

The Drop of Tangpoor

His Lordship was globe-trotting and getting tired of life on the P. and O., stopped a month at Tangpoor. He was a good fellow not a bit of a snob, and took to the men at the club from the first. The little dinners, and a few of the dances he enjoyed. The ladies possessed individuality, and the girls were jolly and could think for themselves. His Lordship detested the conventional girl.

But the one thing which he enjoyed above all others was the fox hunting. He was an enthusiast on hunting, and when he found that there were some really first class horses, and that the men would take them over a five or six barred gate, or a nasty ditch without thinking any thing of it, he made a mental note that his stay should be prolonged indefinitely. Then the women! There is only one time in the history of fox hunting in Tangpoor when a woman failed to follow a man at any thing, and that is excused by the fact that she was not of Tangpoor, but merely a visitor who had stopped over for a week on her way home.

O' all those who hunted, none took so much pleasure in the sport as Dora Craven. She was a little slip of a girl, only nineteen, but she could ride, and her father had given her, her choice of his stables. It was a pleasure to see her go sailing over a hedge with her veil streaming out behind, sitting on her horse firmly, and laughing to her self from pure happiness.

His Lordship had been particularly pleased with her riding, until one day as they were almost to take a gate her horse grew spunky and stopped short. His Lordship went on over and stopping, turned about and waited for her. She knew her horse however, and said, "I can't do it," meaning she could not make her horse go over. He frowned, for he thought she was afraid, but opened the gate for her to pass and several others who had come up at this time.

Dora did not like what had happened but hoped that at the next run of the hounds to make up for it. It happened however that his Lordship had casually mentioned to one of the men at the club that he feared Miss Craven was losing her nerve, and of course in time this reached her ears. She stamped an angry foot and shut her lips tightly. That afternoon she did not go to the ride, but sat in her room thinking—and pounding a potted rose all to pieces with her whip. Finally a plan evolved itself, and gathering up her skirt she ran out upon the back veranda.

"Bring out Jim," she cried to one of the stable boys. And in five minutes he came out leading a great raw boned wailer, which was Dora's chief pride and best hunter. She examined him all over, carefully feeling his firm, shiny legs until she was satisfied that there was not a weak spot about him. Then she mounted and put him over a low hedge or two on the lawn and a wall that was sunken for a foot or two, watching him closely all the time as he took the jump. After half an hour of this kind of work she took him back to the stable boy. When she went to her room she was smiling, but nevertheless she had a determined look.

The day which she had chosen for the execution of her plan was the following Saturday, and on that day she rode up to the county field house on her Wailer as cool and apparently the same as ever. The hunt was to be a good one, for it was a damp day and the fox was a wary old fellow who always set them a hard trail and a rough one to ride. There were some thirty started and it was not long before the fox was out of cover and the pack in full cry.

Two or three miles had been passed and the riders were strung out along the course with his Lordship and Dora in

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the lead. The pace had been a warm one and both horses were breathing rather freely when suddenly, the fox broke cover almost under their feet with two or three of the old dogs close behind. All were perfectly quiet. Without a word Dora set her horse after and he tore over the rough ground and was a good hundred feet ahead before his Lordship was started.

She took a low stone fence and then a small hedge with perfect ease. As his Lordship came over the latter he saw nothing of the dogs and fox, but there ahead of him was Dora riding hard and never looking back once. Suddenly he saw her go out of sight. He did not know what had happened, but he heard the

men talk at the club of young "Devil" Cavesberry riding at the old sunken wall and when they rode around to where he was, they found him with his neck broken. No one had tried the "drop" since that day. His heart came up in his mouth when he thought of it. He had seen a similar thing happen at home, and it had made him sick ever since!

He slowly pulled his horse down to a trot, and when he reached the wall he saw Dora sitting calmly waiting. She had taken the "drop" as coolly as a two barred fence. It was not less than twelve or fifteen feet and when his Lordship looked down, it made him feel sickish again. He rode away and led his horse down a little knoll and when he came up to her, she said:

"My Lord, you should have jumped it.

It's so long going around. But I suppose these are common things with you folks at home. We really have nothing here that makes any excitement. If you are ready we will go."

"Where is the fox?" he asked slowly. "Oh I don't know, I'm sure. He didn't come this way, but I am tired and thought I would take a short cut home."

That evening his Lordship repeated what had happened to the fellows at the club, and they voted her the best and bravest fox hunter in Tangpoor, and promised her the next three fox skins. It was only when his Lordship told them that the best and bravest fox hunter in Tangpoor had agreed to go and be married to him in England, that anybody expressed dissatisfaction. It was hard luck to lose the only person who had ever jumped the "drop" and came out alive.

GEO. C. SHEED.