

and patronage not easy to explain, but which the crowd around were quick enough to observe and appreciate.

Encouraged by the Squire's manner, Sertum, who had made the disputed jump, related in a rather confident manner, his version of the dispute, or more properly, attempted to relate, for the Squire catching his meaning before the prosy narration could unwind its length, said;—

"You think Ronald ought to show that he can leap as far, and not you repeat the jump just to humour him and his *set*. What do you say, lads, are you quite satisfied that Sertum jumped fairly, and as far as the marks?"

The Squire's evident partiality caused very prompt testimony in Sertum's favor. In fact it was quite singular to see the effect this partiality had upon the memories of the respective individuals concerned. Those who had supported Sertum, were jubilant; others who had tried to act impartially, suddenly discovered sound reasons for decision in Sertum's favour, and even those who had been loudest in Ronald's favour, began either to waver in their testimony, or slunk away in the crowd, fearing to oppose so awful an authority as the young Squire, so that Ronald seemed in a fair way of being deserted altogether, and of course was proportionably discouraged by the turn things had taken.

At this crisis, however, an ally appeared in the field who created a sensation decidedly startling to the spirit of submission and cringing servility, which could sacrifice truth to curry favour, regardless of the outraged feelings of one of their own class.

"This is a miserable spiritless way of settling the dispute villagers," said a gruff powerful voice.

The person who gave expression to this independent opinion was the pedestrain stranger, who seeing the crowd had joined it almost unnoticed, in the excitement of the occasion, but was now honored by the staring curiosity of all present. The squire unaccustomed to such contempt of his presence and opinion almost lost his balance in the saddle, with the start occasioned by the sudden interruption, together with the authoritative tone and manner of the stranger, who without noticing the astonishment of the gaping crowd, turned to Ronald and said;—

"Have you any objection to jump against that young fellow," pointing to Sertum.

"None at all," answered Ronald, "and with fair play I can beat him too."

"Good," said the stranger, "we'll have fair play and no favour, those are the terms and no other," and turning to Sertum, who stood in wild amazement at the man's coolness, he held up between his forefinger and thumb a crown piece, and said;—

"Look here young fellow, if you or any of your friends or backers are inclined to make a venture on a crown, just say the word and I back this young man, you call Ronald against you; and if you do not like the terms, offer your own or just own up for once that you dare not and be done with it."

Sertum looked at the stranger from head to foot as though expecting to discover some peculiarity of construction, and then