

...and I'll show you the way." ... while a slim, blue-eyed, young gentleman, with curled mustache, accompanied by a valet, entered the house, Patsy took the mare to the stable, where he accoutred her in an ancient saddle, pulpy, weather-stained, with stirrups of most unequal length, proceeding thereafter to force a rusty snaffle into her mouth, with the tightest possible nose band and a faded green and white front. These arrangements completed, he surveyed the whole, grinning and well-pleased.

That the newcomer could only be a substitute of Light Dragoon, was obvious from his trim equestrian appearance, his sleek, well-trimmed hair, the easy sit of his gaiters, also, perhaps, from an air of imperturbable good humor and self-confidence, equal to any occasion that might present itself, social, moral, or physical.

Proof against "dandies of punch" and such hospitable provocations, he soon deserted the parlor for the stable.

"And how is the mare coming on?" said he, standing in the doorway of that animal's dwelling, which she shared with a little drooped jackass, a Kerry cow, and a litter of pigs. "I always said she could gallop a bit, and they're the right sort to stay. But can she jump?"

"The beautifullest ever ye see!" replied her enthusiastic owner. "She'll go wherever a cat would follow a rat. At there's a horse in Connemara that wd charge on the sharp edge of a razor, there's the wan that can dot! Kick—stick and plaster! It's in their breed, and like thoud mare before her, so long as you d hold her, it's my belief she'd stay in the air!"

The object of these praises had now emerged from her stall, and a very likely animal she looked, poor and angular indeed, with a loose neck and somewhat long ears, but in her lengthy frame, and large clean limbs, affording promise for the future of great beauty, no less extraordinary power and speed. Her head was exceedingly characteristic, lean and taper, showing every vein and articulation beneath the glossy skin, with a wide scarlet nostril and flashing eye, suggestive of courage and resolution, not without a considerable leavening of temper. There are horses, and women too, that stick at nothing. To a bold rider, the former are invaluable, because with these it is possible to keep their mettle under control.

"Hurry now, Patsy," said the owner, as that little personage, diving for the stirrup, which he missed, looked imploringly to his full-grown companions for a leg up.

But it was not in the nature of our young collector, by name John Walters, known in his regiment as Daisy, to behold an empty saddle of any kind without longing to fill it. He had altered the stirrups, cocked up his left leg for a lift, and lit fairly in his seat, before the astonished filly could make any more vigorous protest than a lurch of her great strong back, and whisk of her long tail.

"Begorra! you'll get it now!" said her owner, half to himself, half to the Kerry cow, on which discreet animal he thought it prudent to fix his attention, distrusting alike the docility of his own filly, and the Englishman's equestrian skill.

Over the rough paved yard, through the stone gap by the peat stack, not the little drooped jackass himself could have behaved more soberly. But where the spring flowers were peeping in the turf enclosure beyond, and the upright bank blazed in its golden glory of gorse bloom, the devilry of many ancestors seemed to pass with the keen mountain air into the filly's mettle. Her first plunge of hilarity and subordination would have unseated half the rough riders that ever mishandled a charger in the school.

Once—twice, she reached forward, with long, powerful plunges, shaking her ears, and dashing wildly at her bridle till she got roin enough to stick her nose in the air, and break away at speed.

A snaffle, with or without a nose band, scarcely the instrument by which a violent animal can be brought to its haunches at short notice; but Daisy was a consummate horse-woman, firm of temper, cool of temper, with a head that never failed her, even when she was in the power of her hands.

It was all gone, the filly, though incapable of uttering a sound, sent her at the highest place in the school before her, and, fast as she was going, the active filly changed

which he indulged her, nothing loth. Trotting up to four feet and a half stone wall, round her own stable-yard, she shipped over it without an effort, and her owner, a discerning person enough, added fifty to her price on the spot.

"She's a good sort," said the soldier, patting her rooking neck, as he slid to the ground, "but she's uncommon bad to steer when her monkey's up! Sound, you say, and rising four year old? I wonder how she's bred?"

Such a question could not but entail a voluminous reply. Never, it appeared, in one strain, had been united the qualities of so many illustrious ancestors. Her pedigree seemed enriched with "all the blood of all the Howards, and her great-great-great-grandam—Camilla by Trentham, out of Phantom, sister to Magistrate!"

