Sharp Ink

JULIAN HAWTHORNE

THE COSMIC COURTSHIP

Sharp Ink

JULIAN HAWTHORNE

THE COSMIC COURTSHIP

Julian Hawthorne

The Cosmic Courtship

Sharp Ink Publishing
2022
Contact: info@sharpinkbooks.com

ISBN 978-80-282-0391-7

Table of Contents

CHAPTER I
MIRIAM'S VISITOR

Table of Contents

THE twenty-second of June, of the year 2001, was Miriam Mayne's birthday—her twenty-first. She and her father, Terence Mayne, the billionaire contractor, had arranged to meet at the Long Island house for dinner. After an early breakfast, she kissed him good-by; he went down-town to business, and she to her room, to put on her traveling dress.

A glorious day it was! When the tall girl stepped from the window of her room on to the balcony, the sun embraced her graceful figure as if it loved her; the perfume of flowers rose up like incense; two humming-birds, busy with the morning-glories, buzzed a welcome; the air was warm but exhilarating. She mounted to the wide parapet of the balcony and stood poised for a moment before starting on her journey.

She was clad in a dove-colored suit of a tunic and trousers to the knee, fitting snugly, but allowing freedom of movement. On her feet she wore a pair of sandals, with appendages on the heel resembling the talaria of Greek myth, ascribed to Iris and Mercury; but for the wings were substituted triangular projections of a pliable metal with a silvery sheen. Over her head was drawn a close-fitting cap, fastened securely under the chin, and bearing wing-like excrescences similar to the foot-gear. A wide belt or girdle encircled her waist; it was formed of narrow vertical pieces connected together, and four buttons or small knobs appeared on the front of it, where they could be readily

reached by either hand. In her right hand she carried a light staff.

The art of personal flight was still a novelty at this period, though the principle of it had been known for several years. Only persons of sound physical and mental coordinations were apt to attempt it. Miriam had not only passed the government tests, but was considered an expert.

With an upward swing of the arms, she leaped into the air; the drop to the pavement of the court below was some fifty feet; but she rose upward as if she had no weight, and continued her ascent until she hovered at a height of a couple of thousand feet above the far-extending city of New York. There she paused, gazing hither and thither at the magnificent prospect.

From the Battery to Harlem, the surface of Manhattan Island was covered with handsome villas and mansions, of white or tinted marble, standing each in an ample enclosure of green turf studded with trees and flower-beds. Several miles to the south rose the superb turreted pile of the new Madison Square Garden, like a fairy palace, of white marble set off with pinnacles and trimmings of gold. It was Terence Mayne’s crowning achievement, and was still unfinished. The East and North Rivers were spanned by between three and four hundred bridges, lofty and wide, made of a metallic substance that glittered and shone in the sun. The beds of the rivers themselves were laid with white concrete, over which the water flowed blue and transparent. Northward, beyond the island, the city proper stretched for forty miles, following the course of the Hudson, but extending westward over a breadth of five miles into New Jersey; the home of

nearly fifteen millions of people. From side to side, and from end to end, no smoke fouled the clear air, and no sign of factories or of business traffic was visible. But the entire area had been excavated to a depth of a thousand feet, and here, layer beneath layer, were housed the business activities of the metropolis.

Miriam was not unfamiliar with these subterranean regions. Illuminated by the electron light, and ventilated by the carbon process, and kept at an even temperature of seventy degrees Fahrenheit, they were wholesome and pleasant, and many thousands of the inhabitants never troubled themselves to appear above-ground from year's end to year's end. Except for the absence of sun, moon and stars, life in this artificial world was as agreeable and convenient as on the surface. But sun, moon and stars, and the fathomless depths of space, were indispensable to Miriam's happiness.

She now pointed her staff eastward, and began to move gently in that direction. She was using the ten-mile-an-hour stop in her belt; she had no present need for haste. She flew, leaning forward on the air, at an inclination of about twenty degrees from the vertical, without movement of her limbs. Few individual fliers were abroad, and they passed at a distance. But three of the great Atlantic liners were setting their course east and southeast; and high overhead, flocks of buses carrying business men were sliding swiftly toward the lower part of the city. In spite of its external transformation, New York, in some human respects, had not changed much in the last hundred years.

