matters of policy when in a state of
sobriety, giving their debate the advantage
of being resumed and repeated next morn-
ing; also, should they inadvertently convene
a meeting when sober, to reverse the pro-
cess, and ascertain whether on getting drunk
over it they arrived at the same result. The
system was not without its merits, no
doubt, one of the most prominent of which
seems to have been that it entailed a double
amount of liquor. Mr. Sawyer was suffi-
ciently a Persian to reconsider his decision of
the previous night, when he woke next
morning with a trifling headache, and a
tongue more like that of a reindeer, as pre-
sented by Fortnum and Mason than the
organ of speech and diction peculiar to
the human subject.

He was a hard fellow enough; but no man
can smoke cigars and drink hot-stopping
the last thing at night, and get up in the
morning without remembering that he has
done so.

A plunge into his cold bath, however, a
cup of warm tea, with a rasher of bacon friz-
zling from the fire, and well peppered, soon
restored the brightness to our friend's eye
and the color to his cheek. When he lit his
cigar on his own well-cleaned door-step, and
turned his face to the balmy breath of
"jocund day, under a soft November sky,
dappled, and mellowed, and tinged here and
there with gold by the winter sun, he felt, as
he expressed it, "fit as a fiddle, and hotter
upon Market Harborough than ever."

He was a man of few words though, when
he meant business, and only pausing for a
moment at the stable, and feeling the grey's
legs, which somehow always did fill after a
day's hunting, he took no living mortal into
his confidence, not even the taciturn Isaac
(of whom more hereafter), but started for a
five-mile walk, to inspect the stables of a cer-
tain horse-coping worthy, with whom he had
long been too well acquainted, and who
generally had a good bit of stuff somewhere
about the premises, provided only you could
get hold of the right one.

Mr. Sawyer was not a man to order a
horse out of the stable in the hunting season
for any but the legitimate purpose of the
service. "Walking," he said, kept him in
wind, and off he started down a narrow
lane that in summer was thick with black-
berries and blooming with dog-roses, and
over a stile and across a fallow, and through
a wood, at an honest five-mile-an-hour, heel-
and-toe; every turn in the path reminding
him, as he stepped along, of some feat of
horsemanship or skillful shot, or other pleas-
ing association connected with his country
home. And this is one of the greatest ad-
vantages of hunting from home. After all,
notwithstanding her irresistible attractions,
we cannot follow Diana every day of our
lives, and surely it is wiser and pleasanter to
take her as we want her amongst our own
woods and glades, and breezy uplands, and
pleasant shady nooks, than to go all the way
to Ephesus on purpose to worship with the
crowd. Mixed motives, however, seem to
be the springs that set in motion our human
frames; and if Care sits behind the horse-
man on the cantle of his saddle, Ambition
may also be detected clinging somewhere
about his spurs.

In little more than an hour Mr. Sawyer
found himself entering a dilapidated farm-
yard, of which three sales consisted of lambs
down sheds and out-houses; while the
house, in somewhat better repair, denoted
by a ventilating window, latched doors,
and occasional stable-buckets, that its in-
habitants were of the equine race. Stamping
up a bricked passage, on either side of which
many plants were crying in about three-
meters of mould, our friend wisely entered
the open door of the kitchen, preferring that
easy access to the adjacent porta, of which
a low scraper and rusty kitcher seemed to
point out that it was chiefly intended for
vases of carnation. Here he encountered
nothing more formidable than a white cat
sleeping by the fire, and a Dutch clock,
with an enormous countenance, ticking
drowsily in the warmest corner of the apart-
ment.

...falling him, possibly he did not know his
own name now, when he met them in his
neighbour's field!

Tradition asserted, however, that Job
Sloper, when a younger man, had been one
of the best and boldest riders in the Old
Country. The limp which affected his walk
had been earned in a rattling fall over a
turnpike-gate for a wager of a new hat, and
fiction has itself painted in detailing his many
exploits by flood and field when he first
went into the trade. These had lost nothing
by time and repetition, but even now, in
those exceptional cases where he conde-
scended to get into the saddle, there was no
question that the old man could put them
along still; for, as lusty and heavy as he'd
grown, "I'm a sad cripple now, sir," he'd
say, in a mild reflective voice; "and they
wants to be very quiet and gentle for me. I
never had not what I call good nerve in the
best of times, though I liked to see the
hounds run a bit too. I was always fond of
the sport, you see; and even now it does
me good to watch a gent like yourself in the
saddle. What I calls a real 'orse-man—as
can give-an'-take, and bend his back like
Old Sir 'Arcy; you puts me in mind of him
so much, the way you carries your 'ands!"

