

A WALKING DELEGATE.

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ACCORDING to the custom of Vermont, Sunday afternoon is salting-time on the farm, and, unless something very important happens, we attend to it ourselves. Dave and Pete, the red oxen, are salted first; they stay in the home meadow ready for work on Monday. Then come the cows and Pan, the calf, who should have been turned into veal long ago, but survived on account of his manners; and lastly the horses, scattered through the seventy acres of the Back Pasture.

You must go down by the brook that feeds the ram; up through the sugar-bush, where the young maple undergrowth closes round you like a shallow sea; then follow the faint line of an old county road running past two green hollows fringed with wild rose that mark the cellars of two ruined houses; then by Lost Orchard, where nobody ever comes except in cider-time; then across another brook, and so into the Back Pasture. Half of it is pine and hemlock and spruce, with sumach and little juniper bushes, and the other half is rocks and boulders and moss, with green streaks of brake and swamp; but the horses like it well enough — our own, and the others that are turned down there at fifty cents a week. Most people walk to the Back Pasture, and find it very rough work; but one can get there in a buggy, if the horse knows what is expected of him. The safest conveyance is our coupé. This began life as a buckboard, and we bought it for five dollars from a sorrowful man who had no other possessions; and the seat came off one night when we were turning a corner in a hurry; and after that alteration it made a beautiful salting-machine, if you held tight, because there was nothing to catch your feet when you fell out, and the slats rattled tunes.

One Sunday afternoon we went off with the salt. It was a broiling hot day, and we could not find the horses anywhere till we let Tedda Gabler, the bob-tailed mare who throws dirt exactly as a tedder throws hay, have her head; and she tipped the coupé over twice in a hidden brook before she came out on a ledge of rock where all the horses had gathered, and were switching flies.

The Deacon was the first to call to her. He

is a very dark iron-gray four-year-old, son of Grandee, and has been man-handled since he was two, was driven in a light cart before he was three, and now ranks as an absolutely steady lady's horse — proof against steam-rollers, grade crossings, and street processions.

"Salt!" said the Deacon, joyfully. "You're drefle late, Tedda."

"Any — any place to cramp the coupé?" Tedda panted. "It weighs turr'ble this weather. I'd 'a' come sooner, but they did n't know what they wanted — nor haow. Been out twice, both of 'em. I don't understand sech foolishness."

"You look consider'ble het up. Guess you'd better cramp her under them pines, an' cool off a piece."

Tedda scrambled on the ledge, and cramped the coupé in the shade of a tiny little wood of pines, while my companion and I lay down on the needles, and gasped. All the home horses were gathered round us, enjoying their Sunday out. There were Rod and Rick, the seniors on the farm. They were the regular road pair, bay with black points, full brothers, aged, sons of a Hambletonian sire and a Morgan dam. There were Nip and Tuck, seal browns, six, brother and sister, Black Hawks, perfectly matched, just finishing their education, and as handsome a pair as a man could wish to find in a forty-mile drive. There was Muldoon, our ex-car-horse, bought at a venture, any color you choose that is not white; and Tweezy, who comes from Kentucky, with an affliction on his left hip, which makes him a little uncertain how his hind legs are moving. He and Muldoon had been hauling gravel all the week. The Deacon you know already. Last of all, eating something, as usual, was our faithful Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the black buggy-horse, who had seen us through every state of weather and road, the horse who was always standing in harness at some door or other, a philosopher with the appetite of a shark and the manners of an archbishop. Tedda Gabler was a new "trade," with a reputation for vice which was really the result of bad driving. She had one working gait, which she could keep till further notice; a Roman nose; a large, prominent eye; a shaving-brush of a tail; and an irritable temper. She took her salt through her bridle; but the others came and nuzzled

and wickered for theirs, till we emptied it out on the clean rocks. They were all standing at ease, on three legs for the most part, talking the ordinary gossip of the Back Pasture,—about the scarcity of water, and gaps in the fence, and how the early windfalls tasted, and so on,—when little Rick blew the last few grains of his salt into a crevice, and said :

“Hurry, boys! Might ha’ knowed that livery-plug would be round.”

He heard a clatter of hoofs, and there climbed up from the ravine below a fifty-center, a transient—a wall-eyed, yellow frame-house of a horse, sent up to board from a livery-stable in town, where they called him “The Lamb,” and never let him out except at night. My companion, who knew and had broken most of the horses, looked at the ragged hammer-head as it rose, and said quietly :

“Ni-ice beast. Man-eater, if he gets the chance—see his eye. Kicker, too—see his hocks. Western horse.”

The animal lumbered up to the others. His feet showed he had not worked for weeks and weeks, and our creatures drew together significantly.

“As usual,” he said, with an underhung sneer—“bowin’ your heads before the Oppressor that comes to spend his leisure gloatin’ over you.”

“Mine’s done,” said the Deacon, and he licked up the last of his salt with a gulp, dropped his nose in his master’s hand, drew it up and down the shirt-front, and sang a little grace all to himself. The Deacon has the most enchanting manners of any one I know.

“An’ fawnin’ on them for what is your inalienable right. It’s humiliatin’,” said the yellow horse, sniffing to see if he could find a few spare grains.

