

George Walter Thornbury (1828-76)

1 *The Cavalier's Escape*

Trample! trample! went the roan,
Trap! trap! went the grey;
But pad! pad! pad! like a thing that was mad,
My chestnut broke away.
It was just five miles from Salisbury town, 5
And but one hour to day.

Thud! thud! came on the heavy roan,
Rap! rap! the mettled grey;
But my chestnut mare was of blood so rare,
That she showed them all the way. 10
Spur on! spur on! — I doffed my hat,
And wished them all good day.

They splashed through miry rut and pool —
Splintered through fence and rail;
But chestnut Kate switched over the gate — 15
I saw them droop and tail.
To Salisbury town — but a mile of down,
Once over this brook and rail.

Trap! trap! I heard their echoing hoofs,
Past the walls of mossy stone; 20
The roan flew on at a staggering pace,
But blood is better than bone.
I patted old Kate and gave her the spur,
For I knew it was all my own.

But trample! trample! came their steeds, 25
And I saw their wolf's eyes burn;
I felt like a royal hart at bay,
And made me ready to turn.
I looked where highest grew the may,
And deepest arched the fern. 30

I flew at the first knave's sallow throat;
One blow, and he was down.
The second rogue fired twice, and missed;
I sliced the villain's crown,
Clove through the rest, and flogged brave Kate, 35
Fast, fast to Salisbury town!

Pad! pad! they came on the level sward,
Thud! thud! upon the sand;
With a gleam of swords, and a burning match,
And a shaking of flag and hand: 40
But one long bound and I passed the gate,
Safe from the canting band.

1857

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