# HONOR CAME BACK.

After the last of his guests had departed Stephen Aldridge left his family in the drawing-room discussing with animation the incidents of a pleasant dinner party, followed by an equally agreeable evening reception, and betook himself to a snug corner of the smoking-room, where he filled himself out a glass of port and began to puff meditatively one of his long clay pipes, which, like a man of sense, he infinitely preferred to the choicest Havana. Hither came through the conservatory, which opened on this snuggery, his nephew, George Falconer Rigby, a cigarette between his fingers, his manner jaunty and radiant, as of one on good terms with his world, and a fresh color flushing his face, for which, as well as heightened brightness of eye, champagne and probably stronger excitants were responsible. He had a red rose and maidenhair fern boutonniere in the lapel of his dress coat, and might be pronounced faultlessly arrayed for evening entertainments, according to the notions of our time, although he had not been one of the party at his uncle's house. Before he observed his uncle in the corner he was well across the room, evidently bent on passing into the corridor.

"Ah, George, you've some home, have you? Fond of dining out, but not fond of our own fireside. Too flat, I suppose, for a man of your tastes and accomplishments. Sit down and chat with your uncle a bit on the pleasures of the gay world."

"Yes, uncle, there's no place like home for sleep. That I allow. But I could not help it to-night. My engagement at the club was fixed ahead, and a deuced jolly night it was with Trenton and Rudd, and just for an hour or so we looked in at Lady Melfort's and the Ventnors'."

"Went to the opera, too?"

"No; that is dull. 'Faust,' or some other head-splitting music you've heard again and again. The only stage tolerable is the Alhambra—plenty of change, rattle and go there."

"Well, I'm getting old and don't know these things. I can get along without the opera or theater myself, but the girls like to go. And so you have had a jolly night? as you call it, and kept out of a humdrum party at your uncle's so that your spirits might not be depressed. Now, when I was a young man I was taught to study the pleasure of the old people. The old folks now give way to the young."

"You have the advantage of me in that sort of recollection, but I am downright sorry to have been absent. The Kitsons and Rentons were here, of course—charming girls; and the Burfoots—a deuced queer set, but good-natured. It was a pity to miss it all."

And the young man crossed his legs, looked at his neat patent-leather shoes and blew a cloud of aromatic smoke from his mouth and nostrils as a relief to his pensive feelings. His uncle helped himself to a sip of port and continued to puff his pipe, the while eying the handsome dark face of his nephew curiously.

"By the way, George, what have you done with your horses?"

The young man un rossed his legs, gave an uneasy half hitch round in his easy-chair and looked troubled.

"Oh, I sold them. They were not of much account, although they cost enough, and I can do without them for a bit. They hadn't any style in the Row—in fact, were common nags, and I am glad they're gone."

"And what might you have got for them?"

"Got? Oh, I don't remember quite! Now that I think of it £150 or so. A mere trifle to the £500 I paid."

"Or that I did. Yes, a mere trifle. And who got the pair?—a dealer?"

"No, not exactly. The fact is it was Rudd. He took a queer fancy to them and I let him take them cheap. He's a friend you know."

"So you have always said—a devoted friend! But you don't miss them, and that's good. When I was a young man I could do without horses. You lost £350 on that bargain, or I did. Perhaps you will do better next time with horses, at least I hope so. It is plain you were not born for business."

"No, I wish I had been. There's no living without some knowledge, even when dawdling about in society."

"Now that's a sensible remark at least, if you have sold your horses foolishly. But did you sell them, or was it a gift?"

"Well, Rudd and I squared it."

"Not in cash! I see. A debt at cards?"

"Cards! No—well, that and something else. I forget. A fellow cannot carry everything in his head."

"No, nor keep everything in his pocket. Too true! It's the way of young men. And is Rudd your only credi—friend, I mean, with whom you have transactions like that?"

"Oh, I don't know. I owe a few small sums here and there—nothing to speak of. One hasn't always money in the pocket when it is wanted, but I am a model to some fellows I meet. Hang it, you have no figure without a little dash."

"I see. So it is. And you have just a little dash. How much may you owe, do you think? Don't beat about the bush to your old uncle. I have never stinted you in anything, God knows. Your father, who is dead and gone, would not have been so considerate."

"Yes, uncle, you have been a trump. That I allow, and I am ashamed not to have turned out a more useful fellow. But what's in the bone—"

"May be set right by mending your ways. I know you have debts. What do you think they amount to."

"Oh, a thousand or so. It isn't the happiest thing to think about, and some of these days I'll reform."

"Yes, I've been thinking about it, George. It isn't good for you to run ahead of your expectations. They are not extravagant. All you've got comes from me, and when I go there won't be so much to go round. There's the business, of course, but you have been brought up an idle gentleman, an ornament a little expensive. So it's a thousand or so. Is that all?"