“Go daown hill, then, Boney,” the Deacon replied. “Guess you’ll find somefin’ to eat still, if yer hain’t hogged it all. You’ve ett more’n any three of us to-day, an’ day ’fore that, an’ the last two months, sense you’ve been here.”

“I am not addressin’ myself to the young an’ immature. I am speakin’ to those whose opinion *an’* experience commands respect.”

I saw Rod raise his head as though he were about to make a remark; then he dropped it again, and stood looking like a plow-horse. Rod can do his mile in a shade under three minutes on an ordinary road in an ordinary Concord. He is tremendously powerful behind, but, like most Hambletonians, he grows a trifle sullen as he gets older. No one can love Rod very much; but no one can help respecting him.

“I wish to wake *those*,” the yellow horse went on, “to an abidin’ sense o’ their wrongs an’ their injuries an’ their outrages.”

“Haow’s that?” said Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, dreamily. He thought Boney was talking of some kind of feed.

“An’ when I say outrages and injuries,”—Boney waved his tail furiously,—“I mean ’em, too. Great Oats! That’s just what I *do* mean, plain an’ straight.”

“The gentleman talks quite earnest,” said Tuck, the mare, to Nip, her brother. “There’s no doubt thinkin’ broadens the horizon o’ the mind. His language is quite lofty.”

“Hesh, sis,” Nip answered. “He hain’t widened nothin’ ’cep’ the circle he’s ett in pasture. They feed words fer beddin’ where he comes from.”

“It’s elegant *talkin’*, though,” Tuck returned, with an unconvinced toss of her pretty little head.

The yellow horse heard her, and struck an attitude which he meant to be extremely impressive. It made him look as though he had been badly stuffed.

“Now I ask you,—I ask you without prejudice an’ without favor,—what has Man the Oppressor ever done for you? Are you not inalienably entitled to the free air o’ heaven, blowin’ acrost this boundless prairie?”

“Ever wintered here?” said the Deacon, merrily, while the others snickered.

“Not yet,” said Boney. “I come from the boundless *confines* o’ Kansas, where the noblest of our kind have their abidin’-place among the sunflowers on the threshold o’ the settin’ sun in his glory.”

“An’ they sent you ahead as a sample?” said Rick, with an amused quiver of his long, beautifully groomed tail, as thick and as fine and as wavy as a quadroon’s back hair.

“Kansas, sir, needs no advertisement. Her native sons rely on themselves an’ their native sires. Yes, sir.”

Then Tweezy lifted up his wise and polite old head. His affliction makes him bashful as a rule, but he is ever the most courteous of horses.

“Excuse me, suh,” he said slowly, “but, unless I have been misinformed, most of you’ prominent sials, suh, are impo’ted from Kentucky; an’ *I’m* from Paduky.”

There was the least little touch of pride in the last words.

“Any horse dat knows beans,” said Muldoon, suddenly (he had been standing with his head on Tweezy’s broad quarters), “gits outer Kansas ’fore dey crip his shoes. I blew in dere from Ioway in de days o’ me youth an’ innocence, an’ I wuz grateful when dey boxed me fer N’ York. You can’t tell me anything about Kansas I don’t wanten fergit. De Belt Line stables ain’t no Hoffman House, but dey ’re Vanderbilts ’longside o’ Kansas.”

“What the horses o’ Kansas think to-day,

the horses of America will think to-morrow; an' I tell *you* that when the horses of America rise in their might, the day o' the Oppressor is ended."

There was a pause, till Rick said, with a little chuckle:

"Ef you put it that way, every one of us has riz in his might, 'cep' Marcus, mebbe. Marky, 'j ever rise in yer might?"

"Nop," said Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, calmly quidding over a mouthful of grass. "I seen a heap o' fools try, though."

"You admit that you riz?" said the Kansas horse, excitedly. "Then why — why in Kansas did you ever go under again?"

"Horse can't walk on his hind legs *all* the time," said the Deacon.

"Not when he's jerked over on his back 'fore he knows what fetched him. We've all done it, Boney," said Rick. "Nip an' Tuck they tried it, spite o' what the Deacon told 'em; an' the Deacon he tried it, spite o' what me an' Rod told him; an' me an' Rod tried it, spite o' what Grandee told us; an' I guess Grandee he tried it, spite o' what his dam told him. It's the same old circus from generation to generation. Colt can't see why he 's called on to back. Same old rearin' on end — straight up. Same old feelin' that you 've bested 'em this time. Same old little yank at yer mouth when you 're up good an' tall. Same old Pegasus act, wonderin' where you 'll 'light. Same old *wop* when you hit the dirt with your head where your tail should be, and your in'ards shook up like a bran-mash. Same old voice in your ear: 'Waal, ye little fool, an' what did you reckon to make by that?' We 're through with risin' in our might on *this* farm. We go to pole er single, accordin' ez we 're hitched."

"An' Man the Oppressor sets an' gloats over you, same as he 's settin' now. Hain't that been your experience, madam?"

This last remark was addressed to Tedda, and any one could see with half an eye that poor, old, anxious, fidgety Tedda, stamping at the flies, must have left a wild and tumultuous youth behind her.

