

FIRST

"I know there wait for me  
(The common lot of all)  
Sorrow and toll and weariness and loss  
Before the long nightfall.

"But, ere I bend my head  
Before the griefs to come,  
Grant me some joy to know, some song  
To sing  
Or ere my lips grow dumb.

"Grant me warmly to live,  
Grant me greatly to love.  
To taste the banquet ere despoiling years  
Its varied sweets remove.

"Oh, give me golden grain  
Enough for scanty years,  
Garned in memory's storehouse.  
Then shall age  
Be left of half her fears.

"Out of the lovely past  
I shall have builded me  
A treasure-house of beauty, where to dwell  
In sweet serenity."

—Annie Sophia Waples, in the Woman's Magazine.

WILD HORSES

Some horses are like beautiful women; once seen they are never forgotten. They have a quality all their own, and to such the admiration and affection of a true horseman and horse lover are given instantly.

Salvage was that sort of horse.

Cowing, senior subaltern of the Forty-fifth Battery, Royal Field Artillery, found him. At the time Cowing was conducting the fire of the battery, putting six shells a minute into the village of Monchy-le-Preux; and it speaks well for the beauty and quality of the horse that even under the circumstances he attracted Cowing's attention from a distance.

A trooper was riding him up a sunken road that ran past the battery position, and making heavy weather of it, when Cowing first saw the horse. However, it was consideration for the trooper rather than for the horse that caused Cowing to relinquish command to his junior while he ran out to the sunken road and hailed the man.

"There's interdiction fire on the crossroads about four hundred yards ahead, my lad!" he shouted. "A salvo every minute. Mind your step and you can get through between salvos—if that beautiful brute you're riding doesn't take a notion to do a war dance at the crossroads."

"Hello, Cowing—I mean, how do you do, sir?" the trooper greeted him, suddenly remembering he was a private addressing a senior subaltern. He sat his horse, smiling at Cowing when the latter grasped the animal and held him steady.

"So you're out here, eh? Willie, I'm not glad to see you, you poor little devil. And you're a Tommy. You could have got a commission."

Trooper William Brandon shrugged. "I'm twenty," he defended. "I wanted to go when I was eighteen but I was frail—had a touch of T.B., so the doctors said."

"Hum-m-m! Well, they're not so particular now. And I wish, for your sister's sake, you were not out here. What's your regiment?"

"Ninth Lancers, sir."

"You may omit the military etiquette and address me as an old friend. What the devil are you doing alone on this road—in daylight?"

"Got in from home leave early this morning and discovered my squadron had moved up here some where during the night. Found this horse at the wagon lines, so I saddled him. Looking for my troop, y'know."

"I think you'll find them in a long wooded swale about a half mile from here. Straight ahead to the crossroads, then take the left-hand road about a quarter of a mile. You'll bear a charmed life if you make it."

"I heard we were in for some real old-fashioned cavalry work this morning," Trooper Brandon exclaimed. "I wouldn't miss it for anything."

"Well, two squadrons of the Ninth Lancers wouldn't be up front if there wasn't war planned for them. I think they're going to gallop Monchy-le-Preux after the gunners have softened it a bit. There won't be enough of them left after they've taken the village to make a similar experiment worth while. Better stay here with me, Willie, my boy, until—"

"Oh, but I couldn't do that!" the young trooper protested. "What? Miss a cavalry charge?"

"Yes, miss it," Cowing growled. "It's easy to see you're a newcomer here. Two years have knocked the fields-of-glory nonsense out of me. Nobody knows you're back. Nobody will ask why you weren't in this charge—and when it's over you'll go back and be a nice little orderly in the headquarters troop of some division; probably be safe for the duration of the war. Come now, my boy. Chuck it."

But the boy only shook his head and reluctantly Cowing let go the horse's head. He was profoundly affected, and after the habit of his kind was ashamed of his emotion and sought to conceal it.

