Outdoor Stories of Adventure and Thrill

THE ARGOSY

MAY

PRICE 10 CENTS

THE FRANK A. MUNSEY COMPANY NEW YORK & LONDON

Mother's Day

Is when she moulds the habits, health and beauty of her children. Beauty and softness of skin texture are the natural heritage of nearly all infants. Unfortunately, this birth boon is often undervalued and neglected, with the result that the beauty gradually disappears.

The use of common impure soaps is answerable for much of this skin deterioration, and for this there is no excuse, since the best and purest of all skin soaps

Pears' Soap

is really more economical than ordinary soaps, because of the fact that it lasts twice as long. The pre-eminence of Pears' Soap all the world over is easily accounted for. It is composed entirely of natural beauty preserving ingredients. Its emollient action ensures the skin of a permanent softness and delicacy of color, and exercises a protective influence that keeps it in perfect condition.

Pears is all solid soap purity and goodness having no water mixed with it, and being unaffected by heat or cold. Since 1789 Pears has been the Mother's Soap of the world.

The general idea of Mother's Day is a simultaneous observance in every country of the love and reverence men, women and children owe to a good mother. The second Sunday in May is observed as Mother's Day throughout the United States. The Movement is not denominational—Every society and organization is asked to unite in making the observance universal. Do some distinct act of kindness to the sick or unfortunate, in loving remembrance of your mother. The White Carnation is the Mother's Day special flower.

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.

Victor

Victor III
$40
Other styles
$10 to $250

The advantages of the "goose-neck" tone-arm

The patented Victor "goose-neck" tone-arm in playing position.

The patented Victor "goose-neck" tone-arm when not in use.

"What makes the Victor tone so sweet, clear and natural, and of such splendid volume?" people ask as they become captivated by the unequaled Victor tone-quality.

The "goose-neck" construction of the tone-arm is largely responsible. A little thing in itself, but a great big thing in what it accomplishes.

It puts the weight of the sound-box in the proper place and at the proper angle to get the best results from every record.

Its flexibility enables the reproducing point to follow the lines of the sound-waves so closely that every detail is reproduced with absolute fidelity.

And besides improving the tone, the "goose-neck" adds to the convenience of using the Victor.

This exclusive patented "goose-neck" is only one of the many valuable features that help to make the Victor the world's greatest musical instrument.

If you have never heard a Victor of the present day, go to the nearest Victor dealer's and hear it. You'll be astonished at the height of perfection it has reached in recent years.

And be sure to hear the Victor-Victrola

Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.
Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors

To get best results, use only Victor Needles on Victor Records

New Victor Records are on sale at all dealers on the 28th of each month

STICK
POWDER
CREAM

and every shaver satisfied

With Colgate's, you now have your choice of three methods—Stick, Powder or Cream. The result is the same, for whichever you use, you get the perfect

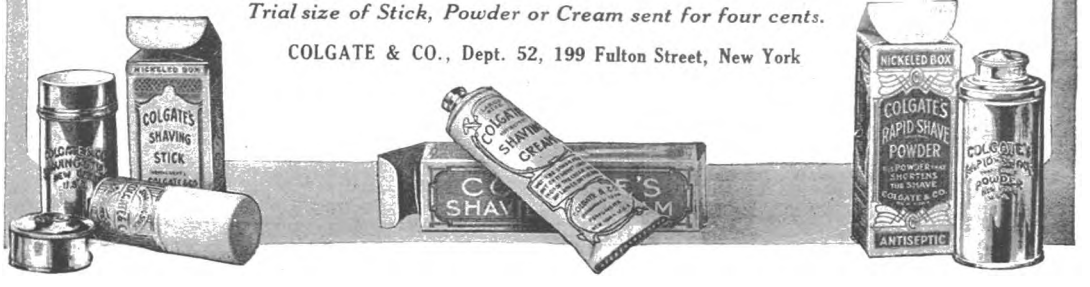
COLGATE'S
SHAVING LATHER

Softening, soothing, sanitary. The most wiry beard yields quickly to the blade. Your skin is left with a sensation of coolness, comfort and refreshment.

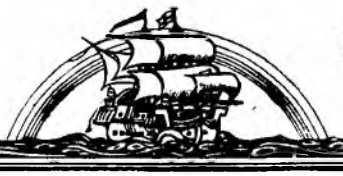
Colgate's is the *safest* lather because of its proved antiseptic qualities. Do not ill-treat your face or handicap your razor by using an inferior lather.

Trial size of Stick, Powder or Cream sent for four cents.

COLGATE & CO., Dept. 52, 199 Fulton Street, New York



10c. per copy



By the year $1.00

The Argosy for May

Two Complete Novels

Six Serial Stories

One Novelette

Eleven Short Stories

"THE FIGHTING STREAK,"

a great war-time story, has been finished in time for us to announce it as one of the Complete Novels in the June Argosy. Don't miss this remarkable insight into the military game as it was played in 1863. For further particulars see this month's Log-Book.

"MIDNIGHT BETWEEN TOWNS"

is the other Complete Novel for June, one of the most absorbing tales of adventure we have ever printed. **"Vengeance Burned Away"** is the title of the new serial.

ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE FRANK A. MUNSEY COMPANY
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, and Temple House, Temple Avenue, E.C., London

FRANK A. MUNSEY, President. RICHARD H. TITHERINGTON, Secretary. CHRISTOPHER H. POPE, Treasurer.

ENTERED AT THE NEW YORK POST-OFFICE AS SECOND-CLASS MAIL MATTER.

Classified Advertising

In the Munsey Magazines

	Line Rate
Munsey's Magazine	$2.50
The Scrap Book	——
The Argosy	$1.50
The All-Story Magazine	1.00
The Railroad Man's Magazine	.75
The Cavalier	.50
June Argosy Forms Close April 24th.	$6.25

Special Combination Rate $5.50

A DEPARTMENT maintained for the small advertiser and for the convenience of the reader in quickly locating a wide variety of necessities for the home, the office, the farm, and for the man or woman who seeks business opportunities. There is virtually no want that may arise which cannot be supplied in these classified advertising pages.

Send for interesting booklet on Classified Advertising.

AGENTS & SALESMEN WANTED

A BONANZA! PUSH-POINT LEAD PENCIL, WITH Sharpener That Slips Over Eraser When Not In Use!! (Sharpener weighs 1-22d ounce); solves pencil economics problem better than devices costing more than ten times as much; no whittling away wood, always same length; 100% profit at ten cents; sells on sight; outlasts ordinary pencil three to five times. Send ten cents silver—no stamps—for sample and terms. APEX SALES CO., 1224-1226 17th Street, Denver, Colorado.

REPRESENT US in exclusive territory and earn 100% profit selling patent gas cooking appliance that every housewife wants on sight. Good proposition for men and women to work individually or organize and direct selling crews. A. G. DECKER, Sales Manager, 37 E. 28th St., New York.

FINE KNIFE GIVEN TO MEN who take agency for our Scientifically Tempered Guaranteed Photo Decorated Pocket Knives, Shears, Razors, etc. Handles decorated with photos, lodge emblems, address, etc. Write quick for money-making offer. CANTON CUTLERY CO., Dept. B 41, Canton, Ohio.

NEW—VACUUM CLOTHES WASHER—FAST SELLER Every customer satisfied; orders come unsolicited. Both sexes. No competition. Protected territory. Your profit on every sale equals mine on four. Unusual opportunity. Investigate. Interesting particulars. W. B. HAER, Mfr., 1545 B'way, N.Y.

WANTED—Agents to sell printers, engineers, motormen, anybody who wants clean hands. *Vonco*, The Perfect Hand Soap and Household Cleanser. Let anybody try a sample and you make a quick sale. Add $12 per week easily to your income. We want hustling representatives in every shop. Enclose 10c for full size can and particulars. Address Box D., THE J. T. ROBERTSON CO., Manchester, Conn.

AGENTS CAN EASILY MAKE $10.00 A DAY selling our Gold Window Letters. Novelty Signs, and Changeable Signs. Enormous demand. Merchants must have them. Catalogue free. SULLIVAN CO., 1233 W.Van Buren St., Chicago.

AGENTS—Handkerchiefs, Dress Goods, Carleton made $8 one afternoon; Mrs. Bosworth made $25 in 2 days. No experience needed. Free samples. Credit. FREEPORT MANUFACTURING COMPANY, 38 Main Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

$100 MONTHLY AND EXPENSES to trustworthy men and women to travel and distribute samples; big manufacturer. Steady work. S. SCHEFFER, Treas., M'1128, Chicago.

Agents, male and female, can make $15 daily selling the latest style French Foulard dress patterns, Persian borders in different designs, also embroidered French lawn waist and suit patterns. Write J. Gluck, 621 B'way, New York.

OUR REPRESENTATIVES make big money selling a household proposition which appeals at once to housewives and sells on sight. Join our hustling, money-making staff; remarkable money-back offer to agents. Write for proposition today. INSULATED CO., Box A, Westbrook, Maine.

AGENTS—THE B-H POCKET GAS AND RANGE LIGHTERS are breaking all records for rapid selling and large profits. State rights to those who apply at once. AUTO IGNITER CO., 1341 Broadway, New York City.

THE HOME CLOTHES SPRINKLER—A new household necessity. Something every housekeeper will buy on sight. Made to fit pint or ½-pint bottles. Send 10c for sample and start now. VAN MFG. CO., 185 Franklin St., Boston, Mass.

Make money in spare time selling $1,500 Accumulative Accident policies that pay death claim for *any* accident; $10 w'kly benefits for $2 a year; insure anybody; strong company. Stalter & Co., Gen. Agts., 100 William St., N.Y.

GET A NOBBY MADE-TO-MEASURE SUIT at wholesale cost. We show the most beautiful and exclusive fashions and fabrics and guarantee a perfect fit. All goods are shipped express prepaid subject to 24 hours' examination. We need an agent in your town. If you want to double your income, write for our 60 handsome fabrics and fashion plates. PARAGON TAILORING CO., Dept. 15, Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS, MILLIONS OF HOUSEHOLDS USE LAMPS. Our Sun-Ray mantle kerosene burners fit all lamps. Cheaper than gas. Prices defy competition. Particulars free. SIMPLEX GASLIGHT CO., Dept. 20, New York.

AGENTS & SALESMEN WANTED

ONE ALADDIN MANTLE LAMP AGENT Made $700 in 60 days. Another sold $50 on money-back guarantee and not one was returned. Burns kerosene (coal oil). Brighter than electricity. Sell themselves on over-night trial. Improved 1911 line is finest in world for homes, offices, public places. Guaranteed. Ask nearest office for agency proposition. MANTLE LAMP CO., Desk 227, Chicago; Portland, Ore.; Waterbury, Conn.; Montreal, Winnipeg, Can.

AGENTS—A PROFIT FOR YOU in selling Eureka Water Strainers, other household necessities. $5 upward daily. Let us prove it. Free samples before you buy. Send two cents mailing cost. M. SEED FILTER CO., New York.

WANTED—SALESMEN. GOOD COMMISSIONS PAID to high-grade men. Fine opportunity for active, able men. Area men write. UNION ENGINEERING COMPANY, Columbia, South Carolina.

BIG PROFITS TO AGENTS, selling our remarkable Mak-Mor Butter Machine. Merges without chemicals 1 pt. milk into 1 lb. of butter, additional pound costing 4 cents. More healthful than creamery butter; sold with a guarantee. MAK-MOR SALES CO., New York City.

BE YOUR OWN BOSS. Sell this absolutely different household necessity. Men and women easily make $15.00 to $35.00 a week. One agent says, "The results it produced in my home were so remarkable I was compelled to take orders for seven more for my friends—and now I am selling 600 a week." Post card brings full information. *Send now.* Dept. 45, DUNLAP MFG. CO., Bloomington, Ill.

GOOD HUSTLERS CAN MAKE FOR THEMSELVES elegant future, selling "Raincoats." We are manufacturers. New proposition. Write for interesting particulars. REGAL RAINCOAT CO., Dept. 66, 1367 Broadway, New York.

LIVE AGENTS WANTED—HUSTLERS TO HANDLE our attractive 1911 combination packages of soap and toilet articles with valuable premiums. One Michigan agent made $65 in 47 hrs.; another $21 in 8 hrs.; another $22.50 in 10 hrs. Write today. DAVIS SOAP WORKS, 202 Davis Building, 1429 Carroll Ave., Chicago.

MEN AND WOMEN—If you want work, sell guaranteed hosiery to wearer. Big commissions; make $10 daily; experience unnecessary. Address INTERNATIONAL MILLS, 3028 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

THE GREAT FRUIT CANNING TOOLS. The Milwaukee Fruit Jar Holder and Wrench. 500 other red hot sellers. Samples of best sellers and big catalog sent free. GEO. EDGREN CO., Milwaukee, Wis.

I WILL START YOU earning $4 daily at home in spare time, silvering mirrors. No capital. Anyone can do the work. Send for free instructive booklet, giving plans of operation. G. F. REDMOND, Dept. B., Boston, Mass.

Salesmen Wanted to sell trees and plants. Free outfit. Experience unnecessary. Steady work. Commission paid weekly. No investment, deliveries or collections to make. Write for terms. PERRY NURSERIES, Rochester, New York.

AGENTS—PORTRAITS 35c, FRAMES 15c, SHEET PICTURES 1c, Stereoscopes 25c, Views 1c. 30 days' credit. *Samples and Catalog Free.* CONSOLIDATED PORTRAIT, Dept. 1075, 1027 W. Adams St., Chicago.

WANTED AGENTS TO SOLICIT ORDERS FOR MADE-TO-MEASURE UNDERWEAR. Those taking orders for Custom Shirts and Clothes preferred. *Big opportunity.* TEXTILE MFG. CO., 211 Institute Place, Chicago, Ill.

Photo Pillow Tops, Portraits, Frames, Sheet Pictures and Photo Plates at very lowest prices. Rejects credited. Prompt shipments. Samples and catalog free. 30 days' credit. Experience unnecessary. Jas. C. Bailey Co., Desk 18, Chicago.

AGENTS: $300 EVERY MONTH. Brand new aluminum 4-piece combination cooker at half price. New proposition. Pocket samples. Outfit free to workers. THOMAS MFG. COMPANY, 1207 Third St., Dayton, Ohio.

SALESMEN making small towns, just what you want for pocket side line, consigned goods, new, snappy, catchy. Quick shipments and prompt commissions. Write for order book to-day. CANFIELD MFG. CO., 208 Sigel St., Chicago.

AGENTS & SALESMEN WANTED
—Continued

WIDE-AWAKE SALES AGENTS to sell personally and organize sales force on new and winning invention. Live agents make extraordinary profits the year round. Preston Hurman, West Virginia, writes: "Sales first day $52.40—first five days $228.16." Our advertising does half the work. Here is your best opportunity in 1911 for making big income. Give full particulars first letter. THE PROGRESS COMPANY, 920-210 Monroe St., Chicago.

WANTED—One Good Man in each town to take orders for made-to-measure clothes. Up-to-date styles, very low prices; orders come easy. High-class permanent business; fine profits, $5.00 a day and up. No money or experience needed. We ship on approval, express prepaid, and guarantee perfect fit. Write for free sample outfit and inside price on suit for yourself. Banner Tailoring Co., Dept. 673, Chicago.

EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ENERGETIC SOLICITORS to secure protected agency for high-grade specialty. Sells to business men, doctors, lawyers, homes, barbers, hotels. Big profits. Write today. SANITAX CO., 2325 Wabash Avenue, Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED IN EVERY COUNTY to sell the Transparent Handle Pocket Knife. Big commission paid. From $75 to $300 a month can be made. Write for terms. NOVELTY CUTLERY CO., No. 77 Bar St., Canton, Ohio.

AGENTS: Send for free booklet, inside information on the agency business. Filled with money-making plans. Pointers and experience of thousands of successful agents. Address J. M. FINCH, 1107 3rd St., Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS—DOLLARS IN YOUR POCKET EVERY DAY, if you handle our new fast selling specialties. Sell at every house. See our big line. Samples furnished. Catalogue Free. A. MILLER CO., Box 254, Muskegon, Mich.

MAKE $20 DAILY operating our Minute Picture Machines. Experience unnecessary. Small investment; large profits. Free book, testimonials, etc. Write: AMERICAN MINUTE PHOTO CO., Dept. 40, Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS—$50 weekly. We manufacture the best needle case made; a wonderful seller; 200% to 500% profit; talking unnecessary; our "Trust Scheme" Envelopes do the work; general agents can make $100 weekly; send 10c for a 25c sample containing 115 needles; particulars free. PATY NEEDLE CO., 200 Union Sq., Somerville, Mass.

