

Ford's best style, with a small crest, garter and cypher on the pannel, in the heraldic colors.

Though light it was a large and roomy vehicle, capable of carrying a brace of setters, with gun-cases and baggage under the driving seat, in addition to two persons; but at present it contained no load beyond the driver and his companion, who were no others than two characters, by this time far too familiar with my readers to require any regular or formal introduction—Frank Forester and Harry Archer.

Harry was sitting easily, and as it would appear loosely, on his high seat, with his elbows squared, the reins free in his left hand, yet feeling his horses' mouths constantly; and his long holly whip, with its light lash lapped up into what is technically called a demmy, carried in his right diagonally across his own and Frank's body.

As he shot past the other tandem, which he did apparently without an effort of his horses, he saluted the other driver gnostically, by dropping the point of his whip, and elevating his right elbow, giving as he did so, a low whistle to his horses, which sprang to it, as if they had felt the lash.

But at this instant master Forester, who was most furiously excited, and who had been in a great state of disgust at being in the rear during the last half hour, exclaimed on a sudden—

"Give them a yell, give them a yell, Harry!"

And putting the action to the word, he set up so hideous and prolonged a howl, clapping his hand to his lips as he did so, that all the ban dogs and hounds, from one end of the valley to the other, responded to the sound, and all the echoes rang for ten minutes in the hill passes.

It had not, however, by any means the effect on which Frank had calculated, for the horses of the rival tandem, which were accustomed to be yelled and whooped at, as if they had been Potomac horses, took no notice whatever of the war-ry, except, if anything, to increase their pace a little, and creep up again nearly alongside.

But Archer's black horse used always to be driven like a Christian beast, and understanding only decent and legitimate horse language, bounded with all his feet together into the air, and broke into a gallop.

Archer, however, did not pull him short up, or saw him, but merely holding him very hard in hand, stood up to his work, and brought down his double thong a dozen times across his flank and loin, with so strong a wrist, and so severe a draw, that every stroke left marks gridiron-wise, and the game brute settled down again to his old square trot, champing his bits, and tossing his head, as if he had intended to say, "a fig for your castigation!"

Still, in spite of the quickness with which he had recovered his trot, Archer's team lost time by the break, and the chestnuts had drawn clear away from the gray leader's head.

Within ten minutes, however, Harry had recovered his place; and for the next two miles, the two tandems ran literally side by side, leader and wheeler-neck and neck, collar to collar, the naves of the wheels never above a foot asunder, oftentimes not three inches, and the spokes whirling round and round with such speed as to be fairly indistinguishable.

Harry might perhaps have run by them, but he knew, by the fretful jerking of the black horse's bit, that he was not perfectly steady, and was therefore afraid of breaking him, should he seek to shove him.

He held them, therefore, quite steady, knowing the pace at which he was going, and knowing also, that it is the pace which kills.

Not a word had been spoken since they lipped; but now, as they neared the broken ground, and as the first knoll loomed up dark before them,

"I have them, now, Frank," whispered Harry, "the first turn is a short curve to the right, we have the inside, and must pass, even if we do not break them."

But the other dragsman was wide awake also; and saw his disadvantage—

"They have got us," he said to him, whom he called "The baronet"—"they have got us at this turn, unless I give the prads the string, and I daren't do it. I don't think they will stand it."

"Oh! d--n it! yes!" lisped the other. "Give them the string, just once—once, you know, for a flier—but we can be beat after all."

Exhorted thus, Ned Brereton drew his long straight whip from the socket, and without relaxing his pull on the horses, dealt each of them two or three slashing stripes.

At first, they quickened their step prodigiously, and the chestnut leader headed the gray for a second's pace, Harry still holding his team hard in hand, and refusing to hurry them.

But the next instant, the baronet, elated by the apparent success of his advice, and of his friend's consequent manoeuvre, set up a yell, second only to Frank Forester's; and both the chestnuts broke, incontinently, as badly as can be well imagined.

Harry shot past them without quickening his pace, wheeled to the right, round the projecting spur, and was out of sight in the gorge, before the echo of the yell had subsided.