The old hypocrite! Ingenuous youth was
pretty sure to "stop and have a bit of
lunch" after that, and after lunch was it
not human nature that it should buy?

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CHAPTER III.

"YOUR HAND-WRITING, SIR."

"Mornin', sir," says Mr. Sloper, scenting
a customer as he accosts his guest. "Oh,
it's you, is it, Mr. Sawyer? Won't ye step
in and set down after your walk? Take a
glass of mild ale and a crust of bread-and-
cheese, or a drop of sherry or anything?"

"No hunting to-day, Job," answers the
visitor, declining the refreshment; "so I
just toddled over to see how you're getting
on, and have a look round the stables; no
harm in looking, you know."

Mr. Sloper's face assumes an expression
of profound mystery. "I'm glad you come
over to-day, sir," he says, in a tone of con-
fidential frankness, "of all days in the year.
I've a 'orse here, as I should like to ask your
opinion about—a gent like you as knows
what a 'unter really is. And so you should,
Mr. Sawyer, for there's no man alive takes
greater liberties with 'em when they
can go and do it. And I've got one in
that box, as I think, just is more than curi-
ous."

"Would he carry me?" asks Mr. Sawyer,
with well-affecting indifference, as if he had
not come over expressly to find one that
would. "Not that I want a horse, you
know; but if I saw one I liked very much,
and you didn't price him too high, why I
might be induced to buy against next sea-
son, perhaps."

Job took his hands out of his coat-
pockets, and spread them abroad, as it were
to dry. The action denoted extreme purity
and candour.

"No; I don't think as he ought to carry
you, sir," was the unexpected reply. "Now,
I ain't a-going to tell you a lie, Mr. Sawyer.
This horse didn't ought to be ridden, not
the way you take and ride them, Mr. Saw-
yer; leastways not over such a blind heart-
breaking country as this here. He's too good
he is, for that kind of work; he ought to be
in Leicester-shire, he ought; the Harborough
country, that's the country for him. He's
too fast for us, and that's the truth. Only,
to be sure, we have a vast of plough here-
about, and I never see such a sticker
through dirt. It makes no odds to him, pas-
ture or plough, and the sweetest hack ever I
clapped eyes on besides. However, you
shall judge for yourself, Mr. Sawyer. I
won't ask you to believe me. You've a
quicker eye to a horse than I have, by a
long chalk, and I'd sooner have your opin-
ion than my own. I would now, and that's
the truth."

This was no less a personage than Barney,
Mr. Sloper's head groom, general factotum,
and rough-rider in ordinary—an official
whose business it was to ride anything at
anything, for anybody who ask'd him. He
was a little old man, with one eye, a red
handkerchief, and the general appearance
of a post-boy on half pay; a sober fellow,
too, and as brave as King Richard; yet had
he expressed himself strongly about this
said brown horse, the previous evening, to
the maid-of-all-work. He's the wussett
we've had yet," was his fiat. "It's natural
for em to fall; but when he falls, he's all
over a chap till he's crumpled him." So his
heroic heart beat more freely when they ad-
journed to the neighboring wh.

Mr. Sloper threw the door open with an
air. It must be confessed he seldom had
one that would bear, without preparation, a
moment's inspection from the eye of a sports-
man; but he knew this was a sound one,
and made the most of it. Clothed and hood-
ed, littered to the hocks, and ancted to the
tail, there was yet something about his gen-
eral appearance that fascinated Mr. Sawyer
at once. Job saw the spell was working,
and abstaining from disturbing it. As far
as could be seen, the animal was a long, low,
wellbred-looking roan, with short flat legs,
large clean hocks, ank swelling muscular
thighs. His supple skin threw off a bloom,
as if he was in first-rate condition; and
when, laying his ears back and biting the
manger, he lifted a foreleg, as it were, to ex-
postulate with his visitors, the hoof was
round, open, and well developed, as blue,
and to all appearance as hard as a flint.

"Has he fashion enough, thank ye sir?"
asked Job, at length, breaking the silence.
"Strip him, Barney," he added, taking the
straw from his mouth.

