

**DOWN THE LINE  
WITH  
JOHN HENRY**

BY HUGH McHUGH

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## Down the line with John Henry



**"Take a satchel and the ice-tongs and haul it away!"**

*To:—*

*Pete and the Little Man, two of the best ever—believe me!*

*John Henry.*

## JOHN HENRY AT THE RACES.

I was anxious to make Clara Jane think that she was all the money, so I boiled out a few plunks, trotted over to the trolley, and rushed her to the race track.

I'm a dub on the dope, but it was my play to be a Wise Boy among the skates on this particular occasion, and I went the whole distance.

In the presence of my lady love I knew every horse that ever pulled a harrow.

Isn't it cruel how a slob will cut the guy-ropes and go up in the air just because his Baby is by his side?

Me—to the mountain tops!

Before the car got started I was telling her how Pittsburg Phil and I win \$18,000 last summer on a fried fish they called "Benzine."

Then I confided to her the fact that I doped a turtle named "Pink Toes" to win the next day, but he went over the fence after a loose bunch of grass and I lose \$23,680.

She wanted to know what I meant by dope, and I told her it generally meant a sour dream, but she didn't seem to grab.

When we got to the track they were bunching the bones for the first race, so I told Clara Jane I thought I'd crawl down to the ring and plaster two or three thousand around among the needy.

Two or three thousand, and me with nothing but a five-spot in my jeans and the return ticket money in that!

"Are you really going to bet?" she asked.

"Sure!" I said; "I've got a pipe!"

"Well, I hope you won't smoke it near me. I hate pipes!" she said.

"All right; I'll take my pipe down to the betting ring and smoke it there!" I said, and we parted good friends.

In front of the grand stand I met Nash Martinetti.

He was holding a bunch of poppies and he picked out one in the first race and handed it to me.

"A skinch!" said Nash. "Go as far as you like."

Then Ned Rose went into a cataleptic state and handed me the winner—by a block. It couldn't go wrong unless its feet fell out.

"Here you are, John Henry, the real Pietro!" said Ban Roberts; "play Pump Handle straight and place! It's the road to wealth—believe me! All the others are behind the hill!"

Every Breezy Boy I met had a different hunch and they called me into the wharf and unloaded.

I figured it out that if I had bet \$5 on each good thing they gave me I would have lost \$400,000.

Then I ducked under, sopped up a stein of root beer and climbed up again to the hurricane deck.

"Did you bet?" inquired Clara Jane.

"Only \$730," I said; "A mere bag o' shells."

I leave a call for 7.30 every morning and I suppose that's the reason I was so swift with the figures.

"My! what a lot of money!" said the Fair One; "do point out the horse you bet on! I shall be awfully interested in this race!"

Carlo! you're a bad dog—lie down!

I pointed out the favorite as the one I had my bundle on, and explained to Clara Jane that the only way it could lose was for some sore-head to get out and turn the track around.

Sure enough the favorite galloped into port and dropped anchor six hours ahead of the other clams.

I win over \$2,200—conversation money—and Bonnie Brighteyes was in a frenzy of delight.

She wanted to know if I wasn't going to be awfully careful with it and save it up for a rainy day.

I told her yes, but I expected we'd have a storm that afternoon.

I had a nervous chill for fear she'd declare herself in on the rake-off.

But she didn't, so I excused myself and backed down the ladder to cash in.

The boys were all out in the inquest room trying to find out what killed the dead ones.

Then they stopped apologizing to themselves and began to pick things out of the next race and push them up their sleeves.

I ran across Harry Maddy and he took me up to the roof with a line of talk about a horse called "Pretty Boy" in the last race.

"He'll be over 80 to 1 and it's a killing," Harry insisted. "Get down to the bank when the doors open and grab all you can. Take a satchel and the ice-tongs and haul it away."

I was beginning to be impressed.

"Put a fiver on Pretty Boy," Harry continued, "and you'll find yourself dropping over in the Pierp Morgan class before sun down."

"This may be a real Alexander," I said to myself.

"Pretty Boy can stop in the stretch to do a song and dance and still win by a bunch of houses," Harry informed me.

I began to think hard.

"Don't miss it," said Harry. "It's a moral that if you play him you'll die rich and disgraced, like our friend Andy, the Hoot Mon!"

When I got back to the stand I had a preoccupied air.

The five-spot in my jeans was crawling around and begging for a change of scene.

When Clara Jane asked me how much I had bet on the race just about to start I could only think of \$900.

When she wanted to know which horse I pointed my finger at every toad on the track and said "that one over there!"



It won.

At the end of the third race I was \$19,218 to the good.

Clara Jane had it down in black and white on the back of an envelope in figures that couldn't lie.

