THOROUGHBREDS.

WRITTEN FOR THE EVENING STAR BY W. A. FRASER,

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CHAPTER I.

Less than a hundred miles from the city of Gotham, across broad green fields, dotted into squares and oblong valleys by full-leafed maple, and elm, and mulberry, was the village of Brookfield.

A hundred years of expansion in the surrounding land had acted inversely with the little hamlet, and had pinched it into a hermetic isolation.

The Brookfieldians had discovered a huge beetle in the amber of their serene existence it was really the Rev. Dolman who had unearthed the monster. The beetle in the amber was horse racing, and the prime offender, practically the sole culprit, was John Porter.

By an inconsistent twist of fate he was known as honest John. His father before him had raced in old Kentucky to considerable purpose, and with the full vigor of a man who races for sport; and so, too, the son, John, in consequence, had come little beyond a not-to-be eradicated love of thoroughbreds. To race squarely, honestly and to the glory of high-couraged horses was to him as much a matter of religion as the consistent guardianship of parish morals was to the Rev. George Dolman. Therefore, two men of strong beliefs were set on opposite sides of the fence.

Even in the Porter household, which was at Ringwood farm, was divided allegiance. Mrs. Porter was possessed of an abhorrent detestation of horse racing; also an assertive Christianity.

The daughter Allison had inherited the horse taint. In the saddle was elysium, in the swinging gallop of a striving horse was the obliteration of everything but sunshine, and the smile of fields and the blur of swift gliding hedges and the driving perfume of clover-laden winds that pressed strong into spread nostrils.

For Alan Porter, the son, there were columns of figures and musty-smelling bundles of tattered paper money where he clerked in the bank. There had been great unison in the Porter household over the placing of Alan.

In addition to horse lore, John Porter was a fair judge of human nature, and, beyond doubt, there was a streak of velvet in Alan which would have twisted easily in the compressive grip of the race course.

As if the evil one had meant to try solely the reclusive dwellers of Brookfield, Philip Crane, the banker, wandering from the respectable highway of finance, had allowed himself to become interested in race horses. But this fact was all but unknown in Brookfield, so the full resentment of the place was effusively tendered to John Porter.

In his younger days some money had come to Philip Crane,with no extraordinary plethora of circumspection. The gambler spirit, that was his of inheritance, had an instinctive truth as allied to finance; but, unfortunately for Philip Crane, chance and a speculative restlessness, led him among men who commerced with the sport of kings. With acute precipitancy he was separated from the currency that had come to him. The process was so rapid that his racing experience was of little avail as an asset, so he committed the first great wise act of his life—turned his back upon the race course and marched into finance, so strongly, so persistently, that at forty he was wealthy and the banker of Brookfield.

Twenty years of deliberate reminiscence convinced him that he could gratify the desire that had been his in those immature days, and possibly work out a paying revenge. Thus it was that he had got together a small stable of useful horses; and, of far greater moment, secured a clever trainer, Dick Langdon.

Crane's latter-day racing had been successful—he made money at it. No man was ever more naturally endowed to succeed on the turf than was Banker Philip Crane. Cold, passionless, more given to deep concentrated thought than expression, holding silence as a golden gift—even as a gift of rare rubies—nothing drew from him an unguarded word, no sudden turmoil quivered his nerve. It was characteristic of the man that he had waited nearly twenty years to resume racing, which really came as near to being a passion with him as was possible for anything to be.

There is a saying in England that it takes two years of preparation to win a big handicap; and these were the lines on which Philip Crane, by instinctive adaptation, worked.

Quite by chance Dick Langdon had come into his hands over a matter of borrowed money. It ended by the banker virtually owning every horse that raced in the trainer's name. In addition, two or three horses ran in Philip Crane's own name.

If there had been any distinctive project in the scheme of creation that gave Dick Langdon to the world it probably was that he might serve as the useful tool of a subtle thinker. Now, it did seem that Langdon had come into his own—that he had found his predestined master.

John Porter had not been successful; ill-fortune had set in, and there was always something going wrong. Horses would break down or get beaten by accident—there was always something. The steady financial drain had progressed even to an incumbrance on Ringwood.

Ringwood was simply a training farm, located close to an old disused race course, for there had been no racing in Brookfield for years.

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Inadvertently the Rev. Dolman had intensified the strained relationship that existed between the good people, who frowned upon all racing endeavor, and those who saw but little sinfulness in John Porter's way of life.

The church was in debt—everything in Brookfield was, except the town pump.

The pastor was a nervous, zealous worker, and it occurred to him that a concert might lighten the financial load. The idea was not alarmingly original, and the carrying out of it was on convential lines—local volunteer talent and a strong appeal to the people of Brookfield for their patronage.

The concert in the little old clapboarded church, its sides faded and blistered by many seasons of tempest and scorching sun, was an unqualified success up to the fifth number.

Nothing could have been more successful or have evoked greater applause than the fourth effort, "Anchored," as rendered by the village pride in the matter of baritone singing; even De Reszke never experienced a more genuine triumph. The crescendo of applause gradually fell away into the soft rustle of manipulated paper, as programs were consulted preparatory to a correct readiness for the fifth offering. The programs confided that the "Death of Crusader," by Miss Allis Porter was the next item.

In the front row of seats a prim little body, full of a severe quaintness in every quirk of dress, tilted her head toward a neighbor and whispered, "It's that racin' gal of John Porter's."

