

HOSS AVERY'S TRIBUTE

happy as plain folks got any right to be. Then the baby come, my Swickey—and then we was as happy as God A'mighty calc'lates to let any kind of folks git, whatsoever. For two years we jest lived right clus to thet baby, and then—

“Wal, Gray Billy was a onlucky hoss. Settin' aside bein' a prime fav'rite with Nanette and seein' as I'd never laid a gad to him in his life, Billy were onlucky—fur us.

“Nanette's brother Jules were 'fraid of thet team,—bad sign, I take it, when a man's sca'd of hosses,—and one day he come over at noon to talk about the foller we was goin' to work t'gither in the spring. It was winter then and he were jest a-goin' back to his work in the woods, when Billy, what was standin' steamin' in the cold from a big mornin's haulin', shook hisself, makin' a sharp rattlin' noise with the trace-hooks. Jules he had hair-trigger nerves and he throwed up one arm like as if some one was comin' from behind, and stepped back a'most under Gray Billy's nose. Thet hoss did n't jerk up his head li' e I seen some. No, sir! He brung his head down slantin' and quick, and he bit. He was a big hoss and pow'ful. Then I knowed Jules was bad clean through, howcome I ken sca'ce say *how* I knowed.

“Jules he screamed, and afore I could wink