She said she was very proud of me, and that's where my finish bowed politely and stood waiting.

She told me that it was really very wrong to bet any more after such a run of luck, and made me promise that I wouldn't wring another dollar from the trembling hands of the poor Bookmakers.

I promised, but she didn't notice that I had my fingers crossed.

I simply *had* to have a roll to flash on the way home, so I took my lonely V and went out into the Promised Land after the nuggets Maddy had put me wise to.

"It will be just like getting money from Uncle Peter," I figured.

"A small steak from Pretty Boy," I said to Wise Samuel, the Bookmaker; "what's doing?"

Wise Samuel gave me the gay look-over.

"Take the ferry for Sioux Falls!" he said.

"Nix on the smart talk, Sammy!" I said; "Me for the Pretty Boy! How much?"

"A bundle for a bite—you're on a cold plate!" whispered Wise Samuel, but he couldn't throw me.

"I don't see any derricks to hoist the price with," I tapped him.

"Write your own ticket, then you to the woods!" said Sammy.

In a minute my fiver was up and I was on the card to win \$500 when my cute one came romping home.

I went back to Clara Jane satisfied that in a few minutes I'd have a roll big enough to choke the tunnel.

"Not having any money on this race you can watch it without the least excitement, can't you?" she said.

I said yes, and all the while I was scrapping with a lump in my throat the size of my fist.

When the horses got away with Pretty Boy in front I started in to stand on my head, but changed my mind and swallowed half the program.

Pretty Boy at the quarter! Me for Rector's till they put the shutters up!

Pretty Boy at the half! Me down to Tiffany's in the morning dragging tiaras away in a dray!

Pretty Boy at the three-quarter pole! Me doing the free library gag all over the place!

But just as they came in the stretch Pretty Boy forgot something and went back after it.

The roach quit me cold at the very door of the safety deposit vaults.

I was under the water a long time.

Finally I heard Clara Jane saying, "Isn't it lucky you didn't bet on this race. I believe you would have picked that foolish looking horse that stopped over there to bite the fence!"

"I'm done! turn me over!" I murmured, and then I rushed down among the ramblers and made a swift touch for the price of a couple of rides home.

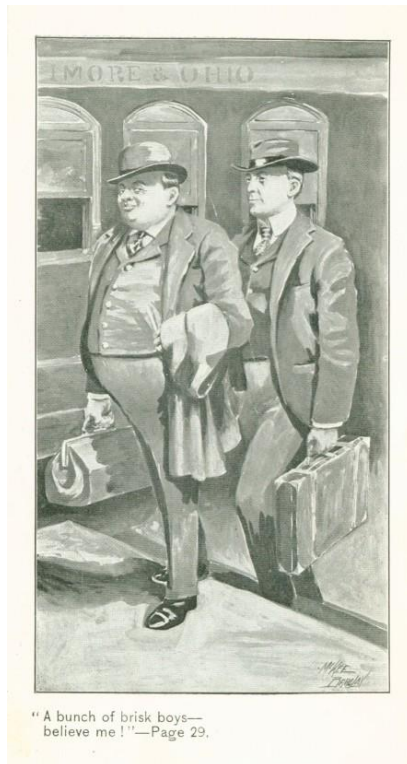
On the way back Clara Jane made me promise again that I'd be awfully, awfully careful of my \$19,218.

I promised her I would.

## JOHN HENRY WITH THE DRUMMERS.

It was a swift squad of sports that climbed into a coach and allowed themselves to be yanked over the rails in the direction of Chicago one morning last week.

A bunch of brisk boys—believe me!



**"A bunch of brisk boys—believe me!"**

Nick Dalrymple, Tod Stone, Slim Barnes—say! do you remember Slim?

Travels for a clothing house in Cincinnati and they call him Slim because he's so fat that every time he turns around he meets himself coming back.

He's all to the good—that boy is!

And such a cut-up!

Slim knows more "look-out!—there's - a - lady - over - there!" stories than any other drummer in the business.

Nick goes after the gilt things for a hardware house in Columbus and he knows everybody in the world—bar no one living.

Nick has only one trouble, he will paddle after the ponies.

Whenever he makes a town where there's a pool room his expense account gets fat and beefy, and Nick begins to worry for fear he may win something.

He won \$12 in Cleveland once and he spent \$218 at a boozeologist's that night getting statistics on how it happened.

Tod Stone cuts ice for a match factory in Newark and he's the life of a small party.

Tod's main hold is to creep into the "reading room" of a Rube hotel after the chores are done of an evening and throw salve at the come-ons.

Tod tells them that their town is the brightest spot on the map and they warm up to him and want to buy him sarsaparilla and root beer.