The neighbor answered in a creak meant for a whisper, "I'm right glad she's took to religion for onct, an' is givin' us somethin' about them crusaders. They was in Palestine, you know. She's been away to boardin' school all winter, an' I guess it'll be a high-falutin' account of the war."

The quaint little old lady jerked her head up and down with decisive bobbiness. On the third upward bob her eyes opened wide in astonishment; a small, slim figure in a glaring read coat stood in the center of the improvised platform.

From beneath the coat fell away in long, graceful lines a black riding skirt; a dark oval face, set with large wondrous gray eyes—the Porter eyes—confronted the quaint little old lady.

"That's the Porter gal," her neighbor squeaked; "I've seen her atop them race horses more'n a hundred times. My! you'd think butter wouldn't melt in her mouth, she's that prim now."

"The coat would melt it," commented the quaint one.

Then a clear, soft, girlish voice, with just a tremble of apprehensive nervousness, giving it a lilt like a robin's, said:

The Run of Crusader.

I.

Full weight they had given the gallant big Black—a hundred and sixty he carried;
And the run for the "Hunt Cup" was over three miles, with mud-wall and water-jump studded.
The best racing days of the old horse were past—there'd never been better nor braver—
But now once again he must carry the silk—I was needing the help of Crusader.
"Could he win at the weight?" I whisperingly asked, as I cinched up the saddle girt tight;
He snuggled my hand as I gathered the rein, and I laughed when they talked of defeat.
To the call of the bugle I swung to his back—like a rock was the strength of his quarters.
At sight of the people he arched his lean neck, and they cheered for my King of all Hunters.

II.

Ten horses would strive for the prize—a big field, and the pace would be killing.
From the West came Sweet Silver, a Gray, gallant and fearless in jumping.
A rakish old nag who walked over the sticks, had been sent for the Cup from Kentucky;
On a Bay, Little Jack, who was fast, they had put but a hundred and thirty,
But I knew that North Star, a big Brown—even the Black was no gamer—
With a pull of ten pounds in the weight, was almost a match for Crusader.
We made a brave troop, long-striding and strong, with the pick of cross-country riders
As we filed past the stand in stately parade, with its thousands of eager admirers,
And down to the turn on the lower far side, where a red flag was flicking the sunlight;
For twice we must circle the green-swarded field, and finish close under the paddock.

III.

Just once we lined up; then down cut the flag, and "Go!" hoarse-voiced the starter;
And the thunder of hoofs, and the clanking of bits, made music to me on Crusader.
Quick to the front, like a deer, sped a mare—a chestnut—making the running;
But I steadied my mount and took him far back—with his weight he would need all my nursing.
They took the first hedge like sheep in a bunch, bit to bit and stirrups a-jingle;
And so past the stand to the broad water-jump, where three went down in a tangle.
I trailed at the heels of the Silver Gray, but Crusader was beginning to falter,
And flew the wide ditch with the swoop of a bird, and on again, lapped on his quarter.
Then over the Liverpool, racing like mad, where Sweet Silver fell fighting for lead,
And his rider lay crushed, white-faced to the sky, and to miss him Crusader jumped wide.

IV.

At the bank something struck, and a cloud of white dust hid the wall as though it were shrouded;
But the big gallant Black took off with a swing—full thirty feet ere we had landed.
As we rounded the turn I could see Little Jack go up to the mare that was leading;
Then I let out a rap and quickened my pace, to work clear of those that were tiring.
Once again past the stand we drove at the ditch that some would never get over;
And a cheer shook the air as the Bay landed safe, with the mare on her back in the water.
Then over went North Star—though he pecked, and nearly emptied his saddle.
As I lifted the Black at his heels, he frothed the Brown's flank with his nozzle.

V.

Then down the back stretch, o'er hedge and o'er bank, we three were racing together;
Till at the next rail the Bay jostled the Brown, and riderless crashed through the timber.
So we rounded the turn, and into the straight—North Star's lean flank we were lapping—
But we shot to the front when I gave the Black head, and I saw that the other was stopping.
We raced as one horse at the very last hedge—just a nose in front was Crusader;
I felt the big Brown bump twice at my side, and knew he was ready to blunder.
With stirrups a-fling, empty-saddled, the Bay stride for stride galloped and floundered.
Just missing his swerve, I called on the Black, and drew out as he bravely responded.

VI.

Just the last jump! and Crusader took off twenty feet from the brush-covered timber.
Then the Bay jumped—too short for his stride—and fell, with his head on my wither.
Down, down, almost to earth—brought to his knees in the struggle,
The Black lost a length, the Brown forged ahead, and I was half out of the saddle.
How I sat down and rode! How the old horse strove! And the Brown rolling tired in his gallop!
On, gallant Black! on, my brave pet! We were almost under the paddock.
Then we nosed the Brown's flank; then we reached to his girt; neck and neck—I rode at his shoulder.
As we flashed past the post I had won by a head. How they cheered, "Bravo, Crusader!"

VII.

But Crusader stopped short, gave a sigh and fell dead; I stood all alone in the winning.
And a hush came over the clamorous mob; like a babe on his neck I was sobbing.
He had won his last race; game to the end, his brave heart broke in the striving.

The girl's voice fluttered and died away to a broken whisper as she told of the death of Crusader.