AGENTS make big money selling our new gold letters for office windows, store fronts, and glass signs. Any one can put them on. Write today for free sample and full particulars. METALLIC SIGN LETTER CO., 409 N. Clark St., Chicago.

$25 WEEKLY AND EXPENSES TO MEN AND WOMEN to collect names, distribute samples and advertise. Steady work. C. H. EMERY, MK28, Chicago, Ill.

SEND US YOUR ADDRESS and we will mail you our catalog of 750 quick sellers. Over 3500 guaranteed articles beautifully illustrated in our 4 free catalogs. $500 prize contest this month. A. W. Holmes & Co., Dept. 11, Providence, R.I.

AGENTS MAKE BIG MONEY—Big pay, no experience, no capital required. 5000 new art specialties; photo pillow tops 25c, portraits 30c, bromides 25c. New 1911 catalog and samples *free*. Write. DANIEL H. RUTTER CO., Madison St., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS Outfit and $10 Sample Watch Free to men and women who will wear and sell our watches among their friends. $18 to $30 a week to agents who devote their entire time to the sale of these watches. *Write now for our free sample watch* & terms to Ogden Jewelry Co., Dept. 108, Chicago.

HELP WANTED

IF YOU CAN READ AND WRITE and are willing to try, we will teach, train and equip you to be a top-notch, scientific salesman. A splendid position with us is then yours. No previous experience necessary. We want "*I can*" and "*I will*" men for our permanent sales force. This is an opening for the man who wants to be a *real* salesman with exceptional money making opportunities. If you believe in doing business on a "100% honesty basis," if you want "success," if your wishbone is not where your backbone ought to be, write us today for full particulars. STACE, BURROUGHS & COMPANY (manufacturers' representatives), 511 Michigan Ave., Chicago. Offices 700.

INVESTMENTS

HAVE YOU FIVE DOLLARS PER MONTH TO INVEST for fourteen months in a Mexican plantation for the growing of a very profitable *fiber product*, that ought to pay you big within two years? If so, write UNITED STATES & MEXICAN TRUST COMPANY, Mexico City, Mexico. Assets, $2,000,000.

BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

LEARN BOOKKEEPING, 25 CENTS. OUR COURSE consists of twenty-six lessons; you pay 25 cents for each lesson as you progress. Total cost, $6.50. Our method is simple and thorough, up-to-date and successful. You don't have to pay $5.00 or $3.00 a month, but simply 25 cents for each lesson. If you don't like it, you stop. Many satisfied students. Send us a silver quarter today and start the course which should put you on the road to better pay. COX & BECK, Accountants, Warburton Building, Yonkers, New York.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE WANTED. Splendid income assured right man to act as our representative after learning our business thoroughly by mail. Former experience unnecessary. All we require is honesty, ability, ambition and willingness to learn a lucrative business. No soliciting or traveling. This is an exceptional opportunity for a man in your section to get into a big-paying business without capital and become independent for life. Write at once for full particulars. Address E. R. Marden, Pres. THE NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE REAL ESTATE COMPANY, L 345 Marden Bldg., Washington, D. C.

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS WANTED. You can write them. We teach you by mail. No experience necessary. Writers earn $50 a week. Demand increasing. For particulars address Ass'n M. P. SCHOOLS, 112 Clark St., Chicago.

WANTED—1,000 chauffeurs and repair men. Our demand for automobile engineers exceeds the supply. Calls for men of intelligence and mechanical bent capable of commanding $100 to $150 per month upon graduation. Resident course $20 to $60. Home Correspondence course completed by practical road and shop work at this school highly successful. Look this up. Auto Schools of America, Dept. K, 1600 Mich. Ave., Chicago.

YOU ARE WANTED FOR GOVERNMENT POSITIONS, $80.00 and over per month. Annual vacations. Short hours. No "layoffs." Common education sufficient. Over 12,000 appointments coming this year. Influence unnecessary. Send postal immediately for list of positions open. FRANKLIN INSTITUTE, Dept. H1, Rochester, N. Y.

$3,000 TO $10,000 YEARLY IN THE REAL ESTATE BUSINESS, without capital; we will teach you the business by mail, appoint you special representative in your locality, of leading real estate company, list with you readily salable properties, co-operate with and assist you to permanent success; a thorough commercial law course free to representatives. If you are honest and ambitious, our *free* 62-page book will surely interest you. Address INTERNATIONAL REALTY CORP., Dept. 1576 Chicago, Ill. (Successor to The Cross Co. and H. W. Cross & Co.)

FREE ILLUSTRATED BOOK tells about over 360,000 protected positions in U. S. service. More than 40,000 vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Easy to get. Just ask for booklet A 18. No obligation. EARL HOPKINS, Washington, D. C.

A COMPLETE COURSE in Practical Automobile Engineering under experienced instructors with all modern equipment and appliances. Our four-story building offers special accommodation to out-of-town students. Call or write for our liberal proposition on Resident or Home Courses. AUTOMOBILE SCHOOL OF CHICAGO, 1339 Michigan Avenue, Dept. A.A.

SHORTHAND IN 30 DAYS—Boyd Syllabic System—written with only nine characters. No "positions," "ruled lines," "shading," "word-signs," nor "cold notes." Speedy, practical system that can be learned in 30 days of home study, utilizing spare time. CHICAGO CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS, 961-112 Clark St., Chicago.

CIVIL SERVICE GOVERNMENT POSITIONS are very desirable for young people. Full information and questions recently used by the Civil Service Commission free. COLUMBIAN CORRESPONDENCE COLLEGE, Washington, D. C.

MAKE MONEY WRITING SHORT STORIES or for Newspapers. Earn from $100-$500 monthly. Pleasant spare time or regular work for you. Send for free booklet. Tells how. UNITED PRESS SYNDICATE, San Francisco, Cal.

LEARN AUTOMOBILE BUSINESS. We teach you at home. Get you $25.00 weekly job, $10.00 weekly while learning. ROCHESTER AUTO. SCHOOL, Dept. 1452, Rochester, New York.

TRADE SCHOOLS

PLUMBING, ELECTRICITY, BRICKLAYING, Painting taught in a few months. No age limit. Positions secured. Free Catalogue. GREAT EASTERN TRADE SCHOOL, 49 E. 32d St., N. Y. City, and 121 South 23d St., Philadelphia.

MOTOR CYCLES

MOTORCYCLES—1911 M.M. TOURING MODEL. Has more actual features than all others. Idler, free engine, roller bearings, etc. Agents wanted everywhere. AMERICAN MANUFACTURING COMPANY, Brockton, Mass.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

CONDUCT A "CANDY KITCHEN": Clear $10 to $25 daily. Very limited capital required. We teach you the business. Send for particulars. KENNON & Co., 148 W. Ontario St., Dept. B., Chicago.

MEN AND WOMEN to sell Whitcomb's "Flexsole," unlined shoe for women; no tacks, no seams, no lining; advertised in magazines 9 years; handsome income assured; all orders filled the same day received; protected territory. EASTERN SHOE Co., 240 Broadway, Beverly, Mass.

GAMES AND ENTERTAINMENTS

PLAYS, Vaudeville Sketches, Monologues, Dialogues, Speakers, Minstrel Material, Jokes, Recitations, Tableaux, Drills, Musical Pieces, Entertainments, Make Up Goods. Large Catalog Free. T. S. Denison & Co., Dept. 43, Chicago.

VENTRILOQUISM

LEARN VENTRILOQUISM in a few hours. New *natural* method. Big money, great fun. I want representatives everywhere. Free interesting booklet tells how. Send stamp. W. H. BAILEY, 771 Iglehart, St. Paul, Minn.

FOR THE DEAF

TO THOSE HARD OF HEARING—An efficient aid sent for trial, no expense, no risk, no contract, no money unless device be kept. Address R. C., TIEMANN & Co., 107 Park Row, New York.

THE DEAF HEAR INSTANTLY with the Acousticon. For personal use, also for churches and theatres. Special instruments. You must hear before you purchase. Booklet free. GENERAL ACOUSTIC COMPANY, 204 Beaufort Street, Jamaica, New York City.

FOR THE HAIR

DON'T BE BALD OR PREMATURELY GRAY. Stop your hair falling. Use our cap a few minutes each day. It means perfect health for the hair—the only sure scientific treatment. 30 days' trial free. We submit proof. HYGIENIC VACUUM CAP Co., 260 B Siberly Bldg., Rochester, N. Y.

FOR THE LAME

THE PERFECTION EXTENSION SHOE for any person with one short limb. No more unsightly cork soles, irons, etc., needed. Worn with ready made shoes. Shipped on trial. Write for booklet. HENRY R. LOTZ, 313 Third Ave., N. Y.

FOR MEN

SAFETY RAZOR BLADES sterilized and sharpened better than new; 2 cts. each. 5 years' success. Send for blade box and circular. ELECTRO STROPPING Co., 124 Shelby St., Detroit, Mich.

REAL ESTATE

CALIFORNIA

MOVING WEST—Don't sell your household goods—ship them at reduced rates in through cars to and from Western States. TRANSCONTINENTAL FREIGHT Co., 551 Bedford Bldg., Chicago, Ill.; 651-29 Broadway, New York.

ORANGE, ALFALFA, VINEYARD AND FRUIT LANDS in San Joaquin Valley, California. Unequaled soil, abundant water. $60 an acre and up. Make you independent in a few years. Booklet "The San Joaquin Valley" and six months' subscription to our journal "The Earth," free. C. L. SEAGRAVES, Gen. Colonization Agent, A. T. & S. F. Railway, 1133 Railway Exchange, Chicago.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ORANGE LAND, in the famed Riverside-Redlands district, on small payments. Water ready for irrigating. $20 monthly, and less, buys ten acres. Unusually attractive planting proposition. You can pay for an orange grove, vineyard or alfalfa ranch while earning your living. Rich soil—splendidly located. Ill. booklet. So. CAL. HOMES Co., Los Angeles, Cal.

FLORIDA

IF INTERESTED IN SOUTH FLORIDA, write Board of Trade, Tampa, Fla. Your name will be bulletined among 500 real estate agents, newspapers, railroads, and you'll receive much interesting literature. "Tampa 143.2% City."

TYPEWRITERS

GENUINE TYPEWRITER BARGAINS. No matter what make, will quote you lower prices and easiest terms. Write for big bargain list and illustrated catalogue. L. J. PEABODY, 63 Minot Bldg., Boston, Mass.

REMINGTON $18.75. This is your opportunity. Write at once for the most interesting proposition ever made. We are the final word. STANDARD TYPEWRITER EXCHANGE, 23 Park Row, New York.

REMINGTON TYPEWRITER FOR SALE CHEAP. Perfect condition and does splendid writing. Could ship on approval. Write for sample of work. FRANK J. PAYNE, Route No. 5, Rosedale, Kansas.

PATENT ATTORNEYS

PATENT SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. SEND sketch for free report as to patentability. *Guide Book* and *What to Invent*, with valuable list of Inventions Wanted, sent free. *One Million Dollars* offered for one invention. Patents secured by us advertised free in World's Progress; sample free. VICTOR J. EVANS & Co., Washington, D. C.

PATENT YOUR IDEAS.—$8,500 offered for one invention. Book "How to Obtain a Patent" and "What to Invent" sent free. Send rough sketch for free report as to patentability. Patent Obtained or Fee Returned. We advertise your patent for sale at our expense. Established 16 years. CHANDLEE & CHANDLEE, Patent Attys., 902 F St., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS: For facts about Prize and Reward offers and Inventions that will bring from $5000 to *10 Million Dollars*, and for books of Intense Interest to Inventors, send 8c postage to PUBS. PATENT SENSE, Dept. 65, Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

PATENT WHAT YOU INVENT! Your ideas may bring you a fortune. Our free books tell what to invent and how to obtain a patent. Write for them. Send sketch of invention for free opinion as to patentability. Patent Obtained or Fee Returned. Patents advertised for sale free. H. ELLIS CHANDLEE & Co., Registered Attorneys, 1287 F St., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS THAT PROTECT AND PAY. Books *free*. Highest references; best results. Send for list of Inventions Wanted. Patents advertised *free*. Send sketch or model for *free* search. WATSON E. COLEMAN, Patent Lawyer, 622 F Street, Washington, D. C.

PICTURE POST-CARDS

Actual-Photograph Post-Cards. Scenes around your own home; your bungalow or cottage; family groups; familiar places; reproduced direct on post-cards. Great for hotels, clubs, parks, stores, etc. 100 for $1.50. Samples, catalogue free. REPRO-PHOTO Co., 259 West 42d St., New York City.

AGENTS WANTED. We want agents in every town in America. We shipped 12,000 packages during 1910. Get in line with a live house, send 10c in stamps for our package of Samples. ARROW POST CARD Co., St. Louis, Mo.

PIANOS

A USED PIANO with the manufacturer's guarantee gives the biggest value; we have many of the different standard makes from $125 up, original cost three times that; delivery free anywhere and very easy terms. The Pease name guarantees fair dealing. Write for bargain list. Address PEASE PIANOS, Leggett Ave. and Barry St., Bronx, N. Y.

POPULAR SHEET MUSIC

BIG MONEY WRITING SONGS. THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS for anyone who can write successful words or music. Past experience unnecessary. Send us your song poems, with or without music, or write for free particulars. *Publication guaranteed if acceptable*. Washington only place to secure copyright. H. KIRKUS DUGDALE Co., Dept. 250, Washington, D. C.

SONG WRITERS—COMPOSERS. Send us your songs and Inst. Mss. Publication guaranteed if acceptable. *New York is the only place, and we are New York's leading music publishers.* Known everywhere. F. B. HAVILAND PUB. Co., 156 West 37th St., New York.

STAMPS AND RARE COINS

$7.75 PAID for *rare* date 1853 Quarters. $20 for a $1. Keep all money dated before 1884, and send 10c at once for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, 4x7. It may mean your fortune. Clark & Co., Coin Dealers, Dept. 34, Le Roy, N. Y.

COINS. I PAY FROM $1 TO $6000 for thousands of rare coins, stamps and paper money to 1894. Send stamp for illustrated circular, get posted and make money quickly. VONBERGEN, the Coin Dealer, Dept. A, Boston, Mass.

STAMPS—100 all different, Album and Hinges only 12c. 20 Russia 10c. 1000 all differeat stamps $2—20 different foreign coins 25c. We buy stamps and coins. Buying lists 10c. TOLEDO STAMP Co., Toledo, Ohio.

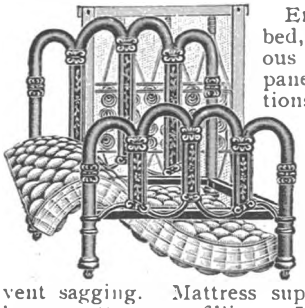
TELEGRAPHY

TELEGRAPHY, BOTH MORSE AND WIRELESS, taught quickly. Also Station Agency Work. R. R. Dispatcher's and Western Union wires, and complete wireless station in school. Big demand for operators. Living expenses earned. Correspondence courses if desired. Catalogs free. DODGE'S INSTITUTE, 9th St., Valparaiso, Ind. Established 1874.

WEDDING INVITATIONS

WEDDING INVITATIONS, Announcements, Etc. 100 in script lettering, including inside and outside envelopes, $2.50. 100 Visiting Cards, 50 cents. Write for samples. A. Ort Engraving Co., 1037 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Bed, Spring, Mattress
$1.50 Brings It Complete



Enameled iron panel bed, full size. Continuous posts, heavy steel panels. Floral decorations on panels in harmonizing colors. Springs—hard maple frame securely bolted and covered with a special pencil weave wire top; three rows spiral steel springs prevent sagging. Mattress superior quality extra heavy cotton top filling. High-grade ticking, hand tufted and securely fastened.

The complete bed, spring and mattress sent to your home on receipt of only $1.50. Try it 30 days. If you're satisfied that it's the most wonderful value you ever saw, you can pay the balance of the direct-from-factory price of $8.75 at the rate of

75 Cents a Month

We can quote you just as low prices, just as easy terms, on anything you need for the home. We have been 56 years in business, have 22 great retail stores and 800,000 customers. We furnish thousands of the most stylish homes in the big cities; and we give you the same style and elegance at prices you never dreamed possible for such quality goods.

