

no man I'd rather see win than you. In other circumstances I should even rather see you ahead of me."

Rollo looked straight at his friend, as he pronounced these last words. Laclede evidently understood their bearing, for he laughed and wished his rival good luck. These two men were worthy of each other.

There was an immense crowd at the finishing point, the broad road around and in front of Prendergast's being encumbered with sleighs. Men, women and children were present and the excitement was that which alone is exhibited at some great field day in the old sporting countries. Speculation was rife as to the probable winners, heavy stakes being laid upon the favorites. At length, a great shout arose from the outrunners, who had gone forth in the open to catch a first glimpse of the racers as they emerged from the trees around the point.

"Here they are. Clear the track!"

And there they were indeed, a dozen of them pretty well together, and tearing over the fields with all the skill and fire of thoroughbreds. The last hundred yards are reached. This is the supreme moment of victory. The man that spurts best now is winner of the race.

Another thundering clamor is heard.

"Thorndyke and Austen have the lead."

And so they had. Up they came like a whirlwind, leaving all the others behind.

"Thorndyke is ahead!"

"Austen is ahead!"

A pause, during which the vast crowd held its breath.