

"CHARLIE HORSE"

By ADELINE KNAPP.

"Yes, indeed, I can take you just as well as not. It's a little bit of a brown house on a side street—you might have trouble finding it, but I've taken Alice home several times after school—she is such a nice girl."

Eleanor Barnard did not mean her tone to sound condescending, but she was in a particularly "elegant" mood that afternoon.

She and Helen Perley were coming down the steps of Mrs. Longley's school for girls. Helen was a newcomer in the school and in the town. She was a pleasant, attractive girl, but what gave her special prestige in the eyes of her new schoolmates was that her grandfather, now dead, had been Governor of the State, and her father, a brilliant lawyer, although still a young man, was spoken of as likely to go even further than the elder Perley had done.

Eleanor Barnard's father was the owner of a large mill, a man who had made his own way and fortune, and enjoyed the high esteem of the community. In Mrs. Longley's school Eleanor was the only girl who had a carriage at her own disposal. It was really her mother's, and was only a very handsome park phaeton drawn by a very gentle sorrel horse.

There was just one shadow over her pleasure in the use of the phaeton. Danny, the sorrel, was a fine, aristocratic-looking animal, a free traveler and perfectly fearless; but among her father's delivery horses was one reserved for light work only, a creature so superlatively handsome that in Eleanor's opinion Danny looked like a yellow cow beside him. Charlie was a shabby, upstanding iron-gray, beautifully dappled, with an arching neck and a proudly carried tail. Eleanor often teased her father to let her drive Charlie before the phaeton, but always met with a half-laughing refusal.

To-day Eleanor had for the first time invited Helen Perley to drive with her in the park, and Helen had accepted the invitation joyously. "I wonder," she said, "whether while we are up in the neighborhood you would mind running in with me to call on my cousin, Maida Fanshaw? I ought to go there soon."

Eleanor was delighted. She did not know Maida Fanshaw—although she had long desired to. The Fanshaws were one of the oldest families in town, and the thought of calling upon Maida thus familiarly with Helen Perley set all her latent social ambitions to purring contentedly.

She formed a great resolution. When she stopped at the livery stable at noon to order the phaeton, she told the man in charge to put "Prince Charlie," as she called him, into the shafts.

The man looked puzzled. "Prince Charlie?" he queried. "Do you mean that there proud-going dapple-gray of Mr. Barnard's?"

"Yes," Eleanor replied, a little haughtily, and he ventured a remonstrance.

"Why, miss," he said, "you don't want to drive that there Charlie horse, do you?"

Yes, Eleanor was sure she did. "Please have the phaeton at the school promptly at half past two, and she swept away, full of school-girl dignity, leaving the man to scratch his head in genuine perplexity.

At half past two a boy from the stable stood at Charlie's head before the school as Eleanor and her guest came down the steps. The handsome gray certainly made a picture, set off by Danny's harness and the stylish phaeton. He was not altogether comfortable. His own bridle bore neither check-reins nor blinders. Danny's over-draw did not restrain that beautiful crest and proudly held head, but he tossed it impatiently now and then in a way that gave him an unusually sprited air.

Helen noticed it as the girls came down the walk.

"Oh!" she cried. "Do you drive that beautiful creature? Aren't you afraid of him?"

Eleanor laughed as she stood to let Helen enter the phaeton. "He's perfectly gentle," she said, "and I am used to driving."

Eleanor took up the reins and whip and they were off. The phaeton was a large one, but its weight was nothing as compared with that of even a light express wagon with several barrels of flour, and Charlie missed the steady resistance of his usual load. He put unnecessary strength into propelling the light vehicle, and once or twice, at a word from Eleanor, he accelerated his express wagon gait.

As he settled by degrees into a comprehension of his new task, the two girls talked of school matters. Helen was not quite prepared, as to her Latin, for the class which she could otherwise easily enter, and Mrs. Longley had suggested that Alice Graydon, who was unusually clever at Latin, might coach her so as to bring her up to the class work. Alice had not been at school that day, and Eleanor offered to take Helen to see her, after their other call had been made.

"Yes, indeed," she assented, heartily, to a remark of Helen's. "Alice is a lovely girl! You know she is going to be a teacher. Mrs. Longley is giving her every opportunity, and she is so deserving."

"She seems very clever," Helen said.

"Oh, ever so clever! I guess since her father's illness things haven't been easy for them. He was an employee at the mill before his breakdown. Father says he is a most worthy man."

"A splendid fellow!" were the words in which the mill owner always characterized his friend and former bookseller; but then, honest John Barnard had never been seated in a park phaeton with the granddaughter of an ex-Governor, driving to one of the most aristocratic houses in town.

They were outside the park now, and Charlie traveled delightfully down the broad, shady avenue on

started off with great energy, the phaeton swaying after him until he settled to a steady gait.