"Is that all? Let me see. Yes, it can't be more, and, by the Lord Harry, I'll keep out of debt when it is off my mind."

"May be. If you keep off cards, may be. These debts of honor are a trifle easy to run up, and business men like your uncle have to pay them. My only debts of honor are to my family. You have drained me pretty dry of late, George."

"Yes, I am so sorry to be unfortunate."

"Now that comforts me. I hardly like to speak about it, George, but I must speak."

And the old man cleared his throat, straightened himself up in his chair, and opening a little secret drawer in the table, drew forth a memorandum. George eyed the movement with concern, if not dismay.

"Do you see those figures?" said the old man, trembling and holding up the bit of paper; "Three sums—£1000, £780, £650. What do they stand for, do you think?"

"Oh, God, this is awful!" groaned George, as he hid his face in his hands. "It's out at last."

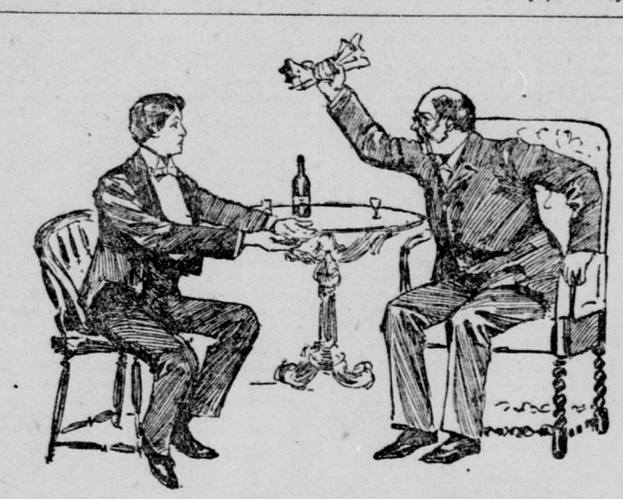
"They stand for forgery, and you are a convict if I choose to prosecute. That is what has come of your career as a gentleman and your gambling and foolish debts. From one step to another. You sell your horses to a blackleg; you get cheated at cards by other blacklegs; you become infamous in baseness, and forge your uncle's name to checks. What is to become of you?"

"Oh, heaven! Do as you will. I can say nothing. Curse my life—I am done with it. Let me cut my throat or quit the country. I have been a fool, with the devil behind me."

"Yes, a fool you are or you would not have run down into such a pitiful rascal. How could you suppose such clumsy forgeries could escape? The checks were clever and passed the bank, but the account betrayed you."

"A fool I was to think of it; but, O God! it is hard to bear the jibes of the fast set I meet, and I could not brace myself to confess all. I see I did worse."

"Yes, infinitely worse. You have qualified yourself for prison. But that is not to be thought of. I can spare you that anxiety, George. I have loved you and treated you as a son, and this is my reward. You



"THEY STAND FOR FORGERY!" HE CRIED.

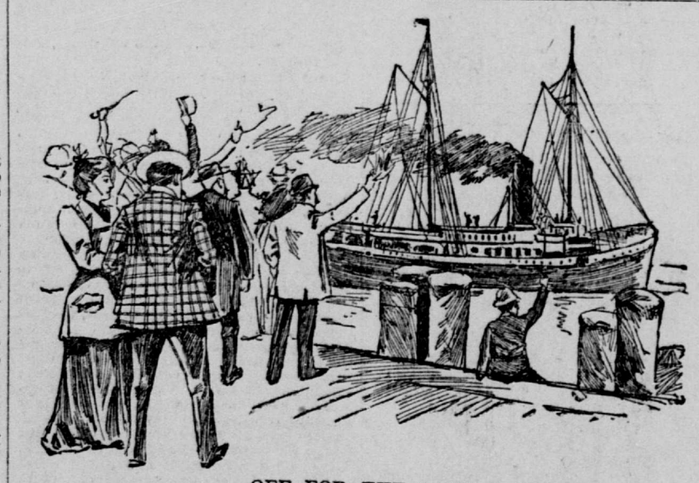
have become what I dare not think about, but what rends my heart is not the loss of money or even the degradation, but the black ingratitude and duplicity. How could you live under this roof and meet your aunt and cousins day by day and be so heartless as play the swindler to the man you owe everything to? It passes my knowledge of human nature for rank turpitude. I forgive, but forget!—no, it cannot be blotted out."

"You cannot believe me, but oh, the temptation of a fast life. If you only knew how it saps your will. I know I am ruined. It may make a man of me. I shall quit the country if you are merciful, but I vow I am not wanting in feeling and heart. You have spared me exposure. I shall yet show that I have some character left."

