

## WON IN A CANTER.

(CONTINUED.)

The order was carried out, and away bowled the "Sea Wave." Harry walked the deck, humming "I'm afloat;" "The Admiral;" "A life on the ocean wave," and so on. But presently the humming ceased; and he called for a glass of brandy and water—he got, too, somewhat paler in the face.

"Captain!" he exclaimed, at length, "is it not getting very rough?"

"Rough, sir? Smooth as a mill-pond; a glorious seven-knot breeze—go round the Wight in no time, sir. Keep her full, Jones."

"Ay, ay, sir;" and the old boat went dashing along.

"If it's not rough now, I wonder what the deuce it's like when it is?" mentally asked the victim.

"It's no use, Wideawake, I can't stand it any longer. I'm getting bonstly ill," gasped poor Harry, and he rushed to the side.

"Oh, it's nothing at all, sir. You'll get over it in an hour or so—stomach out of order. There's a nice little bit of biled pork, greens, and taters, as will be ready for the men's dinner, in five minutes, sir. Have a bit; put you all to rights."

"Oh, hang it, Wideawake, don't, for heaven's sake, talk of eating—the very thought of it makes me ill. There I go again, and he rushed to the side.

"Ready about," called out the captain, and the old boat's head flew up to wind.

"Let draw!" shout'd the man at the helm when he found he had got her; and the "Sea Wave" head was pointed towards Hyde again. When she got up to her moorings, Simpleman was not long in going ashore; and it was evening before he was well enough to take his stroll on the pier.

His yacht was not lying very far off the pier head, so he sat himself down looking at it, thinking that he had better have taken his uncle's advice, and left it alone. However, he was determined to give it up at the end of the month; that day's sail had thoroughly sickened him.

"A fine spot they're having on board the 'Sea Wave' this evening, exclaimed one waterman to another.

"Are they?" exclaimed his companion. "They're always having speera there directly their governor goes on shore. They liquors up wonderful."

"Who has got the old cockroach trap now?" asked the first.

"Blessed if I know," returned the other; "some London chap as knows nothing about it, or he'd soon put a stop to these games."

Simpleman waited to hear no more, but strolled slowly back; and, farther down, engaged a boat to take him to his vessel. It was just dark when he reached it; the gangway was down, so he stepped quietly on board, and descended to the state cabin.

The captain sat with his back to him. Opposite him sat another of the same kidney, and three or four on each side. Each had one of Harry's choice regalias in his mouth; and three or four bottles of his particular dry champagne were empty on the table.

The gentlemen had evidently dined, for their countenances were inflamed and fiery.

"Now, captain, give us a stave," demanded the vice-char; "a stunner, with a chorus."

"I object," said Harry, stepping briskly into the cabin. "What is the meaning of all this, Wideawake?"

"It means, sir, said that individual, slowly turning round and confronting his master, "it means that I and my friends sea-captains who has ranged round the world with me, is enjoying ourselves."

"So I see," replied Harry, "with my wine and my cigars too;" and going on deck, and sending a couple of the men on shore for port-wine, Captain Wideawake, the steward, and the cook presently found themselves in a fine way.

The next morning the men were paid off, the agent came on board and took possession of the boat, and that evening it was announced in the local papers "that the well-known 'Sea Wave,' fully found and ready for sea, was to be let or sold."

This thoroughly sickened Master Harry of yachting. He took his uncle's advice, and stuck to his little place in Berkshire; had a boat, a punt, and a nice little steam launch on the Thames; got a little rough shooting, enough to amuse him, and a steady cob. He finished by running away with a deuced pretty girl with a boarding school, who had eight thousand pounds of her own; so he did not do badly. He is happy as the days are long, and as steady as old time; fond of his wife, who insists on his going out in her handsome carriage and pair every five days.

"What a lot of Simplemans there are," continued Sir John; "those two young men Punter and Bluster, always put me in mind of Harry Simpleman. I only hope they will get off as well as he did. Steward, catching

somewhat superciliously at. As for Charlie he took an instinctive dislike to him at once; he looked at him hard for some time when he thought he was not observed, and fell into a fit of musing.

"I shall be very pleased," said the Count, "to show you all that is to be seen. That is your yacht, I suppose, in the bay. A very fine vessel. My lady and mademoiselle are good sailors, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, Count, we are capital sailors," they replied, "we enjoy our trip immensely."

An invitation was given to John Turtlefat and his wife to lunch on board, and as the Count could not be very well left out, he was included with the others.

They were a merry party on board. Sir John was glad to see Turtlefat and his wife on such good terms with each other, and that he had been the means of bringing them together.

"How long, Turtlefat, have you known the Count?" asked the Baronet of him.

"Oh, nearly a month. He is a very nice fellow; I like him amazingly. I have asked him to return with us to England, there is nothing of that going on now, but he will amuse himself somehow. He says he hunts and shoots."