"That's much too fine a mount, Willie," he protested, "to have slaughtered in a silly, useless cavalry brawl. My word, he's topping! If you have no consideration for yourself—and your sister—have some for your mount. I'll trade you a worn, tired old gunner mount that will be no loss."

Trooper Brandon shook his head. "Got to have something that can gallop when we gallop Monchy-le-Preux."

"Can this one step a bit?"

"He's very fast and beautifully mannered."

"Indeed? It seemed to me he was behaving badly a moment ago."

"Dead men and horses frighten him, but there isn't anything mean about him. I'll handle the rascal."

"The mount I'd trade you for him takes his morning roll among the dead. They mean nothing to his blasé life. This horse must be a spare charger of one of your troop officers."

"No; he's a remount, Cowing."

Cowing's critical glance swept over the trooper's mount and he saw that the horse was one of the best. He was a big liver-colored chestnut about sixteen hands high, with a grand front, the best of shoulders and impeccable limbs. His head was regal and held high; his tail was arched. It would have been impossible to say whether or not he was a thoroughbred, but at any rate he was, obviously, full of the best blood.

"Well, good luck to you both," Cowing said sadly. He patted the chestnut's wet neck with his left hand and held his right up to the trooper. "Mind that interdiction fire."

"Best always," Trooper Brandon murmured and was off.

Cowing stared after him, then strolled back to his observation post to observe his shells falling on Monchy-le-Preux, a village that perched like a mushroom on top of a low hill that must be taken at any cost, since it afforded the enemy a splendid position from which to observe the terrain for miles on each side of it. A dozen batteries were playing on it and some of the stuff was big.

After a while he saw the cavalry emerge from the low wooden swale and gallop the village. When they were within two hundred yards of it the artillery fired lifted and the dust and smoke over Monchy-le-Preux settled. He saw the Lancers going in and wondered what their losses would be in comparison with those of an infantry assault—wondered if little Brandon had been lucky.

He had a particular interest in the boy. There was a girl in England—Willie Brandon's sister Eve, and should the gods of war spare him, Cowing had a dream of courting Eve Brandon and marrying her. He had known her all his life; she had been the excuse for his first case of puppy love and he never got over it.

She was a girl after his own heart—a gallant sporting girl who rode to hounds, who loved the sun and knew good ones when she saw them; a girl whom, despite the fact that he loved her (and he knew she was aware of the passion), he had joyed in contending against in more than one heart-breaking point-to-point hunt down in Devon. He loved her, but not sufficiently to "throw" a race for her, and she would have despised him if he had. A good sort and lovely to look at—and now her brat of a brother, Willie, had joined up, and of course the little fool would be killed and break her heart.

It seemed only yesterday since he had seen Willie pounding along at the heels of the hunt on his pony. The youngster had been in at the death and the master of the fox, dipped had cut off a paw from the fox, dipped it in the animal's gore and blooded Willie most effectively. Well, the boy was in at the death again and, in all probability, old Fritz had blooded him for good and all. That was war. Cowing wished he could weep.

Late in the afternoon he saw a horse break from the ruins of Monchy-le-Preux. Straight across the shell-pocked battlefield he galloped at top speed to the crossroads. He missed the barrage of fire and turned down the sunken road up which the Ninth Lancers had marched in the darkness the night before. Presently, spent and winded, he came trotting down this road, and Cowing stepped out of his observation post and shouted, "Whoa!"

The horse stopped, then came toward Cowing as if, in the society of demons, he recognized a friend. There was no mistaking him. He was the big liver-colored chestnut Willie Brandon had ridden that morning. So it was obvious Willie had got home with the cavalry charge!

Cowing, examining the horse, knew that Willie would not come back to England. The horse's saddle, rump and withers were spattered with blood and the saddle had a jagged gash in the cantle and another across the top of the pommel.