"Pends on the man," she answered, shifting from one foot to the other, and addressing herself to the home horses. "They abused me dreffle when I was young. I guess I was sperrity an' nervous some, but they did n't allow for that. 'T was in Monroe County, Noo York, an' sence then, till I come here, I 've run away with more men than 'u'd fill a boardin'-house. Why, the man that sold me here he says to the master, s' he: 'Mind, now, I 've warned you. 'T won't be none of my fault if she sheds you daown the road. Don't you drive her in a top-buggy, ner 'thout winkers,' s' he, 'ner 'thout this bit, ef you look to come home behind her.' 'N' the

fust thing the master did was to git the top-buggy."

"Can't say as I like top-buggies," said Rick; "they don't balance good."

"Suit me to a ha'r," said Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. "Top-buggy means the baby 's in behind, an' I kin stop while she gathers the pretty flowers — yes, an' pick a maouthful, too. The women-folk all say I hev to be humored, an' — I don't kerry things to the sweatin'-point."

"Course I 've no *prejudice* against a top-buggy s' long 's I can see it," Tedda went on quickly. "It 's ha'f-seein' the pesky thing bobbin' an' balancin' outer the winkers gits on *my* nerves. Then the master looked at the bit they 'd sold with me, an' s' he: 'Jiminy Christmas! This 'u'd make a clothes-horse stan' 'n end!' Then he gave me a plain bar bit, an' fitted it 's if there was some feelin' to my maouth."

"Hain't ye got any, Miss Tedda?" said Tuck, who has a mouth like velvet, and knows it.

"Might 'a' had, Miss Tuck, but I 've forgot. Then he give me an open bridle, — my style 's an open bridle, — an' — I dunno as I ought to tell this by rights — he — give — me — a kiss."

"My!" said Tuck, "I can't tell fer the shoes o' me what makes some men so fresh."

"Pshaw, sis," said Nip, "what 's the sense in actin' so? *You* git 'em reg'lar 's hitchin'-up time."

"Well, you need n't tell, smarty," said Tuck, with a squeal and a kick.

"I 'd heard o' kisses, o' course," Tedda went on, "but they had n't come my way specially. I don't mind tellin' I was that took a-back at that man's doin's he might ha' lit fire-crackers on my saddle. Then we went out jest 's if a kiss was nothin', an' I was n't three strides into my gait 'fore I felt the master knoo his business, an' was trustin' me. So I studied to please him, an' he never took the whip from the dash, — a whip drives me plumb distracted — an' the up-shot was that, — waal, I 've come up the Back Pasture to-day, an' the coupé 's tipped over twice, an' I 've waited till 't wuz fixed each time. You kin judge for yourselves. I don't set up to be no better than my neighbors, specially with my tail snipped off the way 't is, but I want you all to know Tedda 's quit fightin' in harness or out of it, 'cep' when there 's a born fool in the pasture, stuffin' his stummick with board that ain't rightly hisn, 'ca'se he hain't earned it."

"Meanin' me, madam?" said the yellow horse.

"Ef the shoe fits, clinch it," said Tedda, with a snort. "I named no names, though, to be sure, some folks are mean enough an' greedy enough to do 'thout 'em."

"There 's a deal to be forgiven to ignorance," said the yellow horse, with an ugly look in his blue eye.

"Seemin'ly, yes; or some folks 'u'd ha' been kicked around the pasture 'bout onct a minute sence they came—board er no board."

"But what you do *not* understand, if you will excuse me, madam, is that the whole principle o' servitood, which includes keep an' feed, starts from a radically false basis; an' I am proud to say that me an' the majority o' the horses o' Kansas think the entire concern should be relegated to the limbo of exploded superstitions. I say we're too progressive for that. I say we're too enlightened for that. 'T was good enough's long's we did n't think, but now—but now—a new loominary has arisen on the horizon!"

"Meanin' you?" said the Deacon.

"The horses o' Kansas are behind me with their multitooninuous thunderin' hoofs, an' we say, simply but grandly, that we take our stand with all four feet on the inalienable rights of the horse, pure and simple, the high-toned child o' nature, fed by the same wavin' grass, cooled by the same ripplin' brook—yes, an' warmed by the same gen'rous sun as falls impartially on the outside an' the *inside* of the pampered machine o' the trottin'-track, or the bloated coupé-horses o' these yere Eastern cities. Are we not the same flesh and blood?"

"Not by a bushel an' a half," said the Deacon, under his breath. "Grandee never was in Kansas."

"My! Ain't that elegant, though, abaout the wavin' grass an' the ripplin' brooks?" Tuck whispered in Nip's ear. "The gentleman's real convincin', I think."

"I say we *are* the same flesh an' blood! Are we to be separated, horse from horse, by the artificial barriers of a trottin'-record, or are we to look down upon each other on the strength o' the gifts o' nature—an extry inch below the knee, or slightly more powerful quarters? What's the use o' them advantages to you? Man the Oppressor comes along, an' sees you're likely an' good-lookin', an' grinds you to the face o' the earth. What for? For his own pleasure; for his own convenience. Young an' old, black and bay, white an' gray, there's no distinctions made between us. We're ground up together under the remorseless teeth o' the engines of oppression!"

"Guess his breechin' must ha' broke goin' daown-hill," said the Deacon. "Slippery road, maybe, an' the buggy come ont'er him, an' he did n't know 'nough to hold back. That don't feel like teeth, though. Maybe he busted a shaft, an' it pricked him."