For a full minute there was a noiseless hush. The full pathos of the gallant horses striving had crept into the hearts that were flesh and blood, and, carried away by their feelings, the people had forgotten all about their tortured convictions of the sinfulness of making a horse go faster than a sharp trot. Gradually into their awakening senses stole a conviction that somehow they were countenancing the sin of racing.

Before the complete horror of the situation had obtained a strong pair of hands, far back in the church, came together with an explosive clap. Like the rat-tat-tat of a quick-firing gun was the appreciative volley of recognition from the solitary applauder. It went rolling and crackling through the church, defiantly, derisively, appreciatively. Half way up the isle a softer pair of hands touched the rattle with what sounded like a faint echo; then there was sudden silence. The entire audience turned and looked despairingly, discouragingly at the man who had figuratively risen as a champion of that scandalous recitation.

Resentment had taken hold of the good Christians.

That Crusader had enlisted their sympathies for a few minutes showed the dangerous subtlety of this "horse-racin' business."

The rest of the program might just as well have been eliminated; the concert, as a concert, would be discussed for all time to come as having projected the Death of Crusader.

The people flowed from the church full of an expressive contentiousness, seeking by exuberant condemnation of the sacrilege to square somehow themselves with their consciences for the brief backsliding.

Where the church path turned into the road a group of men had attached together, drawn by a magnet of discussion. They quite blocked the pathway, oblivious to everything but their outraged feelings. Like a great dark blotch in the night the group stood; and presently two slight gray shadows slipping up the path, coming to the human barricade, stopped, wavered and circled out on the grass to pass. The shadows were Allis Porter and her brother Alan.

One of the men, overfilled with his exceeding wrath, seeing the girl, gave expression to a most unchristian opinion of her modesty. The sharp ears of the boy heard the words of the man of harsh instinct, and his face flushed hot with resentment. He half turned, bitter reproach rising to his lips. How could men be so brutish? How could they be so base? To speak ill of his sister Allis, who was just the purest, sweetest little woman that ever lived—too brave and true to be anything else but good!

As he turned he saw something that checked his futile anger. A tall shadow that had come up the path behind them stretched out an arm, and he heard the villifyer's words gurgle and die away, as one of the strong hands that had beat the tattoo of approbation clutched him by the throat. The boy would have rushed to the assistance of this executive friend if the girl had not clasped his arm in detention.

"It's Mortimer," he cried, as a voice from the strong-armed figure cut the night air with sharp decision.

Then the shadowy forms twisted up grotesquely, weaving in and out. There were voices of expostulation and strong words of anger; but the new serious business that had materialized had most effectually put a stop to reflections upon the innocent girl who had so unwittingly offended.

"It's George Mortimer—he's in our bank," Alan confided to his sister, as they moved

away. "He's all right—he's strong as a horse; and I bet Crandal'll have a kink in his neck tomorrow where George pinched him."

"What was it about?" the girl asked.

"Crandal was jawing about people who own race horses," the boy answered evasively. "It's Crandal, the butcher."

CHAPTER II.

It was the May meeting at Morris Park, and Morris Park is the most beautiful race course in all America.

John Porter, walking up the steps of the grandstand, heard some one call him by name. Turning his head he saw it was James Danby, an owner, sitting in his private box.

Porter turned into the box, and taking the chair the other pushed toward him, sat down.

"What about Lucretia?" asked Danby, with the air of an established friendship which permitted the asking of such questions.

"She's ready to the minute," replied Porter.

"Can she get the five furlongs?" queried Danby. "She's by Assassin, and some of them were quitters."

"She'll quit if she falls dead," replied the other man quietly. "I've worked her good enough to win, and I'm backing her."

"That'll do for me," declared Danby. "To tell you the truth, John, I like the little mare myself; but I hear that Langdon, who trains Lauzanne, expects to win."

"The mare'll be there, or thereabouts," asserted the owner; "I never knew a Lazarone yet much good as a two-year-old. They're sulky brutes, like the old horse; and if Lucretia's beat, it won't be Lauzanne that'll turn the trick."

A bell clanged imperiously at the judges' stand. Porter pulled out his watch and looked at it.

"That's saddling," he remarked, laconically; "I must go and have a bit on the mare, and then take a look at her before se goes out."

As Porter went down the steps, his companion leaned over the rail and crooked his finger at a thin-faced man, with a blond mustache, who had been keeping a corner of his eye on the box.

"What are they making favorite, Lewis?" queried Danby, as the thin-faced man stood beside him.

"Lucretia."

"What's her price?"

"Two to one."

"What's second favorite?"

"Lauzanne—five to two.

"Porter tells me Lucretia is good business," said Danby, in a tentative tone.

"Langdon thinks it's all over bar the shouting; he says Lauzanne outclasses his field," replied Lewis.

"Langdon's a betting man; Porter's an owner and a good judge," objected Danby; "and he's got a good boy up, too, McKay," he added, slowly focusing his field glasses on the jockey board opposite the stand.

HIS RIDER LAY CRUSHED, TO MISS HIM CRUSADER JUMPED WIDE.

"Crooked as a dog's hind leg," snarled Lewis, biting viciously at his cigar.

"Bob, it's d——n hard to find a straight-legged dog," laughed Danby. "And when John Porter starts a horse there's never anything doing. Here $600. Put it on the mare—straight."

