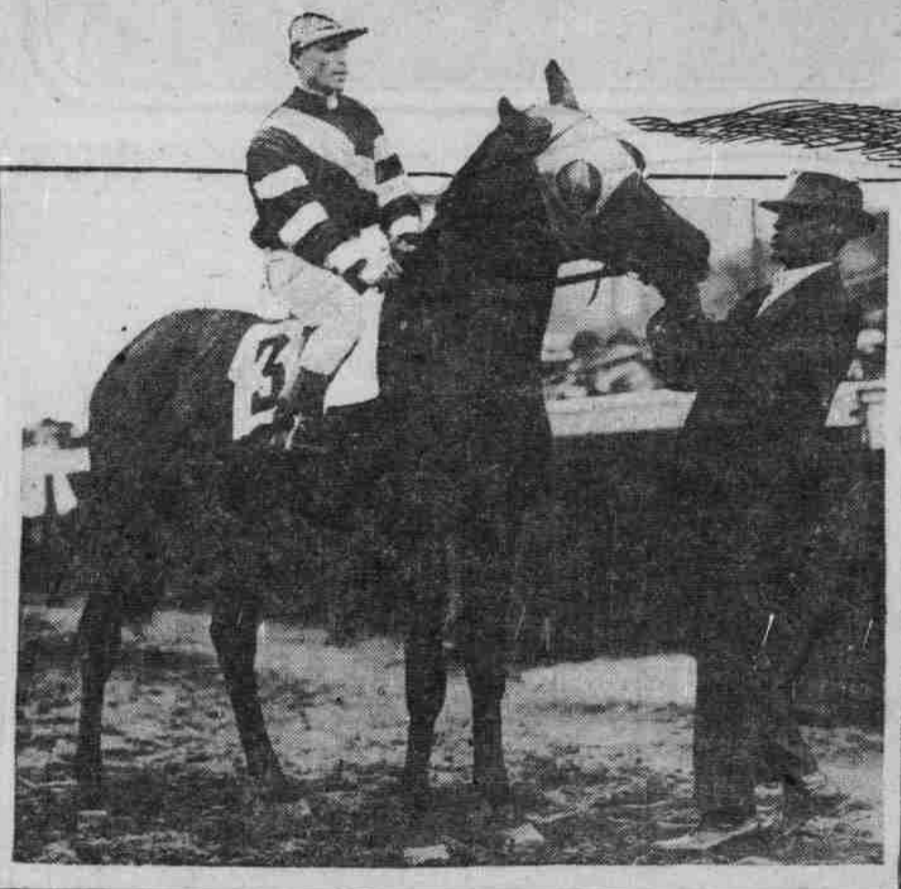


Horse Sense and Their Nonsense



Veteran trainers tell odd stories about famous racetrack steeds.



The Finn—Rider Burlingame

Borrow—Rider Notter

Captain Alcock

BY HENRY V. KING.

His name was Judge Dinney and 20 years ago he was a real good horse. Now he is but a memory to a few old-timers and they know him not as the two-mile champion of America, but as "that horse of Sandy McNaughton's which we used to call 'Kellar the Great.' Sandy himself, who is training the stable of Mrs. Louise Vlau, told us the story of "Kellar the Great" at Jamaica the other day.

"It was along in his 4-year-old days," said Sandy, "that I blistered him for corns and covered his legs with a blue clay I rigged him in a cradle and bib. He was tied in his stall and the help instructed not to remove the bandages and to allow no one near him except at meal times.

"I was particularly interested in Judge Dinney because he was such a good horse and on my arrival at the stable next morning I went directly to his stall. To my great surprise I found the bandages on the floor and the colt's legs as clean as if they had just been washed. There were no signs of the clay.

"I was furious, thinking that some one had disobeyed my instructions and had washed his legs. Inquiry failed to enlighten me.

"But every one in the stable denied having touched the colt and all were sure no stranger was near his stable.

"I then tightened the cradle, rebandaged the legs and after warning all hands to keep away from the stall I went to the races. On my return the next morning the bandages were on the floor and his legs as clean as a whistle.