"Oh, indeed; does he play?"

"Well, I don't know, Sir John, whether he plays or not. He once asked me if I did, and proposed cards; but as I never play cards, no more was said about it."

The Count was very attentive to the ladies—to Mary especially. He evidently admired her brilliant beauty.

"Are you to remain here long?" he asked her.

"Oh, no, Count, we never stay long in any place; we are cruising you know—birds of passage. It is more for the sake of my cousin's health than anything else. Lord Verriest is so kind."

"Your cousin, mademoiselle? which is your cousin?"

"The gentleman who is sitting on the lee side in that easy chair"—she had got quite nautical in her language; "he had a bad accident some months ago—he was shot."

"Oh, indeed, in a duel?"

"Oh, dear no, Count, we are not guilty of such foolish things in England; it is against the law. No, it was at batine shooting. It was an accident."

The Russian fixed his glass in his eye, and took a deliberate stare at the young man, who was quietly smoking his cigar.

"Yes, mademoiselle, he is passable, but I suppose I must say to you he is very handsome," and she moved towards her father.

The Count bit his lip, and crossed over to Mrs. Turtlefat.

"So the gentleman there," he said, nodding his head towards where Charlie Thornhill was sitting, "is mademoiselle's cousin."

"Yes, Count, is he not handsome? and he is so nice."

"Well, I really cannot see anything handsome in him; but mademoiselle is exceedingly beautiful."

"Yes, Count, one of the most beautiful creatures I ever saw, and as good as she is beautiful. She will be enormously rich one of these days; but you must say nothing against Charlie Thornhill to her, nor, indeed, to any of us; she is shortly to be married to him."

The Count gave a little start as she said this, but took no further notice.

Shortly after this the Turtlefats took their leave, arranging they should all go and picnic somewhere next day.

"How do you like the Russian, Charlie?" asked Sir John.

"Not a bit," returned the other. "A presuming self-sufficient ass; but I'll take the wind out of his sails before long."

This the Baronet felt assured he would do, and this was the reason that he, Lord Verriest, and old Mr. Thornhill had a long and earnest confab after Charlie was asleep and dreaming.

The first thing that had to be done in the morning was to hire carriages, but that had been left to John Turtlefat.

The steward had orders from Lord Verriest to put up what was necessary, and by ten all was in readiness, and they were soon on shore, where Turtlefat, and his wife were waiting for them. The Count had not arrived, so Charlie managed that himself, Mary, Mrs. Turtlefat, and Lord Verriest occupied one carriage, and Lady Verriest, Sir John, Mr. Thornhill, and the Count the other. But the Count had not arrived, and they were anxious to be off. The baskets and other things had all been safely stowed away; still no Count, and Charlie began fondly to imagine he was not coming. They were all in their carriages waiting.

"Five minutes more," said his Lordship, "and then we go."

But before the five minutes the Count appeared, cantering his blood bay quietly along, followed by a servant in livery.

"We were just off, Count, without you!" exclaimed Lord Verriest. "Give your horse to your man, and jump up in the next

tell you a funny thing that happened about a yacht:—

"Some four or five years ago a gentleman hired for three months a fine boat of a hundred and twenty tons, from a well-known builder, at a hundred a month. He cruised about the Wight, gave parties, picnics, and what not on board; he went the pace so hard that he presently got into difficulties. One morning, he was just starting for a sail, when a boat pulled alongside, and a couple of men came on board; they were bailiffs to seize the vessel, which, it appeared, they had an idea belonged to this gentleman, so they made an arrest."

"Very well, gentlemen," said the yachtman, "we will sail her into Cowes, for I can't pay," and he gave a few orders to his captain, he was as rollicking a fellow as I ever saw. "Come below," he said, turning to the two men, "and we shall have a glass of champagne; it's the last drink, I suppose, I shall have on board."

"Oh, I daresay it will all be arranged in a few days," said one of them, as they followed him below.

"There they had a bottle of champagne, and another; but they were too wary to take much. He tried hard to get them to partake of a third, but to no purpose."

"I suppose, sir," said one of them, "we shall soon be in Cowes, she seems going along?"

"Steward," called out the gentleman, "how far are we off Cowes?"

"Make it in another twenty minutes, sir," replied the man. "The wind is freshening."

"This was palpable to all, for the vessel began to jump and roll a bit."

"At last the two men would remain below no longer, and went on deck, followed by the other."

"Why, by heavens, we're abreast of the Needles!" they exclaimed.

"And so it was; the vessel was wide of them, though, and tearing along with every rag set."

"Ha, ha!" laughed their entertainer; "you came to arrest the vessel, my fine fellow. Now I am going to take you for a little cruise for the benefit of your healths."