As Lewis pushed his way into the shoving, seething, elbowing crowd in the betting ring he was suddenly struck in the chest by something which apparently had the momentum of an eight-inch shell; but it was only John Porter, who, in breaking through the outer crust of the living mass had been ejected with more speed than was of his own volition.

Bob smothered the expletive that had risen to his lips when he saw who the unwitting assailant was, and asked, "What are they doin' to the mare in the ring?"

"Not much," answered his assailant, catching his breath; "there's a strong play on Langdon's horse, and if I didn't know my boy pretty well and Lucretia better I'd have weakened a bit. But she can't lose; she can't lose!" he repeated in the tone of a man who is reassuring himself.

Lewis battled himself along till he stood in front of a bookmaker with a face cast very much on the lines of a Rubens' cherub; but the cherub type ended abruptly with the plump frontispiece of "Jakey" Faust, the bookmaker. Lewis knew that. "If there's anythin' doin' I'm up against it here," he muttered to himself. "What's Lauzanne's price?" he asked in an indifferent tone of voice, for the bookmaker's assistant was busy changing the figures on the list.

Faust pretended not to hear him.

"Sure thing!" whispered Lewis to himself. Then aloud he repeated his question, touching the bookmaker on the elbow.

The cherub smiled blandly. "Not takin' any," he answered, nodding his head in the pleasant manner of a man who knows when he's got a good thing.

"What's Lucretia?" persisted Lewis.

"Oh! that's it, is it? I'll lay you 2 to 1."

The questioner edged away, shaking his head solemnly.

"Here! 5 to 2—how much——" but Lewis was gone.

He burrowed like a mole most industriously, regardless of people's toes, their ribs, their dark looks and even angry expressions of strong disapproval, and when he had gained the green sward of the lawn hurried to his friend's box.

"Did you get it on?" queried the latter.

"No; I don't like the look of it. Faust is holding out Lauzanne, and stretched me half a point about the mare. He and Langdon are in the same boat."

"But that won't win the race," remonstrated Danby. "Lauzanne is a maiden, and Porter doesn't often make a mistake about any of his own stock."

"I thought I'd come back and tell you," said Bob Lewis apologetically.

"And you did right; but if the mare wins, and I'm not on, after getting it straight from Porter, I'd want to go out and kick myself good and hard. But put it on straight and place; then if Lauzanne's the goods we'll save." z

Lewis was gone about four minutes.

"You're on," he said, when he returned; "I've $200 on the chestnut for myself."

"Lauzanne?"

"It's booked that way; but I'm backin' the trainer, Langdon. I went on my uppers two years ago backing horses; I'm following men, now."

"Bad business," objected his stout friend; "it's bad business to back anything that talks."

When John Porter reached the saddling paddock his brown mare Lucretia was being led around in a circle in the lower corner. As he walked down toward her his trainer, Andy Dixon, came forward a few paces to meet him.

"Are they hammerin' Crane's horse in the ring, sir?" he asked, smoothing down the grass with the toe of one foot, watching this physical process with extreme interest.

"Just what you'd notice," replied Porter. "Why?"

"Well, I don't like the look of it a little bit. Here's this Lauzanne runs like a dog the last time out—last by the length of a street—and now I've got it pretty straight they're out for the stuff."

"They'd a stable boy up on him that time."

"That's just it," cried Dixon. "Grant comes to me that day—you know Grant, he works the commission for Dick Langdon—and tells me to leave the horse alone; and today he comes and—" he hesitated.

"And what?"

"Tells me to go light on our mare."

"Isn't Grant broke?" asked Porter, with seeming irrelevance.

"He's close next it," answered the trainer.

"Aren't his friends that follow him all broke?"

"A good many of them have their address in Queer street."

"Look here, Andy," said his owner, "there isn't a man with a horse in this stake that doesn't think he's going to win; and when it's all over we'll see Lucretia's number go up. Grant's a fool," he added, viciously. "Didn't he break Fisher—didn't he break every other man that ever stuck to him?"

"It's not Grant at all," replied Dixon, rubbing the palms of his hands together thoughtfully—a way he had when he wished to concentrate in concrete form the result of some deep cogitation—"it's Langdon, an' he's several blocks away from an asylum."

"Langdon makes mistakes, too."

"He cashes in often when he's credited with a mistake," retorted the other.

"Well, I've played the little mare," asserted Porter.

"Much, sir?" asked Dixon, solicitously.

"All I can stand—and a bit more," he added falteringly; "I need a win, a good win," he offered in an explanatory voice. "I want to clear Ringwood—but never mind about that, Andy. The mare's well—ain't she? There can't be anything doing with McKay—we've only put him up a few times, but he seems all right."

"I think we'll win," answered the trainer; "I didn't get anything straight—just that there seemed a deuced strong tip on Lauzanne, considerin' that he'd never shown any form to warrant it. Yonder he is, sir, in number five—go and have a look at him."

As John Porter walked across the paddock a horseman touched the fingers of his right hand to his cap. There was a half-concealed look of interest in the man's eye that Porter knew by experience meant something.

"What do you know, Mike?" he asked, carelessly, only half halting in his stride.

"Nottin', sir; but dere's somebody in de know dis trip. Your mare's a good little filly, w'en she's right, but you're up against it."