Select What You Want
Pay as Convenient

Fit your home out, now, as you've often wanted to see it furnished. Remember everything is sent to you on **30 days free trial.** When you're thoroughly satisfied, send us the wonderfully low factory-to-home price in little payments that you won't miss.

CATALOG FREE

"Everything for the home," a big 300-page book illustrating the latest styles in home furnishings, sent absolutely free. Shows how you can furnish a home in a way that will be your pride and the admiration of your friends—shows you what wonderful values we give and why we can give them.

Write today for your free copy—no home-lover can afford to be without it.

HARTMAN
FURNITURE & CARPET CO.
Dept. 6—223 Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Largest, oldest and best known home-furnishing concern in the world.

Established 1855—56 years of success.

22 Great Stores—800,000 Customers

Crooked Spines Made Straight

Use the Sheldon Method
30 Days at Our Risk.

YOU need not venture the loss of a penny. No matter how serious your case, no matter **what else** you have tried, the Sheldon Method will help you and probably **wholly overcome** your affliction. We are so sure of this that we will make a Sheldon Appliance to suit your special condition and let you decide, after 30 days, whether you are satisfied. We make this unusual offer simply because the 16,000 cases we have treated **absolutely prove** the wonderful benefit the Sheldon Method brings to spinal sufferers, young and old.

There is no need to suffer longer or to bear the torture of old-fashioned plaster, leather or steel jackets. The Sheldon Appliance gives an even, perfect and adjustable support to the weakened or deformed spine and brings almost **immediate** relief even in the **most serious cases.** It is as easy to put on or take off as a coat, does not chafe or irritate, is light and cool. The price is within reach of all who suffer. You owe it to yourself, or the afflicted one in your family, to **find out** more about it. Send for our book **free** at once.

PHILO BURT MFG. CO., 255 Fifth Street, **Jamestown, N.Y.**

You Hear

when you use

Wilson's Common Sense Ear Drums

The only scientific sound conductors. Invisible, comfortable, efficient. They fit in the ear. Doctors recommend them. Thousands testify to their perfection and to benefits derived.

Information and book of letters from many users, free.

WILSON EAR DRUM CO.
318 Todd Building Louisville, Kentucky

The Man Who Found Himself

A gray-haired citizen of Tampa, Florida, turning over the pages of the November Review of Reviews, saw this picture, and if the young man on the ground with the bottle, was amazed to discover himself. Like a flash the years vanished, again he was outside Petersburg in '64, the air roared and shrieked with the fire of two armies, and he and these other members of the 9th A. C., U. S. A., whiled away a few weary minutes having "their pictures taken." Afterward he had forgotten it. To-day, he has grown old, but the pictures will be forever young.

This photograph is but one of 3,500 which we have just discovered after they were buried for nearly fifty years. Theirs is a dramatic and amazing story.

Through the Civil War with the Camera

went Mathew Brady, the genius whose photographic studio in New York was sought by world-famous men and women. With special permission from Lincoln, he accompanied the armies and navies for four years. He took thousands of photographs showing every phase of the struggle. Merry-making in camp, lingering in hospitals, lying in prison, spying on the enemy, hanging the Lincoln conspirators, manning the battleships, punishing the deserter, drilling the awkward squad, dead on the field of battle, fighting in the trenches—all is shown in this ever-changing panorama of these four momentous years.

Photographs Copyright 1910. Patriot Publishing Co.

General Custer. Only 23 years old at this time (1863) he was the idol of his men as "Yellow Hair," and "Daredevil Custer." Killed at the Indian Massacre at Little Big Horn, 1876.

18 OF THESE PICTURES FREE.

We have enclosed prints of 18 of the photographs in a large portfolio. This we will give you free if you **send ten cents for the cost of mailing.**

At the same time we will tell you the strange romance of Brady and the photographs,—how the government paid $27,800 for a similar collection, how General Garfield valued them at $150,000—how the famous detective Allan Pinkerton had a share in taking them.

Each of the eighteen prints is on a sheet 12 x 12½ inches in size and has under it the full story of that particular picture.

This offer cannot be held open indefinitely. Send the coupon today.

Review of Reviews Co.
13 Astor Place,
New York.

Argosy 6-'11

Review of Reviews Company, 13 Astor Place, New York, N.Y.

Send me free of charge, the 18 reproductions of your newly-discovered Brady Civil War photographs, ready for framing and contained in a handsome portfolio. Also send me the story of these photographs and tell me how I can get the whole collection for less than one cent a picture. I enclose 10 cents to cover the cost of mailing

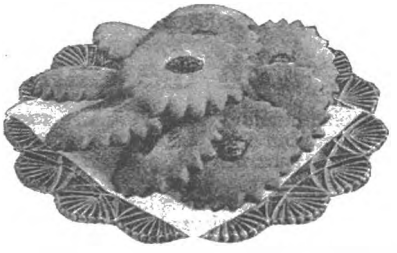
Name .....

Address .....

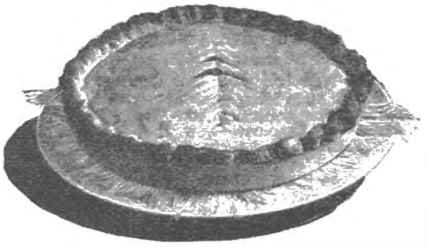
The Best of All Shortening is Real Leaf Lard

Tea Biscuits—Sift one quart of flour with one teaspoonful of salt, and three rounding teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Into this rub one large teaspoonful of Armour's "Simon Pure" Leaf Lard. Add just enough sweet milk to make a dough easily handled. Roll out and bake for about fifteen minutes in very hot oven.

New England Doughnuts—Scant cup granulated sugar, rounding tablespoonful "Simon Pure" Leaf Lard, cupful sweet milk, two eggs, one-fourth teaspoon salt, one-fourth teaspoon nutmeg, four cupfuls flour, four rounding teaspoonfuls baking powder. Roll out one-fourth of an inch thick, cut and fry in Armour's "Simon Pure" Leaf Lard.



Old-Fashioned Sugar Cookies—One cupful of Armour's "Simon Pure" Leaf Lard, three cupfuls sugar, three eggs, one cupful buttermilk, one level teaspoonful soda, one-half nutmeg grated, pinch of salt, two cupfuls pastry flour. Add enough flour to make a dough easily handled. Cut out one-eighth of an inch thick; cover with granulated sugar and bake a delicate brown.



Pie Paste—One level cup of pastry flour, one-half cup of Armour's "Simon Pure" Leaf Lard, one-half teaspoon salt, one-fourth cup cold water. Mix salt and flour thoroughly, chop in the lard, add water. Use as little flour as possible when rolling out. This makes a light, crisp, flaky and delicious pie crust.

It is the shortening that made old-time cooks famous for their wonderful hot breads, flaky pastry, light and feathery cakes—all digestible as well as delicious.

These old-fashioned cooks rendered their own lard—made it in open kettles just as "Simon Pure" Leaf Lard is made today.

Armour's "Simon Pure" Leaf Lard is the fine, pure, sweet, delicate lard our grandmothers had to make for themselves, but even better because of our wonderful facilities, materials and long years of experience.

Armour's "Simon Pure" LEAF LARD

is the very cream of the land — better than butter when butter is called for because it doesn't cook so dry.

And while it costs a trifle more than ordinary lard you need only use two-thirds as much.

There is just one way for you to get this finest of all lard. Be sure the label reads Armour's "Simon Pure" Leaf Lard.

Save this advertisement and try some of these recipes. They will give you wonderfully good results. Then write to us for "Pastry Wrinkles," from which they are taken. We send it free. Address

ARMOUR AND COMPANY

Dept. G 150 **Chicago**

THE ARGOSY

Vol. LXVI. MAY, 1911. No. 2

An Up-to-Date Shipwreck.

BY FRANK WILLIAMS,

Author of "The Tail of the Oregonian Limited."

What Happened to the Ship's Company on the Burma When That Liner Mysteriously Took In Water While Plowing the China Sea.

(COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE.)

CHAPTER I.

A MYSTERIOUS LEAK.

THERE was certainly something the matter with the Burma, the great Pacific liner, now plowing through the China Sea toward Manila.

To her passengers, reveling in the balmy tropic breezes which follow a typhoon, nothing seemed amiss. But to the quiet, efficient, British sailors under whose command the vessel was, ample cause for worry appeared.

The report had been brought to Captain Ross that the Burma was steadily taking water through her starboard-plates amidships. The grizzled old commander shook his head as a dog does when beset by flies.

Hadn't there been enough trouble already during this voyage without adding any more?

"Why, it's preposterous to talk about a leak," he said to Barney, the first officer, as they sat in the skipper's luxurious stateroom arguing the matter. "Only yesterday, when we got out of that typhoon, everything was as close and sound as if the Burma were on her maiden voyage. I myself went below to examine parts that might have been subjected to any particular strain, and she was as tight as a drum. Who reported the leak?"

"Ali Harkahn, the lascar."

"And you have seen to it personally, Mr. Barney?"

"Yes, sir. I closed the compartment, and have ordered the carpenter to let me know as soon as possible whether or not he thinks he can make any repairs. It would be rather an inconvenience to wait until we reached Manila."

"Indeed it would. Within a couple of hours, if we don't mend matters, we will be getting a list to starboard, and anything that makes a skipper the laughing-stock of a harbor is to come in during calm weather with a list, particularly when his log shows him tight and sound after one of the worst storms on the China Sea. Look to this thing at once, Mr. Barney, and report to me."

"Yes, sir." And the chief officer took his departure.

Captain Ross brushed his coat, combed his beard, shook himself, and went down to the saloon for luncheon. He was late, and most of the passengers had gone.

Two seats down the table on his left sat a dry, wizened little man, who never missed an opportunity to eat with Ross for the purpose, it seemed, of being as disagreeable as possible. The captain groaned when he saw him there.

"We aren't making the time we were, are we?" croaked Ezra Winters in his dry, unsympathetic voice, gazing through his huge circular spectacles like some curious fish with bulbous eyes.

"No, I'm afraid not," replied the captain.

"Why, what's the matter?" queried Winters, leaning forward. "Nothing serious, I hope."

"No, nothing very serious," laughed Ross, "for if it were we would have to call in some of you scientists to help us remedy it."

"I'm afraid I couldn't help you," replied the metallic voice coldly.

"For one who has attained what you have in the physical and scientific field, you would be quite within your rights in refusing your assistance," said the captain admiringly, for be it known that Ezra Winters was none other than the man who had invented the Winters elastic dry dock.

He was now *en route* for the Philippines to install this system in the harbors of our island possessions.

Winters laughed mirthlessly at the compliment in the captain's words. Little did compliments mean to him.

"It isn't the fact that I wouldn't *help* that I mean," said Winters, laying down his napkin, "but the fact that I wouldn't help *you*."

He rose abruptly from the table and walked away, snarling at a steward who was in his path.

Captain Ross sat dumfounded.

What on earth could the man mean? Why should he have taken so intense a dislike to the genial old skipper, who had more friends than any man crossing the Pacific? Was the scientist crazed by the intensity of his lifelong labors?

Ross had never seen the man before he boarded the Burma at Singapore, and he certainly did not care to see him again once he could shelve him on to dry land.

The matter passed quickly out of his mind, however, as there was something far more pressing to occupy it. He returned to the deck in deep thought and oblivious of most of the passengers, who spoke to him respectfully, made his way forward to a favorite corner where he could lean against the rail and think undisturbed.

"Starboard-plates amidships sprung," he repeated to himself half aloud.

"Excuse me, captain, you've been standing on my steamer-rug for the last five minutes and holding me a prisoner. Consequently, I couldn't help hearing what you said. That's pretty serious, isn't it?"

Captain Ross turned quickly, his face expressive of extreme annoyance.

"Oh, it's you, Mason! Well, I'm glad of that."

The young man he addressed smiled pleasantly, though a little sadly. He was of good, solid build; had gray eyes and a humorous but firm mouth. His white ducks became him well, and he smoked a bulldog pipe.

"No," continued that captain in answer to the other's question, "one leak is not serious in modern steamships. All it will do is to make us list to starboard, and perhaps delay us more. Heaven knows we're three days overdue now from that hurricane. But at the same time, Mason, I would be grateful to you if you said nothing about the matter to any of your friends. No use stirring them up needlessly."

"My friends!" cried Philip Mason bitterly, "I wish I had some to tell."

Ross looked quickly at the young fellow's clouded face. He had known him on several previous trips, and their friendship was a firm one.

"Hum—er—I say, Mason, I've been apprised of facts about you—that is, of course, I don't believe them; but would you tell a chap what's up?"

"I'm suspected of embezzlement, and because I have no more idea of it than you have I'm willing to talk about the thing. Yes, that's it; I'm suspected of embezzling two thousand dollars. I'd think it was a joke if it wasn't that I'd lost my job and just escaped an oriental jail because my father was an old friend of the boss who paid me my weekly insult. And, worse than that, the stigma and shame of the thing goes with me, though I never touched as much as a penny of the old duffer's money; I can't shake it."

"You didn't do it any more than I did," growled Captain Ross savagely. "I can tell it by the way you talk and the way you act. But who is this chap you were working for?"

"Look out, captain, here they come now! I'm going to duck."

Mason disappeared around the end of the superstructure forward and paced back and forth on the opposite deck. Captain Ross turned in time to see three people approach him, two men and a girl.

"Ah," he said to himself, "old Pell, his daughter Mary, and Captain Wadham, of the Fourteenth British Infantry."

The three newcomers strolled up to the skipper, the girl laughing and talking, and the army officer replying to her banter in kind. Mr. Pell looked on with a pleased parental smile.

"Isn't this weather just too beautiful after that horrid storm?" asked the girl exuberantly.

The four exchanged pleasantries and commonplaces, during which Wadham worked in some typically British sallies. He was a rather slightly built man of perhaps twenty-eight, with a tanned skin. He affected an infantile mustache and a cane with his fatigue uniform.

"I was just talking to that bright young fellow Mason," remarked Ross experimentally.

Instantly a change came over the faces of those before him. Mr. Pell stiffened perceptibly, and his face hardened. The girl's smile faded, and into her eyes there returned a troubled, hurt look that had been there much of late. Wadham gazed indifferently out over the bright sea and swung his cane.

"Rather a decent chap, I take it," the army officer said finally, breaking the embarrassing silence.

"You know better than that, Wadham" retorted Mr. Pell gruffly. "What's the use of defending him?"

"Oh, father," interposed the girl, "why not be fair to him and give him the benefit of the doubt?"

"That will do, Mary. Let us not open that subject again. I had much rather keep it out of the conversation entirely."

"Beg pardon, I'm sure," said Captain Ross stiffly, and the talk switched to other topics.

Meanwhile, on the opposite deck Philip Mason was eating his heart out with bitterness. Now that he was barred from Mary's company, it was maddening that he had to take this long trip on the same vessel with her. The Pells had caught the Burma at the last moment, having just returned from a six weeks' trip with Wadham into the cooler country back of Calcutta.

And during those six weeks this trouble for Mason had arisen. He had been for two years cashier of the Pell exporting house in the Indian city, and had been given to understand that there was a future for him in the firm.

He admitted that he was not an unqualified success as a mercantile man, but his integrity had never been questioned. Now, while he was at the mercy of a pompous manager in the absence of the owner, this shortage in the funds had been laid against him, and he had been unable to explain it.

He had gone over the books until his eyes swam; he had counted checks, stubs, order and shipment receipts a hundred times, but to no avail. The money was missing, and he was responsible. Unable to prove his innocence, he had been discharged in disgrace.

Not only did he lose him his position and his reputation, but it lost him Mary. They had been lifelong friends, and this friendship had developed during their association in an uncongenial foreign land into something that represented to the young man all that life held good.

Now she was being courted hard under his very eyes by Captain Wadham, a man known to Mason as a race-horse follower, and one who, outside of his army duties, conducted numerous rapid-fire love-affairs. It was cruel, indeed.

Mason's lugubrious meditations were suddenly broken in upon by a sailor who hurried along the deck, asking one passenger after another where he might find the captain, as he was not on the bridge. There was an anxiety in his voice that boded something of special moment.

Mason directed the man around the deckhouse, and hurried after him to hear the news. Ross was surrounded by a group of passengers, which included the Pells and Wadham. The sailor made his way through it and, saluting, reported:

"Mr. Barney says the first leak cannot be stopped, and that another has appeared on the port side near the quarter."