"An' I come to you from Kansas, wavin' the tail o' friendship to all an' sundry, an' in the name of the uncounted millions o' pure-minded, high-toned horses now strugglin' toward the light o' freedom, I say to you, Rub noses with us in our sacred an' holy cause. The power is

yourn. Without you, I say, Man the Oppressor cannot move himself from place to place. Without you he cannot reap, he cannot sow, he cannot plow."

"Mighty odd place, Kansas!" said Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. "Seemin'ly they reap in the spring an' plow in the fall. Guess it's right fer them, but 't would make me kinder giddy."

"The produc's of your untirin' industry would rot on the ground if you did not weakly consent to help him. *Let 'em rot, I say!* Let him call you to the stables in vain, an' nevermore! Let him shake his ensnarin' oats under your nose in vain! Let the Brahmas roost in the buggy, an' the rats run riot round the reaper! Let him walk on his two hind feet till they blame nigh drop off! Win no more soul-destroyin' races for his pleasure! Then, an' not till then, will Man the Oppressor know where he's at. Quit workin', fellow-sufferers an' slaves! Kick! Rear! Plunge! Lie down on the shafts, and woller! Smash an' destroy! The conflict will be but short, an' the victory is certain. After that we can press our inalienable rights to eight quart's o' oats a day, two good blankets, an' a fly-net an' the best o' stablin'."

The yellow horse shut his yellow teeth with a triumphant snap; and Tuck said, with a sigh: "Seems's if somethin' ought to be done. Don't seem right, somehow, oppressin' us an' all, to my way o' thinkin'."

Then said Muldoon, in a far-away and sleepy voice: "Who in Vermont's goin' to haul de oats? Dey weigh like Sam Hill, an' sixty bushel at dat allowance ain't goin' to last t'ree weeks here. An' dere's de winter hay for five mont's!"

"We can settle those minor details when the great cause is won," said the yellow horse. "Let us return simply but grandly to our inalienable rights—the right o' freedom on these yere verdant hills, an' no invijjus distinctions o' track an' pedigree."

"What in stable 'jer call an invijjus distinction?" said the Deacon, stiffly.

"Fer one thing, bein' a bloated, pampered trotter jest because you happen to be raised that way, an' could n't no more help trottin' than eatin'."

"Know anythin' about trotters?" said the Deacon.

"Seen 'em trot. That was enough for me. I don't want to know any more. Trottin's immoral."

"Waal, I'll tell you this much. They don't bloat, an' they don't pamp—much. I don't hold out to be no trotter myself, though I am free to say I had hopes that way—onct. But I *do* say, fer I've seen 'em trained, that a trotter don't trot with his feet: he trots with his head;

an' he does more work — ef you know what *that* is — in a week than you er your sire ever done in all your lives. He 's everlastingly at it, a trotter is; an' when he is n't, he's studyin' haow. You seen 'em trot? Much you hev! You was hitched to a rail, back o' the stand, in a buck-board with a soap-box nailed on the slats, an' a frowy buff'lo atop, while your man peddled rum fer lemonade to little boys as thought they was actin' manly, till you was both run off the track and jailed — you intoed, shufflin', sway-backed, wind-suckin' skate, you!"

"Don't get het up, Deacon," said Tweezy, quietly. "Now, suh, would you consider a fox-trot, an' single-foot, an' rack, an' pace, an' amble, distinctions not worth distinguishin'? I assuah you, gentlemen, there was a time befo' I was afflicted in my hip, if you 'll pardon me, Miss Tuck, when I was quite celebrated in Paduky for *all* those gaits; an' in my opinion the Deacon 's co'rect when he says that a ho'se of any position in society gets his gaits by his haid, an' not — ah, his limbs, Miss Tuck. I reckon I 'm very little good now, but I 'm rememberin' the things I used to do befo' I took to transpo'tin' real estate with the help and assistance of this gentleman here." He looked at Muldoon.

"Invijjus arterficial hind legs," said the ex-car-horse, with a grunt of contempt. "On de Belt we don't reckon no horse wuth his keep 'less he kin switch de car off de track, run her round on de cobbles, an' dump her in ag'in ahead o' de truck what 's blockin' him. Dere is a way o' swingin' yer quarters when de driver says, 'Yank her out, boys!' dat takes a year to learn. Onct yer git ont'er it, youse can yank a cable-car outer a man-hole. I don't advertise myself for no circus-horse, but I knew dat trick better than most, an' dey was good to me in de stables, fer I saved time on de Belt, an' time 's what dey want in N' York."

"But the simple child o' nature —" the yellow horse began.

"Oh, go an' unscrew your splints! You 're talkin' through yer bandages," said Muldoon, with a horse laugh. "Dere ain't no loose-box fer de simple child o' nature on de Belt, wid de *Paris* comin' in an' de *Teutonic* goin' out, an' de trucks an' de coupés sayin' things, an' de heavy freight movin' down fer de Boston boat 'bout t'ree o'clock of an August afternoon in de middle of a hot wave when de fat Kanucks and Western horses drops dead on de block. De simple child o' nature had better chase himself inter de water. Every man at de end of his lines is mad or loaded or silly, an' de cop 's madder an' loadeder an' sillier than de rest. Dey all take it outer de horses. Dere 's no wavin' brooks ner ripplin' grass on de Belt. Run her out on de cobbles wid de sparks fly-

in', an' stop when de cop slugs you on de bone o' yer nose. Dat 's N' York; see?"