"Yes, George, these are words! But I will not root out my affection for you. Now, listen to what I say. If you remain here you will go to worse. You cannot stay under this roof longer—longer than a few days. I am willing to do this for you. Go to South Africa. There an agent will pay you £50 a month—£600 a year. On that you can live well, and you may even venture into farming, but you cannot plunge into dissipation and card-playing. You may give out that you are going there to look after a land investment for me; only to stay a year or two, but in reality God only knows how long, for back you cannot come to be a disgrace. You may idle your life away, or raise yourself again, but time only can show the result. It depends upon what there is left of the man in you. What do you say?"

"Only give me the chance to rise. I accept. More I cannot express, for I am unworthy of belief."

"Repentance is the dawn of hope and lamentation about what has occurred is valueless. Nothing is known to any one here but myself of what has happened, and no one shall know, so you have not suffered in the good opinion of your aunt and cousins. The bank itself does not know all, although it assisted in tracing the checks. You will set off for the Cape at once. To spare you while there, you will write occasionally home such letters



OFF FOR THE CAPE.

as I can show, and an inclosed slip will tell me how you really stand. The blow is hard, but I shall not lose interest in you."

The young man rose from his chair and paced rapidly up and down the room. A wild expression of resolution on his face struggled against the emotion that at last seemed to overpower him. He, who had been living the gay life of a young man about town, spendthrift and idle, was now humbled and wrecked, a criminal, a bankrupt, a refugee.

At last he stopped, and looking earnestly at his uncle said, with a quavering voice: "Thank God, you still have a shred of confidence in me. I do not deserve it. I deserve ignominy and death. I shall go to Africa and be another man, and at last you may forget years hence that I went wrong. God helping me I shall come right."

The uncle held out his hand, the tears running down his cheeks, and in a choking voice, he said, "Amen!"

Stephen Aldridge attended little to his business in the City during a few days, and allowed trade with the East Indies to take care of itself, which in an old-established house it was fully competent to do. His nephew had a nominal association with the business, but, as may be inferred, it was very nominal. An hour or two before luncheon, and his room in the quietest part of the great country house in Leadenhall street knew him no more. Mr. George somewhat disliked as unfashionable any connection with the City, and while there his thoughts were mostly in the West End or at his club, where he was accustomed to meet birds of a feather and to pass evenings and nights in a round of pleasure until he got home, usually at an "early hour."

The announcement that George had a business mission at the Cape which would take him away from London a year or more had quite a romantic tone to the household at Kensington. Mrs. Aldridge overwhelmed herself with preparations to complete her nephew's outfit. He was in her eyes and heart as dear as a son, she having no boy of her own, and she made the most preposterous allowances for all his vagaries of absence. Her daughters, also—Agnes and Beatrice—were in a flutter of excitement at the suddenness of the departure and scarcely knew how to begin their contributions to the studied comfort and happiness of their cousin on what was to them a dreadful voyage, full of peril. Agnes betrayed a deeper solicitude than her sister, and in a spirit of cousinly affection asked her father whether some one else would not do as well at the Cape, since George's departure would deprive them of an escort to the Academy and to concerts and the opera.

"You know, papa," she urged pleadingly, "think how dreadful it will be to have George so long away! And he might not come back at all—there are so many horrid wild beasts and savages at that outlandish Cape. What shall we do if anything happens to him? Do find some one else. I am sure he doesn't want to go, though he says he does."

As to the object of so much anxiety he was seen for one brief hour at his club, where he settled outstanding debts to a considerable amount, and he came away with a few ounces less load on his conscience. For the first time in years his tailor was paid in full, and was miraculously paid in respect of fresh supplies. For a young man about town this was exemplary but dangerous independence. To his friends he had only offhand explanations to make of what seemed to them an odd whim. They could not quite comprehend how his abilities in business would be so valuable at the Cape, but they were ready with congratulations that the hunting of big game—elephants, rhinoceros, giraffes, buffalos and elands—would be worthy of a gentleman's attention, and how they would enjoy a trip of the same kind if only they had business too. Algernon Rudd, who had pocketed so many hundreds at cards from George, was unfeignedly sorry that the big game he hunted in London would be so much scarcer by the emigration, and he endeavored to bring about a rendezvous for a card party and grilled bones and champagne. To his surprise, however, George declined with unheard-of firmness, and absolutely refused to snare a brandy and soda.

At length the eventful day of departure came. Stephen Aldridge saw his nephew on board the steamer Roslin Castle at the East Indian docks, and took farewell with a bowed-down sorrow which only one person there on the afterdeck could enter into. "Keep right, George!" was all he uttered.