"It was in vain they threatened and protested; no one would listen to them. The sailors enjoyed the joke amazingly. Well, it ended next day in their being put in their own boat, about a mile from the French coast, on the Brittany shore; and the vessel sailed off, leaving them to find their way home as well as they could, which they did about a week after."

"In a short time the vessel returned to Cowes one night and was given up to the owners all right; the captain and sailors took themselves off quietly, and no more was heard of the matter. This gentleman that hired the vessel, Count, was a countryman of yours; he has never been heard of since."

"Ah, indeed, Mr. Thornhill!" exclaimed the Russian, laughing and showing his brilliant teeth. "Very good indeed, and exceedingly well told."

"Capital," said the other gentleman. "A clever fellow that countryman of yours, Count."

"Very," replied the Russian somewhat dryly.

They rode back in the same order as they came, very much to the dissatisfaction of the Count, who said it was not fair, that Mr. Thornhill was monopolizing the ladies. But Charlie was resolute, and not to be done.

On arriving at their destination, and waiting for the boat to convey them on board, the Russian took the opportunity of touching Charlie on the arm, saying, "I wish a word with you, Monsieur Thornhill."

Quietly as it had been done, the quick eye of Sir John Forest noticed it.

"A word with me, Count? certainly." And they walked a little way apart.

"I see, Monsieur Thornhill, you know me, as you amused yourself by relating my escapade from the yacht, which happened some years ago."

"Yes, Count, I do know you; I know a good deal about you."

"Well perhaps, Mr. Thornhill, you will not refuse me a little gratification?"

"What is it, Count?" said the young man, sternly.

"To let me have a shot at you to-morrow morning. Two kilometres from here, on the road we went to-day. I will bring a friend; pistols of course."

"Certainly, Count. I will accommodate you; but perhaps you will condescend to tell me why you fasten this quarrel on me?"

"What made you tell the story of the yacht, sir?"

"Because I saw you trying to flirt and engage the whole attention of the young lady you know I am engaged to. Is that honorable?"

"Everything, sir, is honorable, as you say in England, in love or war. I intend to propose to Miss Thornhill."

"Do you, Count? then by the living God, if you do, I'll give you the best thrashing you ever had, and one you shall never forget! But you won't have the chance, for I shall

to Mr. Turf'sfat's house; his wife placed this note in my hand directly after you gave it to her to-day, and asked my advice. You may call there, but you will not be admitted, that you may be sure of. Take yourself out of the neighborhood as quickly as you can, or, by the living Harry, I'll make it too hot for you!"

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## ON THE SICK LIST.

Shirkington Duffer was carried to Alice's house perfectly senseless, with a gaping wound in his temple. The poor fellow looked a ghastly object as he lay on a bed motionless and blood-stained.

"Oh, Doctor!" Alice exclaimed, as the village practitioner entered hastily, "do you think he will die?"

"My dear lady, it is impossible to say till I see what is the nature of the injuries. You had better leave the room now, and I will come down and inform you presently."

The poor girl sat in her little parlour, waiting anxiously for the promised appearance.

At last he came.

"Doctor," she asked, "is there any hope?"

"I am afraid to say. He has a broken arm, leg, and collar-bone. I have sent to Brighton for another medical man. I do not like to be alone in such a serious case. If he has any friends, they had better be telegraphed to immediately. Do you know where he resided?"

"At Brighton, Doctor, but where I do not know."

"Well, we must look in his pockets, and see if there is any address there; if not we can easily out. You can come up with me, Miss Lee—we have him in bed. Though it is a bad case, there is always hope, if it be ever so small."

Poor Duffer's address was found; and the next morning all things, his horses, and servants had arrived at Thorley Farm. Alice had done this, for, when she saw the state he was in, her woman's heart relented.

"If I had not sent him off," she soliloquized, "it would not have happened. He might have gone an hour later, and the pigs would have been in the yard. If he dies I can never forgive myself."

Wearily did the time pass; yet the true-hearted woman never left his room. There, with one of her maid-servants, did she sit the live-long night.

The doctors came, bringing with them a professional nurse, who took her place at once.

They seemed to Alice to be in his room an age; she walked about from room to room nervous and excited. At last they came downstairs.

"No hope, I see," she uttered, as she noticed their serious faces.

"We don't say that," said the elder of the two; "he is young and healthy; the broken limbs are set, as well as his collar-bone. If there is no internal injury he may pull through."

"I pray to God he may," said the poor girl. "Every attention shall be paid him. Do you think he will come to his senses?"

"It is impossible to say at present. My dear young lady, you must have patience."

"I will," she said, "but oh it is a fearful accident."

"All that can be done, young lady, will," replied the Brighton doctor. He was a man of great reputation. "I shall see him again to-night, but my confrere will look in again about one o'clock this afternoon. Now, you must not worry yourself, but hope for the best," and they left her.