"I was always told s'ciety in Noo York was drefle refined an' high-toned," said Tuck. "We 're lookin' to go there one o' these days, Nip an' me."

"Oh, *you* won't see no Belt business where you 'll go, miss. De man dat wants you 'll want you bad, an' he 'll summer you on Long Island er at Newport, wid a winky-pinky silver harness an' an English coachman. You 'll make a star-hitch, you an' yer brother, miss. But I guess you won't have no nice smooth bar bit. Dey checks 'em, an' dey bangs deir tails, an' dey bits 'em, de city folk, an' dey says it 's English, ye know, and dey darse n't cut a horse loose 'ca'se o' de cops. N' York 's no place fer a horse 'less he 's on de Belt, an' can go round wid de boys. Wisht *I* was in the Fire Department!"

"But did you never stop to consider the degradin' servitood of it all?" said the yellow horse.

"You don't stop on the Belt, cully. You 're stopped. An' we was all in de servitood business, man an' horse, an' Jimmy dat sold de papers. Guess de passengers were n't out to grass neither, way dey acted. I done my turn, an' I 'm none o' Barnum's crowd; but any horse dat 's worked on de Belt four years don't train wid de simple child o' nature — not by de whole length o' N' York."

"But can it be possible that with your experience, and at your time of life, you do not believe that all horses are free and equal?" said the yellow horse.

"Not till they 're dead," Muldoon answered quietly. "An' den it depends on de gross total o' buttons an' mucilage dey gits outer youse at Barren Island."

"They tell me you 're a prominent philosopher." The yellow horse turned to Marcus. "Can *you* deny a basic and pivotal statement such as this?"

"I don't deny anythin'," said Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, cautiously; "but ef you *ast* me, I should say 't wuz more different sorts o' clipped oats of a lie than anything I 've had my teeth into sense I wuz foaled."

"Are you a horse?" said the yellow horse.

"Them that knows me best 'low I am."

"Ain't *I* a horse?"

"Yep; one kind of."

"Then ain't you an' me equal?"

"How fer kin you go in a day 'fore a loaded buggy, drawin' five hundred?" Marcus asked carelessly.

"That has nothing to do with the case," the yellow horse answered excitedly.

"There 's nothing I know hez more to do with the case," Marcus replied.

"Kin ye yank a loaded car outer de tracks ten times in de mornin'?" said Muldoon.

"Kin ye go forty-two mile in an afternoon with a mate," said Rick, "and turn out bright an' early next mornin'?"

"Was there evah any time in your careah, suh,—I am not ferrerin' to the present circumstances, but our glorious past,—when you could carry a pretty girl to market hahnsome, an' let her knit all the way on account o' the smoothness o' the motion?" said Tweezy.

"Kin you keep your feet through the West River Bridge, with the narrer-gage comin' in on one side, an' the Montreal flyer the other, an' the old bridge teeterin' between?" said the Deacon. "Kin you put your nose down on the cow-catcher of a locomotive, an' let 'em do 'Curfew shall not ring to-night' with the big brass bell?"

"Kin you hold back when the brichin' breaks? Kin you stop fer orders when your nigh hind 's over the trace an' ye feel good of a frosty mornin'?" said Nip, who had only learned that trick last winter, and thought it was the crown of horsely knowledge.

"What 's the use o' talkin'?" said Tedda Gabler, scornfully. "What kin ye do?"

"I rely on my simple rights—the inalienable rights o' my unfettered horsehood. An' I am proud to say I have never, since my first shoes, lowered myself to obeyin' the will o' man."

"Must ha' had a heap o' whips broke over yer yaller back," said Tedda. "Found it paid any?"

"Sorrow has been my portion since the day I was foaled. Blows an' boots and whips an' insults—injury, outrage, an' oppression. I would not endoor the degradin' badges o' servitood that connect us with the buggy an' the farm-wagon."

"It 's amazin' difficult to draw a buggy 'thout traces er collar er breast-strap er somefin'," said Marcus. "Power 's 'most the only thing there 's no straps to 'cept the bar behind. I 've helped saw 's much as three cord in an afternoon in a Power. Slep', too, most o' the time; but 't ain't half as interzestin' ez goin' down-taown in the Concord."

"Concord don't hender you goin' to sleep any," said Nip. "My throat-lash! D' you remember when you lay down in the sharves last week, waitin' at the piazza?"

"Pshaw! That did n't hurt the sharves any. They wuz good an' wide, an' I lay down keerful. The folks kep' me hitched up nigh an hour 'fore they started; an' larfed—why, they all but lay down themselves with larfin'. Say, Boney, if you 've got to be hitched to anything that goes on wheels, you 've got to be hitched *with* somefin'."

"Go an' jine a circus," said Muldoon, "an' walk on your hind legs. All de horses dat knows too much to work [he pronounced it wy-yk, New York fashion] jine de circus."

"I am not sayin' anythin' again' work," said the yellow horse; "work is the finest thing in the world."

"Seems too fine fer some of us," Tedda snorted.

"I only ask that each horse should work for himself, an' enjoy the profit of his labors. Let him work intelligently, and not as a machine."

"There ain't no horse that works like a machine," Marcus began.

