SURPRISED BY NIGHT.

HOW THE FAMOUS PONY CLUB WAS CRUSHED BY THE "SLICKS."

A Secret Band of Horse Thieves Which Committed Widespread Depredations Throughout the South Was Finally Wiped Out by Another Secret Band.

Back in the '50s and '60s there roamed over the states of North and South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio and Tennessee a devil-may-care band of men who styled themselves the "Pony Club." They were regularly organized, had grips, signs and passwords, and duly elected officers. The initiatory oath was filled with blood-curdling threatenings and was issued from headquarters, the penalty being death to those who were so foolhardy as to break it. The creepy part was that it was said to have been alleged in Florida logs and panthers and wolves in Tennessee's wilds for the best testimony to and being inharmonious.

Their mode of operation was to steal in Florida horses and asses on halfway ground and exchange them for one fresh from Tennessee or Ohio; vice versa, with one from South Carolina or one from Mississippi, and it was extremely difficult to catch up with the right party. But these depredations became so numerous and daring, and the consequent loss so great, that the planters gathered together and determined to stop their marauding and bring the offenders to justice. To this end a convention was called and a band organized styling themselves "The Slicks."

When a horse was stolen from a community means were sent to every county, and then the news spread will from the Ohio to the Everglades and from the Potomac to the Mississippi the wonderful story of the consequent loss so great