"So Willie got a shell all to himself," Cowing decided. "Poor, brave, eager little devil! Straight from hell to front—and if the horse hadn't had his head down when the shell came over he'd have got it, too."

He was not one to wear his heart on his sleeve, so he could only stroke the horse for dead Willie's sake and try not to think of the crisp November days when he had been won't to take Willie hunting with him. He had been fond of the boy. Well, he would have to write Eve about this—and he wished he might shrink the task.

He led the horse down the sunken road and tethered him to the wheel of a smashed caisson; when the relief observer came up to the observation post after dark Cowing rode the horse down to the wagon lines and turned him over to the stable sergeant.

"Where'd you get him, Cowing?" a brother officer asked. "An uncommon good one, if you should ask me."

"He's Salvage," Cowing replied briefly. "He's lost from his squadron of the Ninth Lancers, and his rider got a shell. Half the Ninth are casualties, and I doubt if anybody will claim this chestnut. So I'm going to keep him for my charger."

"You always were a good horse thief, Cowing." Which was the truth. The wastage of horses in a field battery is terrific and the allotment of suitable replacements scarcely keeps pace with the wastage.

Of late, the battery had been receiving too many mules, and as Cowing was biased in favor of horses he resented mules. It was his job, usually, to come up with the teams to move the guns and often he had to do it in a hurry.

He had discovered that when a gun is ditched and does not come out after the first violent efforts to pull it out, a mule will become discouraged and quit, whereas a horse will try over and over and over again; he will try every time he is asked. And this was a gallant, sporting quality in a horse which appealed to the man. He had been reared among hunters and had learned to love those that never refused. So he was never done with picking up and nursing back to duty slightly wounded or exhausted horses abandoned by the wagon trains of other batteries.

The chestnut was without brand or hoof mark, but on his upper gum Cowing found tattooed the mark "9-L." "A fresh remount," he decided, "viewing the animal's splendid condition. 'Too high in flesh to have been on the western front very long. Yes, I'll keep him.'"

He saddled the chestnut next morning, mounted him and rode him around the wagon lines. The horse had a fine mouth; he did not pull; he had a fast walk, a long springy trot and an easy gallop. His manners were perfect. "A finished hunter," Cowing decided, and set him at a wagon pole. The chestnut hopped over it instantly.

He named his horse "Salvage." A new major took over the battery that night and occupied the observation post by day, so Cowing was relegated to his old job as officer in command of the wagon lines. The following day Guemappe, a village and still held out on the right flank, was won and the enemy driven back beyond a ridge that extended south, so at dusk Cowing brought the teams up to move the battery to a new position just back of the ridge.

He rode Salvage and when, in the dim starlight, they crossed the ground over which the cavalry had charged, Salvage was again smitten with the terror that had sent him galloping out of Monchy-le-Preux. Seemingly the sight of dead men and the smell of blood made him extremely nervous, but it was the sight of dead horses, with stiff outstretched legs, that drove him into a frenzy of terror.

He refused to leap over them or to pass close to them and the trip up to the new battery position developed into one long battle between horse and rider. Beyond an occasional rattling of nostrils or a shinking to one side, the cold-blooded and phlegmatic gunner horses paid no attention to the grim wreckage of war.

Coming back with the teams after the battery was in its new position man and horse fought it out again, stumbling into shell holes, climbing up, tumbling in again, with Salvage screaming when he encountered the corpse of a mule or a horse. But Cowing did not despair. He knew horses, knew that horses, like man, can become accustomed to anything, and he was confident that time and patience would cure Salvage of his war neurosis.

The horse was too sound, had too much quality plus the high intelligence and courage of his thoroughbred blood, to flunk it continuously. Nevertheless, flunk it he did. Cowing fought it out with the devil, and lost. He could force the horse to do as he pleased, but it was too much work. Regrettably he abandoned Salvage and went back to the old battery horse he had been riding before Salvage had galloped into his life.