In crossing the Sound, a sea-gull flew past Miriam, and she, by a sudden turn, swept so close by it that she was almost able to touch its wing. It dodged and dived with a scream. Smiling to herself, she gave a supple impulse to her body, which caused her to slant slightly downward across the Sound toward the Long Island shore. Five hundred feet above the ground she resumed a horizontal course, moving slowly across the green lawns and parklike enclosures that surrounded the sumptuous county-seats of this district. It was a fair sight; but the sun, now forty-five degrees above the sea-line, dazzled her eyes; she turned her body with a leisurely and luxurious motion until she lay with her face toward the western sky, where a snowy flock of gossamer fine-weather clouds was strung across the blue. She was now carried along as if reclining on a couch, and did not change her posture until she heard the rhythm of the surf on the great eastern beaches. Fetching herself upright again, she touched the gravitation-control in her belt, and sank slowly, guiding herself with her staff toward the left. In a few minutes she alighted buoyantly on the soft turf of the great Mayne estate.

Fifty yards before her rose a grassy mound, with a sort of summer-house on its summit; the place was protected by a grove of tall pines, disposed in a wide semicircle between the dwelling-house and the ocean. Entering the pavilion, she quickly threw off her flying-suit, and running down the steps to the beach, she plunged into the surf. So was Artemis, in the seclusion of her temple precincts, wont to bathe on the Lydian shore of the Ægean. Heading out beyond the breakers, Miriam swam and dived and splashed up diamond

spray in the thrilling coolness. At length she came ashore, borne on the crest of a white-maned steed of the sea, and ran back, a virgin shaft of glistening whiteness, to the pavilion. Thence, after an interval, she reissued, robed in a flowing gown of purple wool, lined with orange silk. She seated herself on a curved bench of marble that stood on the seaward crest of the knoll, and spread out her black hair, thick and long, to dry in the sun. Seated thus at ease, and secure from all disturbance, Miriam fell into a reverie, which gradually became profound. The intense but restricted sphere of personal consciousness closed itself in the broad, steady luminousness of perception which comprises and permeates the individual as does the ocean its waves. The beautiful capacities of nature became transparent.

A voice of agreeable quality was speaking to her “Miriam!” The call had been repeated several times before she recognized her own name. No one was within sight or hearing. She knew the methods by which, in late times, science had overcome space for both ear and eye; but this voice was using a method unknown to her.

“Hold yourself still,” it now said, “and you will see me.”

She imposed quiescence upon mind and body. A shadow flickered for a moment before her, and vanished. It came again, less vague. Upon the empty air between herself and the sea it gradually defined itself. A tall, grave figure in a dark robe with a black silk cap on its head. The face was pale, with large, black eyes under level brows, it expressed tranquility and power. As she gazed, a blue star surrounded

by a ring glimmered forth over the figure's left breast. The lips moved, and the quiet voice spoke again.

"I have observed you for a year. We are companions of the star. We can help each other. Will you meet me?"

"What star?" asked Miriam, though she did not speak aloud.

"Saturn! The desire of your heart may be accomplished. I have found the way, but can go no further without you. Will you meet me?"

The eyes of the apparition, meeting hers gravely and almost sternly, communicated confidence. The speaker was a woman.

"I am willing!" said Miriam after a long look.

The expression of the face softened.

"You will receive a letter to-morrow. I have taken this method that you might act freely. Without sympathy there could be no—" The voice died away; the figure dimmed and a quivering passed through the air-drawn scene. The next moment, nothing was visible but the sun-steeped sea and shore.

Miriam stayed where she was for a long time. The influence had not been hypnotic, but had conveyed a strong sense of spiritual harmony and of enlightenment. She recognized the value of spontaneity. Knowledge was not acquisition, but revelation. Her visitor had understood her need.

Miriam was a woman of her time. After acquiring political equality with man, the other sex had soon turned from political activities to science. Her more finely organized and fresher brain and her spiritual intuition opened to her realms

of conquest over nature and methods of achieving it hitherto unimagined. The revolutionary investigations and discoveries of later years had been woman's work. Etheric heat, planetary motive-power, electron light were gifts from woman's hand. She had divined the parallelism between material fact and spiritual truth. A lever so powerful began to make the rock of human ignorance stir in its bed. The birthday of the universal man seemed near.

To Miriam, keeping abreast of progress, had come some time since the dream of actual interplanetary communication, not by interchange of signals merely, but by bodily transference from the earth to other worlds of our system. She had never confided this ambition to any person, and her fantom visitor had been the first to divine it —for such had seemed to be her intimation. Her father, a man of a past age, never suspected it. All the girl's studies had had this ambition for their end, but hitherto her progress had seemed small. But to-day for the first time she could feel, with a tremulous joy, that her labor and self-discipline had fitted her for what was to come. A powerful hand had grasped hers and a profound and fearless intelligence would direct her course. It was an added joy to know that her cooperation was needed even for her guide's masterful intelligence.