Porter stopped and looked at the horseman. He was Mike Gaynor, a trainer, and more than once Porter had stood his friend. Mike always had on hand three or four horses of inconceivable slowness and uncertainty of wind and limb; consequently there was an ever recurring inability to pay feed bills, so he had every chance to know just who was his friend and who was not, for he tried them most sorely.

Porter knew all this quite well; also that in spite of Mike's chronic impecuniosity he was honest, and true as steel to a benefactor. He waited, feeling sure that Gaynor had something to tell.

"There's a strong play on Lauzanne, ain't there, sir?"

Porter nodded.

"Sure t'ing. That Langdon's a crook. I knowed him when he was ridin' on freight cars; now he's a swell, though he's a long sprint from bein' a gentleman. I got de tip dat dere was a killin' on, an' I axed Dick Langdon if dere was anyt'ing doin', and Dick says to me, says he, puttin' bot' thumbs up,"—and Mike held both hands out horizontally with the thumbs stiff and vertical to illustrate this form of oath—"'there's nottin' doin', Mike,' says he. What d'ye t'ink of that, sir, an' me knowin' there was?" asked Mike tragically.

"It's the biggest tip that always falls down, Gaynor, and they've got to be pretty swift to beat Lucretia."

"That filly's all right; she's worked out well enough to do up that field of stiffs. I ain't no rail bird, but I've had me eye on her. But I ain't doin' no stunt about horses, Mister Porter; I'm talking about men. Th' filly's honest, and you're honest, sir, but you don't roide th' mare you'self, do you?"

"You think, Mike," began Mr. Porter, questioningly; but Gaynor interrupted him with: "I don't think nottin' sir, an' I ain't sayin' nottin'. I ain't never been up before the stewards yet for crooked work, or crooked talk, but there's a boy ridin' in that bunch today w'at got six hundred for t'rowing me down once, see? S'lp me God! he pulled Blue Smoke to a standstill on me, knowin' that it would break me. That was at Coney Island two years ago."

"And you don't remember his name, I suppose, Mike?"

"I don't remember nottin' but that I got it in the neck. But you keep your eye open, sir. You t'ink that none of the b'ys would t'row you down cause you've been good to them, but some of 'em are that mean they'd steal th' sugar from a fly. I knows 'em. I hears 'em talk, cause they don't mind me—t'ink I'm one of th' gang."

"Thank you very much, Gaynor; I appreciate your kindly warning; but I hope you're mistaken all the same," said Porter. Then he proceeded on his way toward stall five, in which was Lauzanne.

"How do, Mister Porter."

It was Philip Crane, standing just outside of the stall, who thus addressed him. "Got something running today?" he continued with vague innocence.

Langdon, just inside of the box, chuckled softly. Surely Crane was a past master in duplicity.

"I'm starting Lucretia in this race," replied Honest John.

"Oh!" Then Crane took Porter gently by the sleeve, and drew him half within the stall. "Mr. Langdon, who trains a horse or two for me, says this one'll win," and he indicated the big chestnut colt that the trainer was binding tight to a light racing saddle. "You'd better have a bit on, Mr. Porter," Crane added.

"Lucretia carries my money," answered Porter in loyalty.

Langdon looked up, having cinched the girth tight, and took a step toward the two men.

"Well, we both can't win," he said, half insolently, "an' I don't think there's anything out today 'll beat Lauzanne."

"The mare 'll beat him," retorted Porter, curtly, nettled by the other's cock-sureness.

"I'll bet you one horse against the other, the winner to take both," cried Langdon, in a sneering, defiant tone.

"I've made my bet," said Lucretia's owner, quietly.

"I hear you had an offer of five thousand for your filly, Mr. Porter," half queried Crane.

"I did, and I refused it."

"And here's the one that 'll beat her today, an' I'll sell him for half that," asserted the trainer, putting his hand on Lauzanne's neck.

Exasperated by the persistent boastfulness of Langdon, Porter was angered into saying, "If he beats my mare, I'll give you that for him myself."

"Done!" snapped Langdon. "I've said it, an' I'll stick to it."

"I don't want the horse," began Porter; but Langdon interrupted him.

"Oh, if you want to crawl——"

"I never crawl," said Porter, fiercely. "I don't want your horse, but just to show you what I think of your chance of winning, I'll give you two thousand and a half if you beat my mare, no matter what wins the race."

"I think you'd better call this bargain off, Mr. Porter," remonstrated Crane.

"Oh, the bargain will be off," answered John Porter; "if I'm any judge, Lauzanne's running his race right here in the stall."

His practiced eye had summed up Lauzanne as a chicken-hearted one; the sweat was running in little streams down the big chestnut's legs, and dripping from his belly into the drinking earth spit-spat, drip-drip; his head was high held in nervous apprehension; his lips twitched, his flanks trembled like wind-distressed water, and the white of his eye was showing ominously.

Langdon cast a quick, significant, cautioning look at Crane as Porter spoke of the horse; then he said, "You're a fair judge, an' if you're right you get all the stuff an' no horse."

"I stand to my bargain, whatever happens," Porter retorted.

At that instant a bugle sounded.

"Get up, Westley," Langdon said to his jockey, "they're going out."

As he lifted the boy to the saddle, the trainer whispered a few, concise directions.

"Hold him steady at the post," he muttered; "I've got him a bit on edge today. Get off in front and stay there; he's feelin' good enough to leave the earth. This'll be a matter of a couple of hundred to you if you win."