Eleanor stole a side glance at her companion, and saw that Helen's face was scarlet. Instinctively she recognized that her own rudeness to the stranger had made the young girl blush, and the flame of shame mounted to her own forehead.

She was too wretched to speak, and they drove on in silence for several blocks. It was Helen who spoke first. "Don't you think," she said, a little hesitatingly, "that we had better go right home? I can see Alice at school tomorrow."

Her words were the last blow to poor Eleanor's pride. She would have turned homeward at once, but unwillingly she had been going in the direction of the Graydon house, and Charlie's long, free strides had been carrying them rapidly toward. "The little brown house on a side street" was already in view, and nearing it, returning from the daily walk that he was now able to take in pleasant weather, was Sunner Graydon himself.

He and Charlie were old friends, and the gray had already spied him, and now made straight for the curb, for the horse was the pampered pet of all hands at the mill.

"For goodness' sake!" Mr. Graydon exclaimed, as he recognized the outfit. "It is really you, Eleanor? What has happened to Danny? How on earth did you ever undertake to drive Charlie horse?"

He had known Eleanor since her babyhood, and called her by her first name as a matter of course.

"You and your friend must have wanted a drive bad," he added, rubbing Charlie's nose affectionately and still flushing crimson. Eleanor introduced Helen.

"Harmon Perley's daughter?" the bookkeeper said, shaking hands cordially. "I'm glad to see you—we're all proud of your father these days!" And Helen thanked him, beaming with pleasure.

Alice had spied them from the window, and came running down the walk.

"O girls!" she cried. "How lovely! Aren't you coming in?"

Then she recognized the gray. "Eleanor," she said, "where is Danny? If this isn't Charlie, dear old Charlie horse!" And she, too, fell to patting the handsome head.

Helen surveyed her hostess in mingled doubt and perplexity. She did not understand. It was very strange, and Eleanor, white now with a sick sense of what her own folly might be costing her, could not meet her glance.

"How in the world did he go in a phaeton?" Mr. Graydon asked, oblivious of their silence. "He's the best horse that ever trotted." This with a hearty slap on the broad back. "But I shouldn't exactly call him a park animal. Is your father going to let you use him?"

After all, there was a broad streak of John Barnard's honesty in his daughter, and raising her head, Eleanor answered bravely, if not very firmly.

"Father doesn't know I've got him," she said. "But I've always wanted to drive him, and so to-day I had him put in."

"For pity's sake, what for, when you have a horse like Danny?"

Truth had risen triumphant, and Eleanor met the question, although her face flamed again.

"Because I was a silly goose," she said, speaking very low and fast. "I thought Charlie would look more stylish—and I didn't know how he drove."

Mr. Graydon was very busy tying Charlie, and his face was hidden. If she could not do justice to either horse at the moment, or realize that each was admirable in his own place. She only knew that she was uncomfortable, that her new acquaintances must think her very stupid, and that she could never again hold up her head in their presence. She was glad when the call ended and she and Helen were once more beside the phaeton.

Helen was not without her qualms as she surveyed the handsome gray, but she had good courage, and she entered the vehicle without demur when Eleanor had untied Charlie and turned him a little from the curb.

He saffed her curiously as she did this; the blenders prevented him from seeing just what sort of outfit he was a part of, and everything seemed to him strange and unfamiliar. He stood motionless while Eleanor took her seat and gathered whip and reins.

No did he move when she gave the little chirrup at which Danny was wont to start promptly. It is a question, indeed, if he heard it. He was listening instead for his own signals, the well-known slam of the tail-board of the delivery wagon, and Tim Sullivan's familiar shout, "G'lang there, Charlie horse!" And neither of these was forthcoming. Instead, after an instant's hesitation, came the light flick of Eleanor's whip.

Effect of Eulogy on Lawyers.

The Rev. F. S. C. Wicks, of the All Souls' Unitarian Church, told a good story the other day of a young preacher who eulogized a very bad lawyer. He said the lawyer was a bad husband, bad father, bad neighbor and generally bad man morally, though he had been very successful in his profession. For the funeral a new preacher in the town was selected so that he would not know just what kind of a man the lawyer had been.

The preacher arrived and asked a man standing by, who was pretty much of a wag, what sort of a man the lawyer had been. The wag landed the lawyer to the skies. The preacher believed all he said, arose and pronounced a poetic eulogy of the departed barrister. When he had heard all he could stand to hear without unburdening himself to some one present, the judge of the court in that town leaned over to a lawyer who sat beside him and remarked:

"Well, there's mighty little inducement for a really good man to die in Smithville now." — The Indianapolis Star.

"Indeed! I am very glad to hear you say so." And the gentleman stepped back, with a slight smile.

Fortunately the situation seemed at last clear to Charlie horse, and he

sorely tried nerves, and she foolishly resented the well-meant interference.

"I am quite accustomed to driving," she said, with what she considered her most dignified air.

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