On landing at Capetown George Rigby had the vaguest notions of what he should do. He knew as little about South Africa as about Peru or Kamchatka, and his acquaintance with trade or occupation of any kind was too rudimentary to inspire confidence. It was unnecessary he should be distressed about prospects, for his draft of £50 a month was enough for current expenses, and perhaps he could step into a vocation in a new land where nobody cared what he was or claimed to be and people were only concerned with what he could do. To be candid with himself, he knew that his talents thus far had been shown in idling. He might as well never have been schooled at Eton as emerge from it hardly fit to be overseer over a gang of Basutos on a farm. But on the voyage out George had formulated one plan for his reinstatement in self-respect. He determined to work at some honest calling, whatever it might be, and to avoid drawing a single shilling of his uncle's allowance.

That at least would be a proof of change in his character and a beginning of true manhood, and it would be an answer to his uncle's last words, "Keep right George," which still rang in his ears.

Holding aloof from his fellow-passengers on the voyage, he had not a single familiar acquaintance when he stepped ashore at Capetown, and he had only a banking-house as an introduction. He notified the bankers, Messrs. Armitstead, that he should not require to draw on his account for some time, as he was about to go into the interior, and he passed a week at the Snoor Hotel studying the situation. With £100 in his pocket and a light amount of baggage he joined a party proceeding to the Transvaal, then attracting a tide of immigration on account of gold and diamond discoveries. Anywhere out of sight with some active employment was his desire and motive, but he had also the ambition to become wealthy if the opportunity came, and he began to form visions of what might be done with money apart from gambling and a wasted life.

At Leydenburg, in the Transvaal, he had a glimpse of gold-mining, and so pleasantly impressed the managers of the Zandam that he was offered a position as clerk, but he confessed, with chagrin to himself, that for this humble work he was not quite qualified, though he did not say this to Mr. Waapennof, the superintendent. As luck had it, he found more congenial employment on an ostrich farm, owned by Peter Koopsten, two days' ride from Leydenburg. Koopsten's father had trekked into the Transvaal from Cape Colony in 1850, and the tract of land he then acquired for pastoral farming made the son prosperous when ostrich feathers became a staple of Cape trade. George was delighted to find himself in the saddle, riding over the rolling veldt and among the rocks and brush, on the lookout for birds and their eggs, and the old Boer made him welcome in his primitive though comfortable home, around which he had planted vines and fruit trees, and laid out shrubbery, all signifying that he had done with inspanning migrations, let come what would, and that he and his long bowl pipe were on terms of contentment and intimacy. Mrs. Koopsten had one daughter living with her and two married to Boers on farms adjacent, which means that on the veldt they were quite fifteen miles distant. Her only son had been killed in an affray with natives over a labor dispute, and the young Englishman was heartily welcomed in a household so shut out from contact with the world and yet not uninterested in its events.

Two years ran past, and Rigby had become thoroughly initiated into the mysteries of ostrich-farming and was quite prepared to begin the enterprise for himself. Peter Koopsten had surmised that this might be the result, and thought it prudent to make a gift of a large slice of land, in the hope that his assistant would cast in his lot with the family. Frau Koopsten gave every sign of approval to this generosity, and Martha Koopsten had deeper sensibilities on the subject than she chose to express, though she could not quite screen from her mother an awakened attachment and discernment of superior qualities in the young man, who differed so much from the ordinary settlers of the Transvaal. Round the parlor table, with Peter poring over a Cape newspaper, Mrs. Koopsten knitting or mending, and Martha showing a sophisticated taste in elaborating some finery, George at times relieved his own feelings and charmed the circle by stories of London and its life, carefully avoiding, however, any revelation of himself. No probing by art or subterfuge on the part of Martha could get him in the least degree interested in his own history. The utmost they could infer from his still unroughened hands and polished manner, which he in vain took pains to shake off, was that his upbringing was gentle, but they were quite baffled as to his profession and why he had drifted out of it into a frontier colony.

Mystery invested him in Martha's imagination with some of the attributes which distinguish the noble-minded and heroic, but for this he could not be held responsible, and in truth he gave not the smallest encouragement to any symptoms of devotion more tender than friendship. That he had inspired any infatuation was not brought to his consciousness until long afterward during some hot words with Hans Mootjen, a young Boer, who sometimes rode to the farm on Sunday, and from being coldly received was thrown into a rage by suspecting the cause.

Stephen Aldridge read the letters from George in the family circle, or such portions of them as were consolatory to the pride of success. The postscripts he kept to himself. They contained no hallucinations about the brilliant manner in which business was progressing and confidence as to a bright future, but they gave the naked truth with an openness as delightful as unexpected. His nephew was a changed man.

