

mirers on the course. I am sure I am not exaggerating in saying that he was the most popular horse of his time; and now, before his final retirement from the Turf, he was to be asked to perform a task which, if brought to a successful conclusion, would, by putting all his previous performances in the shade, add undying lustre to his name.

"In plain English, my husband had accepted with him in the Chester Cup, for which the handicapper had awarded him the heaviest weight it was in his power to give. That official meant it as a compliment, no doubt; in fact, considering Sir Harry's previous performances, I don't very well see how he could, in fairness to the other horses in the race, have been more lenient; but to us, who were so fond of him, it seemed rather hard on the old horse for all that.

"The other patrons of the stable, amongst whom were one or two of the very shrewdest men on the Turf, gave it as their opinion that Sir Harry was handicapped clean out of the race, and strongly advised my husband to scratch him. Your grandfather, however, declared openly that he feared nothing in the race, and that unless Sir Harry succumbed in any exigencies of training, he would not only run for the Chester Cup, but was certain to win it into the bargain.

"The trainer too, wouldn't hear of defeat. I really believe had any one suggested such an idea to any of employees of the stable, there would have been murder. The British public, I need scarcely say, declined to hear a word against their idol, and declared 'on' to a man. Some of the list men, people said, would be utterly ruined if Sir Harry won. Davis, the biggest of them all, showed what he thought of the horse's chance by laying my husband fifty thousand to a thousand in one bet, to say nothing of a host of fancy wagers—Sir Harry against other horses in the race, in their places. Weight of money—public money—at last told its tale, and, extravagant as it may seem, a fortnight before the race found Sir Harry firmly established favorite for the Chester Cup.

"Indeed it was an exciting time. And alas! it proved too much so for your poor grandfather, whose frame, enfeebled as it was by repeated attacks of gout, was unable to stand the severe strain suddenly put upon it. In fact, he completely broke down, both physically and mentally, and it seemed every day more doubtful whether he would live over the race. The Press, of course, got hold of it, and emissaries were actually sent down from London to make inquiries. In fact, my poor husband was touted far more systematically than his horse. Bets were even made, I was informed—nay, saw recorded in the papers, with my own eyes—that the owner of the favorite would die before the Chester Cup was run, and how angry it made me I cannot tell you.

"When we wheeled my poor dear in his invalid chair, clad in the green dressing-gown you see hanging there out of this very window, into the rose garden beyond, where he would lie sunning himself for hours, we could see men dodging about behind the trees in the park beyond, taking in every movement with their race-glasses. I need scarcely say that Sir Harry suffered in the betting in consequence, though not to the extent one might have imagined.

"The Squire wanted rousing," the doctor said, and he, poor man, was doing his best you may be sure, for, like the rest of us, he was a firm believer in Sir Harry, and had backed him at the long odds accordingly.

"If you could get some friend of a lively temperament down to keep your husband company and cheer him up and distract his thoughts generally, it would do him more good, my dear madam than all the doctors in England!"

"Thus spoke the doctor, and taking his advice I wrote off that very day to Mr. Charles Merridew, one of my husband's most valued friends, and, as you know, the most eminent comedian of his day, explaining the circumstances of the case and begging him if it were possible to come down to us at the Manor House at once.

"God bless him! At a quarter to four o'clock the very next afternoon, a post-chaise with four horses attached was to be seen tearing along the carriage drive at a gallop, and the next instant Charlie Merridew was shaking me by the hand—both hands—and asking me a thousand questions all at once in the impulsive manner that was part and parcel of himself.

"My dear old friend not live over the Chester Cup day," he exclaimed. "Nonsense, nonsense! He must live—he shall live, my dear Mrs. Standish, not only over Sir Harry's Chester Cup, but many more in the time to come, or my name isn't Merridew. Besides, haven't I backed Sir Harry to win me ten thousand! Why I shall be ruined if anything happens to prevent his running."

"The gentlemen of the Press bothering you, are they? I'll bother them a bit before I've done with them."

"What would they say I wonder? What will they say, when they see before we are twenty-four hours older—the owner of the favorite for the Chester Cup dancing the sailor's hornpipe on his own lawn attired in the green dressing gown he begged of me years ago?"