"Very well," said Captain Ross bruskly, turning swiftly from the rail and hurrying below.

Near by stood Ezra Winters, peering through his circular glasses. When he heard the sailor's report he staggered back a step with a strange, croaking cry, and his face went pale. When those near by turned to help him he had disappeared.

CHAPTER II.

THE SHADOW OF DREAD.

THERE was a great deal of speculation, a fair amount of excitement, and a little fear in the bearing of those who had chanced to overhear the sailor's statement and seen Winters's action. Standing close together, a group of passengers discussed the matter in low tones.

"I never would have put Winters down as having a yellow streak," said a large and loud man in a gray suit and Panama hat.

"I saw his face, my friend," replied his small male companion with asperity, "and it wasn't fear I saw written there; it was

something far more terrible than that, but I can't describe it in so many words."

"At any rate," exclaimed Captain Wadham, "the old chap's a queer bird, and the less time spent in worrying about him the more chance of holding the ship together. Now, that's a cause that is really worthy my mental effort."

"Good-by, Burma!" murmured a voice on the edge of the crowd just loud enough for every one to hear, and the Englishman fell silent, swinging his cane in exasperation while the other passengers laughed.

The Pells were moving away, when a steward approached Mary and said something to her in a low voice. After a moment's hesitation, she turned to her father and the captain and begged to be excused for a moment.

She walked swiftly aft in the wake of the steward, who led her through the main doorway, down two decks, and stopped before a little stateroom. Without knocking, he entered, signing Mary to follow.

She hesitated, and first peered curiously into the cabin. There in the lower berth, with big eyes staring affrightedly, lay Ezra Winters.

"Ah, Miss Pell," he cried, relieved, "it was good of you to come, and I shall only hold you a moment. I have liked you from the first moment I laid eyes on you, and you have been kind to me, a poor, broken old scientist. It has touched me deeply, and so I have called you here to ask your forgiveness."

"For what?" interrupted Mary curiously.

"That I cannot tell you," replied the old man, his face darkening to a scowl. "But I will say this: Whatever befalls, I want to feel and know that you have forgiven me. I am certain that we are about to have more trouble — I have intuitions of that nature often—and if I have to die, I will do so willingly when I am assured that your heart does not hold any bitterness against me."

"It certainly does not, Mr. Winters," cried the girl warmly, "and, though I don't know why I should forgive you anything, I am perfectly willing to do so because you ask me."

"And I enjoin you to secrecy as to what has passed between us," the scientist said as the girl took her leave.

Consequently, Mr. Pell's persistence and Captain Wadham's curiosity were quite unrewarded as far as information in regard to the interview went.

Meanwhile, in his mahogany-finished cabin Captain Ross looked blankly at his pale, perspiring face in the mirror, and dully admitted that he was defeated.

He had hurried down into the hold where Barney and his lascars were trying to patch the leak, and had been absolutely unable to find rime or reason for its existence. Moreover, it wasn't the leak that bothered him so much as it was that the compartment doors did not prevent the water from entering the rest of the ship. The Burma was not a new vessel, by any means; but she was far too young to be leaking like a sieve in this totally unexampled manner.

The thing had an air of the intangible and unreal. With his own eyes he had seen the plates patched roughly, as is the custom at sea, and with his own eyes had seen them work loose again inside an hour.

As he meditated in perplexity and affright there came a knock at his door. He paled, if possible, still more.

"Yes," he answered, his heart throbbing with dread.

"Mr. Barney reports a third leak under the counter," said an unemotional voice.

"Tell him I'll be down," cried Ross, almost frantic with perplexity, although his exterior was calm and collected.

He hurried through the corridors, down the companionways, through the engine-room, and into the hold. He could hear the clanging of hammers, the sounds of strange tongues, and could see arms rising and falling in the dim light as the shiny backed lascars labored.

"What's the matter, Barney?" asked the captain gravely.

"I don't know, sir," replied the chief," scratching his close-cropped head. "Damme if I do. I think the old vixen is behexed and—"

"Sh—h!" exclaimed Ross warningly, "don't let the crew hear you say that, or we'll have them all going over the side from fright."

"Yes, sir. Don't you think, captain, that we ought to get Robinson and Hottle on this? They could bring fresh minds to bear, and could possibly solve the mystery. And how about the rest of the pumps?"

"Start them all at half speed."

Thus the second and third officers of the Burma were called into consultation, told exactly how the ship was acting, and ordered to go below and see what they could find out. In two hours they returned to Ross's cabin,

pale and exasperated, having been unable to gain the slightest clue to a reason for the diabolical actions of the Burma.

Night had fallen, but there was no sleep for any of those in charge of the vessel. There was a tropical moonlight dance on the main deck, in which the young people reveled; and the irony of their joy, while the ship was calmly drinking the ocean under their feet, came home forcibly to the officers hurrying here and there in their desperate attempts to overcome the waters.

With the arrival of dawn there was no change in the situation except for the worse. Two more trifling openings had appeared between the vessel's plates, both amidships, so that it had been necessary to increase the power of the pumps. One of the old patchings, however, seemed to be holding well.

The efforts of the officers had, on the whole, been unsuccessful, and it was for this reason that when the saloon was full of breakfasters Captain Ross rose in his place and addressed them.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, and there was a general stilling of dishes and voices, "the officers of this ship are face to face with a very grave problem. Within twenty-four hours the Burma has sprung five leaks from apparently no reason whatever. My thirty-five years of experience at sea are of absolutely no help to me, and my assistants are just as much at a loss.

"The reason for my mentioning this to you is that I hoped that some similar experience might have come to you in your travels or your reading, and that some among you might be able to throw light on the situation. To be quite frank, if something effectual isn't done within a day or two and leaks continue to appear, we will never reach Manila."

At these last words there fell a tragic hush over all the company. Men and women looked at one another with faces that paled and lips that stammered. Lord Gransty, of the Royal Geographical Society, who sat at the foot of the captain's table, wrinkled his brows in ponderous thought.

"I've had a good deal to do with ships," he said finally, as no one else volunteered to speak, "and I will be very glad to look over the situation for you, captain. I don't hold forth any hope that I can help, but I shall be glad to try."

"Thank your lordship," said Captain Ross gratefully. "Are there any others with suggestions?"

Several men signified their willingness to help; and after the meal, which did not continue long, they went below and bent their knowledge, or lack of it, upon the problem.

Suddenly the captain had an inspiration.

"I wonder if Winters would do anything?" he asked himself. "Anyway, I'll try him," and he sent a steward to find the scientist, who had not appeared since his strange actions of the day before.

When an hour had passed and the man did not return, Ross, chafing at the delay, went below again to the scene of trouble.

The acute scientific mind of Lord Gransty, combined with the practical seafaring experience of the captain was productive of a most remarkable set of theories and remedies, all of which were tried one after the other. Every known method of holding steel plates together was proposed; and, if the necessary materials could be found, was put into operation.

But all to little effect. Although some of them were successful for a while, they all eventually failed miserably, and the plates continued to spring apart as if drawn by some tremendous magnet, or pried by a mighty force.

There came to be something uncanny about the affair that perplexed the scientist, the sea-captain, and the others who were racking their brains madly with the realization that their failure might mean death to nearly a thousand persons.

By noon two more leaks had appeared. The pumps were now set going with all speed, and, though they gained on the water, there was no telling how long this would be possible.

There was terror among the passengers when they learned the true state of things. But English and American people of the traveling class do not indulge in hysterics, and fear manifested itself only in pale faces, worried looks, and a foolish packing up of belongings. The ship became a grim and silent place, over which hung the great shadow of Dread. All the exuberant life had departed, the decks were silent, the meals almost untouched.

The steamer had now acquired a very decided list to starboard, owing to the greater number of leaks on that side; and was, moreover, down by the stern, which fact lessened her speed materially.

When Captain Ross emerged, grimy and disheveled, from the scene of the latest leak, he found a steward waiting at his cabin.

"Well?" roared the skipper.

"I looked all over the ship for Mr. Winters, sir," replied the steward, saluting, "and he is not to be found anywhere. He has disappeared."

"What? Disappeared you say? Impossible! Preposterous!"

"Yes, sir; but he isn't to be found, just the same, sir. Three of us searched."

Into the eyes of Captain Ross came a look both of despair and determination. With this last chance gone, what was to be done?

"Tell Mr. Barney and Mr. Robinson to go up into the chart-room; I will join them there at once."

"Yes, sir," and the man hurried away.

"A thousand lives," muttered the captain as he brushed his coat feverishly, "a thousand lives to go. Well, better for them to go there than here."

Meanwhile, the fact of Winters's disappearance had thrown a chill over the entire ship's company, for it had almost immediately become known. The mind of Mary Pell flew from one conjecture to another; but all she found was a haunting sense of dread and uncertainty.

CHAPTER III.

TO THE BOTTOM.

"I SAY, wasn't it old Winters you went to see yesterday when the steward came and spoke to you, Miss Pell?" asked Captain Wadham.

The trio was standing at the rail watching the slow progress of the heavy ship.

"Yes," she answered, "it was, but that doesn't throw any light on the matter to me."

"Didn't what he said to you have any bearing on a mysterious disappearance?" added her father impatiently.

"Well, not exactly," replied the girl in a hesitating manner. "But don't ask me what he said, for I cannot tell you."

"It would rather seem," went on Mr. Pell in his cold tone of displeasure, "that in a case where so many lives possibly depend on his being found, it is your duty to speak."

"I give you my word," said the girl earnestly, "that if I told you verbatim what he told me, it would not help us in the least to find him. Please don't ask me any more about it."

"It would relieve me greatly if you trust your secret to me," said Wadham earnestly as Mr. Pell moved away. "You know we have one from your father now as it is," and he smiled up into her face.

As he spoke the last words Philip Mason passed close enough to hear him.

"So they have a secret from her father now, have they?" he muttered hopelessly. "What a dog that Wadham is, making love to the girl when it's very evident we may none of us reach land alive! Can't he see that she is beside herself with trouble already without his adding to it? I don't much care whether the ship goes down or not, as far as I am concerned; but if anything should happen to Mary—well, she won't have to depend on that little Captain Jenks of the Horse Marines! Hallo! What's up now?"

He had felt the ship lean as she turned sharply from her course and, watching the bow sweep the horizon, he found that she had taken a tack of about four points to starboard. Alarmed by the sudden swerve, the passengers came pouring up on deck, anxiety written on their faces.

At this moment Captain Ross emerged from the chart-house, and Mason quickened his pace to fall in beside the skipper.

"Could you tell me your plan, captain?" he inquired.

Ross pulled at his beard a moment in perplexity.

"Yes," he said; "you may as well know it now as later. We are turning directly out of the steamship track in order to try to save the ship and the passengers. As you know, this southern end of the China Sea is packed full of little uncharted islands. Coming out of the Malacca Straits, we touched at Singapore, and then made a course northeast for Manila. But we will never make the Philippines in our present condition, so I have ordered the helmsman to go still more easterly in the hope of picking up one of these islands. If we are successful, we can land the passengers and the supplies, providing the Burma holds together long enough. If we are not—" He paused significantly.

"Then our only hope is to pick up a stray piece of land which perhaps is as barren as a rock, and on which we may have to stay an indefinite period?" asked Mason.

"That's it," replied the captain, heaving a sigh; "and our chance of doing so is very slim indeed, for, as I say, many of these

islands are uncharted, and we don't know where to look for them."

The situation was certainly grave, and Mason, as he told the curious passengers about it, did not gloss over any of the possibilities. His story was met with little cries of fear by some of the women, but the men listened silently, and tried to cheer the low spirits of those about them with assurances that everything would come out all right.

But assurances don't make dry land under foot, and the ship's company prepared for the worst with as much calmness and resignation as they could muster.

Forward, the officers were having trouble with the crew. It was almost more than they were capable of to keep the lascars in the firerooms, despite the efforts of the *serang*, who drove and abused them heartily in their own tongue.

On deck, the Malay and Kanaka sailors were in an equal state of perturbation, and were moaning aloud to their strange gods as they went hopelessly about their duties.

When this trouble became evident, Mason, who understood Hindu sufficiently, volunteered his services to Barney, and with a revolver in his pocket was soon relieving the strain on the already overworked first officer.

As night drew on, the condition of the Burma became more alarming. But one more leak had appeared, yet the patchings of the others had failed to hold, and as the compartment-walls upon which they had depended to save the ship were also sprung, the water began to make headway among the cargo. The pumps were now able to gain but slightly on the inrush.

At dinner that night Captain Ross again addressed himself to his passengers, bidding them all to go to bed confident that if there were any dangerous developments they would be awakened in time. He said that the ship could live for many hours yet, and that, as the sea was calm and the glass remained high, there was very little to fear except the gaining of the water in the hold.

"We cannot hope to be within striking distance of an island before to-morrow morning early," he concluded, "so it will do no one any good to sit up and worry. Everything that myself and my officers can do to protect you has and will be done; so I ask that you keep up your spirits, and, in case we have to meet any crisis, be prepared to act with speed, courtesy, and bravery.

"The life-saving apparatus is in perfect condition and ready for instant use should it be necessary; but I do not think it will. Finally, I ask your cooperation in anything I order done, for my position and my experience qualify me to give orders, and I expect them to be obeyed. Thank you."

This simple and direct speech was greeted with sincere applause, and it was evident that by his own well-simulated confidence Captain Ross had inspired those in his charge with new hope, and, what is more important, a firm faith in the efficiency of those in command.

It was the lookout who, in the first light of the calm tropic dawn, cried that there was land ahead, and Philip Mason, who was early about the decks, ready to resume his self-imposed duties of the day before, descried a low lump of blackness on the far horizon. At first it was no more than that, but by the time the sun had risen it had begun to take form and outline.

Captain Ross directed the course of the Burma toward this bit of hope, still many miles away. At his command, the stewards awakened the passengers so that they might eat and be prepared for immediate debarkation at the proper time.

The ship herself was in bad shape. Throughout the night new leaks had appeared, and this, with the weakening of the ineffectual patches and pluggings, had reduced matters to a question of the power of the pumps, and whether the vessel could keep afloat with their aid long enough to come within striking distance of the shore.

The boats could have been used, of course, but it was not the plan of the old captain to let his fine and powerful, though strangely weakened, ship go to the bottom without a desperate struggle to save her.

"She's a long way off," he said to Barney as they stood on the bridge scanning the island with the glasses, "and I doubt if we can make her. Tell MacAllister to crowd every bit of steam into the boilers."

The passengers strained their eyes feverishly, and had wishes been effectual, the island would have been torn up by its roots and floated to meet them.

"Can we make it?" The question ran round the decks, into the fireroom where the lascars—now at the pistol-point—stoked like creatures possessed, and up onto the bridge, where Captain Ross stood grimly, his hand on the engine-tube ready to call the crew to quarters.

To those in the bowels of the vessel came the swish, swish of water as the Burma lurched back and forth across the oily swells, and they wondered whether it would reach her fires.

The island now grew larger, and those with glasses made out the tall-fronded palm-trees, rising like a lace fringe across the top of the headland, which appeared to be of fair height. This side was most unfavorable for landing, as the beach could not be approached nearer than half a mile because of a long, semicircular coral reef from which the white spray constantly broke.

When he had drawn close enough to ascertain these facts, the skipper started a circuit of the island at a safe distance.

It was not a large body of land, perhaps a mile and a half long, roughly guessed by eye measurements, and half a mile broad, but it was thickly wooded, and when brought into the direct rays of the sun showed brilliant green of a dozen shades, together with dull gold and brown. Not a sign of life could be detected upon it.

"I wonder if there are any natives infesting this region?" asked a man who seemed to be the center of a half-gay party.

"Oh, yes," answered his neighbor wisely. "These waters swarm with a kind of native called a Dyak, I believe; a chap that goes in particularly for human heads and that sort of thing. Cures them at home and decorates his garden with them, so I've been told."

"What?" exclaimed the other in a panic. "You don't mean to tell me that we are in the domain of the Dyak head-hunters?"

"Exactly," replied his friend.

A distinct but suppressed groan went up from all who heard the assertion, but their thoughts were quickly turned from future dangers to those of the present. The Burma had begun to wabble strangely, to kick gently like a restive horse, and to make worse and worse progress. It was evident that she was in a bad way.

"Head her for that strip of white beach on the south side," ordered Ross, and then, turning to the bos'n, "Pipe all hands to quarters."