"There was the same profession of ignorance by all hands, but I was certain some one in my employ was disloyal, so after bandaging him for a third time I got another watchman, a man I knew well and in whom I had confidence. I instructed him to watch the other employes and to keep away from Judge Dinney's stall.

"But the same thing occurred that night. When I reached the stable the third day the colt was happy and playful, but his legs were as clean as the day he was foaled, and the bandages lay beside him.

"I pondered over the thing for nearly an hour, but by no stretch of my imagination could I conceive of the horse doing it. I would have bet every cent I possessed that the cradle and bib would have prevented such a thing. I laid the law down to all my help and fired the watchman I employed the day before. Two negro grooms thought it a great joke, and I fired them, too.

"But the same thing occurred each day

for a week. Then I decided to play detective. I slipped over to the stable after all the help had retired and with my watchman sneaked into the stall next to Judge Dinney. An hour later I was awakened by a noise. I arose quietly and peeped into the colt's stall. There I saw Judge Dinney doing a contortionist's act. He leaned against his stall, slid down the side of it, rolled over on his back and then with great effort pulled his right leg up to his mouth. I thought he was straining himself and was tempted to stop him, but I decided to see the thing through. He worked on the bandages about ten minutes and finally got it untied. Then he picked it up with his teeth and threw it in a corner. He didn't lick the clay then. He went to work on the other bandage. When this was off he threw himself on his side and rested for about a quarter of an hour. He rolled on his back again and placing his leg to his mouth licked off every speck of the clay. He repeated this feat with the other leg and then he rolled over and went to sleep."

Strange Doings of Horses.

Jack Joyner, the veteran trainer, after hearing McNaughton's story, said:

"Horses do strange things and strange things happen to them. I know of no more mysterious happenings than the cure of Ori Flamme.

"In the late 80s Jimmy Rowe gave T. B. Davis, uncle of the present steward of the Jockey club, the gray colt Ori Flamme. The horse was lame and seemed hopelessly crippled, but Mr. Davis believed he would make a good sire and asked me to take him to his farm in West Virginia. He was at Sheephead Bay, and I was about to move to Washington to race Mr. Davis' string there.

"Ori Flamme could scarcely walk. In those days there were no vans and we walked the horses to and from the ferries and railroads. Ori Flamme was in such bad shape I sent him on his way to the ferry three hours ahead of the rest of the others, and at that they beat him to the boat. The people along the streets shouted at us that it was cruelty to animals to walk such a lame horse, and it took four men to get him on the boat and half a dozen to put him on the train.

"When we reached Washington I expected much trouble and loss of time. But to my surprise Ori Flamme walked out of that car without a sign of lameness. I was stunned. I couldn't believe it. I questioned all my help, but all declared they hadn't been near him. I walked him around the block near the station half a dozen times. Still there was no sign of lameness. Then I galloped him and he wanted to run away.

"Mr. Davis had seen him before he started south and was sure he was a hopeless cripple. I wrote to him about the

miracle and asked permission to train him. He wrote back that I was crazy, but that I could do as I wanted. So I put the colt in training and he won 12 straight races and defeated the immortal Firenze in the Fordham handicap.

"And I had dreamed the result of the Fordham. I told Rowe about it the day before the race, and he told me that I was going ooo-coo. But the race was run as I had dreamed it, and Ori Flamme was the winner."

It was now up to Rowe, dean of the horsemen and trainer for Harry Payne Whitney, and he obliged with some recollections.

"Borrow is a shrewd fellow," he said. "He hates me and also Marshall who used to exercise him. If he could catch us he'd kill us, sure. Although he has been retired for several years he still remembers that we used to make him work and if ever there was a thoroughbred which defied us attempts to cross the field in which he is loafing at Brookdale he will chase us to kick out our brains if we don't get out of his way. He has made me hustle many times. To escape him I often ran 50 yards to a fence in record time.

