

the pony was the same animal which I had previously seen standing there.

"Want to buy a pony, sir?" The question was thrown at me like a missile that narrowly escaped my head; launched in a voice which must once have been extremely powerful, but which now, whether by abuse of shouting in the open air or by the deteriorating effect of gin on the vocal chords, was only a loud, passionate whisper: so that, though the man obviously bawled with all his might, the drum of one's ear was not shattered. I judged, partly from the cut of his coat and the size of the buttons on it, and partly from the creaminess of the shaggy, long-tailed pony, that my questioner was or had been connected with circuses. His very hand was against him; the turned-back podgy thumb showed acquisitiveness, and the enormous Gophir diamonds in brass rings argued a certain lack of really fine taste. His face had literally the brazen look, and that absolutely hard, impudent, glaring impassivity acquired only by those who earn more than enough to drink by continually bouncing the public.

"The finest pony in the county, sir." (It was an animal organism gingerly supported on four crooked legs; a quadruped and nothing more.) "The finest pony in the county!" he screamed, "Finest pony in England, sir! Not another like him! I took him to the Rothschild horse-show, but they wouldn't have him. Said I'd come too late to enter him for the first-clawss. They were afraid—afferaid! There was the water-jump.