"There 's no way o' workin' that does n't mean goin' to pole or single—they never put me in the Power—er under saddle," said Rick.

"Oh, shucks! We 're talkin' same ez we graze," said Nip, "raound an' raound in circles. Rod, we hain't heard from you yet, an' you 've more know-how than any span here."

Rod, the off-horse of the pair, had been standing with one hip lifted, like a tired cow; and you could only tell by the quick flutter of the haw across his eye, from time to time, that he was paying any attention to the argument. He thrust his jaw out sidewise, as his habit is when he pulls, and changed his leg. His voice was hard and heavy, and his ears were close to his big, plain Hambletonian head.

"How old are you?" he said to the yellow horse.

"Nigh thirteen, I guess."

"Mean age; ugly age; gettin' that way myself. How long hev ye been pawin' this fire-fanged stable-litter?"

"If you mean my principles, I 've held 'em since I was three."

"Mean age; ugly age; teeth give heaps o' trouble then. Set a colt to actin' crazy fer a while. You 've kep' it up, seemin'ly. Talk much to your neighbors fer a steady thing?"

"I uphold the principles o' the Cause wher-ever I am pastured."

"Done a heap o' good, I guess?"

"I am proud to say I have taught a few of my companions the principles o' freedom an' liberty."

"Meanin' they ran away er kicked when they got the chanst?"

"I was talkin' in the abstrac', an' not in the concrete. My teachin's educated them."

"What a horse, specially a young horse, hears in the abstrac', he 's liable to do in the Concord. You wuz handled late, I presoom."

"Four, risin' five."

"That 's where the trouble began. Driv' by a woman, like ez not—eh?"

"Not fer long," said the yellow horse, with a snap of his teeth.

"Spilled her?"

"I heard she never drove again."

"Any childern?"

"Buckboards full of 'em."

"Men too?"

"I have shed considerable men in my time."

"Kickin'?"

"Any way that come along. Fallin' back over the dash is as handy as most."

"They must be turr'ble afraid o' you daown taown?"

"They 've sent me here to get rid o' me. I guess they spend their time talkin' over my campaigns."

"I wanter know!"

"Yes, *sir*. Now, all you gentlemen have asked me what I can do. I 'll just show you. See them two fellers lyin' down by the buggy?"

"Yep; one of 'em owns me. T' other broke me," said Rod.

"Get 'em out here in the open, an' I 'll show you something. Lemme hide back o' you peoples, so 's they won't see what I 'm at."

"Meanin' ter kill 'em?" Rod drawled. There was a shudder of horror through the others; but the yellow horse never noticed.

"I 'll catch 'em by the back o' the neck, an' pile-drive 'em a piece. They can suit 'emselves about livin' when I 'm through with 'em."

"Should n't wonder ef they did," said Rod.

The yellow horse had hidden himself very cleverly behind the others as they stood in a group, and was swaying his head close to the ground with a curious scythe-like motion, looking sidewise out of his wicked eyes. You can never mistake a man-eater getting ready to knock a man down. We had had one to pasture the year before.

"See that?" said my companion, turning over on the pine-needles. "Nice for a woman walking 'cross lots, would n't it be?"

"Bring 'em out!" said the yellow horse, hunching his sharp back. "There 's no chance among them tall trees. Bring out the—oh! Ouch!"

It was a right-and-left kick from Muldoon. I had no idea that the old car-horse could lift so quickly. Both blows caught the yellow horse full and fair in the ribs, and knocked the breath out of him.

"What 's that for?" he said angrily, when he recovered himself; but I noticed he was not drawing any nearer to Muldoon than was necessary.

Muldoon did not take the trouble to answer, but discoursed to himself in the whining grunt that he uses when he is going down-hill in front of a heavy load. We call it singing; but I think it 's something much worse, really. The yellow horse blustered and squealed a little, and at last said that, if it was a horse-fly that had stung Muldoon, he would accept an apology.

"You 'll get it," said Muldoon, "in de sweet by and by — all de apology you 've any use for. Excuse me interruptin' you, Mr. Rod, but I 'm like Tweezy — I 've a Southern drawback in me hind legs."

"Naow, I want you all here to take notice, and you 'll learn something," Rod went on. "This yaller-backed skate comes to our pastur'—"

"Not havin' paid his board," put in Tedda.

"Not havin' earned his board, an' talks smooth to us about ripplin' brooks an' wavin' grass, an' his high-toned, pure-souled horsehood, which don't hender him sheddin' women an' childern, an' fallin' over the dash onter men. You heard his talk, an' you thought it mighty fine, some o' you."

Tuck looked guilty here, but she did not say anything.

"Bit by bit he goes on ez you have heard."

"I was talkin' in the abstrac'," said the yellow horse in an altered voice.

"Abstrac' be switched! Ez I 've said, it 's this yer blamed abstrac' business that makes the young uns cut up in the Concord; an' abstrac' or no abstrac', he crep' on an' on till he come to killin' plain an' straight — killin' them as never done him no harm, jest beca'se they owned horses."

"An' knowed how to manage 'em," said Tedda; "that makes it worse."

"Waal, he did n't kill 'em, anyway," said Marcus. "He 'd ha' been half killed ef he had tried."