The shrill whistle rang out, and the crew came on the run to their stations. Still upon the bridge, the skipper turned to the stewards.

"Pile all baggage aft on the promenade deck and remain there," he said, and then directed the passengers to stand quietly on deck until Mr. Barney could assign each to his boat or raft.

None must swim, he said, because these waters were infested with sharks.

Already the black fins could be seen cutting the water.

A little cove now appeared in the line of the beach, and the Burma, with her last strength, headed for it at full speed, magnificently careless of running aground. She was laboring hard and her strange, uncertain motions kept those aboard her in a quiver of fear lest she should run under without as much as a premonitory shake.

Finally the cove opened on both sides of the vessel's bow, and the shore was a quarter of a mile away. She had scarcely thrust her nose between the projecting points of land than she gave a great heave and her bow plunged.

The moment had come. There were shrieks, cries, men's voices in command, the sound of bubbling, splashing water, the incoherent noises of the natives swarming up from the hold, the cracking and racking of the ship's great body, and the curses of those who feared.

"Lower away!" came the order, and the boats dropped gently into the water as the Burma's stern began to settle.

On board were still the senior officers, striving with club and revolver to prevent the terrified blacks from leaping into the sea. In this they were only partially successful, and very soon the sinister fins of the sharks commenced to cut circles of satisfaction and expectancy about the ship.

But the Burma refused to go down any farther astern. She had sunk in practically her own draft, except for the bow, and was pitched forward at a small angle, resting on a natural bar of coral that blocked the entrance to the cove.

By this forward movement the water in her, which had been just on the point of quenching the fires, had rushed into the bow, and left the boilers and machinery intact, a remarkable piece of fortune. It might better be said that the Burma went aground than that she sank.

Philip Mason sat on one side of life-raft No. 7, which was slowly being towed away from the black hull of the ship. Mary was in the boat that towed him, and he had his mental eye on her. His physical eye, however, was directed at the ship, where the officers were directing the disposal of the baggage, now that danger was past.

Suddenly a shrill screaming was heard, a sound like nothing human, a noise unearthly and weird, and Philip saw a tattered, emaciated figure clamber up the fore hatch, dripping with water, and mount to the boat deck with two officers in pursuit.

The chase was not long, for the screaming figure would not be caught. When he saw his pursuers close behind him, he sprang to the rail and leaped into the water. The circling black fins began to close in.

CHAPTER IV.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT.

A BRAVE man is one who, after realizing all the danger possible in a contemplated act, performs that act deliberately and coolly. He who blindly leaps without realization does so from instinct, not from bravery. Thus it was that Phil Mason proved himself a hero before the eyes of hundreds.

When the tattered figure sprang into the water from the rail, Mason had risen to his feet. With clear and comprehending eyes he watched the arrow-shaped ripples of the sharp fins coming closer and closer as the boats drew away. He called for those in the towing life-boat to cast off their line, and soon the raft was drifting backward with the tide.

Then Mason went into the water silently, with a great knife that he had snatched from a Kanaka sailor between his teeth. He had cast off most of his outside clothing, and his his figure showed white as he "crawled" through the water. Forty yards away, the man whom he was after seemed to be drowning. Behind him he could hear the groan of the oarlocks as the cutter also hurried to the rescue.

In half a minute he had the splashing creature by his long, thin neck and was holding his head above water despite the maniacal efforts the other made to grapple with his rescuer. Phil knew that time was too precious to waste fighting, so he shot an overhand swing to the jaw that effectually ended any resistance. Then he started for the boat, dragging the body behind him.

It was but a short distance, yet he had only taken a stroke or two when he heard a smothered cry that he knew came from Mary, and the exhortations of the bos'n urging the rowers to greater efforts.

He did not look behind; that would have taken time and effort.

In an age, it seemed, the cutter drew near. Was it losing or winning the race with that other grim pursuer? Phil grabbed the light, limp body of his charge in his hands and thrust it up as the boat surged past.

Eager hands seized it. Other hands reached him also, tore his clothes, scratched his flesh—and failed to hold. The boat swept on with a rush of water amid curses, exclamations of despair, and quick orders. The women screamed.

Phil turned quickly and saw the fin of the savage brute upon his track begin to lean toward the water. He knew what that meant, and, snatching a full breath, dived deep, with his long knife grasped in his hand.

Instantly there was a wild commotion of water. A huge black shadow shot above him, and he struck with all his might, feeling the knife go in to the hilt. He knew he had reached the eye by the softness of the resistance. Gasping, he rose to the surface and swam madly for the boat, which had turned about and was heading again in his direction.

Once more he heard the screams and the shouts and turned upon the defense. He was now almost exhausted, but, summoning his last strength, dived again. This time he aimed definitely for the other eye, his first experience having taught him a thing or two.

The pain-maddened creature came on like an express-train, leaving behind him a trail of blood, which he lashed into foam with his powerful tail.

The black shadow once more passed over, and this time Phil saw the wicked little eye so close that he shuddered and struck with all his might, reaching home with the blow.

Mason rose to the surface, victor in the unequal contest, and the next instant had been hauled into the boat by frantic hands amid wild, hysterical cheering. He fell exhausted into the bottom, his wet head against the clean dress of Mary Pell. Meanwhile the blind shark was putting up a losing fight against the cannibalistic attacks of its kind.

"Where did you ever learn to do that?" was the general inquiry when Phil had revived and began to gain strength.

"Oh, that's a little sport I have seen practised down off the Florida Keys," he replied. "The negroes do it there for amusement all the time, and I learned once, thinking it might come in handy. Who was that I rescued?"

"Ezra Winters."

"Ezra Winters! How did he ever happen to do such a fool thing as jump overboard?"

"Can't say, old chap," replied Wadham. "He's just coming 'round now and may be able to explain himself after he hears what you've done for him. I say, Mason, I've seen men win the Victoria Cross for only half as decent affairs as that, and I want to tell you that I think it was a jolly brave act, damme!"

Shortly after this the boats began to ground on the beach. It was a broad, yellow strand, extending about one hundred yards before it gave growth to the first line of brushwood. Rocks jutted out here and there, and a miscellaneous collection of flotsam lined the high-tide mark.

Behind the brush the foliage grew denser and taller, and the ground rose until at the distance of a quarter mile the top of the hill was reached, crowned with the palms that had been seen from the ship.

There was not a sound but the scraping of the boats on the sand and the subdued conversation of the passengers. No sooner had the last of these disembarked than Captain Ross mounted upon a stone and addressed them.

"By virtue of my former position, my experience under similar circumstances, and my command over so many men, I shall assume the leadership here, at least for the present. I will be frank with you. The chances of our getting away from here alive are good as far as I can see now; but the chances of our getting away quickly are not. The Burma will not be missed for a long time, and even when she is, and a search is made, there are hundreds of islands in the China Sea between Borneo, China, the Philippines, and Java that must be searched.

"We are out of the steamship lane, and, moreover, the fact that there are native and Chinese pirates and robbers infesting these waters will not expedite the search. We are thrown upon our own resources, and we must take advantage of them quickly and ingeniously."

"I suppose, captain, we will continue to live on the ship?" said a voice.

"No, that is too dangerous. Should a storm come up, with the Burma in her present position, she would be thrown forward by the waves into deeper water and all aboard would be lost. That is why we must all work with speed and willingness to erect some shelter on shore. It is now nearly midday, and after a picnic lunch, which the stewards have brought, we will begin the construction of the village."

There was much to do. Pathways into the woods must be cleared, trees felled, houses built, quasi-streets laid out, protection against animals, reptiles, and men provided, and a good supply of water found. Drainage, sanitation, and all the primary luxuries of civilization would have to be foregone for a while until the demands of hunger, thirst, and the want of shelter had been attended to.

Every one was soon busy.

An exploring party having discovered two fresh, sweet springs a couple of hundred yards straight into the jungle, a party of fifty men, mostly sailors, were soon clearing the underbrush and light timber with what materials they had, while a boat went back to the ship for several cases of axes which were on the manifest as being part of the cargo. When they arrived the work proceeded with astonishing rapidity.

Luckily there were no snakes on the island, as is often the case in these latitudes, and the men therefore worked without fear.

Under the direction of a Mr. Wilberforce Albertson, a young architect, who hastily sketched a plan of the proposed village for Captain Ross's approval, certain of the trees were left standing to serve as corner posts of the houses. It had been estimated that at least a hundred and fifty of these structures would be necessary, and provision was made for this number.

By afternoon Phil Mason had sufficiently recovered from his fight with the shark to take a lively interest in all that was going on. The present situation stirred in him all the qualities of ingenuity and cleverness that the dry monotony of a mercantile house had kept dormant, and it was with a hundred chimerical ideas in his head that he retired to a lonely rock to think. Among all the visions he hoped he would find a practical one.

Meanwhile the sailors were plying back and forth between the Burma and the shore, bringing rope, nails, bolts, food, cooking utensils, furniture, ammunition, and guns, of which last named there was a large consignment on board. An exploring party under Captain Wadham penetrated the jungle to the top of the hill, and on returning announced that the open sea could be viewed from that point.

The island, the captain reported, was rectangular in shape, except for the two arms of the lagoon between which the Burma had gone down, and was about two miles long by a mile wide. Its trees were populated with monkeys and strange birds, whose chatterings and cries made day and night hideous, but, so far as he had discovered, there was not a sign of human habitation or being.

This was encouraging news to most of the men and all the women, and the brow of Captain Ross cleared when he heard it.

As Phil Mason sat on the rock gazing moodily seaward his eye was caught by the curl of smoke which rose from the funnels of the sunken vessel. It was evident that because of the pitch of the Burma the water in her hold had been thrown forward so that her boilers were free and could be kept under a head of steam.

This set Mason thinking upon the germ of an idea, and for the better part of an hour he developed it carefully. Then he walked quickly to where Captain Ross stood directing the disposition of the stores as they were landed from the boats.

In a few brief sentences Mason explained his plan, and the commander of the settlement fell in with it enthusiastically. He clapped the young fellow on the back, declared him to be the savior of the ship's company, and told him to go ahead, with full power to carry out his scheme.

Mason then hurried up into the woods where the clearing party worked. From among the felled trunks he selected a large number that were comparatively straight, and, having established his authority with Barney, who was in charge of this work, he set two men at trimming the trunks and piling them along the outside edge of the proposed village at regular intervals.

These logs were, for the most part, poon-trees, which are very straight and are used much in eastern countries for the masts of vessels; also, some were of the hard, leafless casuarinas or beefwood. He also found ebony and cedar.

Never has an uninhabited island seen such bustle, such energy, and such accomplishment in one day as did this dot in the ocean, which was unanimously named Rossile, after him who had discovered it. By the hardest kind of work wonders were performed even in the five hours at their disposal, and many a muscle unaccustomed to manual labor cried for rest before the sun sank.

By five o'clock the boats were again loaded with the passengers, for Ross had decided that one more night aboard the Burma would be necessary, since the weather was ideally clear and the glass high. Only a guard for the stores was left, with the second officer in command. Mason, at his own request, was permitted to stay, for he said he had work to do.

It was a clear, bright night, with a glorious tropical moon that showed every line and contour of the sand in black and silver. The island loomed dull and rich under it, and there was a light wind blowing.

After eating, Phil and Morrisey, the second officer, started on a tramp, Phil having his plan in mind. They had gone about half a mile, and were on the point of turning back, when Morrisey stumbled in the sand and kicked up two pieces of metal with serpentine blades and rough handles. He lifted them up and looked at them closely. Then he gave a low whistle.

"This is a find," he said. "Here are a couple of Malay creeses, the deadliest weapons in the world. This is a serious matter indeed."

"How so?" asked Phil, his mind occupied with other things.

"It simply shows," replied Morrisey, "that natives have been here once, and that there is every chance of their coming again. If they lived on a neighboring island and saw the smoke of the Burma it would excite their curiosity. Moreover, these islands are very prolific in their production of tortoise-shell and trepang, or sea-cucumber, which is much used for food, and now that the season for gathering these is at hand we may expect roving bands in search of them."

Mason stared uncomprehendingly for a moment. Then the seriousness of the situation came home to him.

"And if they come?" he asked anxiously.

"It means a fight for our lives," replied Morrisey.

CHAPTER V.

DUMB BEFORE OPPORTUNITY.

THIS new possibility gave excellent exercise for the abilities of Captain Herbert Wadham, who, when he heard of the discovery on the beach, offered at once to begin the construction of fortifications, his past activities in the Indian service having prepared him for such work.

With this in mind, the plans of the settlement were changed slightly, so that the houses would occupy a square plot built in a general way about the two springs, so far as known the only supply of water in the island. It was also planned to construct a protected runway to the summit of the hill, which, on the other side, was precipitous and very hard to climb.

General comment was made among the passengers that the inventive genius of Ezra Winters was not called upon in this new situation. But the old man was merely a shadow of his former self, and since his rescue had been confined to a sick-bed. His strange attraction toward Mary Pell had caused him to ask for her as his nurse, and she, always willing to help the unfortunate, had gladly consented. As to his mysterious disappearance and his sudden and spectacular attempt at suicide, he said not a word, even to the girl, and he came to be looked on by most of the company as a crack-brained inventor whose studies and experiences had driven him mad. Thus quickly is a human tragedy disposed of in the minds of the unsympathetic.

The following day Phil Mason's plan became known. A force of men under his direction had been busy all morning planting in post-holes the trees he had secured the day before. Morrisey passed by, looked at the preparations, and laughed.

"Putting up a telegraph line?" he asked.

"We may do that when we have finished with the electric lighting and telephones," replied Phil.

"What!" exclaimed the other. Then: "How are you going to do it?" he added.

"Quite simple, my friend," answered Phil. "So simple, I am surprised none of our famous engineers thought of it. As long as we can keep steam in the boilers of the Burma, we can keep the dynamos running on the ship. Then by laying an insulated cable to the shore we can have our own power-plant in our model village. Of course, most of the fireroom force will remain on the ship with some of the engineers, and while we're about it we might as well have a telephone connection with them as well. In that way we could call for help if we should need it."

"Young man, your brains are being wasted on an unappreciative world," remarked Morrisey in profound admiration as he walked away.

It took a great deal of time, perseverance, and wire to lay the first cable to the shore from the ship. Had there been material enough, it would have been easy to extend it around one of the arms of the cove. But Phil was very economical of his wire, having other and greater plans in mind. However, on the fourth attempt, he was successful, and the land end was finally housed in a boxlike structure ready to connect with the wiring system of the village.

Just as much ingenuity was being exercised by young Albertson, the architect, in the building of houses. Using four trees as the corners of each dwelling, to these he nailed or tied, since the supply of hardware was limited, crossbeams of felled saplings. For roofs and walls he used tarpaulins, canvas, and any other material he deemed waterproof, weighting the bottoms of the walls with stones, which were buried in the earth.

About the structures intended for the women he set a kind of stockade of branches, so that the little buildings looked like leafy bowers. They were, in any event, impervious to wind and rain.

With two thousand rifles at his disposal —a part of the cargo—Wadham was in his element. Fortifications would be easy, he declared, and, with a hundred helpers, set about proving it.

By computation it had been decided to build one hundred and ninety-six houses to accommodate eight hundred people, the remaining two hundred of the company, mostly crew, preferring to take their chances on the ship. This meant that a solid square of fourteen houses on a side, each fifteen feet long, could be built in a space two hundred and seventy-five feet square. There being four sides, this meant that Wadham had eleven hundred feet of frontage to defend.

This is the plan of the village:

It is therefore plain that he had nearly two rifles per foot. First, he took the bayonets from them and ordered these affixed firmly to sharp stakes of green wood which could not burn. Then the men, under his direction, surrounded the rapidly growing village with an abatis of fallen tree-trunks, stumps, and branches.

Through this defense, which arose to a height of four feet, he pointed the *chevaux-de-frise* of bayoneted stakes, half of them upward and half downward. Inside the two entrances, which were at the lower and right-hand side of the square, he constructed an inner semicircle of defense that fairly bristled with steel.

In the space near the center of the village, where the springs were, what Albertson called the "municipal buildings" were set up. That is, the ship's doctor had his office there, the Burma's galley force had a sufficiently protected kitchen, and there were built an ammunition magazine and several low, covered storehouses for food and the like.

One of the first discoveries of the doctor had been the abundant growth on the island of the cinchona or quinin-tree, and he had stripped a large supply of the bark and daily made a strong infusion of it, which he administered to the women and the weaker men.