When Bradshaw, youngest subaltern in the battery, saw Cowing on his old horse, he said: "Hello, what's wrong with Salvage?"

"Too nervous for a charger," Cowing replied. "I've turned him over to the stable sergeant to break to draft. After he's hauled a G.S. wagon around a while with a sixteen-hundred-pound Percheron to teach him his place he'll simmer down."

Bradshaw was horrified. "Oh, come now, Cowing," he protested. "I'll spare old Salvage this ignominy. Do give him to me, Cowing."

Cowing shrugged. "Help yourself, youngster. Within a week you'll resign yourself to seeing Salvage in draft."

"At any rate," Bradshaw declared, "I shall require quite a bit of beating, I fancy, before turning him back."

He and Salvage had it out together for two weeks; then one night Salvage came galloping back to the wagon lines without Bradshaw. Cowing looked him over, found him free of blood and grinned. "Bradshaw's taken a spill," he thought. "Now that Salvage has taken to bucking, the young'un'll be glad to give him back."

An hour later an orderly came back from the guns. "Sorry to report, sir, that Lieutenant Bradshaw's gone west, sir."

"How?" The old sinking feeling in his heart assailed Cowing.

"Got a shell to himself, sir. Lifted clean off Salvage and cut in two."

Well, there was nothing to say or do about it. These things happened with horrible regularity and the thought came to Cowing that he would be next. He had been genuinely fond of little Bradshaw, who had been one of the best—"Horse of ill omen," he muttered, "carrying my friends into it for signal honors. Now he shall go to draft."

He reckoned without the major, however. The latter came in for a rest period at the wagon lines next day and Cowing, now a captain, was sent up to the guns to take his place. The following day he learned from the sergeant major that the major had appropriated Salvage. "Tell Major Goodwin to stick with his old mount," he ordered the sergeant major. "Tell him two friends of mine have each got a shell to themselves while mounted on Salvage. The brute bears a charmed life, but he's death to his riders. He's no good beyond the wagon lines—shies and bolts and bucks and raises the devil when he has to pass dead men and dead horses. Tell the major I ask him, please, to let Salvage go into draft."

The sergeant major dutifully delivered the message, but the major merely hooted good-naturedly. "When you go up to the guns again, sergeant major, present my compliments to Captain Cowing and express my thanks for his friendly warning, but add that I'll give Salvage a tryout. He's new to the war, but it's been my experience that even a horse can grow accustomed to warfare."

Goodwin rested a week at the wagon lines; then he rode Salvage up to the battery position.

"Rather hot and bothered, eh?" Cowing greeted him. "It's five miles from the wagon lines to the guns and I'll lay you a quart of whisky you've covered eight miles en route."

"He's a devil, I'll admit, Cowing. However, he's got to learn to like it, and I'm the boy to teach him. Wish you'd ride him back to the wagon lines for me."

"Is that an order or a request, sir?"

"Request—naturally."

"Request denied," Cowing retorted promptly. "I wouldn't ride him back for a hundred pounds. Frankly, Goodwin, I'm afraid of him."

"You're getting jumpy, my boy," Goodwin replied easily. "However, there's an ammunition pack train over on the road yonder; I'll ride over and send him back with one of the muleteers."

He climbed back on Salvage—and at that instant it pleased a battalion of German artillery three miles away to open on the Forty-fifth Battery. Cowing heard the first shell coming and he knew that it was going to be a close one.

"Down, Goodwin!" he shouted, and threw himself flat on his face. A second later the shell whizzed over and burst twenty feet beyond. He turned and glanced over his shoulder.

In the dim starlight Salvage, riderless, was galloping to the rear and the second shell was exploding a little beyond the first. One, two, three, four, in orderly progression, the shells fell in front of the guns. One, two, three, four; another gun dropped them twenty yards in the rear of the guns. One, two, three, four; a third gun dropped them off to the right flank. One, two, three, four; a fourth gun dropped them on the left flank.