The personal equation had begun to be recognized as the most important agency of man's rule over nature. It found its analogy in the inter-atomic force. By solving the true nature of the isolation which the personal equation implies, the way to its mastery was found to lie in the compensating attraction of innate sympathies. Proper use of this vital truth

could result in achievements otherwise unattainable and seemingly miraculous.

Miriam's mother, a lovely and intelligent woman, had died when the girl was fifteen; her father, though a man of the old fashion, was in his way a genius, of immense energy and ability; and the whole tide of his ardent Celtic nature flowed into love for his daughter. He had the insight to perceive that she must allowed great freedom of choice and action in order to secure her best development; he let her make her own rules of conduct and education, and merely supplied whatever means and facilities she required; there was complete mutual love and confidence between them. She came and went, studied and played, as she pleased, without supervision or question; and as she grew up the visible results were fully satisfactory. Her bodily strength and symmetry were united with supple grace; she was trained in the great gymnasiums which the influence of the king had made fashionable; she was expert in fencing, swimming, running and wrestling; and, besides her aptness in flying, was a consummate horsewoman. Terence Mayne never learned personal flight, and hardly liked to have his girl "mix herself up with a lot of ducks and geese," as he put it; but he was always eager and proud to act as her cavalier on a ride, and they were often seen cantering down the Long Drive side by side, he with his bushy gray hair uncovered to the breeze, thumping up and down on his big hunter; she undulating easily beside him on her fine-limbed Arab. The vision of her beauty haunted the dreams of many an impassioned youth. But Miriam, though always kind and frank, drew back from male intimacies. She was wedded to

science and desired no human husband. Her father forbore to urge her.

“A pretty gal is a good thing; let ’em stay so long as they will. The woman in ’em will have her say in the long run; don’t let us be meddling!” This was his rejoinder to the suggestions of sympathetic friends.

On her side, she recognized his cordial and sociable temperament, and never refused her cooperation in his great dinners and receptions—a queenlike presence, with her black hair and sea-gray eyes, moving through the glowing vistas of the great rooms. Side by side with her intellectual proclivities, there was in her a deep emotional quality, which found expression in forms of art, and which she used to give distinction to the plans and details of her father’s social enterprises.

But the greater part of her time was devoted to thoughts and effort far removed from such matters; these had for her a sort of sanctity, due to their exalted character. Science, in that age, had a spiritual soul which lifted it toward the religious level. The solution of her problems was connected with the future of mankind; it required courage to face even the prevision of them. Transcendent moments visited her, mingled with a sentiment of profound personal humility. She was conscious at times of an appalling loneliness, chilling her to the finger-tips with delicious terrors. But anon the warm blood flowed back to her heart, and she would rise and pace her chamber, crowned with the hope of being forever known and blessed as the giver to her race of unimagined benefits.

Her spectral interview on the Long Island estate brought a new influence to her. The next morning at breakfast she found the most commonplace-looking letter imaginable beside her plate. The contents were as follows:

> DEAR MIRIAM:
> My laboratory is at Seven Hundred and Ninety-Sixth Street, near the river. Come at three o'clock any day. Pardon the abrupt way I presented myself yesterday. It was made possible by our saturnian affiliations. I am still a little awkward about it—the interruption was caused by an accident to the coordination. I hope to fulfil your expectations. I am myself more than ever convinced that we shall achieve together something that will modify the course of human history.
>
> Sincerely yours, MARY FAUST.

Miriam looked across at her father, who was immersed in his business mail. How near and dear to her he was, and yet how far removed! Distance is but the relation of one mind to another; we may be closer to the Pleiades than to the companion whose arm is linked in our own. But diameters of sidereal systems cannot sever us from those we love.

She said nothing to her father; but that afternoon she privately visited Mme. Faust's laboratory; and thus began a secret connection destined to have important issues.

CHAPTER II
RACE FOR LOVE

Table of Contents

A LITTLE more than a year after Miriam became Mary Faust's pupil and partner, the new Madison Square Garden was opened with the annual horse-show, which, for ages, had been a leading function of New York society.