The chef went about half the time with his mouth open in wonder, having been shown by Captain Ross the natural resources of the island in his department. Aside from the plantains, coconuts, and bananas, there were areca nuts, the cassava or tapioca plant, and sago palms, from the kneaded and dried pith of which puddings and seasonings could be made.

Mason, in the course of his labors, caused the Burma to be stripped of all her electric bulbs except where these were most necessary in the bowels of the ship. Also, he had many of the fixtures ruthlessly ripped out, feeling that the necessity of the moment had a mightier call upon him than any scruples concerning the disfigurement of the ship.

Among those who had gladly offered their services to the captain was Mr. Pell. Being a merchant, and a good one, he was properly unimaginative when placed in a situation like the present one, but he was eager to help and worked faithfully all day up to the limit of his strength.

By chance he happened to be in the squad under Phil Mason, and the young man, seeing this, determined upon a bold stroke. He arranged and apportioned the work among the men under him so that only Pell seemed to be left idle. Then he approached the one whom he feared and dreaded above all men.

"Mr. Pell," he said in a coldly professional tone, "you seem to be disengaged; could you come to the top of the hill with me and give me a hand with some work?"

"Certainly," replied the other, mopping his red face vigorously; "but is there no one else you can get?"

"It doesn't seem so," returned Phil, carefully scanning the busy workers.

They started up the hill in silence, both laden down with axes, wire, and a case of bulbs. The fairly stiff climb precluded any conversation, and when they had arrived at the top the old man was so purple that Phil set the example of resting by throwing himself on the ground.

Mason then started a husky sailor he had called after them to digging post-holes, and commenced himself to chop down straight young poon-trees. These Pell, after careful instruction, was able to wire and stud with bulbs at half-foot intervals, leaving plenty of pole for planting at the bottom.

"Young man, why have you taken advantage of your position to-day to humiliate me before all these people?"

The remark fell out of a clear sky with the shock of a thunderbolt. Phil gasped.

"I didn't intend to humiliate you, Mr. Pell," he stammered, "truly I did not."

"Didn't you arrange the men's work so that I would be the most convenient one to take with you?" inquired his former employer.

"Y-y-yes," reeplied Phil hesitatingly, "but I had a reason and a good one," he added more boldly, upbraiding himself for this show of weakness.

"What was that, pray?"

"I wanted to ask you, Mr. Pell, if you believed that I was guilty of—of—of the thing for which that nincompoop, Manager Bilton, discharged me from your office."

Phil was now busy nailing some of the timbers together, and his companion, despite the more serious conversation, watched him with a quiet interest. After a while he replied:

"Mr. Mason, I would hate to believe anything like that of any one, particularly one whose father was as good a friend of mine as yours was. But I have always made it a rule in my business to take the word of my managers as final unless it is palpable that they are wrong, or they have proven themselves untrustworthy. I feel that I ought to do so in this case, unless you can tell me a different story than Bilton did when he related the circumstances."

Phil flushed with embarrassment and shame. He was helpless. He couldn't explain the disappearance of the money any more than Bilton, but he knew he hadn't taken it, and that some one else must have. His old bitterness returned.

"I can tell you nothing different, Mr. Pell," he said.

"Then why discuss it further?" snapped

the old man, disappointed at not hearing at least an attempt at defense or explanation. "You aren't shielding any one, are you?" he added suddenly.

"No, sir." And then, with the change of voice compatible to their change of positions, Phil added: "Kindly help me set up these poles, will you, Mr. Pell? I am afraid Jack and I cannot do it alone. It will require the strength and handiness of the three of us to get them in place, besides making the work easier all around."

Pell sprang to the work at the tone of command the young fellow used. With a rope thrown over the crotch of a tree and fastened to the end of the timber, they let the great spars, almost thirty feet long, into the ground. There were cross pieces on some, and when they had been filled around and tamped they stood nearly twenty-five feet high.

"Will you explain this contraption?" asked Pell interestedly.

"Gladly," said Phil. "Those timbers make four letters—*H-e-l-p*—and they can be seen a long distance, both day and night. When we get the current into it she will be the greatest signal for help we could possibly have."

"Young man," exclaimed Pell involuntarily, "you're a wonder! You have almost as many ideas as Captain Ross. You ought to be the mate of the Burma."

"Oh," laughed Phil, "that's just the reason I shouldn't be. A captain and a first mate can't both have ideas on the same ship, and get away with it. It doesn't work."

In a moment his face became very serious again.

"Mr. Pell," he said, "I want to ask you one more question."

"Yes," said the other pleasantly.

"Is Mary, your daughter, engaged to Captain Wadham?"

"Not that I know of. They have told me nothing about it; why?"

"Because I want you to lift the ban between Mary and myself. I—I deserve an even chance to explain to her and—"

"What explanation can you make to her if you cannot make any to me?" came the searching query.

Phil could not reply, and Pell finished his thought.

"For the present," he said, "the situation will continue as it is, and you will confer a favor by not trying to interfere with it."

Mason picked up his tools, and walked despondently down to the half-completed village.

CHAPTER VI.

DANGER AHEAD.

THROUGH the days that followed there was enough work and more to keep the poison of unhappiness out of Mason's blood and that of any among the company. But for the remainder of that day when he had talked to Pell, Phil felt that life was scarcely worth the striving for. All his fears were founded on fact, it seemed; the father believed him guilty of the shameful crime ascribed to him; the daughter, no doubt, was engaged secretly to Captain Wadham.

"What's the use of pulling crazy inventors who want to die out of the water, fighting a shark, and introducing light and telephones on this barren island if all I get is contumely and distrust?" Phil cried bitterly to himself. "Must I give everything, and get nothing in return?"

But his inventive genius did not pine away beneath these gloomy reflections. Rather, it was stimulated by them. He had come now to the end of the supply of wire on hand, and his plans were not half completed.

With Captain Ross's permission, he stripped the Burma of several hundred feet of metal hand railings, and everything long and sinuous that would conduct current.

But this was not enough. His mind recalled the different parts of the ship hastily, and finally, with the help of MacAllister, he located a useless dynamo forward underneath the water. It was the work of half a day to find it, and of another to unwind the wire from armatures and brushes; but when it was done he had many hundred feet of what was later to prove itself worth its weight in gold.

With these new supplies he returned to the shore jubilant, for there was a lot to be done. Wadham's fortifications were half completed; so Phil went into solemn conclave with him, and very soon was twining his slender wires in and out and over and around the logs, bayonets, and stakes. So interested were they in the perfection of their unique defenses that any personal enmity was for the time forgotten.

The houses were now almost completed, and had, for that matter, been occupied

some time, the mild weather having permitted this. It was a very compact little village that Albertson had planned and built; and now that he had provided roofs and shelters to sleep under, he was busy most of the day and night laying out sewage and sanitation systems, and directing their construction.

One afternoon Phil Mason walked out into the jungle alone, a vague yet inspiring idea having taken possession of him. He climbed the hill back of the settlement, and stood upon its brow, looking down the precipitous sides and off toward the ocean. With a little hammer he tapped the rock, and gave a whoop of delight when he found that it chipped off fairly easily under his blows.

Suddenly he listened intently.

His voice seemed to be answered by a strange, unearthly cry to the left along the ridge. Was there something familiar in the tones? He had never heard such a strange outburst; but yet there stirred a faint recollection in his memory.

He started hurrying through the forest, revolver in his hand, running when he could, but most of the time trying to evade the treacherous creepers that extended across the ground. The cries continued occasionally in a half-choked tone. Suddenly there was one real full-throated feminine scream of terror and pain that froze his blood, for he recognized these words: "Phil, come and help me!"

That could be but one voice—Mary's. He knew it now, and cursed himself for not having recognized it before. Spurring his weary limbs to redoubled efforts, he broke through a cover of brushwood into a tiny opening, and almost fainted at the sight which met his eyes.

Disappearing into the timber on the other side was a huge man in a strange hat, a blue silken blouse, a glistening golden-hued belt, and yellow silken trousers. Down his back hung a slender, dark string of hair.

All this Phil saw as in a flash-light photograph. The next instant upon his vision flashed the fact that the man was carrying a human figure, and that figure, Mary.

Before he could level his revolver the two had disappeared. But Phil knew that he was gaining, and raced across the clearing with a throbbing heart.

A moment later his opportunity came as the girl's captor, unconscious of pursuit, laid his burden down and began to bind her feet together. With a maddened cry, Phil leveled his revolver and pulled the trigger.

The huge man leaped to his feet. He saw his adversary, and proved that he was uninjured by whipping out a mighty creese. Then, instead of throwing himself upon his enemy, he turned to the girl and lifted the weapon savagely.

"I must get him this time sure, or he'll kill Mary!" cried Mason fearfully, hesitating for the fraction of a second.

The long weapon in his hand spoke again, and the creese, as if cut by an unknown agency, leaped into the air, glittering, and fell many yards away.

"Heaven's own luck!" cried Phil, pumping away as fast as he could pull trigger, and the huge, repulsive-looking creature tottered, mortally wounded, striving to reach Mary with his long talons as he fell.

But she was now crawling toward Phil as best she could, for her arms were tied behind her back.

"Quick!" she cried. "We must get back; there are more!"

Then she rolled gently over, and lay white and still. Mason thrust his revolver back into its holster, gathered up the slender form tenderly, and began the return journey. As he plunged into the woods he heard shouts both before and behind him.

"I say, old chap, why do you hurry so? Can't you wait a moment, and tell us what the bally ruction is all about, eh?"

It was Wadham and half a dozen men, who, attracted by the shots, had hurried forth to be of assistance. Mason gasped out the situation briefly.

The men took their stand behind trees, and when the howling creatures broke cover they were treated to a volley of ammunition and abuse that dropped three of the five for good and sent the others scuttling. Wadham and his men started in pursuit, while Phil, with a guard of one, hurried Mary to the village.

There he found half the people running around foolishly in terror of the unknown. When Mason had delivered Mary into the care of the ship's doctor, he told them in a few words what had occurred, and another party of armed men started quickly on the track of the first.

In two hours' time Wadham returned with the final news of the marauders.

"Two of them escaped," he reported disgustedly, "and they are making off now as

fast as they can in a *sampan* which was hidden in a tiny cove under an overhanging jut of the shore. That's how you didn't discover them when you were on top of the hill yonder, Mason. The big fellow with the fine clothes seemed to be the leader, but he was dead as a stone when we reached him. He was abandoned by his men, who couldn't carry him and get away as well.

"This narrow escape of Miss Pell's and Mason's has taught us one thing," the captain added. "We must have lookouts stationed on all the high points of land overlooking the sea. Those fellows reached shore without any of us knowing it. To-morrow morning we post sentinels."

"And to-morrow morning we set up the Burma's two searchlights on the top of the hill," supplemented Mason quickly. "They will carry five miles, and we can thus protect ourselves night and day."

Mary Pell's condition was not serious. She suffered from shock, for the most part, but her arms and body were bruised by the rough handling the great pirate had given her.

In explanation of her being in the forest alone, she said she had always been curious about that belt of primeval jungle, and had taken a sunny afternoon to explore it. Which piece of feminine injudiciousness received a well-merited rebuke from Mr. Pell.

Great interest was taken in the bodies of the dead natives, and much speculation as to their race and nationality was rife. But it took only one swift look from Captain Ross to settle all the arguments. He viewed the body of the leader for a moment before it was buried.

"Those are Dyaks," he said in a tone that brooked of no argument. "Look here," and he bent and touched the belt that had gleamed soft and lustrous in the sun. "That is human hair, and it is the hair of a white woman or child, for there never was a native of any land within five thousand miles of here who was a blonde. Doubtless she was the captive of some raid, and has either died by his sword or is living in the brute's hut, shaven and mad. That," and the captain's voice grew grave, "can give you some idea of what we have to face in the way of danger. And with all these women among us—"

His words trailed off into a groan.

"I can safely predict," said Wadham, "that we are not through with these fellows. Since two of them have escaped to return to their island, it won't be long before we hear from them again; and when we do, it will be a mighty serious matter. What, with a chief and several comrades killed, there will be revenge afoot, and it will take many blond heads to atone for the injury they have received."

Now that this added danger had actually manifested itself, the work of completing the defenses and the houses was rushed. Practically every scrap of food was brought ashore from the Burma, and the island, as far as possible, was stripped of its natural fruits. These were stored in the capacious underground storehouses provided in the middle of the village, and prepared by the kitchen force as rapidly as possible.

The same day that Philip had rescued Mary the electric light was turned on throughout the village, and the telephone connection with the Burma was made satisfactorily. Thus it was that during the busy days following, the laborers were enabled to work on into the night, and thus accomplish much more than would have otherwise been the case. In the course of time the houses were all completed, and, with the exception of the runway to the top of the hill, the defenses were pronounced finished.

It was a strange village, this settlement on a barren island in the unknown China Sea. On the main street were the doctor, barber, and storekeeper—the switch-house for controlling the electric lights—and the main kitchen. Here, under the wonderfully bright stars glowed a myriad of tiny lamps, embroidering the savage strand with graceful lines of fire, and upon the highest point of the hill shone forth the call for help in letters twenty-five feet high.

The life in this primitive walled town soon acquired a routine; and since there was always so much to be done, there were no signs of discontent, except a general wish that the enforced sojourn might end.

"Do you think we will ever be picked up?" was the question hurled at Captain Ross many times a day, and his only reply was: "I can't say, but the chances grow better every hour. We can only hope for the best."

CHAPTER VII.

UNEXPECTED RESPONSIBILITIES.

"You may thank me all you wish, Mr. Pell, for saving your daughter; but I would

relish the thanks much more if you could first tell me who stole the two thousand dollars from your business. It means nothing to me to have you come here with the same tone you would use if I had hauled a valuable piece of furniture out of the fire. I don't care for that kind of gratitude, when I know all the time that in your mind you are saying to yourself: 'It's too bad he forgot himself that once when I was away; and he was *such* a promising young man.'"

Mr. Pell flushed to the roots of his hair, opened his mouth, fish-wise, to speak several times, and finally said nothing. The two men were standing by the water's edge three nights after Mary's adventure in the woods, and Pell was out of the doctor's hospital tent, where the girl lay, for the first time.

He looked helplessly at his younger companion's troubled face, and felt that the plain speech was but just under the circumstances.

"I am not through with this job yet," continued Phil, gazing around at the radiant village as if uttering a prophecy; "but when I am, you will begin to realize that such things as dollars and doughnuts, and daughters sometimes, don't amount to everything. If what we fear takes place, this beautiful town will have an entirely different look in a very short while, and those of us who get away alive may be thankful."

"I hadn't thought of those things before," said Pell; "and I realize partially your feelings about my words of thanks. But I wouldn't let that matter of the money prey on my mind if I were you. There are some things a man can do, so exalted in conception and so splendid in their execution, that a few thousand dollars is a mere nothing. The rescue of Mary was one of them."

"Then you will exonerate me from suspicion?" cried Mason eagerly.

"No, I cannot conscientiously do that," replied the older man sadly. "If the suspicion is in my mind, I am powerless to prevent it; but I can do this. Were it proven that you did deserve suspicion, I should forgive you everything and give you a helping hand always, because you saved Mary."

"And you think I would take it?" grated Phil furiously, and, turning, walked rapidly away.

He strode off down the hard, dry beach, raging, resolved to relieve his mind of some of its tumult by hard physical exercise. He had not gone a quarter of a mile when he perceived two figures approaching and heard two people in earnest discussion.

"Do you suppose he will like it, captain?" It was a girl's voice. "I'm so crazy to tell father and show him the paper that I can't wait. If it pleased him I should be the happiest woman in the world."

"Mary," pleaded the man, "won't you ever call me anything but captain? It would be so lovely if you would call me Herbert. I'm sure nobody'd care."

"Only myself," replied the girl. "No, captain," she continued; "while we are on this island we had better call each other by our formal names. Also, I don't think we had better tell father about that little matter which happened up in Naihati. He might think we are crazy. He certainly wouldn't like our doing it without his permission."

Phil, who had sunk down in the black shadow of a rock, groaned savagely to himself. Why was it that every time he achieved a height of success or happiness, these two should plunge him into the abyss of despair and utter hopelessness?

He had no doubt now that they were married, and that they had been afraid to show their certificate to Mr. Pell for fear of his displeasure. With this idea rooted in his mind, Phil gave himself up to the blackest thoughts.