Years passed and the reformation continued. He had thrown off his dissolute tendencies, abandoned his reckless drifting into a career of pleasure and indolence and was striving to be independent and manly. The change and the hope that it was not ephemeral caused Aldridge to yearn for a return of the prodigal, and yet he dare not be precipitate in sending the message which would turn his nephew's face again toward old England. It was well that he was happy, living down shame and degradation, although banished from all he had known the greater part of his life. Mrs. Aldridge and Agnes and Beatrice at least had reason to know that George was at the Cape, for at times presents arrived of ostrich feathers, the most magnificent that London could exhibit, and these adornments being overabundant they were shared with friends of the family. The letters and inclosures he received from England caused George to tingle with a joy that he had never known when his existence was that of a roue, and he felt a glow of atonement buoy[illegible] he found his uncle [illegible] not making use [illegible] mand.

A grand[illegible] George [illegible] miles t[illegible] was i[illegible] trac[illegible] Ge[illegible] an[illegible] le[illegible]

[illegible]

with[illegible] be inve[illegible] ridge an[illegible] as their pa[illegible] the purport o[illegible]

Words fail [illegible] fervent gladness w[illegible] Aldridge as he thought [illegible] turn to well doing and recovery of character. His errors had long been forgiven, and now was the auspicious moment to summon the prodigal home. The message of reconciliation and endearment went forth, and precious to George was the conviction, now testified to by his uncle, that he had kept on the right path. But the stab of his errors had sunk too deep in his regenerated nature to render him otherwise than shame-stricken when he thought of residence again in England. It could not be. Better the life in the new land where what was known of him was only good. Better a home with the good, simple people who had shown affection for him when in distress, and had made him one of themselves.

His bearing of respect and friendship for Martha ripened into tender regard. With a sweetness and solicitude unspeakably devoted, she had nursed him through a fever, and had read to him during those days of convalescence when depressed nature is soothed by little gentle acts of kindness. His illness brought him the benison of feeling that he was loved, and that his own heart beat responsively. There was no happier young woman in the Transvaal than Martha when George asked her to be his wife, and no happier old couple than Koopsten and his spouse.

Two years after the marriage, when a son had been born, and seven years after his arrival at the Cape, George Rigby made the voyage to England, traveling alone. He assumed another name for the sake of disguise, and avoided meeting friends. Both his aunt and uncle had passed away, his cousin Agnes was married, and Beatrice lived with her. What charm there was for him in London had vanished. All he coveted doing was to go from place to place and brood over their associations, many of which saddened him. A fortnight sufficed. He thought of the great Babylon as a graveyard in which his follies and frailties were buried, and as reminiscent of remorse and the abuses of a degraded past. Yet in the descent he had been mercifully spared, and his future promised contentment and happiness. In South Africa he could forget the hideous dream of his evil days, and there he should die.

A week after his departure the news reached England by telegraph from Madeira that on the outward passage the Cape steamer Pretoria had encountered a terrific hurricane in the Bay of Biscay, and that three passengers and two of the crew had been swept overboard by a sea. George Falconer Rigby was one of the lost.

D. J. McROBERTS.

## It Might Melt.

Rector—Did you ever hear of the theory that people will have the same vocations in the next world as they had in this?

Widow—I don't believe my husband will. He was an ice-dealer.—Truth.

# OLD DANDY.

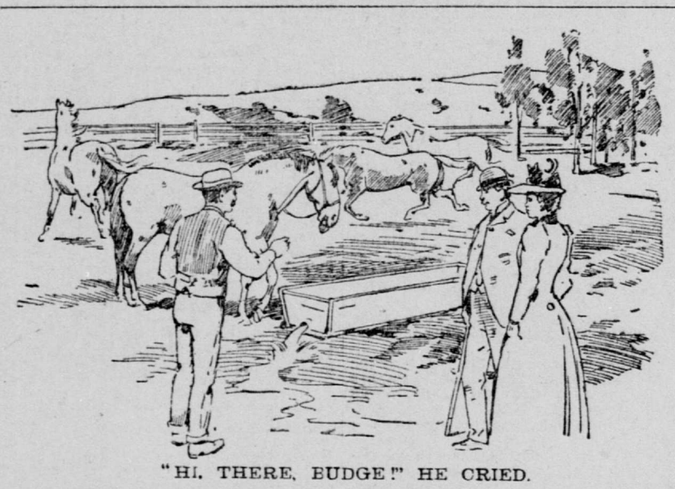
## A Common Occurrence in Equine Existence.

The horses were all out in the corral, strolling meditatively about, now taking a tentative nibble at the bulging straw stack, now pausing beneath the eucalyptus trees in the corner to hold an idle confab in that pleasant shade, and again wandering over to the watering trough for no other purpose, apparently, than to stand solemnly gazing into its damp depths and occasionally to wag their heads and look at each other across its narrow width.

In the same way their human superiors were wandering about the farm, strolling across the road to a neighbor's or gathering in little knots around the entrance to the postoffice at "The Corners," as idle a picture of rural Sabbath inactivity as were the horses in the corral.

