would often be "let us go and see Bessie at th' Barn."

Another legend (presumably) was to this effect:—A noted highwayman (generally supposed to be Dick Turpin) was in the habit of stabling his steed in the old barn which stood at the square in front of the Besses o' th' Barn Inn. The name of this gallant steed was said to have been Black Bess or Bess o' th' Barn, and it was from the exploits of this horse and its rider that the village obtained its name.

It is unfortunate that no record exists of the actual date of the commencement of the Band, but we are given to understand that when first originated, over 100 years ago, it was a string band, which was afterwards turned into a reed band somewhere about the year 1818, during the reign of George III., and soon after the famous Battle of Waterloo.

As far back as 1821 Besses were awarded their first prize in musical competition, for on the 19th of July they were, along with numerous other bands, engaged to play in the procession celebrating the Coronation of George IV., a prize was offered for the band that should play a piece of its own selection. The prize was awarded to Besses, who for their test piece played "God Save the King." This stands as the first introduction to a long list of remarkable successes. In June, 1837, on the occasion of the Coronation of the late Queen Victoria, the band also competed, playing on this occasion "Hail! Smiling Morn," and were awarded the first prize.

In 1853 all the reed instruments were dispensed with, and no time was lost in procuring the necessary means required to replace them with brass; the band was augmented to the strength of eighteen performers, and secured the services of a professional conductor.

For some years, midst many ups and downs, the band toiled on, ever actuated by a desire to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, and in the year 1868, at a contest held at Todmorden, Besses won a fifth prize. In 1869 and 1870 the band also won the fourth and fifth prizes respectively at Belle Vue contests.

Changes were made and various conductors took the band in hand and the combination kept up a steady progress until 1882. Some time after this a deputation was formed to wait upon, for the second time, Mr. Alexander Owen, with the object of inducing him to take up the teaching of the band, and the ultimate outcome was that on February 24th, 1884, this well-known gentleman gave Besses o' th' Barn their first lesson. Mr. Owen, whose name and fame extend throughout the universe, may truly be described as one of the pioneers of musical art in the brass band sphere.

During 1892 Besses held the proud position of holding every challenge cup in Great Britain—a feat truly magnificent.

The year 1903 brought to the band the crowning victory of its contesting career—a victory, the value of which is almost inestimable. At the great National Championship Contest, held annually at the Crystal Palace, London, Besses were successful in winning the Thousand Guinea Trophy, which carries with it for one year the Brass Band Championship of Great Britain and the Colonies, a position coveted by every band under the sun. This great and glorious victory, achieved in competition against over one hundred of the best bands of this country, adds to the brilliant career of Besses o' th' Barn, the greatest honour that falls to the lot of our brass bands.

During the past year, Besses, as all the world knows, has toured nearly the whole of the British Isles; has been commanded to appear before their Majesties the King and Queen, and also carried out a triumphal tour through France in aid of French charities, when they had the honour of performing before President Loubet. The King was delighted with the performance of the band, and the French President expressed his praise in equally flattering terms, and the band has a pressing invitation to return to France as soon as their engagements permit.

Mrs. Ultra-De Swell: "Coach dogs are out of style. I want an automobile dog."

Dealer: "Well, madam, here is just the one you want."

"Now, you are sure he is an automobile dog?"

"I should say so. Why, he will follow the scent of gasoline for miles."

Spearmint in Private Life.

(By Edward Moorhouse, in "Pall Mall.")

It is not often that Derby winners go a-begging. The instances in which they have been bought privately, as in the case of Surplice, or at public auction, are extremely few. Nine times out of ten the hero of the great Epsom race has been bred by the owner whose silk jacket he carries to victory. Hermit was one of the exceptions. He was bought as a yearling by Mr. Henry Chaplin for a thousand guineas; and, curiously enough, Marksman, who ran him to a neck, was purchased at the same sale and for the same sum; indeed, they followed one another in the sale ring in the order in which they were placed at Epsom. A more recent case was that of Sainfoin. He was sold twice over. Bred at the Royal Stud at Hampton Court—long since disbanded—he was, as a yearling, bought jointly by Sir Robert Jardine and Mr. John Porter for 550 guineas. As a three-year-old, the late Sir James Miller acquired him for £6000 and half the value of the Derby if he won it. Win it he did, only a month or so later. Volodyovski, who carried the colours of the American owner, Mr. W. C. Whitney, to victory in 1901, was, and is, the property of Lady Meux, who, however, had leased him, first of all to Lord William Beresford, and then, after the latter's untimely death at the close of 1900, to Mr. Whitney. But these are merely the exceptions to the rule that Derby winners are seldom to be bought.

