

Around the Camp Stove.

Dick Templeton.

WELL, fellows," said Long John, as he withdrew his gaze from the beauties of the stovepipe to let it rest on mere us; "Well, fellows, of all the horses I've ever seen this here outfit keeps the bummiest. What d' you think? Why, when I started as a teamster here I had to learn my horses that they'd sleep better of nights if they'd lie down. Then I had to prove to them that oats are for eating by munching a handful or two before them. I tell you, right now, that if the town didn't happen to be fifty miles away I'd never hang this job down."

Having thus delivered himself, he spat reflectively at the unoffending stove.

"Everybody knows what a darned old woman you are with horses, anyway," answered Red George. "The horses 'd be all right if they had proper skimmers after them. I never want to throw the lines across a better bunch than the eight I drive on the grader. Why, sir, they're that anxious to know what I want them to do that I'm prepared to bet they'd be willing to give up a couple of years of life to be able to read my thoughts. Talk of a mule's ears! Just you take a squint at the way my leaders throw theirs about and you'll be surprised."

"To get out of the neighbourhood of Ananias & Company," broke in Old Simon, "I'll tell you something about a horse I owned some five or six years back. I bought him as a three-year-old from a breed I met at Battleford. In colour he was a dark bay. At first sight you'd think him a fast 'un, because of his length of back, but, on looking closer you'd see that his running gear didn't combine, his knee and hock joints being too high and his houlders too straight. It was his head that took my fancy. His lips were thin, his eyes clear and intelligent, and his ears small and pointed. I

shan't enlarge on his appearance. I'll content myself with saying that he had the head of a thoroughbred and the body of a ranker.

"Well, I brought him to my homestead and put him to work. I soon found that he knew a darned sight more about some things than I did. I'll explain by giving you an example. One day, after I'd harnessed and hitched him up, I noticed he kept looking back. I didn't think much of this at first, but after I'd been driving him for a while I was forced to, as it interfered with his speed quite a bit. No matter how I punished him he'd keep up his little game. At last I pulled him up, and got out of the buggy to try to find out what the divil he meant. As I looked over the harness, I thought that perhaps the belly-band could do with a little tightening, and I therefore drew it in one hole. I then got into the buggy again, and resumed my journey, freely cursing the animal for a darned idiot. Would you believe me, but he never looked back once after that! He just wanted that harness put on perfectly, and he saw that I did it! That's as true as that I'm living. If any of you fellows have run across a cuter horse than that, well, I'll send for a keg of beer by the 'tote' teamster next time he goes to town."

For a minute or two there was silence in the tent. We were busy endeavouring to digest what we'd just been asked to swallow. 'Twas a pretty tough proposition, but we managed it fairly well. The calm was not to last, however, for, with a preliminary cough, Tom Drury butts in:

"Well now, boys, I guess you'd think it kind of mean of me if I didn't get that liquid refreshment along, seeing as how I can beat Old Simon there into a cocked hat in the line of true experience with horses. I'll admit that the