It was a warm Sunday afternoon in the haying-time. By dawn to-morrow the ranch and the highway would be a scene of busy activity, but now, with the fleckless blue sky overhead arching down on every side to meet the edges of the golden plain of the Santa Clara, with the scarce-perceptible breeze bringing to the nostrils the tender perfume of the fragrant hay and the pungent, pleasant smells of eucalyptus and tarweed, men and beasts alike were content to lie in the shade, scarcely troubling to speak or answer a question; to watch the heated air quivering along the surface of the earth and to abandon themselves wholly to the dolce far niente of the hour.

There were a dozen or more horses in the big corral. They would go out early in the morning with the huge red machine and the accompanying smaller vehicles of the thrasher's outfit that old man Hardin owned and operated through the season. He was going next day to handle the crop on the Gresham place. Meantime, with a couple of visitors from the city who were interested in inspecting the outfit, he



"HI, THERE, BUDGE!" HE CRIED.

lounged in the deserted cook wagon and watched the horses.

They were splendid creatures, graded draught stock, the best possible for slow work on our California farms. Old man Hardin had made the study of farm horses a matter of years, and was ready to back his ten sturdy pullers against anything in the county, day in and day out. "Normans, on native stock," he would say to any one who was willing to "talk horse," "are the animals for our work. They ain't apt to be too big nor too leggy. They've got strength and pluck and more sense than half the men you can hire nowadays."

They were indeed a splendid-looking lot. [illegible] were Jack and Jill, the big white [illegible] on the thrasher. "I never [illegible] before a load and had 'em [illegible]," Hardin used to say of [illegible] could hitch 'em up to the [illegible] there, and they'd go down [illegible] fore they'd quit pulling. [illegible] and Midget, short-[illegible] with broad chests and [illegible] Their black coats [illegible] sunlight as they [illegible] There was Budge, [illegible] that very mo-[illegible] with his strong [illegible] plug out of the [illegible] just for the fun [illegible], while Jim, his [illegible] stood watching [illegible] of puzzled dis-[illegible] face. Beside [illegible] yed, skittish fel-[illegible] hung to the tip [illegible] im an uncanny, [illegible] watching a pig [illegible] under the fence. [illegible] one in the lot. [illegible] er the head, as a [illegible], and five years of [illegible] had not yet suf-

fered to remove from his mind the association then established between the human being and bodily harm to himself.

It was always necessary to approach Billy cautiously, but he was a splendid worker, with a head and forearm that bespoke blooded ancestry, probably on the side of his native dam. Old Puss, his mate, served to keep him steady, and the pair made a good team for the cook wagon, while Nip and Tuck, the handsome pintos, pulled the haybaler. There was a lighter pair besides serving as leaders on the thrasher, that required six animals to pull it, and used by Hardin when the season was over as a road team.

"They're prime travelers, too," he assured one of the city visitors, pointing them out.

"That's a good-looker yonder in the corner," remarked the visitor. "What is he?"

"What, the little bay? That's old Dandy. Yes; he is a good-looker, and he's 26 years old, if he's a day; but he's as sound to-day as he was twenty years ago. It's Morgan blood there, you might know," waxing enthusiastic. "I've had old Dandy for twenty-three years, and he's a mighty good horse now, sir."

Old Dandy seemed to know he was being talked about, for he pricked up his ears and looked intently in the direction of the cook-wagon. Hardin was growing reminiscent. "Gracious, but that was a colt!" he exclaimed. "I remember how he run me away from a Sheriff's posse once that chased me, mistaking me for Dick Lowe, who murdered old man Bramball and his girl on the branch. The chasers let on to the crowd, afterward, they thought I was Lowe sure, and they weren't anyway particular about catching me if only they could get within shooting distance of me; but they never come up with Dandy.

"Many's the hunting trip I've taken along with old Dandy," Hardin continued. "Why, the old nag retrieved a duck for me once; waded out to his neck and fetched it in as handy as a dog. I remember once chasin' antelope with Dandy in a light wagon. There was a big party of us away down the valley. We'd chased the herd, takin' turns, all day, and the little things pretty well tuckered out when they come my way. I grabbed my gun, and sent Dandy spinning after 'em over the plain. They wheeled, and I thought to come up with 'em by a short cut.

"I knew Dandy knew what I wanted, and would keep right on, so I dropped my reins and got ready for a shot. I was most near enough to pick out a beauty and bring him down, when all at onece that horse sat square down on his haunches and brought everything up sharp. My gun flew off a dozen yards, and I went down with a thump on the wagon seat, and there Dandy was squattin' on the ground, with his forefeet braced less'n a foot from the edge of a great gulch that went clean down 'most as far as you could see. The antelope was skittering away, clean out of sight, and I never got a shot at 'em, but Dandy saved life that time, sure enough.