This year we have had another most striking illustration of what can be accomplished when luck and judgment are working in conjunction. In the East Riding of Yorkshire there is a little village called Sledmere, that has for generations been familiar by name to all who concern themselves with racing. It is the home of the Sykeses, the most notable of whom have been the Sir Tatton that is, and the Sir Tatton that was. A remarkable character, the Sir Tatton that was. Born in 1772, he lived until 1863. He was a great believer in good beer and healthy exercise. Several splendid walking feats stand to his credit. As an amateur horseman he had few equals, and he rode in races when over sixty years of age. He saw the Doncaster St. Leger competed for on seventy-six occasions. At the time of his death his stud contained over two hundred thoroughbred horses and mares. He had bred many notable animals, including St. Giles, the winner of the Derby in 1832. He regularly attended the important sales of blood stock, and was never frightened by the price when he wanted a horse. At Doncaster, in 1861, he determined to buy Fandango; and after bidding 3000 guineas, followed with another hundred. The auctioneer intimated that the previous bid was his. Sir Tatton imperturbably pulled out his watch, and said, "Knock him down, Mr. Tattersall. We want to go to the races."

The present Sir Tatton has kept up the family reputation by breeding thoroughbreds of the highest class at Sledmere. Each September he sends his yearlings to Doncaster to be sold, and as a rule they command very big prices. There were nine yearlings from Sir Tatton Syke's stud sold at Doncaster in 1904. The aggregate yield was 10,710 guineas, so that the average was 1190 guineas. There were only three lots which failed to excite the covetousness of breeders. One was a son of Royal Hampton, another was a colt by Isinglass, and the third a colt by Carbine, an Australian horse brought to this country by the Duke of Portland. Try as he would, the auctioneer could not get a higher bid than one of 300 guineas for the Carbine colt. The bidder was Major Eustace Loder, and the youngster was Spearmint, who this year won the Derby and the Grand Prix de Paris. The two races were worth £16,000!

Major Loder is a comparatively young man, and has not been an owner of racehorses very long. But during the brief period in which he has wooed Fortune on the Turf, the fickle dame has treated him as one of her favourites. His success has been so phenomenal that the Major has come to be known far and wide as "Lucky Loder." Luck has no doubt played a big part in fashioning his career. There are people who will tell you that there is no such thing as luck. They are wrong; at any rate, every man who has anything to do with racing will tell you they are wrong. But it was not luck pure and simple that placed Spearmint in Major Loder's possession. In the latter days of August 1904 he was staying at Harrogate, and one morning motored over to Sledmere to inspect the yearlings that were shortly to be sent to Doncaster for sale. Accompanying him was Mr. Noble Johnson, who so ably superintends the Major's racing and breeding establishment at Eyrefield Lodge, The Curragh, and to whose friendly guidance and advice so much of his success has undoubtedly been due. They took a fancy to the colt by Carbine—Maid of the Mint. When in due course he went to Doncaster, the Major asked his trainer, Mr. P. P. Gilpin, to have a look at the colt. The latter did so, and he, too, was pleased with the youngster's appearance. They were not alone in forming a high opinion of the colt's merits; at least one other man was impressed with that particular "lot." But this third party had not the power which a long purse gives, and when the bidding was in progress he had to retire from the fray after making an offer of 280 guineas. Luck again! Major Loder was, no doubt, agreeably surprised when he found himself the owner of Spearmint at an outlay of 300 guineas only, an amount which scores of men are prepared to give for a horse capable of winning a paltry selling race. That was where good fortune came to his aid; but it was sound judgment that enabled him to single out a horse which other men, commanding unlimited capital, and prepared to invest thousands of pounds in fashionably-bred stock, would not look at a second time. Buyers of yearlings, indeed of horses generally, are well aware that they are dabbling in a huge lottery. Now and again a "gem of purest ray" is to be picked up, and it is in the hope of securing one that people give the enormous sums that are chronicled every year. But the blanks are sadly more numerous than the prizes. Indeed, if we confine our attention solely to yearlings that are sold for 1000 guineas or more, we find that the balance of outlay and return is invariably on the wrong side. And the "outlay" is merely the initial cost—that is to say, it does not include training expenses, nor the much more serious item of entrance fees and subscriptions, which amount to hundreds of pounds in the case of horses engaged in the more important races. In 1905 there were twenty-two fashionably-bred yearlings sold for £48,510. During their active careers on the Turf they won stakes of the total value of £27,99, leaving a deficiency of £45,711.