The roan winced, and stamped, and
whisked his tail, and set his back up during
the process; but when it was concluded,
Mr. Sawyer could not but confess to himself,
that if he was only as good as he looked, he
would do.

TO BE CONTINUED.

KATERFELTO,

A STORY OF EXMOOR.

CHAPTER XXX.

REPARATION.

He stretched his arms towards her. For
one brief moment she stood looking at him,
like a woman of real flesh and blood
than some visionary phantom of the night.
To his dying day, John Garnet never forgot
that figure of the gipsy girl, her pale face,
her raven hair, the folds of her scarlet hood seen
through the slanting downfall of the storm.
Those solemn eyes, with their yearning gaze,
seemed still bent on him, long after the
slender shape had vanished in that gray and
thickening gloom; vanished for ever, to re-
turn no more but in his dreams.

Shouts at no great distance warned him
that he must attend to his own safety, and
slipping into the coombe, he obeyed Walf's
direction to the letter, keeping studiously un-
der cover in the brushwood, and making
his way along the bed of the stream, as num-
berly as he rated feet, protected only by hos-
s, would allow. Ere he reached Red Rube's
hut, where he found the harbinger at home
and willing to give him shelter, he had plenty
of time to reflect on his future plans, and
to appreciate the devotion and self-sacrifice
of the girl whose heart he had won so lightly
and cared so little to retain. Pangs he felt,
no doubt, of pity, regret, even remorse, but
through them all he could not but admit,
that one glance from Nelly Carow's blue
eyes would be enough to make him forget
his own thoughtless frivolity, and the gipsy's
nursing, uncontrollable affection that was
now risking dear life for his sake.

when on which they depended for guidance
and success. "We are beat, man!" said
Dick, drawing rein, sulkily, and wringing
the heavy snow from his sleeves and hol-
sters. "There's not a drop of blood left un-
frozen in my body, and I shall give out!"
turning his bridle doggedly down hill, while
the gipsy, trusting to his knowledge of the
country, declared his own intention of mak-
ing a wide sweep forward, hoping thus to
catch a glimpse of the pedestrian, and ride
him down, so soon as the storm modified
sufficiently to distinguish an object at ten
paces' distance.

Once parted, the two men had no chance
of coming home together. The sheriff's
officer, through sheer good luck, did eventu-
ally find his way back to Porlock, but Fiu
Cooper wandered aimlessly on many a mile
further into the wilderness. He, too, was at
last obliged to confess himself defeated. Not
only baffled in his search, but lost, like an
overfed Gorgio, on the moor.

The snow, falling and fallen, so comple-
tely effaced or altered every familiar land-
mark, that he rode blindly round and round,
ashamed to admit he was unable to find his
way out of this weary, interminable, undulat-
ing waste of white.

After a hundred mistakes, a hundred dis-
appointments, he came to a standstill per-
force. Floundering through a deep snow
drift, he was compelled to halt and take a
survey of the misty surface, over which
every passing moment made it more unsafe
to travel. The storm, that had raged and
lurched at intervals, now lifted for a time,
disclosing at a hundred paces' distance some-
thing that caused Fiu to start in his saddle,
and brought a blasphemy of malice and ex-
ultation to his lips.

Yonder, almost within pistol-shot, lay a
motionless heap, half buried, half revealed,
and yes, his keen hawk's eye did not deceive
him, a horseman's heavy boots protruded
from the snow!

With a cry of triumph he spurred eagerly
to the spot, and leaped from the saddle in
such fierce and hungry hate as impels the
pounce of a wild cat—the swoop of a bird of
prey.

She lay dead—stone dead. The girl he
had loved all these years. The woman that
to-day, this very day, was to have been his
wife! And he thought it was John Garnet,
whose life he had thirsted to take for a re-
ward of twenty guineas. Twenty guineas to
spend in rioting and drunkenness at his wed-
ding feast! He burst into so wild a shriek
of laughter as startled the very horse from
which he had dismounted, and fell on his
knees beside the rigid form, that he had last
seen warm and supple, clothed with living
grace and beauty in his tent.

It seemed impossible. She had not surely
lain there many minutes, and yet how stiff
she had grown and cold! Against that fixed
gray face he had laid his own, and tried
hard in his agony to breathe life into those
pale parted lips, but it was hoping against
hope, and while he swore that it could not,
should not be, his bursting heart told him
the truth, and he knew that Thyra Lovel's
deep dark eyes would look on him again,
gladly or sadly, never more! Even in his
utter misery he saw it all; the ingenious
shut, the false track, the artifice by which
she had outwitted him, and led him skillfully
on the line of his pursuit, to spend his wed-
ding-day with her here, locked in each other's
arms, the only occupants of the frozen, dis-
olate waste.

