

WHO WAITS WINS.

BY D. HOLLAND.

CHAPTER I.

KEEN SPORT. A NOVEL RACE.

It was a day in August. But not such a day as one generally looks for in that pleasant time of the year. It was a dull, wet, "muggy" sort of a day. The sky, overcast with clouds, had a sullen, leaden aspect, and the rain came down with a dogged persistency which it would have distressed and made heavy the stoutest heart to contemplate.

Two young men were seated at table in the sanded parlor of a rustic inn. They had finished dinner, and were sipping their wine with an air of weariness and discontent. Both were silent; and the eyes of both were directed to the window outside of which they could see the rain falling with a steady down-pour.

One of these young men was slender and fair, rather above the middle height. His features were regular and almost feminine in their aspect; and his wavy hair was of a light brown hue and glossy as silk. His companion was a taller man—fully six feet high—of vigorous, athletic build, strong of limb, and broad of chest. His face was handsome, with an indefinable high-bred air, but of a dark Spanish type; and his hair was as black as a raven's wing. Dull and discontented as he looked now, he could sometimes laugh a frank, merry, musical laugh, and then he would show a set of even teeth, glittering white, that a beauty might envy.

"What miserable weather!" said the fair complexioned man. "This is assuredly the pursuit of pleasure under difficulties. Confound this West of Ireland; it seems always to rain here."

"It did not rain yesterday afternoon, Ned," said his dark-featured companion, "when you brought home a well-filled creel from the trout stream, whilst I got scarce a nibble. But that's my luck."

"But see, Charley," said the other dolefully. "Look out there. Behold that leaden sky. See how that confounded rain comes down like one broad sheet of water, and listen to its heavy,

steady splash. Why it is enough to tempt a man to go and commit suicide."

"Bad enough, but not so bad as that, I should hope," said the dark man. "It is certainly a very miserable prospect; but there's no help for it. So take your wine, my boy, and give care the go-by."

"Confound that fly!" said the young gentleman whom his companion called Ned—"he has popped right into my glass. Nothing but a wine bath would suit him."

He lifted the fly gently out of the glass on the point of his fruit-knife and deposited it on the table.

"And another beggar in mine, by Jove!" said the dark-visaged man, following his friend's example.

"The drunken brutes!" exclaimed the other, with a comical look of disgust. "Look how they crawl and leave a wine-track behind them. Now I'd wager that these two fellows are reeling drunk. I wonder, Charley, if they weather through this, will they be likely to have a headache in the morning?"

"I'm not sufficiently versed in the physiology of flies," said the other laughing, "to be able to offer an opinion. But I'll tell you what, Ned—a great thought strikes me; as we have no other way of killing the enemy, Time, suppose we get up a race and bet upon the winning horse."

"Get up a what?"

"A race."

"What on earth do you mean, and what are you talking about winning horses? There's not a four-legged beast fit to mount for miles around; and even if there were, I for one feel no inclination for a canter along these rugged roads this blessed evening through that drenching rain."

"Tut, man, you don't take me."

"No, I certainly do not. Had you not better explain?"

"Well, attend," said he who was called Charley. "That's your fly there, and this is mine. You see that, as they struggle to shake off the wet from their wings, they are moving as fast as their wine-weighted legs will carry them toward that far end of the table. Now, Ned, I'll bet you a sovereign even, that