"That was sweetly done, Harry, lad," said Frank, "they are used up now, about as badly as they will be used up in the steep-chase on Friday."

"Why, Frank, I do think we can give it to them there; but I fancy they have not got enough of this work yet. Hark, now, I hear them comming up."

"Take a pull on the prads, Harry. The gray is racking a little, I think. Don't let the pull get out of him; for they will push us hard up the last straight mile to the Hall."

"Bah!" said Archer, laughing, "you do not suppose that I will allow them to come up with me in these steep pitches, and short turns. Nothing but a quick finger, and curls bits will do the business in such ground as this."

At this moment, Archer was descending a short abrupt descent, with the hill rising steep and rocky to his right hand, and falling off abruptly to the left into a dell or dingle, full of tall trees, and broken blocks of stone.

A large stream crossed the road, some fifty or sixty yards farther on in the bottom of the dell, on a narrow one-arched bridge of stone.

But at the very instant when Harry spoke, the other team came thundering over the brow of the hill, both chestnuts at full gallop.

"They are away with them, by the Lord! Harry," shouted Forester.—"Spring them to it! Archer, spring them to it! this is not for honor and glory, but for the dear life! He cannot steer them any more than he can fly, and we cannot avoid them in this narrow gully. Spring them to it, for God's sake! spring them to it!"

"Get away, lads! get away!" sang out Harry Archer, before the words were half out of Frank's mouth; and at the same minute, out flew the long thin whip, whistling through the air in a figure of eight, and the blood sprang from the high flank of the gray leader, and, in the next second, from under the shoulder of the black wheeler, under the collar.

Away! away! they went down the rough descent, quartering the deep ruts, and sheering the great blocks of stone—away, like the wind! the wheeler still holding his slashing trot, the gray at full gallop.

And close behind them, sheering from side to side of the rugged road, and making everything ring and rattle, with foam flying from their mouths, and their necks outstretched and rigid, as though they had been cast in bronze, came the two fiery chestnuts.

Ned Brereton sat firm in his seat, pulling as if either the horses' jaws or his arms must have been torn from their sockets; but their mouths were deadened by the dead pull of the snaffle bits; and he might just as well have pulled against the rocks which lay in their path.

The baronet was leaning back in the seat, laughing as though it were the best joke in the world, though his neck was in momentary peril.

"If they catch us before we clear the bridge, it is all day, Harry," said Forester, coolly enough.

"They cannot catch us, before we clear the bridge," said Harry, who had looked back and measured his distance carefully.

"It will be touch and go, Harry."

"It will be a near thing—get away, get away, lads!" and again out flew the lash, and both the good steeds sprang responsive; but now the black was in his gallop.

The nose of the chestnut leader of Ned Brereton's drag was within two hands' breadth of the body of Archer's tandem, when the wheels rattled on the hollow bridge.

The next moment, they had passed it; and scarce had the wheel cleared the abutment before, even at the fearful rate at which they were going, Harry wheeled hard and sharp to the right hand into a wood-road, which ran along the margin of the stream, and so escaped the shock, which otherwise he could not have avoided.

Just as he wheeled his tandem, the other rushed headlong past him, so close that the nave of their wheel literally grazed his tire, as they turned. Two or three inches more, and both had been dashed to atoms.

As Brereton was whirled by them, they just caught the baronet's laugh, and the words "for a flier"—came to their ears alone out of a sentence, shouted to them as they rushed onward, by the gay reckless dandy.

They flew up the opposite hill, crossed the brow, and were out of sight before there was time to ask how or whether.

Then Archer backed his tandem, and turned his horses neatly round into the road, and taking the team well in hand, trotted gently up the next hill.

"I am afraid we shall come up with them," he said gravely, "before we reach the Hall!"

"In course, we shall," responded Frank; "that next infernal hollow, Muddy Bottom, I believe they call it, will settle their hash, for a thousand!"

"I am afraid so. But so much for snaffle bits, with hot horses, on a hilly road!"

"What you say right, is perfectly true," said Forester. "Pull up on the brow, and let's listen if we can hear their wheels."

They listened, but there was not a sound.