The gipsy's mind was very pitiful and ten-
der while he sat and watched by her corpse
in the falling snow, waiting till his horse
should be sufficiently rested to carry a double
burthen, thinking, more in sorrow than in
anger, of their two blighted lives, and the
love he had given so lavishly without return,
wondering in his heathen reasonings why
these things were so, wishing in his despair
that the storm would fall thicker and thicker
to wrap them for ever on this their marriage-
bed in its shroud of eternal white.

After a few days, however, all traces of
winter again disappeared from those smiling
valleys and shaggy woodlands that border

...to be left so friendless, so utterly alone
in the world.

But one afternoon, when the days were at
their shortest, came a letter by the weekly
post from Taunton, stamped with a Frenon
mark, tied in a bright new ribbon, and di-
rected in a bold masculine hand to Mistress
Nelly Carow.

From the date of its receipt the neighbors
could not but observe how the girl's eye
grew brighter, and the color returned to her
cheek. The hope that had nearly died out
in her heart began to bloom once more, and
her trust came back in John Garnet, just as
poor Walf's did, but with better reason, and
a happier result.

She learned that powerful friends had
made intercession for this proscribed young gen-
tleman at court. The king was a thorough
Englishman, placeable, courageous, extremely
averse to severity when an enemy was con-
quered and under foot. John Garnet counted
a free pardon, and even hinted at the possi-
bility of the northern estates reverting by
right to their rightful owner. Lord Ballin-
ger had made a famous speech on the Cider
Bill, which brought him into notice, and
gave him, for the time, considerable influ-
ence. This influence he had exerted in
Master Garnet's favor, reasoning with char-
acteristic inconsequence, that but for the ex-
ploit attributed to Galloping Jack, of which
his penetration had discovered the real origi-
nator, he would have been buried alive in
the West at the very time when he seized
his opportunity to distinguish himself in the
House of Lords. Nelly must be patient and
constant, as the writer vowed to be himself.
There was a good time coming, and she
must wait.

That Nelly did wait, I gather from a pic-
ture in the possession of the Garnet family,
representing a woman in the bloom of youth,
with a pair of outrageously beautiful blue
eyes, smiling from under a mushroom hat,
on a child in a white frock and coral neck-
lace at her feet. This whole purporting as
set forth in gold letters on a corner of the
canvas, to be a portrait of Dame Ennor Gar-
net and her eldest son. If this indeed be
the Nelly Carow of his desperate expedition
into Devon, I can readily understand that
sickness of heart which came over Walf,
when peering stealthily into the orchard at
Porlock, she espied so comely a damsel in
affectionate converse with the man she loved.

But what became of the good gray horse?
Tradition, on the authority of Red Rube,
affirms that he was never retaken after his
bridle broke, but passed on rejoicing, to life-
long freedom on the moor. The harbinger
was wont to declare that as soon as he had
forwarded his rider, whom he kept in close
hiding for a week, to the little coast town
where an escape was arranged by sea, he
himself set out in pursuit of the incomparable
stallion, determined to tax all his science
and ingenuity for the capture of such a valu-
able prize. The very first day of his search,
he came upon the saddle and furniture from
which the horse had kicked himself clear.
And many a time afterwards, he followed
the iron-shod hoof-marks till the iron too
had dropped off, leaving only the point of a
smooth oval foot, with the patience and per-
sistence of his trade; but slyer, and varrier
than any red-deer, the animal never allowed
him to come within hearing, and seldom
within sight. Doubtless he joined those
herds of wild horses and ponies, which to
this day roam through the remote coombs
and moorland wastes of West Somerset and
North Devon, free and unrestrained as the
very breeze that sweeps across the scanty
herbage on which they feed. Here it is to
be presumed that he fulfilled his destiny,
doing good in his generation, for even now,
when some bold and reckless rider has been
carried more gallantly than usual, in one of
those wild, glorious, but exhausting runs,
that seem peculiar to the West, he lays a
loving hand on the reeking neck of his favor-
ite, and observes, triumphantly, "It always
tells at the finish. You never get to the end
of them when they've a strain of blood that
goes back to old Katerfelto!"

THE END.