"All out! all out!" called the voice of the paddock official. "Number one!" then, "Come on you, Westley! they're all out."

The ten starters passed in stately procession from the green-swarded paddock, through an opened gate, to the soft harrowed earth, gleaming pink-brown in the sunlight of the course.

How consciously beautiful the thoroughbred looked. The long, sweeping step; the supple bend of the fetlock as it gave like a wire spring under the weight of great broad quarters, all sinewy strength and tapered perfection; the stretch of gentle-curved neck, sweet-lined as a greyhound's, bearing a lean, bony head, set with two great jewels of eyes, in which were honesty and courage, and eager longing for the battle of strength and stamina, and stoutness of heart; even the nostrils, with a red transparency as of silk, spread and drank eagerly the warm summer air that was full of the perfume of new-growing clover and green pasture land.

Surely the spectacle of these lovely creatures, nearest to man in their thoughts and their desires, and superior in their honesty and truth, was a sight to gladden the hearts of kings. Of a great certainty it was a sport of kings; and also most certainly had it at times come into the hands of highway robbers.

Some such bitter thoughts as this came into the heart of John Porter, as he stood and watched his beautiful brown mare, Lucretia, trailing with stately step behind the others. He loved good horses with all the fervor of his own strong, simple honest nature. Their walk was a delight to him, their roaring gallop a frenzy of eager sensation. There was nothing in the world he loved so well. Yes—his daughter Allis.

But just now he was thinking of only Lucretia—Lucretia and her rival, the golden-haired chestnut, Lauzanne.

(To be continued.)

THE NEW AGRICULTURE.

Opportunity for Women in This Field—Their Special Fitness.

From the New York Tribune.

Women visitors at the commencement exercises of the Briarcliff Agricultural School last week were specially interested in the plans of the feminine contingent among the pupils. The one woman in the graduating class, Miss Barker, plans to start a green house at her home in Auburn, N. Y. Two girls from Omaha have a two-thousand acre ranch a few miles from that city, which they propose to cultivate. They intend to make a specialty of celery, the cultivation of which is a growing Nebraska industry. One young woman, who had been taking a course in landscape gardening, left before commencement day to help lay out grounds on Staten Island. Two others are going to have green houses.

One young woman is going to put $10,000 into a fruit farm somewhere near Philadelphia.

"I want something," she said, "that will not keep me tied down all the year, as dairying, stock or poultry would. I don't expect nor care to make a great deal of money. I just want my place to be self-supporting and bring me in enough money for current expenses. It is necessary for me to be near Philadelphia, which limits me in my choice of fruit, as I must plant the varities adapted to the soil. I shall plant dwarf trees, as they produce equally and are much easier to care for. Then I shall raise small fruits, selling through commission houses. If I can get just the right kind of help, I may cater for special customers direct. The work? Oh! I don't expect to do any manual labor myself unless I feel like it. I shall know how it all ought to be done when I leave this school, and then I shall pay a man to do it. So long as we know how to manage the cultivation we don't have to operate it here unless we wish. Some of the boys here have not done as much actual farm work as the girls. They demonstrated their ability to do it, and that was enough."

"Yes," she continued, reflectively, "I think women are going to take the new agriculture, especially women of some means, who can own their own homes and want an object in life, and find it necessary or agreeable to add something to their incomes. Of course, individual adaptation to the work is of no account in the new agriculture without the technical training required to farm successfully today. But given this training, and farming is in its nature only an extension of housekeeping. The farmer's wife always ran the dairy, the poultry yard and the vegetable garden as naturally and unquestionably, according to the old methods, as she did her kitchen and dining room. She knew about strawberries and blackcaps, just as she did about dahlias and grass pinks. Frequently the only ready money that came into her hands was from the butter and eggs. There is no marked line of difference between housework and farm work, and it will be a great deal easier for the average woman to be successful with the new agriculture than with half the things which she is doing or trying to do today, which are foreign to the instincts and inbred traditions of the sex."

MEDICAL ATTACK ON LIQUEURS.

Drinks That Contain Essences Dangerous to Health.

From the Lancet.

About a year ago, in the course of a parliamentary discussion upon the law as to drinks, a socialist deputy, Dr. Vaillant, proposed that the Academy of Medicine should be requested to make out a list of alcoholic drinks, such as liqueurs, aperitifs and the like, which contain essences dangerous to public health, with a view to interdict the manufacture or sale of such. As the minister concerned did not accede to this request the academy has at last sent into a parliament a report on its own account. M. Laborde has published the report in the name of the commission appointed by the academy.

The report states that the essences used are very poisonous. Synthetic essence of anisette contains a quantity of hydrocyanic acid. The inhalation of a little of this essence from an open bottle containing it causes grave syncope and a feeling of illness lasting for several days. Chartreuse is very poisonous and contains thirteen substances which can bring about serious effects. Vulnerary contains fifteen very poisonous substances. The genuine vegetable essences are bad enough, but these are not used now and the essences are all made with synthetic flavorings which are even more poisonous that the genuine vegetable essences. Gin (genievre) contains a poison and bitters are also very dangerous.

M. Laborde proposes that the sale of the following should be absolutely forbidden except for medicinal use: Absinthe and its compounds, bitters, vermouth, noyeau, chartreuse, gin and vulnerary. It is proposed that the authorities shall forbid the manufacture or sale of these drinks as containing substances harmful to public health.

