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FRIENDSHIPS and ENMITIES

(Continued From Page 97)

ming or other. The wonder is you didn't buy him."

"You can be as obstinate and thick-headed as you like, but there's no need to be offensive. It was tactless enough of you to raise the subject at all—absolutely spoiling our day."

"Oh, very good," said George. "I'm sure I've no anxiety to trespass any further on your hospitality. Stop the car at the next railway station and I'll go back by train, and I'm damned sorry I ever came."

"As you please," said Mr. Robertson coldly.

There was plenty of traffic on the road and for a time the car had perforce to proceed slowly. For nearly a quarter of an hour neither of the men spoke. But it gave them plenty of leisure to think.

What George thought was that he simply dared not go back to Lucy and tell her that he had once more quarrelled with James over that infernal old pony. It was not merely that Lucy would be angry with him; though she certainly would. She would also be extremely amused. And that was unendurable. It might even be that the story of the happy day at Epsom might get abroad. At all costs things must be put right. He would have to pocket his pride and apologise. He cleared his throat and was on the point of beginning the apology. But James Robert Robertson, who had possibly been pursuing a similar line of thought, got in first.

"Look here, George," said James. "I'm afraid I rather lost my temper just now and said a lot of things I shouldn't have said. I'm sorry and I hope you'll overlook it."

"With all the pleasure in the world," said George, extending his large hand. "For that matter I was very much to blame myself, and I hope you'll overlook that too."

"Certainly," said James. "This is as it should be. Now I'll tell you what I propose. We are both of us men of decided opinions and strong will. You'll probably never change your mind about that pony, nor shall I. What we must do is to agree to drop the subject. And I'll tell you what I'll do. Have you backed anything yet?"

"No. I'm waiting. According to the papers, the favourite's the only horse in the race. But look at the price. I'm not touching it."

"And I'm not buying money either. I'm going to put the £10 you paid me for that pony on the best outsider I can get. If it loses, it's my loss. If it wins, we divide up—fifty-fifty. How's that?"

"Extremely generous of you. I accept with pleasure."

Their mild flutters on minor races had no success, but they lunched admirably and Tilling, who waited on them, ventured on a word to his master.

"You'll excuse me, sir," he said, "but I've met with one or two of my old friends and had a word with them. There's a horse—Tremolo by Musician out of Quakeress—that they think something of. If he's fretted and messed about at the

gate he'll be no good—he'll be dancing when he ought to be running. But if he gets away nicely they say he can win. The price is tempting too. It was better, but you can get thirty still."

"That's our horse," said Robertson with conviction.

"I'm entirely with you," said Barnes.

They put their money on at once and were only just in time to get the price that Tilling had mentioned.

The race was uneventful. At Tattenham Corner Tremolo had the lead and never lost it. He won by over a length and the favourite was not even placed.

Robertson and Barnes, with £150 apiece to come to them, felt joyous and convinced that they had little more to learn about racing. Some of their friends gathered round and drank to their health in Mr. Robertson's champagne, but expressed a lowly opinion of them.

"It's a case of fool's luck," said Mr. Smithers. "I've studied the things from A to Z, and I've not found a winner to-day yet. You chaps go at it blind and pocket £300. Tell me now, what made you do it?"

"We saw the horse in the paddock," said Robertson complacently, "and we fancied the looks of him."

"Quite so," said Barnes. "If ever a horse had winner stamped all over him, Tremolo had. Can't think how you wise men came to miss it."

"Well, he'd no business to win, anyhow," said Smithers. "He's no particular class, and a bad-tempered brute into the bargain. Fool's luck, that's what it is."

Robertson and Barnes did not wait to tempt fortune further. They were happy, they were also weary, and they both slept placidly in the car during the greater part of the journey home.

Barnes was deposited at his house and Robertson proceeded home. He found Annie somewhat dejected.

"Perfectly rotten bridee this afternoon," said Annie. "I never held a card the whole time and went down 12/9. Lucy did nearly as badly. I shouldn't mind so much if I'd lost to people who could play. I don't suppose you've done much better either. Cook says an outsider won. I don't know where she got it from."

"Yes, Tremolo won. I thought he would. I backed him, and so did dear old George—on my advice, but that is strictly between ourselves."

"James, you didn't! How did you?"

"Well, I saw the horse and liked the looks of him. That was all there was to it. And if you happen to want a new hat you can go up town to-morrow and buy one. Three if you like. And what I want now is a whisky-and-soda with a large lump of ice in it, and a hot bath to follow."

"James," said Annie. "I think you're the most truly wonderful man that ever lived."

"Not at all," said James modestly, with a whisky decanter in his hand.