The new building covered four city blocks, and was raised above the vast plaza in the midst of which it stood by flights of ornamental steps. The great central tower rose fifteen hundred feet above the pavement, and the towers of less elevation stood at the four corners. Forests of delicate columns supported the superstructure, which mounted height above height in snowy elevations, finely touched with gold and color, till the central tower leaped aloft like a fountain. So just were the proportions of the whole that the edifice seemed rather to rise upward with an aspiring impulse than to press upon the earth.

The populace filled the plaza, thronged the steps, and streamed inward through twenty broad doorways. The king and court were to attend the ceremony of the opening, and the uniforms of the guards divided with their bright lines the masses of the crowd. Air-boats, like great birds, chased one another high overhead in sweeping circles, dropping small parachutes carrying bags of sugar plums, which were caught by the crowd. The October sun shone on the front of the marble edifice, kindling all into airy splendor.

A young man of modest demeanor but of striking aspect was slowly edging his way through the throng. He was

nobody in particular—an artist, Jack Paladin by name. But he was tall, well formed and handsome; his fellow students in the art class, a few years before, found a strong resemblance between him and the statue of Hermes, ascribed to Praxiteles, and used to get him to pose for them. Jack was good-natured and easy-going; but his mind was not centered upon himself. It did not even dwell upon one or another beautiful girl, with whom he could imagine himself in love. He thought of and loved nothing but art: was a *Galahad* of art, in short. Mankind and the universe were to him material for pictures: his constant problem and delight was to make them serve art purposes. He had little money, and only one living relative—his uncle, Sam Paladin, quite a notable personage, who had been a great traveler and adventurer in all parts of the world, a hero of daring escapades, a soldier of fortune; but now, at a little less than fifty, had settled in New York, enjoying the society of a few old friends and applying himself enthusiastically to astronomy; as if, having exhausted the resources of this planet, he were seeking further entertainment in other satellites of our sun. Jack had no heartier backer and sympathizer than Uncle Sam, though art was an unknown region to him. Though by no means a rich man, Uncle Sam devised all sorts of pretexts for “tipping” him; and Jack was obliged to stipulate that his uncle was not to buy any picture of him which had not already been sought by some outside purchaser. Hitherto, the outside purchaser had seldom brought the stipulation to the test.

Jack was going to the horse-show because, if anything could share a place in his heart with art, it was fine horses.

He had almost been born on horseback, and there were few better riders alive. Since horses had been retired from utilitarian service, the art of breeding had been cultivated, and magnificent animals were produced.

As he reached the broad flight of steps at the front of the building, bugles announced the approach of the royal party. The king and queen, simple and unostentatious persons, drove up in a carriage-and-four of the fashion of fifty years ago. The popularity of the monarch was attested by the cordial greetings of the populace. The old man’s stately head was uncovered, and he bowed with kindly smiles at the acclaim. On the platform at the top of the steps a group of officials awaited him, foremost among them Terence Mayne, with a tall black-haired woman by his side. Jack happened to get himself within arm’s reach of this woman; she slowly turned her head, and their eyes met.

At first her smooth cheeks paled; then she lowered her eyes, and her face was covered with a blush. At the same moment the music of ten thousand silver bells sounded; the royal party reached their hosts and changes of position occurred in the group, so that the black-haired girl disappeared. But her image had entered Jack’s soul and banished all else except the purpose to follow her forever!

Availing himself, unobtrusively, of his great strength, he made his way to the interior immediately in the wake of the royalties. The spectacle was astonishing—an oval of blue and gold nine hundred feet in diameter surrounding the dark red tan-bark of the arena. From above the seats, which accommodated one hundred thousand spectators, arches rose to the spring of the tower, meeting at the base of the

golden dome, through whose central aperture further heights were visible, with frostwork arabesques, ascending into a misty vagueness of rainbow light. The royal box was in the center of the middle circle of seats, and to the left of it Jack soon identified the gray hair and stalwart figure of Terence Mayne chatting with the Maharaja of Lucknow. But the girl of his soul was nowhere to be seen.

“Miriam Mayne is to ride in the ninth race, I hear,” said some one to some one else at his elbow. Miriam! That must be she! How he worshipped the name!

At another bugle-blast, several hundred beautiful animals entered the ring and began to move round it. Many of the riders were women. The usual riding-costume for both sexes was a close-fitting silken tunic and leggings: the hair of the women flowed loose from a fillet, or hung in braids. As the procession passed him Jack noted in the ninth rank a rider on a white Arab. Dense black hair streamed out from beneath her fillet; the movements of her body were full of supple dignity, replying to those of her horse; she rode without saddle or bridle; her dress was gray silk embroidered with gold, and in her right hand she carried a red rose. Miriam!