In the face of figures like these it may appear surprising that men are willing to pursue the game. But the temptation is a great one. They have constantly before their eyes cases like that of Sceptre, who, bought as a yearling for the unprecedented sum of ten thousand guineas, won all the classic races except the Derby, and was sold as a four-year-old to her present owner, Mr William Bass, for the net sum of £25,000. The value of the stakes she won amounted to more than £38,000. When M. Edmond Blanc gave 37,500 guineas for Flying Fox (who had then finished his racing career), cautious people stood aghast. But it has since proved one of the very greatest bargains ever made. This horse's progeny have won stakes to the value of over £110,000, and four of his sons have been sold for sums amounting to £94,000. It is not generally known, by the way, that Mr Gilpin, acting on behalf of Mr W. C. Whitney, was the last bidder for Flying Fox against M. Blanc.

Let us, however, return to Spearmint, who is really our text. Why was he secured for so comparatively small a sum as 300 guineas? Because his dam was not too fashionably bred, had failed to distinguish herself on the racecourse, and had not produced a great winner; and because his sire, Carbine, though a horse who had gained renown by his racing deeds in Australia, and had achieved some notable successes in the stud, both at the Antipodes and in England, was not yet able to claim that a son or daughter of his had won a "classic" race—that is to say, the "Two" or "One" Thousand Guineas, the Derby, the Oaks, or the St. Leger. Those races, together with the Ascot Gold Cup, are the events that hall-mark an animal and add immeasurably to its value, and to the value of its descendants, until the time comes when their merits can be subjected to a practical test, which is the only one of vital consequence.

Generally speaking, a classic horse or mare is begotten by a classic horse. Chance-bred ones usually fail when submitted to a supreme trial. This is where the value of racing comes in. There are people who profess to be anxious to plough up our race horses. If they had their way, the English thoroughbred would dwindle into nothingness in the space of a generation. This race of equine aristocrats of which we have just reason to be proud, and which is the envy of all other nations who love the horse, has been built up by a careful process of selection extending back to the time of the Charleses; and it is as certain as anything can be that the slightest relaxation of effort to maintain the standard we have reached would prove almost instantly disastrous. It is remarkable that the degree of perfection which has been reached is almost entirely the outcome of private enterprise. In the days of the Stuarts our monarchs aided the movement, then in its infancy, by importing pure-bred Arabians and barbs; and until the latter part of the reign of Queen Victoria there was a Royal stud farm at Hampton Court; but it is chiefly owing to the interest taken in the thoroughbred by the noblemen and landed gentry of England that this country acquired, and still holds, its position as the horse-breeding centre of the world.

But if Spearmint could not be regarded as a fashionably-bred horse, a very cursory examination of his pedigree reveals the fact that he has coursing through his veins some of the most desirable blood. In all probability his super-excellence is attributable to the prominence of the mare Pocahontas in his lineage. Your scientific breeder always pays as much attention, at least, to the qualifications of the dam as he does to those of the sire. During the past hundred years there have been several mares who have exercised a remarkable influence in their day and generation and in succeeding generations. Pocahontas, foaled in 1837, was one of them. She was the dam of Stockwell (perhaps the greatest sire of all time), of Rataplan, and of King Tom. Two or three of her daughters are also noteworthy, especially Ayacanora. Pocahontas's names is to be found in most pedigrees—the oftener the better. It appears thrice in that of Spearmint, once on Carbine's side and twice on that of Maid of the Mint. Then, again, Spearmint's grandsires are Musket and Minting, both renowned for their sterling qualities, particularly those of courage and stamina. Carbine inherited the same traits from Musket. It is not surprising, therefore, that, given other endowments in liberal proportion, Spearmint should have proved himself a really good horse. Whether he is destined to rank as a great horse has yet to be shown. He will have to do more than he has yet done before he is entitled to be placed on the topmost pinnacle.

"After we brought Spearmint home from Doncaster at the close of the Sales," Mr Gilpin told me during a conversation we had, "he was ill, very ill, for five months. He developed a cough, which we did not manage to stop until the first week of the February following. The great marvel is, not that he should be worth thousands, but so much as half a sovereign. We always treated him very quietly and carefully. From the first I was particularly fond of him and had a great opinion of him. He is a beautiful-tempered and happy horse."

Discussing Spearmint's performances as a two-year-old—he won the first time out and was beaten in two other races