"Box barrage," Cowing shouted to the gun crew. "Clear out!"

There was no sense in staying now to engage in an artillery duel with the enemy, even if Cowing had known the coordinates of the guns firing upon them. The Forty-fifth Battery was enclosed in a square of heaving earth and flying metal; with each salvo the square was contracting and he knew some of his guns were bound to be destroyed. There was nothing for it but to "do a bunk." He got through the barrage with the gun crews, losing two men en route, and, safe off on a flank, they crouched in a shell hole and watched their guns being smashed.

Goodwin had got that first shell to himself and once more Salvage had escaped. Cowing prayed the brute might be wounded so badly he would have to be destroyed, but he knew otherwise. No wounded horse could have galloped off as Salvage had done. Moreover, had the horse been hit he would have screamed.

"The first time I get back to the wagon lines I'll blow his brains out," Cowing decided. "He's a devil horse, sent by the devil to kill my pals."

They shifted the three remaining guns to a new position before morning; three replacements came up the following night and the war went on. Cowing became a major. It was a month before he saw the wagon lines again. There on the picket line stood Salvage, sleek and shiny, with two newly healed scratches across his rump.

Cowing saw at a glance that the stable sergeant had been babying the horse. Gilbert, one of the new subalterns, asked the major for him, but the latter refused and issued orders that Salvage should be broken to draft immediately.

He was—but he did not take kindly to the collar, and a sneaking sympathy for him on the part of every lover in the battery was responsible for the fact that his hours in draft were as few as possible. After his first trip to the front he threw himself over the wagon tongue and broke it; he was relegated to the task of hauling forage in from the dump.

The war entered its fourth year and dragged its gray way across France. Then one night when the teams came up to move the guns to a new position the officer in charge of them brought a wild tale of a revolution in Germany; of overtures for an armistice.

At ten o'clock on the morning of November eleventh Cowing put a box barrage around a German battery and destroyed it. For an hour he hammered it savagely; at eleven o'clock, he gave the command to cease firing.

Then he sat down on the trail of No. 1 gun and commenced to weep. Nobody thought the less of him for it, for he had been out since Mons and this was the first time he had broken.

Presently he pulled himself together. A mounted man was coming toward him and he knew it must be an orderly with orders for him. He watched the horse approach in a rearing, plunging, shying fashion, leaping shell holes, fighting his rider every step of the way.

The orderly reached the battery, dismounted, saluted and handed the major a handful of mail. "It came in to brigade a little while ago, sir, and I thought you might like to have it at once, sir."

The major took the mail, thanked the orderly and then stared at the horse. "Isn't that Salvage you're riding?"

"Yes, sir?"

Cowing looked the animal over with new interest. He hadn't a blemish on him. Even the old shell-scratches on his rump had healed and the hair had grown over again perfectly.

"He's out of draft," the major ordered. "Tell the officer at the wagon lines I'll take him again for

my mount. Now that the war is over I might get some enjoyment out of him to repay me for the grief he's caused me."

Three days later, the battery pulled out for Germany, on the heels of the retreating German Army. When, at last, they had passed through the battle area into a calm and lovely countryside Cowing mounted Salvage and rode him at the head of the battery. And he had to admit he had never ridden a more tractable horse. Before the battery had reached Cologne, Cowing's old resentment against the horse had vanished.

After four years of the depression of war there was the vital necessity for a change and the British mounted units quickly found it. As quickly as the stock could be rested and got in shape again the division held a horse show and Salvage won the blue ribbon for jumping and conformation. He won many a point-to-point race, too, with Cowing up, never refusing a jump, never running off, seemingly enjoying it as much as did his rider.

Six joyous months in Germany ever threw a leg over. He had a marvelous mouth, perfect manners and was very fast.

"That's my horse," Eve declared proudly. "Tell me about him."