"He was as cunning as a fox when he was in training, too. He used to lose sleep so he wouldn't have to work. In all the years I had him I never saw him sleep and night watchmen used to report to me regularly that he was awake every time they entered the stable. Several times I let him escape work because I believed he hadn't slept.

"One day I concealed a groom in the stall next to his. When the help left the stable Borrow laid down and slept like all the other horses. But he slept like the hoboes—with one eye open. Just as soon as a watchman entered the stable Borrow woke up, jumped to his feet and began munching hay. When the watchman passed he'd lie down again and have another snooze. After we learned his trick I worked him every workday and he hasn't forgiven me or Marshall yet.

Greenleaf Pulls a "Bone."

"Chicle was a foxy fellow, too. He had bad feet and when in training it was necessary to put them in buckets of healing water every night. We did that every night for months but got no results. The same lotion had healed other horses' feet and I couldn't understand why this fellow didn't improve. Every time I went to his stall his feet were in the buckets and the employes reported the same thing.

"Finally I became convinced he was fooling me and I 'planted' a negro near his stall. The lad found out quickly why

his feet didn't respond to my treatment. As soon as anyone would come near his stall he stuck his feet into the buckets and as soon as they'd leave he'd take them out again. I cured him by strapping the buckets to his feet and making him stand in them all night.

"Greenleaf did the same stunt on me but we caught him when he pulled a 'bone.' His front feet were sore and placed in buckets of water but like Chicle he used to take them out as soon as he was sure no one was watching him. One day while he was munching hay the door opened suddenly and he put his two hind legs in the buckets instead of his sore front ones."

Billy Shields tells the story of Logan which could not stand the sight of a uniform. This aversion cost the railroad companies hundreds of dollars and earned for the colt the sobriquet, "Hustler's Delight."

Now, a hustler is a shiftless fellow, who follows racing from one track to another. He is usually an ex-stableman and just as happy with a dime in his pocket as on the rare occasions that being a windfall.

When racing shifted from one track to another, a dozen hustlers would watch for Logan. When he was placed in his car, they would scamper aboard and hurry to his stall. He was as kind and docile as a kitten with them but no one with a uniform could come within ten feet of him. All the conductors on the horse trains knew him and feared him. They never went near his car with the result that the hustlers rode without buying tickets.

Shields also had a peculiar horse in Armonde's Right, belonging to E. R. Thomas. He was a fast horse and a really great racer but he was a savage and in all of his races wore a muzzle. It was worth any employe's life to go near him in the stable. But the "green" boy could do anything with him and a stranger could pull his tail and he'd pay no attention to it.

Jim Fitzsimmons says he has a cunning and intelligent horse in Captain Alcock.

"Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays are his work days and he knows them as well as I know them," said Fitzsimmons. "If a storm or heavy track should make it necessary to postpone his work he seems to anticipate it and delight in it. On his off days when he has only a gallop, he returns full of vim and without a urging. But on work days he cuts up like a broncho. It is only by use of another horse and the hardest kind of urging, plus plenty of whip that I can get him to the starting post. On some mornings all

the whips in the country won't make him do his best. We get him to the post and started but he'll sulk all the way around and travel as slow as a pony."

All racegoers of a decade ago know about Robin Hood's fondness for beer. He was a good sprinter and won many races but Johnny Mayberry says he never ran well unless he had a bucket of beer before going to the post. He also whinnied on his return from a race until he got another bucket. When Robin Hood was racing, Mayberry lived in Sheephead Bay and to get to and from the Gravesend and Sheephead tracks it was necessary to walk horses through the streets and pass Mayberry's home. When he got him in front of that house he would pull up and wouldn't budge until one of Mayberry's family came out and gave him some beer.

George Reed holds Viley, now racing in the south, as the strangest horse he has ever seen.

"To frequenters at the New Orleans track Viley is known as the guideless wonder," says Reed. "Jack Phillips sends him out to gallop without a rider and when he thinks he has gone far enough he gives a shrill whistle through his fingers. The horse hears it, stops galloping instantly and returns to his barn."

