

COLLABORATEURS.

By S. D. SCHULTZ.

CHAPTER III (Continued).

"THAT sounds pretty, and I suppose you expect a courtesy, but I'll fool you. Some other time. Just listen, and then judge whether I have any chance of passing through the pearly gate. I'm implicated in a gambling operation. You see, the Carlyles invited me to enter a fifty cent pool. They vouched it being quite an innocent diversion. The pool is worth twenty dollars. There were twelve drawings—just the number of entries for the plate—and the rest were blanks. They all said that I was a lucky one to pick out the slip of paper pencilled with 'Dorothy'; but, Steve, I know that this race means a lot to you, at least Forsyth-Smith told me that you were betting heavily, and—and"—Zela checked her words confusedly, for she was just on the point of confessing something she had no intention of divulging.

"And—and—what?" amusedly enquired Fairlie.

"Oh! you'll think me a silly goose," she answered shyly, hanging her head.

"You women are all alike, arousing curiosity, and then refusing to gratify it," said Steve with simulated petulance.

"If you want to know so badly, then, I tore up my slip of paper entitling me to twenty dollars, if Dorothy won. I couldn't bear to make a gain out of your loss," and Zela inclined her head still lower to conceal the burning tide of crimson, suffusing brow, cheek and neck.

Steve's only answer was a sudden passionate squeeze of the dainty tan-gloved hand that hung so near his own. The pressure thrilled her with ecstasy. Fairlie's eye-lids quivered. He felt a contraction about the throat. "What a trump of a girl she was? How loyal? Oh! if Osceola could only win?" he cogitated, his breast heaving with pent emotion.

"Did you notice Osceola when Dorothy galloped past her just now?" divertingly exclaimed Zela.

"No!" briefly responded Steve, wrapped in thoughts of her loveliness.

"It was most amusing. I really do believe that animals have as much intelligence as we supposedly gifted mortals possess. As Dorothy went by in a canter, Osceola stopped, and turned her head, with those large knowing black eyes of hers, and seemed to take in all the points of her formidable rival. It was as human as could be. Certainly more so than your brutal jockey—Rufus Jackson's action in viciously jerking her head away, and urging her forward. But how could anyone expect an ignorant stable boy to understand the motives of a dumb

creature?" and Zela's interest and sympathy were expressed in speech and feature.

"A race course is no place for mystic metaphysics, but the fallacy of your ascribing 'motive,' forsooth, and other lofty mental attributes to the animal world prompts me to give you a much-needed lecture. Don't you know that there is an unbridgeable chasm—a yawning abyss—between man and animal? I quite understand that you women claim that man and brute are convertible, synonymous terms, but you must bear in mind that dumb creatures are only supposed to act by instinct, that they only experience bare sensation, and haven't the ability to correlate nerve impressions by the unifying function of thought, by which sensations"—

"Stop, sir professor, that's too technical for me; put it down on paper and I'll study it," Zela said with mock irony. "Just the same, your scientific division between man and animal is responsible for much torture to the latter, and there would be small need of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, if we would always remember that they are subject to the same feelings as we are—within circumscribed limits. You won't deny that they suffer, that pain and joy are as much to them as to us."

"Well, science and the Bible apparently join hands. Whilst there are many scriptural passages evidencing a kindly disposition to these ill-used, poorly understood creatures, there are few positive injunctions against maltreatment. How trustful, faithful, kindly they often are; and how cowering, skulking, spiritless they become under the masterful lord of creation's domination? Give man unbridled power to rule, and he becomes a despot, whether it be on the throne or the lowlier responsibilities of the kennel and the stable; but, look, the starter has given the signal for the horses to get into line! Good-bye," exclaimed Steve, hurriedly.

He pressed her hand lingeringly. A mist came into his eyes. "Bah! I mustn't give away to my feeling," he muttered beneath his breath, and strode away. He looked behind once, and saw Zela standing on the same spot where he had left her. A misgiving—a nigh uncontrollable impulse—urged her to run forward, but she resisted, and Fairlie was lost in the pushing, jostling crowd that always eddies around the book-makers just before the horses are sent away.

The field of twelve were restless, and over-anxious to get off. There were half-a-dozen false starts. Once Dorothy got to the quarter post, the jockey sawing her mouth before she could be turned. One ugly-tempered beast was pawing and rearing, and attempted to hurdle the

railing in front of the grand stand, creating a panic and shrieks of horror among the feminine portion of the audience.

"It looks like a go this time," shouted some one as the horses came to the post in a line.

"They're off," burst from the crowd as the starter's flag dropped, and there was a flash of steely heels flying away in a mad scramble for place. It was a splendid send-off. Only one horse had been left at scratch. The rest were confusedly bunched, and spectators were vainly attempting to pick out the different entries. After the quarter, though the horses stretched into a string, at least a couple were straining for first, three or four for second, and the rest trailing in the rear. The pace was hot. They were nearing the half. "Yellow and black leading"—"crimson and white gaining," were the sounds that came in deafening roars from the excited multitude. "Look, look, it's crimson's day," came suddenly during a lull, and the onlookers breathlessly craned their necks. Sure enough "crimson and white" had spurred, and was crawling past the flank of "yellow and black." "Crimson will pass"—"crimson has it." They were speeding along furiously, stride for stride, nip and tuck. A groan of disappointment came from the onlookers. Rufus Jackson, colored in crimson and white, had fallen behind, and Dorothy, the favorite, ridden by "yellow and black," was a good two lengths in the lead, as they came around the turn at the north side of the oval track.

"Here they come"—"Here they come," and the people scampered to the fence to see them pass.

Dorothy and Osceola had drawn away from the others, and were racing down the stretch. It looked like the favorite's win. Rufus had not put the whip, and Dorothy was being lashed for a final spurt. The gap had increased. "Yellow's race," shouted the crowd. A second afterwards, there was another cry: "See, crimson's whipping." True enough, Rufus was slashing away in earnest. Could Osceola do it? Was there time? The finish was dangerously near. Game little Osceola responded to the call, and the crowd, the majority of whom had taken Osceola at long odds, went wild with frenzied enthusiasm, as Fairlie's mare closed the space separating them. They are rushing past the grand stand, the riders plying the whip and the struggling steeds straining for vantage. They flew past the finishing post together.

"A dead heat"—"Dorothy has it"—"Osceola's won" were the conflicting cries, whilst the uncertain ones enquired, "Who's won?"

All eyes were centered in anxious sus-