"After the race," he evaded. He shrank from telling her that her mount was the same horse her brother had been riding when he got a shell to himself and that two of his friends had met the same fate. The story might unsettle her; throw her off her race. Why tell her of the horse's shies and bad habit, when there was no possibility that it would reassess itself?

He smiled up at her. "Well, Eve, I'll tell you this much. If we have no bad luck this race lies between you and me. I don't think there's another entry we need worry about."

"How, nice!" she replied. "I shall enjoy beating you no end. Really, Major Cowing, you've been very disagreeable."

"I shall not enjoy beating you, but—I shall certainly try," he promised. "But let us cease bickering. There goes the bugle call."

"I suggest you put a large bet down on my horse," she teased.

"Sorry, Eve, but I've bet a thousand pounds—every penny I can spare—on my mare."

"Not really?"

"Really. Why not, when I know what she can do? I've had her over this course in a private tryout and she took every jump like a bird. And she's a thoroughbred and fast enough to have been a stake horse but for one sad little fault."

The girl frowned. "That's going to make it hard for me to win from you," she murmured. "And I've hurt you sufficiently already."

"I shall lose," he told her. "I feel it in my bones."

"Why?"

"Because this horse of yours is a devil horse. He always was a horse of ill omen to men."

"A change of climate and scene may have exercised the jinx," Eve suggested, and rode off to take her place in the parade to the post. Cowing followed last.

They were off—and a perfect start for Cowing. There were eleven starters and as they raced down the field toward the first jump Cowing saw that he was to be first over and that Eve Brandon on Salvage would be second.

He gathered the mare and they settled for the long cruel grind. Over stone walls, hedges, water jumps and gates they went and a quarter of a mile of plowed ground before reaching the red flag, the marked turn. Then, for the first time, Cowing glanced back.

The field was strung out widely behind him and, as he had anticipated, was making hard going through the plowed land, which is something that few horses like. No horse that will not run in the mud will run in a plowed field.

But Cowing's mare, broad of hoof, powerful and as free from nerves as a thoroughbred can be, was galloping it grandly, while three lengths behind her old Salvage was coming on as if nothing mattered to him. Cowing eased up his mare and the girl came abreast him; they took the last jump at the far end of the course side by side, rounded the flag and started home, Salvage leading now by two lengths.

The usual casualties incident to a point-to-point race had occurred. Two horses had refused and were hopelessly out of it; three had taken headers at the big water jump and thrown their riders, one of whom had a broken collar bone, while the horses of the other had departed for parts unknown. The remainder of the field was hopelessly out of it, providing nothing happened to Cowing's mare and Salvage.

Cowing saw that Salvage was not tiring—the old warrior had the heart and the stamina to go on to the finish—and he was going grandly. But Cowing knew his mare would go, too; so he raced along behind the girl, holding the mare well in hand and waiting to make his run in the last quarter mile—good firm going across a meadow, a four-foot stone wall jump and fifty yards to the finish.

As they leaped a hedge into this meadow he gave the mare her head, a cluck and a boot—and she commenced closing in on Salvage. As she drew abreast of him Eve used her whip for the first time and old Salvage responded nobly.

For a hundred yards they ran neck and neck, and far away across the field a great shout rose from the crowd watching the hard-fought finish. Then the superior quality of the mare began to tell; gradually she drew away from Salvage and came up for the final jump.

As she took off in her customary gallant style Cowing saw beside the wall something that shocked him almost to the point of crying out. A horse had floundered at that first jump at the start of the race, fallen and broken his neck, and, as so often happens in such cases, gallons of blood had poured from the animal's nostrils. The ground around

a world of speed and stamina, and how he can jump!"

"Where did you get him, Eve?"

"Gave a dealer seventy pounds for him. Hes been knocked up a bit—shins bucked and a tendon hurt—but I've had him fired, and now he's sound enough to serve me as a hunter. I can't afford such a horse as your mare."