Jack leaned far over the balustrade. Miriam Mayne, in the magic of a moment, had thrown wide the gates of his heart and transformed the boy dreamer into the lover full grown. She was blood to his heart and air to his lungs. To be hers—to make her his!

As she drew near she did not look toward him; but her Arab began to curvet and dance, and she playfully struck him on his glossy neck with the rose. Hereupon the beautiful

creature reared erect; she flung her body forward, and in the act the rose somehow escaped from her hand and fell into Jack’s breast. She passed on.

Had she meant it? Jack dared not believe so. He had never considered the effect upon a woman of his commanding stature and noble bearing. Many a fair woman had followed him with her eyes, in vain.

But here was her rose, the most sacred object he had ever possessed! Did it not create some ineffable understanding between them?

The parade filed out, and on consulting the program Jack found that Miriam’s race was two hours hence. He determined to visit the stalls below.

Among the noticeable horses was a roan, belonging to the maharaja, seventeen hands, to be ridden in the ninth race by a Mohammedan groom as big as Jack himself. Jack took a fancy to him, and, though warned by the groom, entered his stall and petted him. He was a natural horse-tamer. After a few moments the formidable creature responded to his advances, and the groom stared.

When he returned to the arena the royal party had withdrawn and the spectators, freed from court etiquette, were visiting one another and strolling about the lobbies. But Miriam was nowhere to be seen. However, as he was ascending the tower on one of the escalators, he saw, through the carved interstices, a party descending on the opposite side. An exclamation broke from him.

She was there, with her father and the maharaja. Her back was toward Jack. But as they passed she turned slowly, and for the second time their eyes met. Oh, the poignant

delight to him of that moment! As she averted her glance she seemed to notice the rose in his doublet, and he thought she smiled. The next moment the relentless machinery of the escalators had separated them and hope of overtaking her was vain.

Returning to the arena he found Miriam absent from her father's box; the latter was talking animatedly with the prince, and near by stood the big Mohammedan groom with a dejected air. It seemed that he had just stabbed another attendant and was under arrest. The official was sorry, but an assault with a deadly weapon could not be overlooked. As no one else could ride the roan, the animal must be withdrawn from the race. The maharaja smiled and bowed politely, shrugged his shoulders, and resigned himself to the will of Allah; but gave the groom a glance that boded no good for his near future.

Jack had an inspiration; he flung a leg over the railing of the box and strode up to its astonished occupants. "I'll ride for you," he said to the maharaja, "I know your horse and can manage him." His highness gazed at him with an inscrutable Oriental smile. Mayne, his Celtic temper already somewhat ruffled, growled out in the brogue that always more pronounced in emotional junctures, "An' who might *you* be, me frien'? Ye have yer nerve wid ye, anyhow!"

Before Jack could reply a long-legged, athletic figure came striding down the aisle with a grin of amusement on his aquiline features. It was Uncle Sam!

"It's all right, Terence!" he called out, a laugh in his deep voice. "That's only my nephew, Jack. How do, prince? Oh, the boy can ride, all right. If you want to win that race, the

youngster can come nearer doing the trick for you than any other jockey on the track!”

The atmosphere changed. None ventured to dispute Sam Paladin. Terence smoothed his hostile front. The maharaja bowed with engaging grace. “My horse has killed six men,” he observed in liquid tones, “but I see your nephew is a big, brave man. I am content—Bismillah!”

Jack lifted his head and his chest expanded; his eyes shone with joy. “Thanks, uncle; thanks, prince!” he said. “I’ll fix it!” and he was off. He remembered afterward that he ought to have said something nice to Miriam’s father; but it was too late.

There was a bare twenty minutes before the ninth race. Jack, the pacific, plunging down to the basement, abruptly became the despot of the stables. He stripped the roan of the cumbrous saddle, patted him, divested himself of shoes and doublet, bound the broad blue sash of the maharaja round his waist, fastened Miriam’s rose over his heart, vaulted at a bound astride the great horse, and was ready for the ring five minutes ahead of the bell.

Some of the best horses and riders in the world faced the starter—seven of them. The champions of England and of Australia; a black from Morocco, carrying a Berber prince as black as he; a famous Chinese mare bestridden by a mandarin’s daughter; a wiry brute from Russia backed by a Cossack. But where was Miriam?