"An now ye've bought her, Captain," said our friend in frieze, "ye've taken the best iver I bred, an' the best iver I seen. Av' I'd let her out o' my sight wanst at Ballinastloe, the Lord-Lieutenant wd have been across her back, while I'm tellin' ye, an' hum leadin' the hunt, up in Meath, or about the Fairy House and Kilmuckree. The spade wasn't soldered yet that would dig a ditch to hould her, and when them sort's tired, Captain, begorra! the very breeches wd be wore to rags betwixt your knees! You trust her, and you trust me! Wait till I tell ye now. There's only won thing on this mortal earth she won't do for ye!"

"And what's that?" asked the other, well pleased.

"She'll net back a bill!" was the answer; "but if iver she shames with ye, reneaging or such like, by this book, I'll be ashamed to look a horse, or so much as a jackass in the face again!"

So the mare was sent for; and Patsy, with a stud reduced to the donkey and the Kerry cow, shed bitter tears when she went away. Refusing.

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CHAPTER II.

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MISS DOUGLAS.

It is time to explain how the young black mare became linked with the fate of certain persons, whose fortunes and doings, good or bad, are related in this story.

To that end the scene must be shifted, and laid in London—London, on a mild February morning, when even South Audley Street and its tributaries seemed to exhale a balmy fragrance from the breath of spring.

In one of these, a window stood open on the drawing-room floor—so wide open that the baker, resting his burden on the area railings below, sniffed the perfume of hyacinths bursting their bulbs, and beat time with floury shoes to the notes of a wild and plaintive melody, waiving from the piano-forte within.

Though a delicate little breakfast-service had not yet been removed from its spider-legged table, the performer at the instrument was already hatted and habited for a ride. Her whole heart, nevertheless, seemed to be in the tips of her fingers while she played, drawing from the keys such sighs of piteous plaint, such sobs sweet seductive sorrow, as ravished the soul of the baker below, creating a strong desire to scale the window-sill, and peep into the room. Could he have executed such a feat, this is what he would have seen.

A woman of twenty-five, tall, slim-waisted, with a wealth of blue black hair, all made fast and coiled away beneath her riding-hat in shining folds, massive as a three-inch cable. A woman of graceful gestures, undulating like the serpent; of a shapely figure, denoting rather the graces of action, than the beauty of repose, lithe, self-reliant, full of latent energy, betraying in every movement an inborn pride, tameless though kept down, and incurable as Lucifer's before his fall.

The white hands moving so deftly over the keys were strong and nervous, with large blue veins and taper fingers; such hands as denote a vigorous nature and a resolute will—such hands as strike without pity, and hold with tenacious grasp such hearts as are prone to rebellion. Her eyes were dark and piercing, and her feet and ankles were strong and sinewy, and her whole frame was a study of power and grace.

As she played, the baker's head sank and his eyes closed, and he fell away, the sad suggestive notes, bursting at last into a peal and crash

General St. Joseph's knew what it was to starve in the Crimea and behold the Mutiny; had been shot at very often by guns of various calibres; had brought into discipline one of the worst-drilled regiments in the service, and was a distinguished officer, past forty years of age. What made his heart beat, and his hands turn cold? Why did the blood rush to his temples, while she gave him greeting?

"Don't hurry, pray!" said he, "I can wait as long as you like. I'd wait the whole day for you, if that was all!"

He spoke in a husky voice, as if his lips were dry. Perhaps that was the reason she seemed not to hear.

Throwing the window wide open, she looked down the street. Taking more of that thoroughfare than was convenient by advancing lengthways, with many plunges and lashings out, and whiskings of her long square tail, a black mare with a side-saddle was gradually approaching the door. The groom who led her seemed not a little relieved when he got her to stand by the kerb-stone, patting her nose and whispering many expletives suggestive of composure and docility.

TO BE CONTINUED.

TILBURY NOGO.

There were, however, two grand exceptions to the general run of commoners constituting this assemblage, in the persons of a dowager viscountess, and an earl's younger son, and the deference with which poor old deaf Lady Ricketts was listened to, and the Honorable Lionel Legerdemain toadied, were instructive proofs of the respect in which England still holds the illustrious ornaments of her aristocracy. The sufferings of poor Lady Ricketts from intermittent paralysis prevented her being anything more than a passive recipient of the general homage she commanded, but Mr. Legerdemain's popularity did him, indeed, the greatest credit, inasmuch as there must have been some admirable though hidden virtues concealed beneath so unprepossessing an exterior, to render that short, thin, dirty and vulgar-looking man the centre of an admiring crowd. Badly dressed, not half washed, and more than half drunk, he was relating to a listening circle that day's run with the stag-hounds; the chief merit of the performance being the fact that he had ridden nearly a hundred miles on the road, exclusive of hunting, since breakfast—and this feat, perhaps, in a measure accounted for his seedy appearance.