"You remember—were it when I played Beau Lollington in The Fop—ran for five hundred nights—gave it to dear old Ned after I had taken it off for the last time—had to play the part again soon afterwards—obliged to buy another—a gray one this time—still harping on the parrot you perceive—not the same thing though—never liked it so much as my old green one. Moral: never lose sight of an old friend if you can possibly avoid it—Couldn't help it though in this case, could I, Mrs. Standish? eh?"

"Then I led the great actor to my husband, the quick glance he threw at me, as he clasped his old ally by the hand, telling me plainer than words how shocked he was at the change which had taken place since they had last met. The next instant and he was seated by his side, running on in his usual airy and volatile manner, letting off jokes and telling stories by the score and waking up the drowsy rose-garden with that wonderful laugh of his, so familiar to playgoers. High spirits are infectious, and my husband, ill as he was, at once fell a victim and brightened up so all of a sudden, as to make me regret that I had not begged his staunch friend to run down and see us before. Joined by the doctor, who was delighted by the success of his prescription, we were quite a merry party at dinner that night, and did not forget, you may depend, to drink Sir Harry's health, proposed by our visitor in a humorous speech. Finally we all went to bed in the best of spirits.

"On rising the next morning, my maid, busy brushing my hair, remarked how glad she was to see master 'so much better this morning.'

"He's up and about amongst the roses," she added, 'just as he used to before was took so bad.'

"About and amongst the roses, Jane!" I exclaimed in astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"What I say ma'am," replied Jane. "Look out of the window, and you'll see for yourself, ma'am."

"I flew to the window, and, sure enough, there was to all intents and purposes my husband, who I imagined lying helpless in bed, trotting about in his green dressing-gown, a pair of scissors in one hand and a basket in the other, cutting off a rose here, a dead leaf there, and humming a little song to himself all the time in the cheeriest manner imaginable. Looking up from his occupation for a second he caught sight of my astonished face at the open window.

"Breakfast, my dear; breakfast!" he called out, kissing his hand as he spoke. "A horrible thought struck me that he must have suddenly gone out of his mind, and hastily donning a wrapper, I tore down stairs and out of doors."

"My dear Ned," I began.

"Ha, ha, ha! I always said I was the best 'make-up' in England, and now I'm sure of it," exclaimed Charles Merridew, for he it was, in high glee, executing as he spoke a few steps of the sailors' hornpipe.

"Don't say a word," he whispered; "we've got at least half a dozen race-

glasses levelled at us at the present moment, and the sporting papers will be full of it tomorrow morning, and this is what they'll say: 'We are glad to be in a position to state for a fact that the popular owner of Sir Harry has so far recovered from his recent severe indisposition that there is every probability of his being present in person on Wednesday next to see his horse run for the Chester Cup.' Sir Harry will be favorite again before the day's out, see if he isn't!—I know—ha, ha, ha!"

"It was indeed a good 'make up.' Mr. Merridew and my husband were both about the same height and build, and there was great similarity with regard to that prominent feature, the nose, both being of the Roman pattern. On the other hand the former possessed a luxuriant head of hair, and was clean shaven, whilst your grandfather was very bald, and wore bushy whiskers meeting nearly under his chin. Here the actor's art came in with the happy result that I told you; so happy indeed that at a little distance no one could have detected the deception.

"Well, my dear, the Chester Cup day arrived at last, the brightest May day you can possibly imagine. The doctor had been to see his patient, had remained to luncheon, and gone off chuckling; partly at the success of his treatment, and partly no doubt at the prospect of Sir Harry winning him a comfortable sum of money; whilst I retired to my own room to write a few letters by way of distracting my thoughts. So engrossed was I that I took no account of the time, until looking up to the clock I was astonished to find that it was five and thirty minutes past three, and the time appointed for the Chester Cup to be run was half-past the hour.

"They may be running now, for all I know," I thought to myself; 'at all events they are at the post;' and I was just preparing to leave the room and join my husband and his friend, when a hasty tap at the door was heard, and in response to my invitation in walked Charles Merridew, his face as white as a sheet, and greatly agitated. I guessed the truth at once.

"My dear husband was dead!"

"He was apparently asleep, and his friend, unwilling to disturb him, was quietly reading at his side, when he suddenly started up into a sitting posture with a strange wild look in his eyes which the actor had never seen before. 'Sir Harry wins!' he screamed. 'Sir Harry—' The sentence was never finished. The lips were suddenly tinged with froth and blood; a slight gurgle in the throat; and your grandfather fell back dead in the arms of the true friend whom he liked so well.