Jack’s heart sank. Without her his presence was a farce. True, honor bound him to defeat her if he could; but he believed her Arab was unbeatable. The riders took their places, while a murmur of admiration from tens of

thousands of lips created a soft but thunderous vibration in the enclosed space. The starter's arm was uplifted!

"Miriam, my soul, where art thou?" Had Jack spoken aloud? At all events, as if in response to a summons, and to Jack's unspeakable delight and agitation, out she paced, quietly, from behind the barrier and moved to a place directly at his side!

She gave no sign, however, of recognizing his presence. She tossed back over her shoulder a heavy strand of her hair, leaned forward and whispered in her stallion's ear, then straightened her limbs and lifted her body, alert with life and vigor. At the second signal she crouched forward over the withers and threw up one arm, keen for the signal. It came—the race was on!

Jack, with a hoarse shout of love and war, made himself one creature with the roan, and they hurled forward. His blood thundered in his veins, the frenzy of his pulse was answered by the leap of his steed. They flew forward smoothly, and the ground swept beneath them like the fleeting of a cataract. Hippomenes and Atalanta—a memory of that, read in a shadowy corner of his father's library, sped through Jack's mind. Triumphant power, mingled with the exquisite sense of Miriam's companionship, made him greater than himself. He knew, without looking, that she was still at his side, riding with elastic ease. What a girl! What a rider! What a queen of heart and soul, whom he with heart and soul was striving to overcome!

The first circuit was a free course; after that, obstacle succeeded obstacle, each of increasing difficulty. Few would survive the finish! The great ring seemed to speed round

like the rush of a whirlpool. The riders were trying out one another’s powers. As yet there was little change in their relative positions. With the first obstacle, foresight and strategy began to match themselves against mere swiftness.

Jack suddenly felt that Miriam had changed her place, but at the jump a waft of her hair touched his cheek and something like a great white bird swept past him; she alighted just ahead of him, closely followed by the mandarin’s daughter on her gray. The two girls had outmaneuvered him.

Rapid vicissitudes followed. At the third fence the Englishman collided in mid air with the Berber and both came down in a headlong ruin. As Jack swung into the fourth circuit a tall, white fence with a ditch beyond it rose before him; some one was at his shoulder; but Miriam and the Chinese girl had already passed it. The roan leaped a thought too soon, and his hind feet failed to reach the edge of the ditch; in regaining it he was passed by the Cossack, with the Australian at his heels. Jack was last in the race!

But the roan was fresh as ever, and two circuits of the course remained. Jack, moreover, knew by a sixth sense that he and Miriam would finish together, with the rest nowhere. A glimpse of Miriam flashed before him, leading the field by a scant head, her hair streaming out like a sable oriflamme to lead him on. Like a bolt shot by Hercules, the roan answered his call. The Cossack and the hardy Australian fell to the rear, but Jack and the former swung around the corner nearly abreast; the two girls were close in front; all four would take the final jump almost together!

The spectators were on their feet and the air roared with the gigantic diapason of their cheers. Jack’s nerves were steady as iron now and his spirit dilated, till the whole desperate struggle seemed to be taking place within himself, and the end foreordained.

The last barrier was seven feet high, at the top of a slight incline. Beyond was a six-hundred yard stretch to the tape.

The mandarin’s daughter, riding superbly, but near the end of her physical endurance, had the gray’s head at Miriam’s knee. Miriam, at the incline, slightly abated her pace; the other shot forward at full stride, but her mount, embarrassed by the incline, struck and snapped the top rail and fell, with the near foreleg broken on the further side. Miriam, in leaping, had to swerve to escape the sharp end of the broken rail and to avoid landing on her rival. But the latter picked herself up unhurt; the gray lay kicking on its side.

Meanwhile the Cossack, relying on the lightness of his horse, took the incline at top speed, grazing the roan’s shoulder as he went by, and he and Miriam, in unison, but on converging lines, rose in the air. With Jack between them, a catastrophe was imminent. A hush, followed by hissing of breath drawn between the teeth, showed that the spectators realized the peril.

Jack, self-possessed in that crisis, knew what to do and had the power to do it. Miriam’s white Arab cleared the bar first and unscathed; but the kicking gray beneath caused him to stumble on alighting and he fell on his right side. Miriam threw her right leg over his head as he fell and thus avoided injury, but she was unseated and thrown heavily;