Manners at the Play.

From the Nineteenth Century.

It must be granted that the attitude toward the play and players is everywhere more respectful, more interested and more earnest than it is in London. Different countries have, of course, different manners; and whereas the American, admittedly the most sincere lover of the theater, will "softly and silently vanish away" if the entertainment be not to his fancy, the Englishman who comes to laugh remains to boo if his expectations are not fulfilled; the Frenchman shows his characteristic exuberance in joy as well as in despair; and the forceful character of the German is displayed by his liking for short prices and long programs.

Betting.

From the London Chronicle.

Among the social curses of the time, th growth of the betting habit must be given principal place. If we were to deduct fro the total of crimes those which are caus by drink, we should probably find that t majority of the remainder were caused betting.

BILLIONS IN GOLD

Uncle Sam Has Piles of the Yellow Metal.

BEATS ALL NATIONS

AN UNTHINKABLY VAST SUM IN MONEY.

Would Buy the British Navy or 4,000 Acres of American Pie.

Written for The Evening Star.

Through the Treasury Department of his government at Washington Uncle Sam gave out a rather startling piece of news the other day in the statement that this country at this moment possesses about a quarter of all the gold that has been made up into money in the entire world.

To quote the official figures correctly, there is now in the United States (including treasury coin and bullion) one thousand two hundred millions of gold money, whereas the world's entire stock of gold money is worth less than five thousand millions ($4,906,700,000, according to the latest figures). New York financiers believe Uncle Sam's figures as to his own gold money are shy, and that in truth the amount of gold money in the country is close to $1,250,000,000—a bilion and a quarter—while all the rest of the world possesses less than $3,750,000,000. This is a larger sum of coined gold than has ever been possessed by a single nation in the history of the world.

Next to the United States, according to the latest reports, comes France, with $810,600,000, followed by the British empire, with $769,700,000; Russia, with $724,300,000, and Germany, with $721,300,000. So far as coined gold is concerned, it will be observed, the United States is in a class by itself.

The British empire is second in the second class, but Great Britain proper is last, its store of coined gold amounting only to $511,000,000. All other peoples are so far behind in the race as not to be eligible even for the second class. Austria-Hungary leads the third class, with about $230,000,000, but even at that the great empire is very poor in gold money, relatively as well as actually, for her gold supply amounts to less than $4.90 per capita for her population of 47,000,000 souls. Uncle Sam's children have nearly $16 in gold apiece, which is less than the citizens of the French republic, for each of whom there is a little more than $21 of gold coin a head. Germany comes third in the per capita computation, the figures being $12.81, Great Britain's being $12.34, and that of Russia, with her enormous population of 128,300,000, only $5.64. The per capita figure for the entire British empire is a shade under $2.20, that for India's enormous horde of 297,000,000 being only 15 cents. Here, as in most other things, the British empire exhibits the most astonishing extremes, for there are parts thereof where the per capita of coined gold is in great excess; in Australasia, for instance, there is $24.26 in coined money for every man, woman and child. At one time the South African republic led this, with per capita figures of $26.34, but now Australasia is the highest. Canada's per capita is a few cents in excess of $3.00.

But these per capita figures of coined gold should not be taken as indicative either of a country's actual wealth or the per capita of money in circulation. The total amount of money of all sorts in the United States is rising of two thousand five hundred millions, or more than $28 for every citizen of Uncle Sam, about double the per capita of gold. In Australia, where the gold per capita is highest, there is little money circulation at all except that made from the precious yellow metal; in India the great preponderance is in silver, and this is true in even greater degree in China.

Staggering Figures.

It is doubtful whether any one can comprehend the meaning of figures as stupendous as those which are needed to express the present wealth of this country in coined gold. It would take a laborer earning a dollar a day 416,666 years to earn a billion and a quarter of dollars, but at that he would have to have the longevity of more than 4,000 Methuselahs. If the money had to be earned by day's work it would be better to put 416,666 laborers at it for a single year.

Reduced to avoirdupois, the one thousand two hundred and fifty millions of gold dollars now in this country would represent 5,000,000 pounds, or 2,500 short tons of 2,000 pounds each. Packed away as Uncle Sam packs away his gold in the treasury at Washington and in the various subtreasuries, it would fill 2,500 strong boxes, each 21 by 18 by 24 inches in size, inside measurement, and containing six cubic feet. Piled up, the gold coin thus accumulated would make a heap containing 15,000 cubic feet; a bar of gold containing $1,250,000,000 worth of precious metal would be five feet square and 300 feet long; erected into an auriferous monument, it would be a highly imposing sight, and would make no mean showing beside the Washington monument itself, albeit of about 200 feet less altitude than that patriotic structure.

At two tons to the million, it would take 2,500 teams, or 5,000 horses, to haul this unthinkable mass of coined treasure over the average roads of the country. Fixing fifty pounds as the proper load for the average man to carry any distance, it would require an army of 100,000 to pack the stuff. In ranks of twelve moving in fairly open order this army of gold bearers would stretch over eleven or twelve miles, or about the length of Broadway on the Island of Manhattan.

There is little danger that the yellow specie of the great republic will be looted and carried away "by hand."

What Our Gold Would Buy.