"I did all my courtin' with Dandy," went on the farmer, a smile coming over his face at the memory. "Mrs. Hardin that is was one of the daisiest riders ever you saw. She had a little bay pinto that could pace like a steam-engine, and I've ridden fifty miles of a night on Dan to take her to a dance and back, and either one of them horses was good for a day's work next afternoon. After we were married and settled down on this place Dandy was all the horse we had for a long time. We were getting along in a small way. I wasn't any too forehanded, and help was scarce. Dandy'd pull a plow as willing as any of the grades yonder, and he knew a heep more about keepin' away from the young trees—for I began to set out orchard first off, knowin' that was the thing to do in this here valley. Sundays he'd pull us to church like any old family nag, and if ever of an evening as I was driving home any fellow wanted a brush with me on the road Dandy could always give it to him.

"He hasn't done much work of late years. My wife uses him to go callin' and to drive to sewin' circle, and once in a way he puts in a day's work in busy seasons or pulls the children to school in wet weather, but he don't really earn his keep. Still he comes in handy now and then, and I suppose one of these days he'll die off."

"Hi, there! Budge! Look out!" and he shied a lump of dirt at the roan, who had succeeded in pulling out the wood plug, and with every manifestation of equine delight was watching the water run away underneath the trough. "The rogue," muttered Hardin as he hastened to repair the mischief. "He seems to know it cools the air while it runs. They do beat all."

Just then the storekeeper at "The Corners" opened the corral gate and strolled in. "Howdy, Hardin," was his greeting, nodding in an inclusive fashion to all present, and then plunged at once into his errand.

"There's a peddler up The Corners," he said, "that's lost his horse. He's drove down from the city to-day, an' his animal dropped dead up there by the station. Twan't anythin' but an old rackabones of a plug, but it cud pull his waggin, an' now he's all at sea for a nag an' none to be had about here fer any money he wants to pay. I bin over to the Widow Graham's, thinkin' mebby she'd like to sell her old Jack, but she 'lows she'd rather bury him first. Women git fool notions about things, you know I was thinkin' p'raps you'd part with that old bay of yours, so I told the man to come along with me and see you. There he comes now," and, as he spoke, the peddler appeared in the lane leading to the corral. He was not a prepossing-looking fellow, gaunt and shabbily clad, with a hard, calculating face and shifty, pale-blue eyes. The visitor did not like his looks.

"Well, now, I don't know," Hardin said, as the man drew near. "I wasn't cal'latin' to sell old Dan. He's kind of a fifth wheel about the place, but he's perfectly sound, and comes in handy when we need an extra horse. My wife likes to drive him—the children are fond of him. I reckon I don't care to part with him," and he glanced carelessly over to where the still handsome old bay stood, taking an intelligent interest in the presence of a stranger in the corral.

"I wish," the latter said, "I could get your figure for the animal. I own I am in a tight place. I must have a horse, but I don't want to go a high figure. Any kind of a plug would do for my work."

"Dandy's no plug," interrupted Hardin. "They ain't many better bred horses 'round here. He's worth a dozen plugs any day."

"Then you wouldn't care to name your price?" the stranger said.

"Well, I don't know." Hardin hesitated.

"He aint really any use to me, and he's getting old, but the fact is I'm some attached to him. It's like parting with an old friend to sell Dan. Still, sentiment's one thing and business another. Wife's in the city to-day, and this 'u'd be a good time to sell him, I s'pose. Well, how does fifty dollars strike you?"

"Too much," said the stranger. "Make it half that and I'll take him. Horses is cheap nowadays."

"Couldn't think of it," was Hardin's decided answer. I wouldn't take less than fifty dollars for Dan. Why, he's sound as a trivet."

"Make it thirty," the stranger said.

So the haggling went on until the price of thirty-three dollars was at last set as a fair price for old Dandy, who in the meantime had gone to nibbling straw, in severe unconsciousness that his fate hung in the balance. He came like an obedient dog at his master's call and submitted to be led away at the end of a halter by the unprepossessing stranger, while Hardin went into the house with the thirty-three silver dollars that the peddler counted grudgingly out. The visitor, when Hardin returned, could not refrain from saying:

"It seems too bad the old horse couldn't die in peace after his long years of service."

"Yes," assented the farmer. "It does seem kind of a pity; but the old horse was no use about the place, you know, and business is business."

The visitor saw old Dandy once, a few months later. He was being led through the streets pulling a wagon load of oranges. A boy held his bridle and yelled as he walked: "Oranges! oranges! Ten cents a dozen!"

Old Dandy's head drooped low; his ribs were plainly in evidence under his rough coat, and his hip bones stood out like wings back of each flank. I would not have recognized him but for a peculiar white marking in his face. A bit of white paper tucked into his dilapidated old bridle announced that he was again in the market.

