

little square of white sugar she had hidden in the palm of her glove. I had to laugh at the syce; he saw the Missie Baba fumbling for the piece of sugar, and turned his head discreetly away, pretending to be looking for my brush. Everybody let Miss Jess have her own way it seemed.

"That *is* a bribe," I said to myself, "to lose the Viceroy's Cup for a lump of sugar," and I made up my mind to take all the whip and spur Jockey Jim could give me, rather than show a nose in front of the captain's horse at the finish.

My! there was a crowd of people at the races. It was like Melbourne Cup day on a small scale. I had a host of friends, for I was the favourite. The story of the beer and the swimming had got out, however, and a great many had backed Sting to win, especially since the Trial Stakes.

As we walked around in a circle in the paddock before going out for the race, I manoeuvred to get close behind Sting to speak to him.

"Don't forget," I said, "at the turn into the straight, just before we leave the old race stand, I'll be in the lead on the inside—come through next the rails; I'll pull out and carry them all wide."

The little horse switched his long bronze tail caressingly across my neck, and looked gratefully at me over his shoulder.

"How did you feel after the trials?" I asked.

"I had a pain in my side," he answered, laconically; "but I don't feel it now."

Plucky little chap, I thought. They say his grandfather, Gladiateur, was just like that, brave as a lion.

Then a cornet sounded the signal for the jockeys to mount. Archie swung up on to Sting's broad back, and Jim pressed his long, slim legs down my sides. How Jim would hate to miss riding the winner of the Viceroy's Cup. I felt sorry for him.

Captain Thornton led his bonnie horse out through the crowd and on to the course.

As I passed the end of the seats in the stand I saw Miss Jess. She didn't see me; her eyes were following my chum, Sting, and perhaps the man who was leading him. They had taken our wraps off, of course, and I could see that Sting outclassed us all in point of thoroughbred beauty. I wasn't jealous, for I knew that he was as plucky as he was good to look upon.

It was a mile and a quarter to go, so none of us bothered much at the start—we knew we'd have enough of it before we got to the finishing post. I knew the starter wouldn't send us off until I, the favourite, was in a good place; so as soon as I saw Sting had this best of the start, I broke away. The flags fell, both of them, and we rushed along.

When we were standing, there didn't seem to be much wind, but as we tore through it, it roared in our ears and snapped and crackled at the jockeys' colours, like the sound of the lashing of whips. Archie was sitting quietly on the little chestnut, and Jim had taken a gentle pull at my teeth with the bit. On the back of the course, after we'd gone half-a-mile, two of our mates commenced to creep up on the outside. I could see that Sting had his eye on them, and so had Archie. Neither of us paid any attention to them. We could pass that pair whenever we wished.

Rounding the turn toward the old stand, half-a-mile from the finish, Robin Hood showed his nose close to my shoulder. I galloped a little faster, up on the inside of Sting. I knew if Robin Hood got in front his big, clumsy bulk might bar the road for the little horse's rush home.

Gradually as we came opposite the old stand, I worked my way on the inside past Sting.

"Keep close behind," I gasped, as we raced nose and nose past the old stand.

Neither of our riders had moved in the saddle yet. They were good generals, both of them; they knew that so far we two were playing the game for keeps.