"Makes no differ," Rod answered. "He meant to; an' ef he had n't — s'pose we want the Back Pasture turned into a biffin'-ground on our only day er rest? S'pose *we* want *our* men walkin' round with bits er lead pipe an' a twitch, an' their hands full o' stones to throw at us, same 's if we wuz hogs er hooky keows? More 'n that, leavin' out Tedda here, — an' I guess it 's more her maouth than her manners stands in her light, — there ain't a horse on this farm that ain't a woman's horse, an' proud of it. An' this yer bog-spavined Kansas sunflower goes up an' daown the length o' the country, traded off and traded on, boastin' as he 's shed women — an' childern. I don't say as a woman in a buggy ain't a fool. I don't say as she ain't the lastin'est kind er fool, ner I don't say a child ain't worse, — spattin' the lines an' standin' up an' hollerin', — but I *do* say, 't ain't none of our business to shed 'em daown the road."

"We don't," said the Deacon. "The baby tried to git some o' my tail for a sooveneer last fall when I was up to the haouse, an' I did n't kick. Boney's talk ain't goin' to hurt us any. We ain't colts."

"That 's what you *think*. Bimeby you git

into a tight corner, 'Lection day er Valley Fair, like's not, daown-taown when you're all het an' lathery, an' pestered with flies, an' thirsty, an' sick o' bein' worked in an' aout 'tween buggies. Then somethin' whispers inside o' your winkers, bringin' up all that talk about servitood an' inalienable truck an' sech like, an' jest then a gun goes off, er your wheels hit, an'—waal, you're only another horse as can't be trusted. I've been there time an' again. Boys,—fer I've seen you all bought er broke,—on my solemn repitation fer a three-minute clip, I ain't givin' you no bran-mash o' my own fixin'. I'm tellin' you my experiences, an' I've had ez heavy a load an' ez high a check's any horse here. I wuz born with a splint on my near fore ez big's a walnut, an' the cussed, three-cornered Hambletonian temper that sours up an' curdles daown ez you git older. I've favored my splint; even little Rick he don't know what it's cost me to keep my end up sometimes; an' I've fit my temper in stall an' harness, hitched up an' at pasture, till the sweat trickled off my hoofs, an' they thought I wuz off condition, an' drenched me."

"When my affliction came," said Tweezy, gently, "I was very near to losin' my manners. Allow me to extend to you my sympathy, suh."

Rick said nothing, but he looked at Rod curiously. Rick is a sunny-tempered child who never bears malice, and I don't think he quite understood. He gets his temper from his mother, as a horse should.

"I've been there, Rod," said Tedda. "Open confession's good for the soul, an' all Monroe County knows I've had my experiences."

"But if you will excuse me, suh, that pusson"—Tweezy looked unspeakable things at the yellow horse—"that pusson who has insulted our intelligences comes from Kansas. An' what a ho'se of his position, an' Kansas at that, says cannot, by any stretch of the halter, concern gentlemen of *our* position. There's no shadow of equality, suh, not even for one kick. He's beneath our contempt."

"Let him talk," said Marcus. "It's always interestin' to know what another horse thinks. It don't tech us."

"An' he talks so, too," said Tuck. "I've never heard anythin' so smart for a long time."

Again Rod stuck out his jaw sidewise, and went on slowly, as though he were slugging on a plain bit at the end of a thirty-mile drive:

"I want all you here ter understand that ther ain't no Kansas, ner no Kentucky, ner yet no Vermont, in *our* business. There's jest two kind o' horse in the United States—them ez can an' will do their work after bein' properly broke an' handled, an' them as won't. I'm sick an' tired o' this everlastin' tail-switchin' an' wickerin' ababout one State er another. A

horse kin be proud o' his State, an' swap lies about it in stall or when he's hitched to a block, ef he keers to put in fly-time that way, but he hain't no right to let that pride o' hisn interfere with his work, ner to make it an excuse fer claimin' he's different. That's colts' talk, an' don't you fergit it, Tweezy. An', Marcus, you remember that bein' a philosopher, an' anxious to save trouble,—fer you are,—don't excuse you from jumpin' with all your feet on a slack-jawed, crazy clay-bank like Boney here. It's leavin' 'em alone that gives em their chance to ruin colts an' kill folks. An', Tuck, waal, you're a mare anyways—but when a horse comes along an' covers up all his talk o' killin' with ripplin' brooks, an' wavin' grass, an' eight quarts of oats a day free, *after* killin' his man, don't you be run away with by his yap. You're too young an' too nervous."

"I'll—I'll have nervous prostration sure ef there's a fight here," said Tuck, who saw what was in Rod's eye; "I'm—I'm that sympathetic I'd run away clear to next caounty."

"Yep; I know that kind o' sympathy. Jest lasts long enough to start a fuss, an' then lights aout to make new trouble. I hain't been ten years in harness fer nuthin'. Naow, we're goin' to keep school with Boney fer a spell."

"Say, look a-here, you ain't goin' to hurt me, are you? Remember, I belong to a man in town," cried the yellow horse, uneasily. Muldoon kept behind him so that he could not run away.

"I know it. There must be some pore dellooded fool in this State hez a right to the loose end o' your hitchin'-strap. I'm blame sorry fer him, but he shall hev his rights when we're through with you," said Rod.

"If it's all the same, gentlemen, I'd ruther change pasture. Guess I'll do it now."