"Main, my boy!" said a good-looking, fresh-colored young gentleman, who seemed to derive much reflected honor from the familiar abbreviation,—"Main, my fine fellow! what did you do to-day with The Buck?"

"Ran ten minutes, and broke my horse's back," replies Main, who is evidently a man of few words.

"I'll mount you to-morrow with the Duke," good-naturedly suggests the pitying inquirer, who is basking in that time of life when the loss of a horse is the greatest conceivable affliction.

"Wouldn't give a thank-you for fox-hunting!" is the somewhat uncourteous reply, which, however, elicits a burst of applause from the attendant circle; and the young one, rather disconcerted, walks off to pay his court to Mrs. Bagshot, whilst Main confidentially whispers to a red-faced Irishman, with whom he seems most intimate, that "he shall go and smoke a weed at Joe's, and try for a drain, as this thing's mortal slow," and the honorable himself "curious-thirsty."

The baffled young gentleman who rejoices in the high-sounding appellation of Constantine, joined to the less ambitious patronymic of Slopes, is rather a favorite amongst the Bath ladies, being tolerably well-off, always exceedingly correct in dress, of fresh color and curly hair, with a guileless expression of countenance, reminding one irresistibly of a sheep, and is extremely well received as he edges his way amongst sofas and ottomans to Mrs. Bagshot's side. Oh! Kate! Kate!—still as great a flirt as ever! Even in the absence of higher game, to think it worth your while to waste your artillery upon the harmless boy! Ere he has exchanged three words with you, I can see by the nervous manner in which he shrinks from your eye, by the pinker color that mounts to his chubby, unwhiskered cheek, as your thrilling tones fall upon his ear, that

the young man at Ascot, and the dreamy follies of the past?

Then, as if the music, accompanied by the half-reproachful glances shot at me from beneath those long eyelashes, was not enough, Kate must needs complete the charm—thereby, I acknowledge, incited by the supplication of Mr. Constantine Slopes—by warbling forth one of those plaintive ditties which people who are not "by way of" singing, sometimes execute so beautifully and so touchingly. With just enough accompaniment to melt the tones gradually away; with just enough expression not to mar the plaintive simplicity of the sentiment; and with looks of pitiful tenderness that might have thawed St. Anthony into a sighing Strophon, and that did make me very uncomfortable, and caused young Constantine Slopes to shake like an aspen-leaf, she drew from the responsive chords a soul-stirring harmony as she poured forth her plaintive wail for

"THE DAYS WHEN WE MET."

"There is mirth in the sunshine, there's peace in the shade,
There's the fragrance of June on the flower;
There is love in the whisper that steals through the glade—
But the sunshine may pale, and the roses may fade,
And the skies may be dark in an hour;
And the heart may grow weary—the brain may forget—
And the loved one be changed since the days when we met.

"There is morning to hope for, when darkness is past;
There's a dawn that shall smile into day,
Though the winter be chill, and unsparing the blast,
Yet the flow'ret shall bloom in its spring-time at last,
And the bird's carol forth from the spray.
But the heart hath no morrow, when its sunlight is set,
And its music is hushed since the days when we met.

"Will you seek for a blossom when the tree is laid low?
Will you look to find life in decay?
Is there joy in despair? is there laughter in woe?
Can you ask me to smile through the tear-drops that flow
For the hopes which have faded away?
No! the cheek shall be pale, and the eyelash be wet,
While I mourn all alone for the days when we met.

Amidst the applause that succeeded to the "voice of the charmer," I caught a glance from Mrs. Nogo which somewhat moderated the fervor of my approval, and a peremptory order to "see about the carriage!" sent me into the dark street to grope up and down for the fly which had brought us, and which, according to agreement, was to be ready to take us back. The interval having been whiled away by the driver in the consumption of exciseable commodities, we were not long on our homeward journey, and were soon arranged for the night in our comfortable dormitory at the "White Rose."

