



It was a breakdown. Legs hobbling, head tossing, eyes rolling, and frightened, Silvio was in pain. Already there was a swelling on his knee nearly the size of a cricket-ball. He could hardly stay on his feet, but he mustn't lie down, not in the middle of the track. One hundred yards to the stalls, to the paddock behind the stalls; there he could rest, stay quietly until the veterinary surgeon arrived. Already a telephone call had been made, he wouldn't be longer than the five miles took in his car. Quiet voices talked to Froggy Silvio; voices that he knew, that he associated with his care and living. Voices that soothed him. His eyes showed he couldn't understand this pain, this burning tenderness in his knee; but his eyes showed, too, he knew these men would look after him. Much as it must have hurt him, he hobbled down the track after Ray.

Silvio tried to turn in the gate he knew led to the stables. Home was the only place, the sooner he got away from here the better. He said it plainly with head tugging at the loose reins.

Poor old Froggy Silvio. He rubbed and scraped his nose in the gravel of the path to relieve the pain in his leg; he pawed the gate; he tried to tangle himself in the barbed wire of the fence. He wouldn't be still, he wouldn't lie down. A cart-horse, a mare not as sedate and proper as she should be for her years, came romping across the farm paddock next door; Silvio peg-legged over for greetings and an early morning rub of noses. Perhaps he explained what had happened;

but, however great the pain, the instinct of friendliness, of responding to a snort and a whinny, was stronger.

The vet. arrived. We smiled at the long words, the Latin terms, he used; he knows his job, but he always makes sure you realize it. Silvio maybe had broken a small bone, maybe torn a muscle—an x-ray would show; and in the meantime water hosed on the knee for an hour a day would reduce the swelling and lessen the pain. He tied a skilful bandage and gave the shaking, trembling animal a shot of morphia to help him through the day. Silvio would be turned out after the swelling and the pain had gone. It would probably be at least a season before his training was continued. And it seemed strange that the leg now giving all the trouble was not the one that had previously shown signs of weakness. It happens often. A horse will rest a sore leg, relieve it of all possible pressure, to such an extent that the other leg will break down under extra and unaccustomed strain.

It was the luck of the racing game. One thing it made plain: that what these racing men were worried about was not the races Silvio would have to be withdrawn from, not the stake money automatically to be forfeited, not the cost of his training or his feed; it was that a horse was in pain.

Later in the morning we had an interesting hour in the stables. Solid wooden buildings, concrete floors, roomy boxes, plenty of ventilation, spotlessly clean—and woe betide any thoughtless fly that happens to come that way.