One thousand two hundred and fifty millions of dollars would buy an enormous amount of merchandise, and would pay the expenses of no end of wars or merry-making. A few weeks ago, before it could be foreseen that the coronation of King Edward VII would be postponed by a royal illness, it was estimated that the total cost of the ceremonies to government and English people would be not far from $7,000,000. At that price for such jubilations Uncle Sam's stock of coined gold would foot the bill for 179 coronations and leave some millions over.

A billion and a quarter dollars would build eighty Brooklyn bridges. It would build, equip and put in commission more than 400 great battle ships. It would probably suffice to buy the whole British navy, providing that aggregation of marine fighting machines could be purchased at anything like a fair valuation. At a million dollars a day, the approximate cost of the civil war, the coined gold now in the country would wage a war for more than three years and four months.

Comparison of the quantity of coined gold in the country with the value of some of the country's staple products is somewhat startling. For instance, in round numbers the output of coal, both soft and hard, in 1901 was three hundred and twenty-two millions, of pigiron more than two hundred and fifty millions, of silver more than thirty-six millions, of crude petroleum more than seventy-five millions; of corn, wheat and oats nearly two hundred and nine millions; of butter and cheese more than three hundred and eighty-four millions. Yet the billion and a quarter of coined gold now in the United States would buy all these products and leave a trifling matter of $27,875,857 as a nest egg around which to accumulate another twelve hundred millions or so. It would build 62,500 miles of railroad at $20,000 a mile, nearly a third of all the railroad mileage now in the United States.

Thousands of Acres of Pie.

But it is when the purchasing power of a thousand and a quarter millions of gold dollars as applied to pie is considered that the ordinary mind may come nearest to grappling with the real meaning of such a vast sum. Good, fair pies can be bought for 10 cents apiece, and thus the coined gold now in the country would buy twelve billions and five hundred millions of pies. The square surface covered by pies varies, but fifty square inches for each would not be far out of the way, allowing for the waste room that would have to be allowed for, supposing the pies are round. On this basis the gold coin in circulation in Uncle Sam's dominions would buy pies enough to cover at least 4,000 acres of land. How many pie bakers it would take to bake this enormous aggregation of toothsomeness in one day is a matter for conjecture only.

Yet all this gold could be packed into a very small space, relatively speaking. Made into a pile forty feet square, it would be only a little more than nine feet high, and its weight of 5,000 tons would not furnish a full cargo for any one of several of the great ocean liners now plowing the Atlantic ocean, though it would build hundreds of them.

Food for Serious Thought.

All in all, good Americans may well be proud of the magnificent showing our gold coin enables us to make before the world, yet there is another and a more serious aspect of the situation to be considered—an aspect, by the way, that thoughtful men are examining with much gravity. Will the presence of so much gold in the country produce the apparently logical result of permanently holding up the price of all things eatable by reason of its own comparative cheapness? Some economic philosophers declare that it will beyond the shadow of a doubt. In time they say there will also be a general uplifting of the scale of wages, but not until it is settled whether the present plenitude of the yellow metal is permanent or not. Naturally, in the meantime the man who works will have increased problems to meet.

On the other hand a plenitude of gold will mean lively circulation, and that will mean a continuance of the present "good times" for a considerable period to come. And, if the prophets speak wisely, the present unexampled quantity of coined gold in this country is only a forerunner of the future. Unless all signs fail, say they, the day is not far distant when we shall have two thousand millions instead of a thousand and a quarter millions of gold coin in our land.

Tombstone as Evidence.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The title to Kansas City property valued at over half a million dollars has been clouded by a suit filed in the circuit court there by the heirs of the late Nancy Priddy. The property includes fifty-two acres in the fashionable residence district. Mrs. Priddy died in 1892. It is contended by her heirs, who are residents of Central Point, Ore., that she was sixty years old at the time of her death, while the defendants to the suit maintain that she was sixty-six years old. On this point the suit hinges. If she were but sixty years old she had not reached a lawful age to execute a deed at the time she disposed of her property here in 1852. There is no record of her birth, the only evidence of her age being her tombstone, and the claim is made that it has been tampered with. The tombstone, a plaster cast of which was made in Oregon for use in the trial, shows this record: "Aged sixty years," but the cipher looks as though it might originally have been a "6," and it will be left to the court to decide whether it was or not. If the court declares her age to have been sixty years at the time of her death the heirs will win.

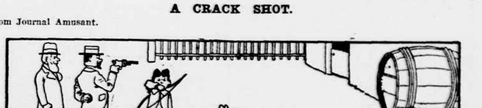
Chinese Adaptability.

From the North China News.

There is no clinging to an effete old language by the Chinaman when money is to be made by learning a new one. He gives up the speech of his forefathers and takes to that of the people about him, and this to such an extent that a very considerable proportion of Chinamen in Singapore and the Straits Settlements generally are absolutely incapable of speaking Chinese or of understanding it when it is spoken.

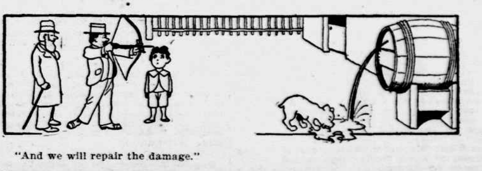
A CRACK SHOT.

From Journal Amusant.



"We are great shots out our way. See that fly walking on the cask?"

Bang! The fly is crushed. "But I didn't know the cask was full of wine. My boy, give me your bow and arrow——"



"And we will repair the damage."

"That's the sort of shots we are out