Then when he gets them stuck on themselves he sells them matches.

"Pipe the gang to quarters and all rubber!" said Slim, about half an hour after the train pulled out.

In the seat ahead of us a somewhat demure looking Proposition in rainbow rags had been sampling the scenery ever since we started.

We had all given her the glad glance but she was very much Cold Storage, so we passed it up.

As Slim spoke, the Proposition was joined by a young chap with a loose face who had been out in the smoking room working faithfully on one of those pajama panatella cigars that bite you on the ringer if you show the least sign of fear.

Just then the train stopped for a few minutes and we were put wise to the fact that it was an incurable case of bride and groom.

"Oh! Boozey is back to his Birdie!" said the brand new wife; "did Boozey like his smoky woky?"

Boozey opened a bunch of grins and sat down while wifey patted his cheek and cooed:

"Is ums glad to get back to ums 'ittle wifey-pifey?"

Nick Dalrymple and Tod Stone began to scream inwardly and Slim was chuckling like a pet porpoise.

"Sweetie mustn't be angry with Petie, but Sweetie is sitting on Petie's 'ittle hand!" said the bride, whereupon Tod exploded and Slim began to grab for his breath.

A Dutch brewer and his wife sat right ahead of Boozey and Birdie and every once in a while the old hop puncher would turn around and beam benignly over the gold rims at the bride.

"Boozie must snuggy-wuggy up closer to his Coozie and skeeze her 'itty arm—no, no, not her waist! you naughty! naughty!"

The brewer was back at the bride with another gold-rimmed goo-goo when his wife got nervous and cut in:

"Is id you turn your face to see someding—yes?" she snapped, and the foam builder ducked to the window and began to eat scenery.

Dalrymple was almost out; Tod was under the seat sparring for wind; Slim was giving an imitation of a coal-barge in a heavy sea, and the rest of the passengers were in various stages from hiccoughs to convulsions.

"Is Boozey comfy wif his 'itty weeny teeny Birdie?" chirped the bride.

"Boozey is so happy wif his izzy-wizzy!" gurgled the husband; "how's my 'ittle girley wirly?"

"Oh! she's such a happy wappy 'ittle fing!" giggled the dotty dame, pinching her piggie's ear, whereupon the brewer tried to hand the bride another gasoline gaze, but the old lady caught him with the goods:

"Is it to my face you go behind my back to make googley-googley eyes at somevun—yes?" she growled, and in a minute the brewer's brow was busy with the window pane.

"Sweetie looks at Petie and Sweetie sees that Petie's pretty face is getting sunburned, so it is!" cuckooed Mrs. Daffy; "and Sweetie has a dood mind to tuss him, too!"

They opened a newspaper, crawled under cover and began to bite each other on the chin.

"Go as far as you like!" said Slim, then he went down and out.

The man who helped to make Weehawken famous had his head out the window watching for an ice-wagon, and Mrs. Brewer was industriously muttering "Du bist ein Narr. Du bist ein Narr!"

Just then the train pulled out and saved our lives.

Nick, Tod, Slim and I went over near the water-cooler to rest up, and in a minute the three of them were fanning each other with fairy tales about the goods they sold.

I'll back these three boys to dream longer than any other drummers on the track.

It's a pipe that they can sell bills to each other all day and never wake up.

Slim turned the gas on to the limit about hypnotizing a John Wanamaker merchant prince in Pikesville, Indiana, to the extent of \$200 for open-work socks, farmer's size, and Todd Stone sent his balloon up by telling us how he sold the Siegel-Coopers of Bugsport, Iowa, \$300 worth of Panama hats for horses.



The Hot Air Association was in full session when Buck Jones caromed over from the other end of the car and weighed-in with us.

Buck is a sweller.

He thinks he strikes twelve on all occasions, but his clock is all to the bad.

Buck isn't a drummer—nay! nay! take back your gold!

He'll look you straight in the eye and tell you he's a *travelling salesman*—nix on the drummer!

I think Buck sells canned shirt waists for the Shine Brothers.

Buck's wife and a three-year-old were traveling with him, but he wasn't giving it out through a megaphone.

Buck is one of those goose-headed guys who begin to scratch gravel and start in to make a killing every time they see a pretty girl.

Across the aisle sat two pet canaries from Plainfield, New Jersey.

They were members of the Soubrette Stinging Society and they were en route to the West to join the "Bunch of Birds Burlesque Company."

Their names were Millie and Tillie and they wore Florodora hats and did a sister act that contained more bad grammar than an East Side pinochle game.

Millie was fully aware that she could back Duse off the map, and Tillie was ready to bet a week's salary that she could make

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