Frank Herold says St. Isidore is a Dr. Jeckill and Mr. Hyde. "When I had him he used to wait at his stall door for me, and if I had sugar he was my friend for the remainder of the day. But the days I failed to bring that sugar I had to watch him every minute or he'd kick my brains out."

Tom Healy, who looks after R. T. Wilson's string, recalls the doings of Kinikinic. Ed Nash had charge of him and in the mornings when Healy would tell Nash to take him home, Kinikinic would start without being guided. When Nash was told to work him the colt would start to fight and it would take several men to get him to the post.

George Carroll, the jockey, says The Turk wouldn't work until he had a chew of tobacco and this colt would chew a whole plug while being cooled out after a race or a workout.

Bitter Enmity Between Horses.

Sam Hildreth had two horses. So violent was the mutual dislike that it was impossible to bring them on the track together for work or races. They knew each other two hundred yards away and only an iron chain could hold them from running at each other.

The Finn, the famous black horse of H. C. Hallenback, understood only one language. It was the curses of the negro stable boys. One day his negro rubber went to Ed Heffernan, the trainer, and asked him to be transferred to another horse. The trainer was surprised at any groom wanting to give up the care of a champion and asked the reason: The negro replied:

"Well you see, boss, I went to church yesterday and I made peace with God and man and I promised I wouldn't cuss no more. This morning I started to work on that black devil and cause I didn't cuss him he tried to kill me. I tried him several times but each time he ran me out of the stall."

Walter House has a saddle horse he calls King, which does the work of a shepherd dog. He watches all of the horses in his stable and when one of them

is missing he cries until he is whipped. He accompanies his stablemates to the paddock and if any outsider goes near his charges he tries to kick or bite him. When his charges go to the post he whinnies for them until they return. Last summer at the Empire City track he stood on the hill near the jockey's room while Sweep By was in a race. When the flock of horses in the race went past him he recognized Sweep By and began crying at the top of his lungs.

All the men and all the whips at the Aqueduct track won't make Jim Fitzsimmons' All Over go into his stall unless Mike Sullivan, his groom, is near. Mike is his only boss and he obeys him like a dog obeys his master.

Frank Herold says some mares are like women. He said Wistful and a gelding named Farragut were pals and when turned out to pasture were always together. One day something happened and their friendship suddenly ceased. Wistful jilted Farragut and then made a steady companion of another gelding named Cleopatra.

Tom Welch, who has charge of Joseph E. Widener's horses, had a filly that could run like the wind but which refused to race. She worked fast in the mornings but it was a physical impossibility to get her on the track for a race. She was Cherryola, the dam of the great Purchase. With her Welch believed he would win the rich and historic Spinaway stakes. She acted like a lamb the morning of the stake but when he attempted to put a saddle on her in the paddock in the afternoon she threw herself on the ground on her back and refused to get up until the saddle was removed from her sight. The trainer asked for permission to saddle her on the track, the request was granted and the horse was held on her legs while the tack was arranged. Then Jack Martin was thrown on her back and she was turned loose. She didn't run, nor jump, nor kick. She just lay down and rolled on her back. Martin had a narrow escape. The stewards saw her antics and ordered her off the track and out of the race.

Frank Regan had a pair, Dorcas and Whimsy, which were more like circus horses than runners.

"All I'd have to do was hum a two-step and they'd dance as well as any dancing horse you ever saw on any stage. Whimsy and Dorcas knew my voice and if they were turned loose in a field a call from me would bring both of them on the run.

There have been thousands of mean and bad and savage horses, but it is a saying on the turf that all children, drunks and the irresponsible are immune.

The writer saw Louis Feustel's three little children make a circus horse out of Dream of the Valley. They pulled his tongue, made him "shake hands," pulled his tail and lie down so that they could sit on his stomach. If their father or any of his employes attempted to go near him without a strap or a stick, he'd run them out of the stall.

Jim Fitzsimmons says he had a horse named King Idol that was mean and a world's champion kicker. Fitz swears that when King Idol kicked he never missed, but that his victims always were h. remen. He wouldn't bother a child or a stranger.