The poor thing was in and out of his room watching him, and asking endless questions of the nurse.

She would go into the stable and see if his horses were comfortable, and then to his bedside.

The day had passed slowly and wearily away. The Brighton doctor had come and gone. Nearly thirty hours had elapsed; still no change. The agony of suspense was becoming insupportable. She could settle to nothing. About midnight, as she was watching alone—for the nurse had left the room for a minute—she saw his pale lips move, and he uttered, "Water."

The drink that had been made, should he require it, was instantly at his lips. Then he babbling in an incoherent way, but, maimed and bruised as he was, he could not move.

Then he fell into a doze again. She sat, never moving, looking at him. However unworthy he was, she loved him with all her woman's heart.

She would have given all she possessed, ay, ten times more, to have recalled him to health and happiness! but there he lay, a maimed man before her, hovering between life and death.

"Oh, Shirk," she uttered, "how happy we might have been." She never thought, poor

as she saw him staring vacantly about. "Don't you know me—Alice Lee? you have been very ill, but you will, thank God, soon be better."

He seemed puzzled, and evidently did not realize his situation. At last a faint smile crossed his face, and he said, "I want a lawyer."

"You had better send for Mr. Langley at once, Miss," said the nurse. "Do not let him die."

"Dear Shirk," said the fond woman, leaning over him, "you shall have a lawyer; I have sent for one." He smiled faintly again, and then dozed off.

An hour or more went by. The man of law was there, and waiting for the waking of poor Shirkington Duffer, whom we have carried through so many scenes.

At last he awoke, calm, and perfectly conscious.

Alice was at his side on the instant.

"Shirk," she said, "the gentleman whom you wish is here—the lawyer."

"Thank you, Alice," he gently replied, "leave me with him a little."

"Now, sir," he commenced, "my time is short. I wish you to draw up my will as quickly as possible, and to condense it into as small a space as may be. I leave everything I have in the world to Alice Lee, the mistress of this house. My horses and effects are to be disposed of, except such as she may wish to keep. I ask to be buried in the village, and that she will put up a tomb-stone to my memory. That is all I have to say. Do it as quickly as you can."

Shirkington's wishes were soon put on paper, and it was read over to him.

"That is what you wish, Mr. Duffer," asked the lawyer, "is it not?"

"Quite so, sir," replied the poor fellow. "Now let it be witnessed by the doctors."

They had just entered the room, and before them he signed it, and they affixed their signatures as well. This done the will was delivered to him.

"I feel easier in my mind, gentlemen, now this is finished. I cannot expect to recover, and I have given all to her who deserves it most. Tell Alice I wish to see her."

The unhappy girl entered presently, pale and trembling.

"My poor, dear fellow, what is it?" she asked.

"Alice, dear Alice, will you do me one last favor," he demanded.

"Yes," she replied, anything that you ask."

"Alice, marry me before I die. I shall die happier. I must go; I know it. I am very young, but so it must be; forgive me all, and be my wife."

The poor creature threw herself, in an agony of grief, on her knees beside his bed. Even the medical men, who were accustomed to such scenes, were affected.

That evening the clergyman of the village made them man and wife, and she remained that live-long night beside her husband, his hand in hers, without moving.

In vain did her servants and the nurse beg her to go to rest—that she should be called if any change took place. She would not move, and, save a cup of tea which was brought to her, naught else passed her lips.

Morning found her in the same position, but deadly pale.

The doctors came as usual, and to the questions put them, said there was no difference.

"But," remarked the Brighton practitioner, "the longer he lasts, the more hope we have. There is a possibility of his pulling through."

Those few words put fresh life into her. She was another creature; hope was in her heart, and she became comparatively happy.

Towards the afternoon Bluster arrived. He had heard of the accident, and with him came Pastern; but not a word of her marriage did she utter.

"I cannot tell you, Miss Lee," said the honest-hearted Bluster, "how dreadfully shocked I am at this poor fellow's accident. Although latterly we were not on friendly terms, I bear no malice, and should be only too glad to shake hands with him again in health. Do you think I may see him?"

"Although mum, I ain't his servant now," exclaimed the ex-groom, with tears in his eyes. "I can't forget old times. He'd his faults, like other men, and some bad ones too; but he wasn't a regular bad 'un. He came into money too quick, he did, afore he was properly bitted and weighted. Young 'uns will be young 'uns, always kicking over the traces; he'd a-come out all that, though, in time. If not too bold, I should like to see him too."

"I do not know, Pastern, that either you or Mr. Bluster can see him; but I will go and find out," and she had a consultation with the nurse.

"Shirk, dear," she asked, leaning over him, "your old friend Mr. Bluster, with Pastern, are below. They have come to inquire after you. Would you like to see them?"

"Yes, Alice; very much. Let them come up."

They were both terribly shocked to find him in such a state. He looked out his one