
INTRODUCTION

tacular and quaint figures that so distinguished what we might call the Victorian Era of American racing.

The sport of emperors has to a great extent become the pastime of King Moneybags. And there is no place for ancient crusaders like Old Man Curry, so he has taken the remnants of his stable and gone back to the farm or merged into the humdrum and neutral tinted landscape which always designates the conventional and ordinary.

He doesn't fit in any more. The cost of maintaining a racing stable is almost ten times greater than it was in the days when he and his kind went up and down the country making the great adventure. Racing has been systematized and ticketed and labeled in such a way that it is only very rich men who can afford to indulge in it. The tracks west of Louisville are all closed. The skeleton hand of the gloom distributor has put padlocks on the gates. Even if Old Man Curry was with us to-day, his sphere of action would be limited, unless he elected to play a game where the odds would be so immeasurably against him that he would be beaten long before he started.

So it is that when Charlie Van Loan went away, he bequeathed to us the records of a peculiar nomadic people which are now almost like the argonauts and whose manner of living and happy-go-lucky ways are but a memory. It is strange that although the turf has always