"I'll give you a fine hunter one of these days—as a belated wedding gift, Eve, I have some yearlings coming along." Cowing got off his mare, walked over to the girl's mount and felt the off side of the horse's rump. He could feel two long scars in the silky hide. "It doesn't seem possible," he muttered, "but I think I know this horse."

He went to the animal's head, opened his mouth—and found "9-L" tattooed on the upper gum.

"I'll be shot if it isn't Salvage!" he declared.

"You know my horse?"

"I rode him in France and Germany, Eve. In those days I was, without doubt, the finest hunter I ever threw a leg over. He had a marvelous mouth, perfect manners and was very fast."

"That's my horse," Eve declared proudly. "Tell me about him."

"After the race," he evaded. He shrank from telling her that her mount was the same horse her brother had been riding when he got a shell to himself and that two of his friends had met the same fate. The story might unsettle her; throw her off her race. Why tell her of the horse's shies and bad habit, when there was no possibility that it would reassess itself?

He smiled up at her. "Well, Eve, I'll tell you this much. If we have no bad luck this race lies between you and me. I don't think there's another entry we need worry about."

"How, nice!" she replied. "I shall enjoy beating you no end. Really, Major Cowing, you've been very disagreeable."

"I shall not enjoy beating you, but—I shall certainly try," he promised. "But let us cease bickering. There goes the bugle call."

"I suggest you put a large bet down on my horse," she teased.

"Sorry, Eve, but I've bet a thousand pounds—every penny I can spare—on my mare."

"Not really?"

"Really. Why not, when I know what she can do? I've had her over this course in a private tryout and she took every jump like a bird. And she's a thoroughbred and fast enough to have been a stake horse but for one sad little fault."

The girl frowned. "That's going to make it hard for me to win from you," she murmured. "And I've hurt you sufficiently already."

"I shall lose," he told her. "I feel it in my bones."

"Why?"

"Because this horse of yours is a devil horse. He always was a horse of ill omen to men."

"A change of climate and scene may have exercised the jinx," Eve suggested, and rode off to take her place in the parade to the post. Cowing followed last.

They were off—and a perfect start for Cowing. There were eleven starters and as they raced down the field toward the first jump Cowing saw that he was to be first over and that Eve Brandon on Salvage would be second.

He gathered the mare and they settled for the long cruel grind. Over stone walls, hedges, water jumps and gates they went and a quarter of a mile of plowed ground before reaching the red flag, the marked turn. Then, for the first time, Cowing glanced back.

The field was strung out widely behind him and, as he had anticipated, was making hard going through the plowed land, which is something that few horses like. No horse that will not run in the mud will run in a plowed field.

But Cowing's mare, broad of hoof, powerful and as free from nerves as a thoroughbred can be, was galloping it grandly, while three lengths behind her old Salvage was coming on as if nothing mattered to him. Cowing eased up his mare and the girl came abreast him; they took the last jump at the far end of the course side by side, rounded the flag and started home, Salvage leading now by two lengths.

The usual casualties incident to a point-to-point race had occurred. Two horses had refused and were hopelessly out of it; three had taken headers at the big water jump and thrown their riders, one of whom had a broken collar bone, while the horses of the other had departed for parts unknown. The remainder of the field was hopelessly out of it, providing nothing happened to Cowing's mare and Salvage.

Cowing saw that Salvage was not tiring—the old warrior had the heart and the stamina to go on to the finish—and he was going grandly. But Cowing knew his mare would go, too; so he raced along behind the girl, holding the mare well in hand and waiting to make his run in the last quarter mile—good firm going across a meadow, a four-foot stone wall jump and fifty yards to the finish.

As she took off in her customary gallant style Cowing saw beside the wall something that shocked him almost to the point of crying out. A horse had floundered at that first jump at the start of the race, fallen and broken his neck, and, as so often happens in such cases, gallons of blood had poured from the animal's nostrils. The ground around