Shall I confess that as I laid my head on the connubial pillow, the still-present "refrain" of "The Days when we Met" was yet ringing in my ears, undrowned by the confidential discussion that took place, ere I was suffered to taste repose, relative to the merits and foibles of my old friend Mrs. Bagshot.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

"Let him not live," quoth he,
"After my fame lacks oil, to be the snuff
Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses
All but new things disclaim, whose judgments
Are
Mere fathers of their garments.
All's Well that Ends Well.

Farewell! with him alone may rest the pain,
If such there were—with you, the moral of his strain.
Child Harold.

Life is a strange medley. As I sit here in lonely grandeur, the sole inhabitant of that great desert which constitutes the principal dining-room of "The Munchausen Club," I can scarce believe that the middle-aged member, whose bristling whiskers and incipient crow's feet I can too plainly discern in yonder

attendant. Look at him; he is neither bent nor wasted, neither wrinkled nor grey; he always looked like a waiter, and he looks just as like a waiter now as he did before you went abroad. What is his secret? and can he be induced to part with it for love or money? Perhaps he has no family cares—Ah! the daily epistle from Mrs. Nogo, which the rogue presents on a silver salver, with a careless air that is enviable to a degree.

"Waiter, bring me a large glass of sherry and a biscuit."

"Glass of sherry, sir—yes, sir. Biscuit, sir—yes, sir."

And now to see what information my news-loving lady can give from Bath, where we still hold our head-quarters, and are considered, I rather flatter myself, what the purser's wife in "Peter Simple" calls the "Smiths, of London"—"quite the topping people of the place." She still crosses her letters word for word, and line for line; and her hand, though faint and ladylike in appearance, gets more illegible every day. I wonder if I shall have to come to glasses at last! however, with the assistance of alternate sips at the goblet of sherry, I manage to decipher the contents, which a respect for the confidence of conjugal correspondence prevents me giving *verbatim*, but by which I am glad to learn that "the cockatoo and the white mice are well, though the bullfinch has broken his leg!" (The reader will infer, from the importance of these pets, that establishment is unblest with a nursery.) "The mastiff puppy, as yet nameless, has been lost, and recovered at an enormous sacrifice; and Toko—a long-eared, useless spaniel—has been bitten by the butcher's dog. My own two hunters have the influenza, and one of the carriage-horses is lame"—which bulletin concludes the domestic details of this daily report. The remainder of the epistle, like its predecessors, is full of that ever-increasing intelligence which men call news, and gods scandal, and for the growth of which the climate of Bath appears peculiarly favorable. From its perusal I learn that the Honorable Lionel Legerdemain has been concerned in some most equivocal proceedings on the turf, and that it is doubtful whether even his exalted rank will enable him to retain his position in the immaculate society of Bath; that old Admiral Dolphin is paralytic, and poor Lady Rickett dead; and young Graceless—formerly of the Guards—has behaved shamefully to her niece; that venerable Miss Dido, supposed to be the most inveterate of spinsters, had been seen at ten o'clock at night walking with a man in a cloak, who, Mrs. Nogo's maid thought, was the postmaster at the corner, but whom Mrs. Champfront likewise saw and declares to be Louis Napoleon: that people did more than extraordinary things every day; and that she, Mrs. Nogo, did not know what the world would come to at last, etc., etc. The letter concluded with an earnest hope that my business in London would soon be brought to a close, and was further elongated by a postscript, to the effect that "she had just seen young Constantine Slopes driving four-in-hand down Lansdowne-place; and people received him just the same as ever; though what had become of that Mrs. Bagshot, she had not an idea—only it would be extremely painful considering the relationship and all, if accident should ever bring them together." This last piece of intelligence set me ruminating upon the many changes that had taken place since my own marriage—our first establishment at Wild-wood; the exploits of that Doctor Dott with the harriers; our removal to Bath, and the delightful reunions at Bagshot's house, of which Kate—the now-never-to-be-mentioned Kate—had been the ornament and the charm. Few were the years that had elapsed; and yet how far apart were the different individuals that had elapsed; and yet how far apart were the different individuals that had constituted those pleasant assemblages! My own wife a confirmed invalid, never leaving the vicinity of her physician; my brother-in-law Topthorne, who had given up his hounds, relapsing into a sort of yeoman—never seeing a visitor, never associating with his equals, fast losing the manners and habits of a gentleman; poor Segundo fallen into the hanger-on of a sporting patron, who has himself to reside at Boulogne, and living from had to mouth in a foreign country—as truth to tell, he was tolerably accustomed to living at home.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)