

both go and stay. Of course I asked Arthur what he was, and where he got him.

"He is a good horse," he replied, walking up to him, and rubbing his ears, as the horse leant his head on Arthur's shoulder. I bought him last spring from Ryan, on the Gulburn, for my own riding; but he is such a first-rate hack, with gentle manners, and a mouth far too good for my rough, heavy hands, that I gave him to my sister. She never rides any other now, and has made such a pet of him that, when she calls him, he will leave the mob of horses and trot straight up to her. I really believe he likes being ridden by her."

"He is too good for such work," said I—"that is, I mean," correcting myself, "he is or ought to be from his looks, good enough to win any steeplechase in the colony."

"So he is," returned Griffith. "I had a spin once with Boomerang, and beat him, over two miles of fair country, too. But nothing will induce Alice to allow me to train him for the Melbourne races. And I think she is right, for he is perfection as a lady's horse, and racing would soon spoil him."

After we returned to the house, I remarked to Miss Griffiths what a splendid horse she had.

"Yes, he is a beauty, and as nice as he looks, she said. "We have many long rambles all over the bush together, and have got quite to like each other's company. I can leave him anywhere when I dismount, and he will always come when I call him. Ah, Chestu is a dear old fellow! But come, let us have a game at whist. Arthur can play dummy, if Mr. Flaxman will take me as a partner."

We must have been playing some time, when our attention was attracted by the loud, angry barking of the dogs, warning us that some one was approaching; but, thinking it might be one of the men from one of the out-stations, we took no notice of it. Directly almost, we heard footsteps on the verandah; and as we both jumped up to see what it was, the door which entered from the verandah was violently burst open, and two men rushed in, each holding a levelled pistol in his hand.

"Hold up your hands, or I'll blow your brains out!" cried one.

And you may be very certain we did not require a second bidding. For one instant I looked at Alice. Cool and collected she stood, her eyes flashing and glittering as I had never seen them do before. Then I thought of dashing at the nearest of the ruffians; but the sight of his pistol at once decided me that it was useless—nay, worse than useless, as it could but end in one way. A pair of worse-looking rascals I never saw. One was a short, thick-set, bullet-headed, prize-fighting looking fellow, with a flat, coarse face, covered with a stiff bristly sort of beard. His eyes, red and weak, were deeply sunken in his head. His mouth, nothing but a mere slit across his face, was ornamented by long yellow tusks, and the corners were deeply stained with tobacco juice. A more repulsive villain could not be imagined. The other though not quite so hideous, was far from being a pretty boy. Taller than his companion, and equally strongly built, he looked the more dangerous of the two. Both were dressed in red serge shirts, cabbage tree hats and loose neckties—just like the generality of stockmen or shepherds.

I suppose I looked on the most dangerous of our party, for one of them, the short blackguard, took a piece of rope and tied my hands behind me, whilst the other stood sentinel over us. Then they tied Arthur also, and began disputing about Alice, cursing and using the most