"Then the actor went on: 'The Chester Cup was put down for half-past three; poor Ned died at precisely twenty-five minutes past—if known Sir Harry will be disqualified; thousands of poor people all over the country lose their money—ruined. Must not be—off among the roses again—green dressing-gown—not a moment to be lost. You stay here and call a servant as witness in case any questions are asked afterwards.'

"In three minutes' time the actor was to be seen fussing about once more in the rose garden. He even spoke to an undergardener. I rang the bell, and the butler appeared.

"Oh, take these letters please, Wickham, and ask your master if he has any for the post; you'll find him amongst his roses. Oh, and, Wickham, what is the right time, please."

"The time is just a quarter to four, ma'am," replied Wickham, consulting his warming pan of a watch. 'Chester Cup's all over by this time, ma'am,' added Wickham with a smirk as he left the room.

"I looked out of the window with a beating heart, and saw Wickham go out to his master (as he thought) with my message and return when he had received his answer in the negative to the house.

"Then I went out, and kind Charles Merridew, giving me an arm, led me gently into the presence of the dead.

"Hastily removing his wig and whiskers and doffing the green dressing-gown, he was quickly himself again, and then we rang for assistance, and

a groom was at once despatched for the doctor.

"Late that night a mounted messenger arrived with a letter for my husband, sent off by his trainer immediately after the race, to inform him that Sir Harry after a desperate finish, had got up in the very last stride and won the Chester Cup by a head.

"I felt horribly guilty when I heard the news. 'Would you have felt guilty had you been in my place, my dear?' inquired my grandmother, naively turning to me.

"Well, upon my word, grandmamma," I replied, 'I don't think I should. Sir Harry was, there is no doubt, a very great public favorite, and a large number of poor people profited and were made happy by his victory, which they certainly would not have been had he been disqualified, and the second—an outsider, wasn't he?—awarded the race. Oh, there were what the French call extenuating circumstances—and, yes, I think, dear grandmamma, I should certainly have done the same thing had I been in your place.'

"That is exactly what Mr. Merridew observed at the time, my dear," said my grandmother, looking pleased.

"And now," she went on, "you have listened to my confession, I am sure you will be glad to hear that we did nothing wrong or underhanded after all. For it turned out that we made a mistake as to the hour the Chester Cup was to be run. We thought it was 3.30, whereas it was 3 o'clock. The horses were sent on their journey precisely at thirteen minutes past three; your poor grandfather died at twenty-five minutes past; so that the race was over just in time to save the disqualification of Sir Harry. There, my dear," said my grandmother, "that's my story; and I hope in the years to come, when I am dead and gone and you take up your abode in the Old Manor House, you will occasionally give a passing thought to your designing old grandmother and Sir Harry there, and, above all the green dressing gown."

A Wish.

I see the boy who graduates.
Stand up before the crowd;
His collar's very, very tall,
His tie is very loud;
He sees his parents sitting there,
As proud as they can be—
And there's another, too—his breast
Is filled with ecstasy.

I see him raise his good right hand
And wave it in the air;
I hear the big, uncommon words
Roll from his lips, up there;
He draws himself up proudly, and
His face with pleasure glows—
I wish that I knew half as much
As this boy thinks he knows.

—S. E. Kiser.

Brave Tommy.

This is the story of a hero, not the kind of a hero we are accustomed to read about, but nevertheless a hero in real life. His name is Tommy. One day Tommy's great kite snapped the string and flew away far out of sight. Tommy stood still for a moment, and then turned around to come home, whistling a merry tune.

"Why, Tommy!" said I, "are you not sorry to lose that kite?"

"Yes, but what's the use? I can't take more than a minute to feel bad. 'Sorry' will not bring the kite back and I want to make another."

Just so when he broke his leg.

"Poor Tommy!" cried his sister, "you can't play any more!"

"I'm not poor, either. You cry for me; I don't have to do it for myself, and I'll have more time to whistle. Besides, when I get well I shall beat every boy in school on the multiplication table, for I say it over and over again till it makes me sleepy every time my leg aches."

If there were more heroes like Tommy three would be less real trouble in the world.