

fellow named Joe came and asked for the mount. "Can you ride?" asked Mr. H.

"Ride, I should say I can. I have never done anything but ride hunters."

"Well, said Mr. H., I wish we had time to see what you can do, but the horses have been called, and I will give you a chance. Remember, he is highly bred, high-lived and rather nervous. No person but myself has ever ridden him; he has any amount of courage; you must not punish him nor worry his mouth, else you will rattle him and spoil everything. Be kind to him, steady him at the jump, give him his head while taking off, and he will do the rest. He seldom makes a mistake and never falls. Allow him to make his own pace. Take your spurs off and mount, and all that you win will be yours."

Joe answered, "I never ride without spurs, but I will not use them."

"You must remove your spurs, else I will not allow you to mount," responded Mr. H.

OVER THE HURDLES.

Then he took them off and mounted. There were several horses in the competition, which commenced at 4 ft. 6 in. I was the last called; the others had all taken it at the first trial. Joe rode me at the hurdle, and when I was about to take off he hit my sides with his heels, spoke sharply and pulled heavily on the reins. Not being able to get my head, I blundered and knocked the bar down. When I was taken back for the second trial, Mr. H. said, "Now, do not worry his mouth nor urge him, and give him his head at the take-off as I told you."

"I am not worrying his mouth," answered Joe, "but I must lift him over the jump."

"Is that all you know about riding? You cannot lift him; do as I tell you and allow him to do the lifting."

At the second trial he gave me a better chance and I got over clear. The bar was raised 4 inches each time, and I performed fairly well, notwithstanding the fact that my rider continued to lift me over. Some of the horses dropped out before we reached 6 ft. 2 in., after which the bar was raised 2 inches each time. According to programme, 6 ft. 6 in. was to be the maximum height. When we reached this height, there were but two horses in it besides me. Both took it at the first trial, and then I was called. I was nervous now, as Joe continued to ride me according to his own ideas. He started me and I went a little faster than at the lower jumps. He urged me still faster, and just as I was taking off he lifted me more forcibly than ever and struck me a sharp cut with his whip. Of course I blundered and knocked the bar off. As I was coming back I heard Harry say to Mr. H., "Pull the bloomin fool hoff and kick 'im. 'Ee can't ride a box, let alone a 'orse like The Himp." Mr. H. said to Joe, "Now you must allow the horse to perform in his own way. Just sit there—hand me your whip—do not touch him with your heels nor try to lift him."

He forced Joe to give him the whip, and then I was started again. I think Joe was more excited than I, as he paid no attention to instructions, but pounded me with his heels and lifted me even harder than before. I could not avoid blundering again. I felt very badly, as I was anxious to win for my master, who had so much faith in my ability.

I had one trial more, and when I was ridden back for it Mr. H. did not say a word, but caught Joe and pulled him out of the saddle, and prepared to mount himself. The owner of one of the other horses objected to a change of riders. Mr. H. said, "The conditions do not stipulate who shall ride. You certainly cannot claim that I am asking any advantage, as with this saddle I ride at 205 lbs." The judges decided that there were no objections to the change. Mr. H. said to me, "Now, Imp, keep cool and do your best." I immediately lost my nervousness; he cantered me around a little and then faced me towards the hurdle, allowed me to make my own pace, gave me my head and I cleared the bar without a tip. As three of us were tied, it was decided to go on raising the bar. At 6 ft. 8 in. one was beaten, and the other took it at the third trial. I cleared it nicely at the first. It was then raised to 6 ft. 10 in. My competitor knocked the bar down the first trial, and then I was called and took it clean. He failed at the second and third trial, and I was consequently the winner.

My master again refused several tempting offers for me. He took me home and hunted me regularly as long as the season lasted. He soon discovered that I had speed and staying powers as well as ability to jump both high and broad. He usually held me back and selected a low jump when he could, as I was too young for heavy hunting, and he tried to save me, but he would occasionally give me my head for a brush with other horses, and I always beat them.

During the winter and following summer he rode and drove me, and also allowed his wife to ride me and do some hurdle jumping. I now weighed 1,260 lbs. and retained my quality. He fitted me for the shows and won in the same classes as before, and also for performance with my mistress in the saddle. The judge said, "He is really too heavy for a lady, but is only 16 hands, and his quality, manners and performance

outclass the others so much, I have to place him first."

AN EXCITING EVENT.