Was life worth living? Were these doings of his worth the doing if the only person in the world to make them worth while belonged to another?

It was a long time afterward that Phil returned to the village, his heart sadder but lighter. The call of these helpless women and children, and the more dependent men, had rung true in his heart, and he had, for the time, effaced his own crying anguish of spirit to lend himself energetically to the furtherance of the common good.

The following morning Phil took a couple of workmen and continued his tapping on rocks back of the village, particularly near the brow of the hill, which led steeply down to the other beach. All day he tapped and sounded, and the men with him made sign-posts for later use. They also blazed selected trees.

These operations covered ground almost a mile in extent, and when they were completed Phil returned to the village of Rossile and ordered two crews to man the whale-boats.

Then began the transfer of the last re-

maining cargo in the hold of the Burma. It consisted of cylindrical tin canisters, which were handled with the greatest of caution. When the first load had been landed safely, and the men knew what was in the boat, half the crews deserted, and volunteers had to be called upon.

Meanwhile, in the woods at the indicated spots, there was much activity, and the cylindrical tin canisters were solicitously and carefully taken up the hill to these places.

As Phil stood at the vantage spot and looked down upon the village, he thought with pleasure upon the triumph of man over nature, and how quickly the human mind crystallizes experience into action when it becomes necessary.

On the beach he could see the small, slim figure of Wadham mounted upon a stone and drilling his army of three hundred men, who wheeled and formed and shifted formation like veterans of a hundred campaigns. From the first, military duty had been compulsory with all men above and below a certain age, and there had been very few exceptions to the rule. Phil himself was an ordinary private.

Many of the stewards and sailors and stokers had either seen Indian service in native regiments under English officers, or had lived near English garrisons, so that the work of constructing an army was not as difficult as might be imagined.

One day Captain Ross, in his general tour of inspection at the various works near the village, stopped near Phil as he was concluding the last excavation on the hill. The younger man saluted as his superior approached, and they talked for a little of general things.

"Do you know how long we have been here?" asked Captain Ross finally.

"I should say about a month and a half," replied Mason. "There are plenty of calendars in camp, but I reckon time only by the Sundays, and I've forgotten how many of those we've had."

"Sixty days to-morrow," replied the skipper solemnly.

"Why the grief?" asked Mason. "It seems to me we've got lots to be thankful for."

"Yes, but now we're up against it. The coal in the Burma won't last another week; and if our power plant gives out, you know what straits we will be in. This place is scarcely tenable without electricity. Only MacAllister, myself, and the engine force know about it besides you. I tell you because I am weary of pondering over the matter, and hope that a fresh mind may be able to throw a little light on the subject. We are nearly crazy with trying to find a way out of the difficulty."

Phil realized in a moment the seriousness of the situation, and quickly thought over the possibilities.

"We might burn wood," he said to himself; "but what we could ship to the Burma would last about half a day, if the natives are coming back."

He told his idea to Ross.

"We have thought of that, of course," said the captain, "but it's not a very satisfactory means out of the difficulty, for the reason that all the wood within a reasonable distance of the ship is green and standing, and would not be usable until it had been partially dried at least. However, if no other suggestion is made by this evening, we will have to turn every one to felling trees and transporting logs to the Burma."

"I think I shall interview Ezra Winters!" cried Phil suddenly.

"It will do no harm, assuredly," replied Ross. "But you will be more than fortunate if you get anything other than a crazy howl out of such an absolute lunatic. I've given him up in despair. I also keep away from him, for he looks at me with such hatred that I'm afraid he will stick a knife in my back. If you are going down now I might as well accompany you to the village."

Together they turned, beginning the descent to the settlement by taking a short cut across a little rock-filled gully.

Suddenly and quickly, as such things happen, Captain Ross, with no more warning than a cry of surprise, slipped from the stone on which he stood and fell two or three feet to the boulder below it. There he lay writhing and groaning with pain, while Phil hurried to his side, scarcely believing that such a fall could have resulted seriously.

A quick examination, however, revealed the fact that the captain's hip was fractured, and Mason, white with concern, hurried to the village on the run, and brought back Dr. Simmons, a stretcher, and a party of carriers.

When Captain Ross had finally been deposited, groaning and swearing, in his little house, Dr. Simmons announced that the old

man, now nearly sixty-five, would not be able to walk again inside of six months, if ever.

When the old sea-dog heard this he shook his bushy, determined head with impotent rage, and vowed he would remain in command from his bed. An infuriated effort to rise resulted in such exquisite torture that he fainted where he lay.

Under the doctor's judicious care, he soon regained consciousness, and then, in a more reasonable frame of mind, called the heads of the different departments to his house. The fracture by this time had been set, and Ross was resting more easily.

"Gentlemen," he said weakly, "I'm out of the game as far as practical direction goes, although my experience may still be of assistance to you. There must be another leader selected, and I suggest that you pick Phil Mason to take my place. No man since we arrived on the island has done as much brain or physical work. He knows every foot of the ground, every wire laid, every stick of timber erected. I think he is better fitted than any other man for the post. In one situation only will he have a superior, and that is in case of military service. Captain Wadham is supreme, should we be attacked."

So it was that Phil Mason became the commander of the ill-fated Burma settlement on Rossile. His word became law; for, as in any stable government, he had the military strength to back him up, Wadham having practically sworn allegiance at the first moment.

It was all over in a half an hour; and Phil, remembering his quest of Ezra Winters, inquired as to his whereabouts.

"He started off along the beach around the left arm of the cove," said some one, and Phil immediately went in pursuit of him.

He found the erratic tracks of the old man in the sand, and followed them. Evidently there was something definite in Winters's mind, for he seemed to have gone along very rapidly.

As Phil neared the end of the arm, drawing closer to the wreck of the Burma, he could hear the heavy surf pounding on the coral reef and running in great billows up the polished beach. A careful survey of the ship with glasses failed to reveal Winters, although the tracks led along to this point.

Rounding a clump of date-palms, Phil looked down the sand, and descried the small, stooped figure of the scientist standing in the very foam of the huge breakers. Mason started forward on the run.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RETURN OF THE ENEMY.

WINTERS seemed oblivious to the fact that any one was approaching him, although Phil shouted at the top of his voice, fearing that the old man might be contemplating some rash act. Mason was not twenty-five feet away when Winters saw him. At the young fellow's signal, they drew back from the roar of the surf that conversation might be easier.

Mason explained briefly the situation in regard to coal aboard the Burma, and appealed to the scientist to devise some means of producing power when the fuel gave out. When he had finished, Winters seized his arm excitedly.

"I can do it!" he cried. "It is for that I came here to-day. I have the invention of the age, the greatest thing the world has ever seen—the climax of my life's work. Look! See those great waves rushing in upon the shore with energy enough to pound tempered steel into splinters. What force! What strength! What magnificent power! And I—I, Ezra Winters, shall harness them, make them do my will. The idea has been taking shape in my mind for years, and only last night the final step came to me like a flash. It has never been done, but I shall do it—and then, perhaps, I can atone for what my life has been."

"Will you be able to extract as much power as the boilers of the ship?" asked Phil practically.

"More, more, a hundred times more, if I wish it. It all depends on the size of the machine I build. The larger the machine the more power."

"How long will it take you to build your machine and experiment?"

"I have a model of a nearly perfect one in my baggage. With the additions I discovered last, one experiment, and materials, I can have the contrivance ready for you in three days. Only I must have privacy, entire privacy; for I will not give this to the world until I can protect it.

"See!" he cried. "I will tell you. People never thought of two forces in the ocean, did they? Only one. But there are two, and I have discovered them."

He pointed to a huge billow advancing rapidly toward the sloping beach.

"There is the height of the wave's crest above the water level with its perpendicular force, and the horizontal energy contributed by the body of the wave as it rolls up on the shore. Combined, you have—ah, my boy, but you must wait and see the machine; wait and see the machine."

The inventor drew a paper and pencil from his pocket, and, oblivious to the presence of Phil, began hastily to sketch After vainly trying to draw Winters's attention, Mason hurried away, having no more time to waste gazing at the ocean.

He had little faith in the new tangent the old man's brain had taken, for he knew something of the insurmountable obstacles in this quest that had barred the way of better men than he.

Since the episode of the first Dyaks, there had been some change in the protection of the island. Sentries and lookouts had been posted, and all night long these watched the waters where the search-lights swept to and fro with their long pencils of whiteness.

Among Phil's more complicated defenses were wires interwoven in the underbrush, and short trees that fringed the beach on all sides within a reasonable distance of Rossile village. These were to serve a double purpose.

Should the invaders by any chance escape the vigilance of the lookouts and search-lights, they would run afoul of these wires and be seriously shocked Moreover, the contact with them would cause the ringing of a huge bell in the center of the village This bell had been taken from the engine-room of the Burma.

At various places along the top of the hill, telephones torn from the staterooms of the ship had been fastened under the foliage of blazed trees, and by this method warning could be sent to the village should the lookouts discover the invaders. The runway to the top of the hill had been completed and electrically charged

Ezra Winters again disappeared

After Phil's interview with him, he had returned to the village, asked for two electricians, taken a bag of supplies, and gone into the forest in the direction of the cove.

Three days after this, in the still hours before dawn, the telephone in the switch-house rang furiously The man who was on duty there took up the receiver.

"Hallo!" came a voice over the wire "This is station 3 on Burma Hill We have just sighted a huge flotilla of *sampans*, probably two hundred, bearing in toward the north shore of the island. They are full of natives. Give the alarm. We will retreat to the village, bringing the search-lights when they land."

The man at the switchboard pressed a button under his right hand, and the big bell rang out startlingly its message of warning. Almost immediately there was a great commotion; the sound of frightened women's voices, the cries of children, the bustle of people dressing hurriedly, and rapid footsteps.

Springing to the slab of stone to which the switches had been fastened, the operator threw on the lights, and the village was brightly illuminated. An instant later the same man, by prearranged directions, called the Burma on the wire, and told those aboard of her the situation. The reply came at once.

"We have the two life-saving cannon on the boat-deck trained to cover the village. But the coal is very low."

An instant later Phil Mason, partially dressed, rushed into the switch-room. Finding everything done that demanded immediate attention, he told the operator that he was on his way to the top of Burma hill, and that Wadham would take charge.

Hurrying out to the runway, Phil found that Wadham was already directing operations, and that the men, well armed, were calmly taking the positions along the wall that the soldier had drilled them to occupy.

In a few moments Mason stood by search-light No. 1 and looked out over the ocean. Under the piercing rays was a strange sight. Crowded closely together lay a multitude of native boats swarming with men who waved their arms threateningly as if cursing the light. He could distinctly see the deck-houses of the *sampans* and the motion of the oarsmen as they paddled.

A hasty but careful computation revealed about fifty of the boats, and, as far as Phil could judge, twenty to twenty-five men in each. They were proceeding steadily toward the north shore of the island, where they had silently landed on the previous occasion, and were now about two miles distant.

There was yet a half an hour before they would disembark. By that time, Phil decided, looking at his watch, dawn would be breaking.

Leaving orders that the search-lights should be used, if possible, until it became light, and that then they should be brought back to the village, Mason hurried away.

He recalled Ezra Winters's disappearance, and cursed the inconvenience of having a hare-brained genius knocking about practically alone in the jungle under the present circumstances. Yet, something must be done. The man could not be left to the mercy of the first party of natives that discovered him.

When Mason arrived at the village he found a hundred questions to answer and a hundred orders to give, but he also found time to call for a volunteer party of four to go out after Winters. Young Albertson, the architect, was finally selected as the leader, and, taking with him storage pocket search-lights, the party set out.

It was agreed that the sound of three shots, followed by the flashing of these lights, should be the signal for help. It was with misgivings that Phil saw them disappear into the forest.

"It's like throwing good money after bad," he said to himself.

A message from station 3 on Burma Hill said that the *sampans* were about to land, and almost at that moment dawn came swiftly. As yet not a shot had been fired. Nothing but the utmost calmness pervaded all the preparations for the coming conflict.

A half an hour later the electricians appeared in the distance, bringing in the two search-lights, as they were no longer needed. The men reported that they had joined the wires to the main feed-wire, supplying those encircling the trees at the top of the hill. At this moment Phil started forth again to reconnoiter the position of the enemy.

They had just landed on the narrow beach beneath the overhanging front of Burma Hill, and were hauling their boats high and dry. Some had gathered wood to start fires, and some stood with their awkward muzzle-loading muskets at their shoulders, awaiting the opening shot.

That they had not been attacked when trying to land, no doubt, caused them great surprise.

The Dyaks were mostly barelegged, and wore Malay hats, loose jackets reaching to the knee, and Chinese sandals. Their chiefs, ten in number, were, however, garbed in silks and hideous ornaments.

It was a strange and almost grotesque horde of savages. Their firearms were miscellaneous, consisting of either flintlocks, or guns supplied with nipples for percussion-caps. All of them carried a *parang*—a deadly and heavy Malay sword — and a dagger-like creese.

Some bore spears, and a few had added to their equipment long, harmless-looking sticks of bamboo called *sumpitans*, through which they blew featherless, notchless arrows, whose tips had been steeped in the deadly juice of the upas-tree.

For the present the natives were concerned with their meal, which, Phil made out with the glass, consisted of dried fish, strips of tough, preserved meat, and some grain unknown to him, perhaps rice or millet.

The coarse breakfast completed, a consultation was held among the chiefs, one of whom, dressed in a wonderfully embroidered blue silk mandarin's robe, seemed the supreme commander. This lasted but a short while, when the horde, separating itself into two equal divisions, started on a détour of the island, one-half going to the east and the other to the west.

Phil telephoned these facts to the village, and received in turn the assurance from Wadham that all was well there, and that sentries had been placed throughout the island to watch the visitors.

Mason followed cautiously along the top of Burma Hill the party which turned to the right. The natives, gun to shoulder, scanned every rock and tree above them, momentarily expecting attack. There was no sound of any defense, nor had there been any sign of human habitation except the weird white light that had blinded them in the darkness many miles away.

Because of this a kind of fear of the unknown had apparently crept into the hearts of the savages, for the chiefs had continually to urge them forward.

At the end of the island they halted, formed a rough line, and started for the edge of the woods, evidently intending to flank the village. A telephone inquiry to the other end of Burma Hill informed Mason that the second party was planning a similar move.

The situation was serious, and Phil had turned to hurry back, when he was encouraged to take a last look at the invaders. Ah, his plan and his weeks of work were now put to the test!

The first line advancing to the edge of the woods seemed to leap into the air, as if

thrown by an unseen agency. Some of the wretches lay where they had fallen, while others, unknowing, tried to pull their sizzling comrades away, only themselves to fall helpless. The cries of fear and pain reached Phil where he stood, and through his heart ran a thrill of pride in this defense of his, while at the same time a natural repugnance at wanton slaughter revolted him.

An instant later there was a blinding flash, a mighty hiss, and a man was thrown ten feet backward upon the beach, his long *parang* melted short.

"Short circuited!" cried Phil.

But it made no difference, for all the other wires were good, as each was operated by a separate switch and a separate strand of the cable. And the foe could never reach the main feed-wire.

He turned and started for Rossile village on the run.

CHAPTER IX.

HAND TO HAND.

As Mason ran he passed men standing behind trees with guns in their hands—his own sentries. Each had a foliage-hidden telephone-box within arm's reach, ready to keep the garrison informed as to the approach of the enemy.

Reaching, he called Wadham aside, and described the attempted advance of the savages and the calamity that had befallen them as soon as they attempted to penetrate the forest.

"There are three lines of defense yet to cross," he ended, "before they approach the circle of the village where the edge of the clearing is thickly strung. Should they get beyond that, they have just begun to find out what trouble is, for, with our three hundred trained rifles, our electrified *chevaux-de-frise,* and our search-lights, they will be kept awake at night planning the quickest way home, I'm thinking."

Just then the switchboard operator called Phil.

"Extension thirteen at the east end of the island says that the savages are advancing again. They have found the first wire harmless, and, after a consultation, have decided to make another start. Will have to abandon this post in five minutes, and will retreat to extension twenty-five."

A few moments later it became known in the village that the party at the west end had made a similar move, and that Rossile was the focal point of the double attack.

So far not a shot had been fired, and, as the day passed with scarcely a sound except a hoarse, distant shouting, the strain in the village became almost unbearable. Meanwhile, the Dyaks were striving blindly against this mighty unseen force that slew their men by the tens before they knew it. There was nothing tangible about it, and had there been it is doubtful if they could have discovered the cunningly concealed wires.

