

that day the police had special orders to keep it clear, so that it was a perfectly blank, white stretch as far as I could see. You know how one never seems to get any nearer to things on a road like that, and there was the clock hanging opposite to me on the splash board; I couldn't look at it, but I could hear its beauty click-click through the trotting of the pony, and that was nearly as bad as seeing the minute hand going from pip to pip. But, by George, I pretty soon heard a worse kind of noise than that. It was a case of preserve me from my friends. The people who had gone out to Sniffer Jung's tomb on horseback to meet me, thought it would be a capital plan to come along after me and see the fun, and encourage me a bit—so they told me afterwards. The way they encouraged me was by galloping till they picked me up, and then hammering along behind me like a troop of cavalry till it was all I could do to keep the pony from breaking.

'You've got to win, Paddy,' calls out Mrs Harry Le Bretton, galloping up alongside, 'you promised you would!'

Mrs Harry and I were great friends in those days—very sporting little woman, nearly as keen about the match as I was—but at that moment I couldn't pick my words.

'Keep back!' I shouted to her; 'keep back, for pity's sake!'

It was too late—the next instant the pony was galloping. The penalty is that you have to pull up, and make the wheels turn in the opposite direction, and I just threw the pony on his haunches. He nearly came back into the cart, but the tremendous jerk gave the backward turn to the wheels and I was off again. Not even that kept the people back. Mrs Le Bretton came alongside again to say something else to me, and I suddenly felt half mad from the clatter and the frightful strain of the pony on my arms.

'D——n it all! Le Bretton!' I yelled, as the pony broke for the second time, 'can't you keep your wife away!'

They did let me alone after that—turned off the road and took a scoop across the plain, so as to come up with me at the finish—and I pulled myself together to do the last couple of miles. I could see that Cashmere Gate and the Delhi walls ahead of me; 'pon my soul I felt as if they were defying me and despising me, just standing waiting there under the blazing sky, and they never seemed to get any nearer. It was like the first night of a fever, the whizzing of the wheels, the ding dong of the pony's hoofs, the silence all round, the feeling of stress and insane hurrying on, the hobbling of my head, and the scorching heat. I'll swear

no fever I ever had was worse than those last two miles.

As I reached the Delhi walls I took one look at the clock. There was barely a minute left.

'By Jove!' I gasped, 'I'm done!'

I shouted and yelled to the pony like a madman, to keep up what heart was left in the wretched little brute, holding on to him for bare life, with my arms and legs straight out in front of me. The gray wall and the blinding road rushed by me like a river—I scarcely knew what happened—I couldn't think of anything but the ticking of the clock that I was somehow trying to count, till there came the bang of a pistol over my head.

It was the Cashmere Gate, and I had thirteen seconds in hand.

There was never anything more heard of the bagman. He can, if he likes, soothe his conscience with the reflection that he was worth a thousand pounds to me.

But Mrs Le Bretton never quite forgave me.

## POISON EATERS.

### AN APPETITE FOR ARSENIC.

It is not generally known that the strange habit of eating poison prevails very extensively on the Continent, and in recent years the number of persons in Great Britain addicted to this injurious and dangerous practice has greatly increased. The aim of the poison eaters is twofold, one object being to obtain a fresh, healthy appearance, and acquire a certain degree of *embonpoint*. On this account many young ladies make use of the dangerous agent arsenic, that they may make themselves attractive in the eyes of the opposite sex, and it is really astonishing with what favourable results their efforts are attended. The second aim of the poison eaters is to improve their breathing capacities, and render respiration easier. With this object in view, the practice of eating arsenic is almost universal among the peasantry of the mountainous districts of Austria, Hungary, and France, and they ascend with ease heights which they could only otherwise climb with great distress to the chest.

### THE DOSE.

The dose of arsenic with which the poison-eaters begin consists, according to the confessions of some of them, of a piece the size of a lentil, which in weight would be rather less than half a grain. To this quantity, which they take fasting several mornings in the week, they confine themselves for a considerable time; and then gradually, and very carefully, they increase the dose according to the effect produced. It is well to observe that the symptoms of chronic arsenical poison never show themselves in individuals who adapt the dose to their constitution, even although that dose should be considerable. It is not less worthy of remark, however, that if from any cause the perilous indulgence is stopped symptoms of illness are sure to appear, which have the closest resemblance to those produced by poisoning from arsenic. These symptoms consist principally in a feeling of general discomfort, attended by a perfect indifference to all surrounding persons and things, great anxiety, and a number of distressing sensations arising from the digestive organs, and for all these symptoms there is but one remedy—a return to the enjoyment of arsenic.

### THE DOOM.

The misfortune, however, is that poisons swallowed for the sake of the agreeable sensations they occasion owe this effect to their action upon the nervous system, and the action must be kept up by a constantly increasing dose till the constitution is irremediably injured. In the case of arsenic, so long as the excitement is undiminished, all is apparently well; but the point is at length reached when to proceed or to turn back is alike certain death. The moment the dose is diminished or entirely withdrawn symptoms of poison appear, and the victim perishes because he has shrunk from killing himself. An individual deliberately condemning himself to devour this horrible poison on an increasing scale during his whole life places himself in the certain position that if at any time, through accident, necessity, or other cause, he holds his hand, he must die the most agonising of all deaths.

'The last word' is the most dangerous of infernal machines, and the husband and wife should no more fight to get it than they would struggle for the possession of a lighted bombshell.



In the card room of the Delhi club, playing whist with the greatest good humour.—See 'THE BAGMAN'S PONY.'