

wore Kathleen's blue racing-jacket, and in the stall a horse was being saddled.

Denton approached Raeburn and asked carelessly: "What horse is this, Raeburn—one of your own?"

"No, this is the flyer you people sent up from Belmont—the great Ben Ali."

Denton stared, speechless; he was looking into the face of a big bay horse that carried a small white star in the forehead, while Ben Ali had no such mark.

"That isn't—" Denton checked himself awkwardly, a sudden animal cunning stilling his tongue.

"You ought to know him, Denton," Raeburn added; "you wanted to buy him when he beat all the plow-horses down there. You were lucky, though, for he's a beastly counterfeit."

"Ben Ali was a good horse at Belmont, and he ought to be a better one in your hands, Raeburn," Denton said, his small eyes staring into the other's, sparkling with covert meaning.

Both the look and the inflection in Denton's voice were lost on Raeburn as he answered simply: "We've worked hard enough over him, God knows, but he won't do—he won't try, only when it suits him."

"Then you're not going to back him for this, Raeburn?"

Perhaps Raeburn did not hear this question; he did not answer, and Denton, suspicious, placed an evil construction upon his silence. He followed up the query with another, seconding it with a keen scrutiny of the trainer's face, hoping to detect a convicting look of confusion.

"What's that other big bay—number eight? He looks a good horse—is he worth a bet?"

With satisfaction Denton saw Raeburn meet his eyes with a quick turn of the head as he answered: "Why—have you heard anything about him? That's North Light."

Denton parried the question as to knowledge by asking: "Do you know anything about him—is he going to win this?"

"I don't know anything about him," Raeburn answered; "I don't even know who owns him. I saw him work like a good horse, and to tell you the truth, if I hadn't Ben Ali in the race—well, I won't bet at all; it's too complicated for me."

As Denton turned away he muttered: "By heavens! I see it all—I've got Leigh just where I want him! Mr. Plunger Raeburn has given the real Ben Ali to that nigger to run as North Light; he's going to win this race, and Raeburn makes a killing. It's one way of stealing the horse from Kathleen."

The intensity of his discovery suffused Denton's mean spirit with a hot glow that caused beads of perspiration to stand out on his forehead as he rejoined Kathleen in the stand.

"Did you see Ben Ali?" she asked. "How does he look? Raeburn thinks he has developed a bad temper—and is not to be depended upon."

"I think Ben Ali will win," Denton answered; "though Raeburn's backing a horse that is entered as North Light—not very reassuring for you, Kathleen, to have your trainer backing something else in the same race."

"It won't make any difference to me. You ought to take his tip."

"No, thanks; I shall have interest enough in this race in watching developments."

The peculiar inflection of Denton's voice caused Kathleen to search his face inquiringly. She remembered how Denton had insinuated that Leigh and Raeburn were acting dishonestly over the training of Ben Ali; evidently, judging from his tone, Denton expected to discover something unsavoury in the race itself. This cast the restraint of silence over the girl as she watched the horses pass down the course, through a gap in the rails, and over to the start. Her eyes, engrossed by Leigh and the horse, had not noticed the number on the saddle-cloth; she had not thought of it; Leigh's face, the healthy glint of the horse's satin skin, had been engrossing everything. She watched them troop across the green inner-field, and saw them bunch up at the start. Once she turned to Denton, and asked: "There's another blue jacket there in addition to my colours—what horse is that?"

"That's North Light—blue jacket, red sash," Denton read from his program—"the sash is little good when they're galloping; you can't see it. There they go—they're off! One of the blues is in front, going like a steam-engine."

"Is it Ben Ali?"

"Can't tell from here."

It was Leigh's mount out in front, galloping like a crazy horse, and his rider, sitting tight, was muttering: "If this is only your day—you act like it!" He would have given worlds to have steadied the mad, racing brute, but he dared not; he knew his horse too well. He must just sit like an automaton and humor with gentle hand and cool brain his erratic mount. Perhaps the horse off in front might stick there to the very end. He was jumping faultlessly, going at each obstacle as though the devil that was in him drove, and lifting with a mighty surge that left his hoof-prints twenty feet clear of the jump. Once Leigh looked over his shoulder and saw the nearest horse six lengths away.

"It won't do!" he muttered; "he'll crack up at this pace—he can't live it." He drew at the bit, set against the horse's teeth as though it were cemented in rock, but the bay jerked his head warningly, stiffened his neck, and Leigh fancied he heard him squeal.

"You devil!" he panted.

"That's Ben Ali!" Kathleen cried exultingly. "I knew he would race just the same here as he did at Belmont, and Leigh's doing just the wisest thing—he's letting him have his own way."

Denton said nothing. He knew it was not the real Ben Ali. Through his glasses he saw that the blue jacket carried no red sash.

On for a mile, a mile and a half, for two miles, Leigh's horse galloped in the lead; behind, trying to live the fierce pace, weak jumpers had come to grief. Three were down; and one, Lodestar, galloping riderless, clear of his jockey's weight, stirrups slashing saddle-flap and belly, had crept up until he raced beside Leigh's mount. Unguided, Lodestar hugged the bay, bumping him into an evil temper, and, just behind, North Light—the real Ben Ali—galloped with that long, easy stride that had made him a king at Belmont.

Now there was less than half a mile to the finish. Leigh, cursing the riderless brute that clung to him with tenacity, saw the ears of his horse go back; the rein, slippery with perspiration, was almost jerked from his fingers as the bay suddenly lunged with gleaming-teeth at Lodestar's neck, trying to savage him. Before Leigh could steady his mount they rose loosely at the last mud wall. Lodestar, thrown out of his stride by the assault, struck, pitched sideways, cannoning against the bay; but Leigh, with a swinging pull of the rein, lifted him from his knees; the horse staggered, and swung lamely into his stride again. And now a ridden horse, with a blue jacket atop, had slipped into Lodestar's place.

For a dozen strides Leigh's horse held to his new rival, and the stand breathlessly watched the struggle. Gradually Leigh saw the other horse forge ahead. It had come to the last resort, the whip. He was beaten; unless the bay answered the call of the whip the race was lost. One cut, and Leigh felt the soft-hearted brute under him curl up like a leaf.

"I knew it—I knew it!" Kathleen cried, joy in her voice, as she saw Ben Ali gallop on and win by two lengths.

Denton knew that it was the other—the one known as North Light; knew that the red sash on the blue jacket had failed to claim Kathleen's eye from its loving embrace of the gallant Ben Ali.

"Yes, your good horse won easily enough at the finish Kathleen. I'm glad of it. Hello!" he exclaimed the next minute, throwing a pretense of surprise in his voice. "They've put up number eight as the winner—that's North Light."

The girl stared, aghast.

"It's a mistake!" Her voice was a whisper in fits of apprehension. "Ben Ali won easily—there was no horse near him. Quick, run down, Denton—please, speak to the judges, the stewards—anything—quick, before it's too late—before they make it final with the 'All right.' Hurry, please!"

"If you wish it, Kathleen—I don't like to interfere—I'm afraid there's something very wrong."

"There is! The judges have made a mistake in the colours, or something. Go, please, quick! Get Raeburn to object—anything!"

"Mind, it's your request, Kathleen."

"Of course it is. Why do you hesitate?"

"By Gad, what a chance!" Denton chuckled maliciously as he hurried down the steps.

"Any objection" was the open sesame to the officer of the little gate leading to the judge's stand.

Denton, knowing that the horses had been changed, rendered Kathleen's message in his own way.

"The owner of Ben Ali objects that the winner of this race, North Light, is really her horse, Ben Ali," he said