"It is all up with them, I am afraid. We will go on gently."

"How dark it is here. Has the moon set?"

"Not she. It is always as dark here as a wolf's mouth, in summer at noon-day as dark as at midnight."

"Hilloa! ho! Hilloa!" rose shrilly from the bottom of the hollow, in the well-known tones of Edmund Brereton.

"What ho! how goes it?" answered Archer, at the top of his voice. "We'll be with you in a minute."

"On top of us, you mean, I think," shrieked the baronet. "Here's a sweet go of Brereton's."

"Where the deuce are you?" hollered Frank.

"Up to my knees in mud, with both my boots pulled off," answered the sufferer. "And Brereton is worse off than I. He's up to his neck."

"And the tandem?" said Harry, pulling up in the middle of the road, opposite to the spot whence the voices sounded in the swamp, and trying vainly to peer into the darkness. "And the chestnuts, where are they?"

"The tandem-cart, or what is left of it, is in the bog here beside us," said Brereton, dolefully, crawling up out of the wet morass, "and the chestnuts are —"

"In —, I hope, by this time," said the baronet, still in the quagmire. "For heaven's sake, help me to get my boot."

"Strike a light, Frank," cried Archer. "Be alive, man. There is a flint and steel and tinder, in the driving box, and a large wax candle in the lamp by your side. Be alive."

"Ay! ay! Harry; and the click of the steel and flint-falling shower of sparks, truly showed that Frank was alive."

Written for the Experiment. THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

The sun shone bright o'er fair Judea's plains,
Where now the night of desolation reigns;
The bleating flocks around their keepers stray'd,
And grazed the spot where ancient Jacob pray'd;
The noble Jordan loved his honored strand,
And gentle zephyrs fanned the holy land,
The golden harvest waving o'er the plain,
Evoked the thankful happy minstrel's strain;
Fair Salem's daughters tuned their harps anew,
And o'er the strings their taper fingers drew;
The gentle strains arose, and swelled around,
Till all seemed holy consecrated ground.

One wretched man alone the scene survey'd,
And sighed for pleasant fields where once he stray'd,
Till proud ambition lured him from his home,
A stranger in a stranger's land to roam:
"My childhood's home, oh well remembered spot,
How sad my fate, how cruel is my lot;
I will arise and seek my father's face,
And ask of him a kind, a fond embrace.
Vast mountains, plains and rivers intervene,
I furnish here amid a herd unclean;
My thoughts on home do most intensely burn,
Oh will he hail the Prodigal's return."

On Kedron's banks a princely mansion stood,
Long ere it mingles with the briny flood;
An hundred hills surround the ancient place,
In all their native majesty and grace.
An hundred flocks o'erspread the vales below,
Their peaty whiteness rivalling the snow;
Judea's maidens watch with gentle care,
Their fleecy charge, and give to each its share;
A garden sloped down to the gentle stream,
Resembling more the poet's wildest dream,
Than any real habitable spot,
Of paterne terrace, water-lout and grot.

Beneath that dome, bent down by weight of years,
An aged man far in this vale of tears,
Mourns his lost son with all a parent's grief,
Nor seeks to find in distant hope relief:
"My son is dying in a stranger's land—
No friend to watch him, and no gentle hand
To smooth his pillow, whisper words of love,
Or point his straggling soul to realms above:
To watch for him has been my daily toil,
With earnest prayer I do the night beguile;
Oh God give back my erring, wand'ring son,
Thy will, not mine, indulgent Lord be done."

On velvet couch—with gold embroidered o'er,
And diamonds sparkling from famed Ophir's shore,
A gentle maid reclined, with form and face
So perfect, that they seem like angel grace;
Luxuriant curls of raven blackness flow,
On bosom white, and pure as virgin snow.
Ezela mourned her Nathan's absence long,
Her only comfort was her harp and song;
She snatched her harp, a gentle prelude drew,
Then o'er the strings her taper fingers flew,
Evoked a strain of melody so sweet,
That angel hosts seemed mortal ears to greet.

SONG.
Oh why will you linger, Ezela is true,—
Oh, Nathan, dear Nathan, I mourn yet for you;