"Can't always have your 'druthers. Guess you won't," said Rod.

"But look a-here. All of you ain't so blame unfriendly to a stranger. S'pose we count noses."

"What in Vermont fer?" said Rod, putting up his eyebrows. The idea of settling a question by counting noses is the very last thing that ever enters the head of a well-broken horse.

"To see how many's on my side. Here's Miss Tuck, anyway; an' Colonel Tweezy yonder's neutral; an' Judge Marcus, an' I guess the Reverend [the yellow horse meant the Deacon] might see that I had my rights. He's the likeliest-lookin' trotter I've ever set eyes on. Pshaw, boys! You ain't goin' to pound *me*, be you? Why, we've gone round in pasture, all colts together, this month o' Sundays, hain't we, as friendly as could be. There ain't a horse alive—I don't care who he is—

has a higher opinion o' you, Mr. Rod, than I have. Let 's do it fair an' true an' above the exe. Let 's count noses same 's they do in Kansas." Here he dropped his voice a little, and turned to Marcus: "Say, Judge, there 's some green food I know, back o' the brook, no one hain't touched yet. After this little *frakas* is fixed up, you an' me 'll make up a party an' 'tend to it."

Marcus did not answer for a long time, then he said: "There 's a pup up to the haouse 'bout eight weeks old. He 'll yap till he gits a lickin', an' when he sees it comin' he lies on his back, an' yowls. But he don't go through no *circituous* nose-countin' first. I 've seen a noo light sence Rod spoke. You 'll better stand up to what 's served. I 'm goin' to philosophize all over your carcass."

"I 'm goin' to do yer up in brown paper," said Muldoon. "I can fit you on apologies."

"Hold on. Ef we all biffed you now, these same men you 've been so dead anxious to kill 'u'd call us off. Guess we 'll wait till they go back to the haouse, an' you 'll have time to think, cool an' quiet," said Rod.

"Have you no respect' whatever fer the dignity o' our common horsehood?" the yellow horse squealed.

"Nary respect' onless the horse kin do something. America 's paved with the kind er horse you are — jist plain yaller-dog horse waitin' ter be whipped inter shape. We call 'em yearlings an' colts when they 're young. When they 're aged we pound 'em — in this pastur'. Horse, sonny, is what you start from. We know all

about horse here, an' he ain't any high-toned, pure-souled child o' nature. Horse, plain horse, same ez you, is chock full o' tricks, an' meanesses, an' cussednesses, an' shirkin's, an' monkey-shines, which he 's took over from his sire an' his dam, an' thickened up with his own special fancy in the way o' goin' crooked. Thet 's *horse*, an' thet 's about his dignity an' the size of his soul 'fore he 's broke an' rawhided a piece. Now we ain't goin' to give ornery unswitched *horse*, that hain't done nawthin' wuth a quart of oats sence he wuz foaled, pet names that would be good enough fer Nancy Hanks, or Alix, or Directum, who *hev*. Don't you try to back off acrost them rocks. Wait where you are! Ef I let my Hambletonian temper git the better o' me I 'd frazzle you out finer than rye-straw inside o' three minutes, you woman-scarin', kid-killin', dash-breakin', unbroke, unshod, ungaited, pastur'-hoggin', saw-backed, shark-mouthed, hair-trunk-thrown-in-in-trade son of a bronco an' a sewin'-machine!"

"I think we 'd better get home," I said to my companion when Rod had finished; and we climbed into the coupé, Tedda whinnying, as we bumped over the ledges: "Well, I 'm drefle sorry I can't stay fer the sociable; but I hope an' trust my friends 'll take a ticket fer me."

"Bet your natchul!" said Muldoon, cheerfully, and the horses scattered before us, trotting into the ravine.

Next morning we sent back to the livery-stable what was left of the yellow horse. It seemed tired, but anxious to go.

Rudyard Kipling.

THE FLOATING BETHEL.



ELL, bless the Lord for savin' sinners!" Babe exclaimed one evening as she came out and sat on the porch by my side, untying the strings of her white sunbonnet, and letting it fall back on her shoulders.

"I never told you about the Floatin' Bethel, did I? Well, last April, soon after I got sanctification, old Brother Hunter, over at Sandersville, heard me talk at Holiness Meeting here at the Station about how bad I wanted to work for the Lord and save souls, and the next week he wrote for me to come and go down the Ohio and Mississippi with the Floatin' Bethel. Brother Hunter he 's just a real full-salvation man, and eat up with zeal, and he had went about and raised money for the Lord, and bought the bottom of a' old wharf-boat

cheap, and mended it up, and built two stories and a steeple on it, and named it the Floatin' Bethel. And he said he was goin' to carry the Gospel into waste places, and convert the world.

"Well, of course I just more 'n blessed the Lord for the chance to go, and I got ready, and rode over to Sandersville, and we started from there up Green River to the Ohio. There was Brother Hunter, and Sister Hunter, and young Sister Hunter, their son Sam's wife,— one of the godliest women you ever saw,— and her baby, that was just three months old, but she said when the people scoffed at her for goin' that no amount of babies or husbands or the devil hisself could hold her back from the Lord's work, and go she *would*. Then there was Brother Gummy Bangs from the Station here, that Brother Hunter paid to go