I was hunted the same as the previous fall, and performed better, as I was older and fully matured. Towards the end of the season the City Hunt Club got up an afternoon's racing and asked our club for entries. One event was a five-mile point-to-point steeplechase, open to horses belonging to any recognized hunt club, that had



THE FINISH.

been regularly hunted during the season; owners up, minimum weight 180 lbs. I was fit to race, and Mr. H. entered me, and of course had to ride himself. On account of having to carry 205 lbs. I was supposed to have no chance to win, as the others were all to be ridden at about 180. The day was fine, there were 14 horses in my race. Public opinion was divided between a big chestnut and a rakish-looking big grey for the winner. No one but Harry and Mr. H. condescended to give me a thought. When we arrived at the post I heard several express their opinions as to how we would finish, but my name was not mentioned. Harry was there, not saying a word, but I could see that he was indignant that no person thought well of his favorite.

Some one said, "What does H mean by starting The Imp with so much weight up? He can jump well, but cannot gallop, and will not be at the turning point when some of them are home."

This was too much for Harry, so he turned and said, "You bloomin fool, there's only one 'orse in the race, and 'ee is The Himp; 'ee'll show them all 'is 'eels on the run 'ome." The flag fell and we started across country. We had to take fences, ditches and a broad water jump. The going was heavy in some places, as we had to take the fields as they came. I was anxious to go to the front, but my rider held me back, saying, "Take it easy, Imp, let the others make the pace. You may require your wind later on; the most of them will come back to us before the journey is over; watch the chestnut and the grey, they may try our metal."

He kept me well back and sat still. Some of the horses blundered and threw their riders at the first jump, others went further. Six only reached the turning point. I was the last to turn; I was running easy and fighting the bit to get to the front, but my rider would not allow

it. One after the other came back, until the chestnut and grey alone were in front of me, and I was still fighting for my head. The others also appeared fresh and strong; they were well-ridden and running easy.

When about a mile from the post Mr. H. said, "Now, my boy, we will chase them a bit. Keep your head and we will see what kind of stuff they are made of." He gave me my head, and quickening my pace I reached within a length of the others, who were running as a team. They also quickened and kept their lead. Master said, "They still have something left, do not force too much pace, you are badly handicapped with weight, save yourself for the finish, and it will be a victory worth winning, to beat two such horses." We galloped thus for the next half mile; we still had a fence about 4 ft. 6 in. and the water jump to take and then $\frac{1}{2}$ mile on the flat to go. We all took the fence in good style; my rider then gave me my head and said, "Now, Imp, get even, and if they do not come to grief at the water, it will be a race home, and may the best horse win; go on boy, but do not jostle them." I came up even, but could not get a lead; we were all tolerably fresh and ran abreast at a terrific pace to the water, which we all cleared safely without slacking speed. My master whispered, as he sat more closely and leaned forward in the saddle: "Imp, my boy, do not fail me now. You have foemen worthy of your steel, but you must win for your own glory and mine; we will show the city folk what a country horse and rider can do; go on, my boy, go on."

I was as anxious to win as he, so I settled down to my fastest clip, but could not shake them off. The riders of the others were using whip and spur, but mine sat perfectly still, knowing that I would do my best.

The chestnut began to falter, he could not stand the clip; we had him beaten, but the grey stayed on; I could not gain an inch. With heaving flanks and distended nostrils, we each strove for victory, as anxious to win as our riders. When within about 100 yards from home my rider leaned still a little further forward and whispered, "Imp, my boy, Imp, now or never, he must not win." He pricked me slightly with his spurs (the first time he ever did so); I made a supreme effort, sprang forward, and won by a neck!

The crowd had been very quiet, and while the most of those present were anxious for a city horse to win, they appreciated the noble race I had run, and cheered me and my rider right heartily. Harry was delighted. As soon as Mr. H. dismounted, he removed the saddle, threw a blanket on me, threw his arms around my neck and said, "I knew you would win, but you 'ad no bloomin picnic, 'ad you, Himp?" He took me to a stable and attended to me well. Mr. H. received some fancy offers for me, but I was still "Not for Sale." I was taken home, and I heard Mr. H. tell my mistress one day that he would probably start me in some steeplechases next year if he can secure the services of some good medium-weight rider; that I would have to compete with Thoroughbreds, but he thinks I can win in first-class company, with a good man up, who will ride according to instructions.



RED PRINCE 2ND.

The thirteen-year-old first prize winner in Thoroughbred class at the Dublin Horse Show, 1902.