"Who would buy such a scarecrow?" I heard some one say. "Why, he can scarcely walk to the boneyard."

"Oh, there's a good deal of work in the creature yet, I dare say," was the careless response. "Horses aren't like people, you know. They can go on working till they die."

Poor old Dandy! It looked as though he would have to.

My heart was still aching for the old fellow when I was taken by an acquaintance to look at a horse he thought of buying. I asked after the one he already owned.

"Oh," was the reply, "he's getting old. I want to sell him while I can get something for him."

It looks as though faithful service did not count for much for these useful dumb friends of ours, doesn't it?

MISS RUSSELL.

"DANDY SUDDENLY SANK BACK ON HIS HAUNCHES."

## LITTLE ALL-ALONEY.

Little All-Aloney's feet
Pitter-patter in the hall,
And his mother runs to meet
And to kiss her toddling sweet
Ere perchance he fall.
He is, oh, so weak and small!
Yet what danger shall he fear
When his mother hovereth near
And he hears her cheering call:
"All-Aloney?"

Little All-Aloney's face,
It is all aglow with glee,
As around that romping-place
At a terrifying pace
Lungeth, plungeth he.
And that hero seems to be
All unconscious of our cheers—
Only one dear voice he hears
Calling reassuringly:
"All-Aloney!"

Though his legs bend with their load,
Though his feet they seem so small
That you cannot help forebode
Some disastrous episode
In that noisy hall;
Neither threatening bump nor fall
Little All-Aloney fears,
But with sweet bravado steers
Whither comes that cheery call:
"All-Aloney!"

Ah, that in the years to come,
When he shares of Sorrow's store,
When his feet are chill and numb,
When his cross is burdensome,
And his heart is sore:
Would that he could hear once more
The gentle voice he used to hear—
Divine with mother love and cheer—
Calling from yonder spirit shore:
"All-Aloney!"

EUGENE FIELD

## ITEMS OF INTEREST.

The Prince of Wales has one living son.

The opal is no longer considered unlucky.

June is the favorite month for marriages.

Butterflies are found in almost all countries.

The golden-crested wren is the smallest bird in the world.

Secret marriages in every country in Europe are illegal.

In Alabama all school and church property is exempt from taxation.

The tides of the North American Pacific Coast are reflex rather than direct.

Gold is washed in Africa by the same means employed by the California '49ers.

The Bermuda Islands were named for Bermudez, a Spaniard, who sighted them in 1527.

Each pupil in the public schools of the United States costs an average of $17 22 a year.

Ex-President Hayes called two extra sessions of Congress during his term of office.

The basin of the Great Lakes was probably formed by contraction of the earth's crust.

It is claimed that pumice stone and cream will remove superfluous hair from the chin.

Two thousand new books will be put on the market by London publishers alone this winter.

The combined length of the world's telegraph lines would encircle the globe about thirty-three times.

The meanest man yet was an Ohio youth who got married and left an envelope containing a 2-cent ferry ticket in the parson's hand.

There are entire apartment-houses in New York monopolized by self-supporting bachelor girls, and they are the happiest of their sex.

Ear-lopping was of three degrees: For minor offenses, the lower lobe was taken off; for graver, the upper half; for offenses still more serious, the whole ear was shorn away.

Gold leaf, when beaten into a sheet of the thickness of but 1,250,000 of an inch, appears to be of a beautiful green when held up to the light. Such sheets are really semi-taanspparent.

The number of suicides throughout the world is 180,000 yearly, and on the increase. The greatest number happen in June, the fewest in September, and nearly one-half between 6 A. M. and noon.

The navigation of the Dead Sea is the latest step in Oriental progress. The Sultan has sent two sailing boats there, one for freight and one for passengers. Abdul Hamid is going to try to make money out of the salt, bitumen and sulphur of the lake.

Samuel Jeffries and wife, each aged 76, reside at Hustonville, Ky. They had no children in the first seven years of their married life, but in the eleven months after that four were born, and in the next fourteen years fifteen more were born. There were seven sets of twins among the nineteen children.

The flavor of eggs depends very much on the kind of food given to the poultry. When hens are fed largely or almost exclusively on milk the yolk is lighter in color, the white has a milky look, and the whole egg is watery and less firm in texture than those laid by grain-fed hens.

The City Marshal of Boston more than sixty years ago arrested one William Doyle and found in his possession a deposit book on the Providence Institution for Savings showing that the prisoner had deposited $60 there. The City Marshal took possession of the book; Doyle served his term after sentence and was then lost to sight. Long after it was learned that he died in Charlestown, Mass., leaving no known heir. Five years ago legal proceedings were instituted, publications were made and no claimant appeared. Last week the sum on deposit, which has increased to about $2100, was turned over to the commonwealth of Massachusetts.