

# *Sketch*

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## Dark and Light

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a chorus of replies, since similar mares had been selling for as much as a hundred dollars.

He turned to the horse, murmuring affectionate patter, before waking to the fact that not one bid was voiced.

His shrill bark shattered the interval of embarrassing silence. "Gents, I beg your pardon. But this is a sale and here is a sound mare to be sold. You know you can't buy a sound mare only 'leven years old for less than a hundred now-a-days! In case you didn't hear the fust time, we are starting this mare out at twenty-five less than that. Do I hear a measly little bid of seventy-five?"

There was a nervous stir in a far corner of the crowd. A single voice sounded, brusque and unfriendly. "Yeh, sure. Seventy-five cents!"

The auctioneer gasped and glared. But his glare diffused into a grin as it occurred to him that he might be the object of a practical joke. "Well, what am I bid then, now that you've had your fun?" He searched the crowd for a bona fide bid, to no avail.

Seventy-five cents was the first bid and the last. Wise voices advised the auctioneer that his job that day was a futile one. With an explosion of tobacco juice he departed without argument or ceremony.

The crowd thinned quickly, many of the men stopping to grip the hand of the man with the smile that lied, saying nothing, but winking at him broadly.

After the last one had gone, he led his Belgian mare back to the stable, with a smile that spoke the truth.



## Dark and Light

By Betty Blanco

**N**ARCISSUS in a copenhagen bowl—  
 Its lacy perfume brings me thoughts  
 Of love just burst in bloom.  
 What star it searches, little known to me;  
 But whene'er drabness clutches all,  
 Its spires reach toward the sun.