One brave young chief saved the day for the invaders. *Parang* in hand, he marched ahead, chanting a weird, wild battle-song and beating the brush. In so doing he smote the second wire and went to the Dyak heaven after the proper manner of a chief, with his sword welded to the wire. Thus the evil was discovered for the first time, and thereafter carefully avoided, while a swift runner sped from one band to the other conveying the intelligence of the discovery.

After that progress was snail-like, as every foot of ground was carefully scrutinized by the half-frantic natives. Despite this fearful timorousness, the hidden messengers of death claimed their toll, and the long afternoon was made hideous with shrieks of agony.

The sentries dropped back slowly from one vantage-point to another.

Suddenly Phil, who was standing expectantly in the switchboard-house, received a message through the receiver clapped to his ear.

"They are directly in front of Battery A," came the excited voice, "let her go!"

Phil jammed down a small switch, and immediately there echoed through the forest a discharge as of a battery of cannon. It was in reality the sound of a hundred loaded rifles sent off by an electric spark, and the reply was instantaneous.

A hoarse, wild yell rang through the jungle, followed by the pattering sputter of undisciplined musket firing, as the Dyaks pressed forward, thankful to have something tangible at last against which to direct their impotent rage. But their scattered volleys drew no answering shot, and the woods before them remained as quiet as early dawn, except for the terrified squawking of birds and chattering of monkeys.

This was more uncanny than before, and the wild-eyed natives wavered for a while.

When they finally pressed forward they

were greeted fifteen minutes later by first one volley and then another—volleys which did considerable execution. Both parties of Dyaks were being treated to the same medicine, so complete were Phil Mason's defenses; and a subsequent counting of bodies on the ground covered during that first day showed that between a hundred and a hundred and fifty of the savages were killed.

By sunset the advance line of Dyaks became visible through the fringe of trees. The two parties signaled each other with weird shouts, and then spread gradually to right and left, so that the village was surrounded by them on three sides, leaving only the beach open.

By the use of the telephone, Phil soon had the men on the Burma dropping bits of lead pipe, spare metal parts, and other effectual missiles down through the trees from the distance of a quarter of a mile. The life-saving guns did very little execution, but they served the purpose of making a show of artillery.

That night it was cloudy, and the two ship's search-lights, remounted and facing east and west respectively, swept the edge of the forest without ceasing, lighting up the leafy aisles for some distance back and driving the invaders hurriedly behind trees. A company of sharpshooters from Wadham's command reclined leisurely behind the abatis and picked off what daring spirits ventured to protrude an arm or head.

In the village the defenses had been made more secure. The women and children had been congregated into five large, low huts, whose sides had been boarded with huge slabs of ebony and ironwood—or Australian eucalyptus—so that they were bullet-proof. Ammunition from the main magazine had been conveyed to well-protected underground branches of smaller size, dug at convenient locations within the village.

The abatis had also been strengthened and the fighters protected by the throwing up of earthworks about the entire enclosure.

One sally was made by the natives during the night, but this was repulsed with such speedy loss of life on one side, and none on the other, that the soundly thrashed and very weary Dyaks were glad to discontinue hostilities until daylight. However, they made night hideous with their wailing.

With the dawn came terrifying news.

The coal had given out aboard the Burma! MacAllister, when he sent the message over the wire, held out little encouragement.

"We are beginning on some of the timber that was brought aboard," he said, "and I have a force of men at work chopping up the decks and superstructure. This is a dangerous thing to do, for the vessel may at some time be raised; and if she cannot be sailed, she will be a total loss."

When old Captain Ross heard it he blazed forth into fierce wrath.

"Tell him to rip everything out of her from her decks to her toothpicks and put it under the boilers, or I'll have myself rowed out there and attend to it personally," he roared, and the message was sent verbatim.

The defenses were manned early, and when a hasty breakfast had been snatched, it was seen that the invaders were mobilizing for a concerted attack on all sides.

It was not long in coming.

With blood-curdling yells the Dyaks burst from their cover and rushed from the edge of the wood. At this point, where it had been calculated that many would fall from contact with the wires, there was a momentary wavering as they felt the slight shock due to the weakness of the current. Wadham, who stood erect and motionless behind the earthworks, shouted to his men:

"Hold your fire until I give the word, and then stand up and let them have it. Five steady volleys at the word of command. Shoot low and coolly."

With cries of exultation on discovering that the terror of the day before could not harm them, the savages burst from cover and charged the abatis, firing their guns as they came. In the lead were the stalwart chiefs, their swords in one hand and their creeses in the other. At a distance of fifty yards the first of the small, silent and deadly *sumpitan* arrows landed inside the village, and the battle had begun.

On they come and on, nearer and nearer, without receiving a single reply. The men squirmed in the trenches at Wadham's delay, but he reassured them calmly as he walked back and forth, apparently indifferent to danger.

At a distance of fifty feet the Dyaks were in full career, and then Wadham's crisp command rang out.

"Ready!" he cried, and the three hundred rose as one man, leveling their guns.

"Fire!"

With a rippling roar the deadly Mausers spoke, and the first line of the charging savages crumpled, and in an instant had passed under the eager feet of those fol-

lowing. Five times the command rang out, and five times that hail of death replied, but still the foe came on, a fanatical bravery making very demons of them.

The crest of the wave broke screaming on the abatis; miserable wretches, forced from behind, were impaled by the dagger-like bayonets and hung, tearing at their wounds like wild animals, while those in the rear pressed forward, unknowing.

Wadham, every inch the cool, commanding soldier, took in the horrible details with a calculating eye, and gave further commands to fire. It was evident that with the confusion and pile of dead at the fortifications, none but a few could cross.

A moment later the billow of attack receded, leaving the ground covered with a great number of the slain and a greater number of wounded, who yelled in their agony and besought the help of their comrades, or tried to drag themselves to the shelter of the woods alone.

The *chevaux-de-frise* was a sickening sight, and in order to spare its victims hours of torture, Wadham ordered those impaled to be shot—a merciful measure.

Of his own men fifty were stretched upon the ground—most of them sailors, but here and there a first class passenger. Only a few were killed outright, but a number had been struck with the deadly arrows from the blow-pipes, and lay writhing in their last struggles despite the quick and heroic work of Dr. Simmons.

From within the protected huts, where the women and children were, came very little sound. Theirs was perhaps a greater heroism than that of the fighters, for it was a heroism of silence and uncertainty.

Meanwhile Phil had been raising heaven and earth by wire in an effort to resuscitate the power-plant on the Burma.

But there was little hope. The firewood was green, and there was very little of it. The power was so weak that it was almost impossible to use the telephone at all, and a voltage of that magnitude was quite harmless to the enemy. There seemed nothing to be done but to trust to the fortune of war, without the aid of this power of science.

It was now a question of a small, disciplined number against a large undisciplined one, and the odds, now that electricity had failed them, were with the enemy.

Again Mason wondered as to the whereabouts of Ezra Winters and his men, as well as the rescue party under Albertson which had set out after him. Was it possible that they had all perished miserably at the hands of the Dyaks, or was there yet a faint hope that the old man's brain had turned out something useful at this critical moment?

His meditations were interrupted by shouts, and running outside, he saw advancing over the death-strewn clearing a chief and two nearly naked soldiers, all waving in their hands dirty white pieces of cloth.

"Ah, a truce!" he cried, and hurried forward to join Wadham.

CHAPTER X.

DESPERATE STRAITS.

At a distance of a hundred feet the trio of ugly-looking villains halted, holding their hands aloft to show they were unarmed. Wadham would not permit himself to be seen, and asked Phil to reply in behalf of the settlement.

"What do you want, sons of pigs?" asked Phil delicately, looking as ferocious as possible.

He spoke in a kind of pidgin Chinese and Hindustani.

The chief, whose Mandarin robes proved him to be the senior officer, spoke rapidly and harshly to one of the men with him. This latter turned to Phil.

"Son of a cloud," he cried, salaaming, "we would sue for peace."

Which assuredly was the retort courteous.

"On what terms?" asked Phil.

Another long conference, and strings of harsh, rough gutturals intervened before a reply was made.

"Our mighty chief says that on the following conditions will he depart from the island, never to return more, except to be your ally in defendin, it whenever you may need him. First you must give up the secret whereby you kill men silently at a long distance. And secondly you must give up nine women, the flower of your harems—one for every chief. As for himself, he demands the fair one, the white lily of the forest, whom he has already held in his arms, and for whom he would lay down his life."

"Son of a pig that roots among corpses," cried Phil, white with rage, "tell your cowardly master that his terms are refused

utterly, and that this truce is at an end. If he is not in the woods in five loadings of a gun, he never will be. Tell him also that he will have plenty of opportunity to lay down his life for the 'fair one,' and that he won't have to wait long. Say that I know him, and that he is afraid to die."

The interpreter, after considerable urging by his master, translated this message, and received a tremendous blow in the face for his pains. The chief then promised all the terrors of destruction and slow death to the inhabitants of the village, and wound up with:

"Death is not sweet, but a death of torture shall be yours. Your god who slays at a distance has forsaken you. Prepare then to die."

Facing about, he stalked away to the woods, and Phil turned from the earthworks and translated for the soldiers the terms upon which peace had been proposed. A howl of ungoverned rage greeted their hearing, and it was with difficulty that he restrained the men from shooting the chief where he stood.

Very shortly afterward a premonitory activity in the woods gave promise of something serious. Men with great logs in their arms took position behind those with rifles and blow-pipes, and in a few moments with a great yell, like nothing human ever heard, the savages again broke cover.

This time, it was seen, even the riflemen had some kind of shields, great blocks of wood, with which they intended to withstand those withering first volleys if they might.

The suspense was short. Once more Wadham's men, this time with experience at their command, rose calmly and poured forth their devastating fire. But fewer of the natives fell. They, too, had withheld their volley until the English had risen behind the breast-works, and the execution on both sides was terrible.

Shielded by the smoke of the discharge, the assaulting party brought their logs quickly forward, and leaning them against the *chevaux-de-frise*, began to run nimbly up their lengths and drop to the ground inside the defenses. The steady volleys of the magazine guns were wreaking dreadful havoc, but the Dyaks would not be denied.

One by one they dropped over the embankment—some of them to be shot, some to be clubbed, but still some to escape destruction.

Phil, with the rage of a Berserker in his heart, and a great, cold fear gripping at his vitals, fought like a demon. It was not for himself that he pumped his great elephant gun and slashed right and left like a native running amuck. He was thinking of the "fair one," dearer than life to him.

She was his special charge; he felt that he was answerable to God, her father, and himself for her safe-keeping; and resolved that were defeat to be the portion of the English, both her death and his should precede capture. So when Wadham gave the first word to retreat out of the trenches, ere the swarming Dyaks should exterminate his men, Phil fell back toward the house in which the women were sheltered, this firm intention in his mind.

The din of battle was terrible; the deafening roar of musketry combined with the clash of steel, the shrieks of the wounded, and the battle cries of the fighters to make an indescribably terrifying turmoil. And the fighting was savage in the extreme. Never did creese and *parang* rise and fall with more deadly effect. Never did men with Anglo-Saxon blood and dogged bravery in their hearts more fiercely face desperate odds.

Noon came, but there was no thought of food.

Of the defenders fully one-half lay on the ground slain, for the Dyaks left no wounded, and literally hundreds of the savages strewed the ground outside and inside the enclosure.

The Malays and Hindus of the ship's crew had been kept on the Burma for the purpose of lessening the crowded condition of the village, and also because there was so much work to be done there. Suddenly Phil looked across the waters of the cove and saw four of the ship's boats rowing frantically inshore, crowded with brown men.

Had MacAllister sent them into the fight, or had they seized the boats, all their savage instincts aroused, to throw themselves into the fight against the ancient enemies, the English?

In the thick of the battle Wadham fell, and over his prostrate form raged just such a hand to hand encounter as left its circle of dead about the body of Hector on the plains before Troy. An English sailor, Charles Myer, distinguished himself, with no hope of reward, by dragging the leader from the midst of the furious strife.

As Phil fell back near the now useless switch-house, he saw several of the savages skirting their companions and making it the point of attack. Their actions were peculiar as they crept slowly along, close to the ground, and knowing the object of their attack to be a valuable strategic point, Phil called the attention of his superior officer to them. A detachment hurried to head off the marauders.

The Dyaks, seeing the English approach, stood up and revealed white faces.

Instantly Phil recognized the leader as Albertson. The young architect looked worn and exhausted. He held up his hand as the guns were raised.

"We're laying the wire to the switch-house," he cried. "We have the power, and can connect it in a minute. We took the clothes of the dead natives we found on the shore, and worked our way through.

"Then Winters succeeded?" cried Phil joyously.

"Yes," shouted Albertson. "Go into the switch-house and have everything ready to splice up."

Phil turned again toward the lagoon. The boats had arrived and were spilling their occupants on the sand. Among them he recognized white men.

"Hurrah for MacAllister!" he cried exultantly. "The Malays are with us, and there are a hundred of them."

Without further delay he darted into the switch-house.

Affairs had come to the worst possible pass. Mason had scarcely gone through the low doorway when a great cry of fear and despair caused him to turn back. To his horror he saw smoke curling from the roofs of the five armored houses where the women were. The natives had thrown fire-tipped arrows, and in a short while all would be over.

Now was the time he should be there. This was the moment he feared. With bursting heart he fought the battle between his personal desire to be with Mary in their extremity, and his obvious duty in the switch-house.

With a sob of anguish he fought down the almost overmastering impulse and forced his way again into the building.

In five minutes all was ready, and Albertson was at the door with the heavy insulated wire. A moment later they were at work making the connection with nervous hands.

Upon the instant there was an ear-splitting yell, and MacAllister, swearing like a madman, threw his fresh party upon the rear of the Dyaks in a fury of fighting.

The savages, whose minds had been blinded with the fixed idea of securing the women, had not noticed the approach of the boats, and were taken completely by surprise. They turned like wildcats at bay to face this new danger, thus giving the white men a moment's respite.

Slashing their way through the exhausted enemy, MacAllister's command joined the comparatively few remaining defenders, who had plucked up new courage, and together they began to drive the savages back.

Phil in the switch-house saw what had happened, and, with his hand on the lever, for the connection had been completed, awaited the supreme moment.

The Dyaks, yelling with fright, reached the abatis with its bristle of bayonets, and Phil, with a mad thrill of victory in his heart, threw on the power.

The result was terrible. Clutching at the air and at one another, the wretches fell forward upon the bright points, where they hung sizzling. With this added terror, the flight became a rout, and others, forced from behind, sprawled upon the electrified bodies of their companions. The pursuers saw the catastrophe that befell the savages and drew back.

The two hundred remaining natives, driven to desperation for a means of escape, fled up the protected runway toward the top of Burma Hill. Mason shut off the power, and running from the building, bade MacAllister hold his men in leash and not to pursue the routed Dyaks beyond three palms, two-thirds of the way up the hill.

But the Malays and lascars would not be held, and leaped on the track of the flying with wild cries of battle.

With the field-glasses hanging on the wall, Phil followed the movements of the Dyaks, who ran blindly, throwing their weapons away to accelerate their speed. He saw them mount the hill in a helter-skelter scramble, and stretching out his arm let his hand rest on a switch near the window.

Outside the exhausted defenders were busy with the dead and injured, and the women pouring out from their shelter, stifled their grief and anguish to render aid to the wounded.

For a moment all stood looking after the fiends whose presence had been re-

sponsible for their misery. Then Phil shoved the switch home.

To those watching, Burma Hill seemed to quiver violently. Trees waved as if in a high wind, and the top of the hill rose into the air, accompanied by mighty geysers of smoke and dirt. An instant later the whole island shook with a tremendous detonation, and a deafening roar bellowed out across the fronded palms to the sea.

The torn mountain-top fell forward, and in a moment the only sound audible was the crash and roar of the stone, as it dropped with its load of human beings down the cliff upon the scant beach of the north shore.

With awe in their eyes and wonder in their hearts, the people stood astounded at this unexpected climax.

As for Phil, when it was all over, he put his head down and wept from sheer nervous exhaustion and thankfulness until a low voice speaking his name caused him to look up into the radiant face of Mary Pell.

Meanwhile, a party hurrying around the island found a scene of indescribable desolation and disaster where once had been a noble cliff, for Dyak and Malay had perished together, with the exception of five wounded men, who were painfully paddling a *sampan* toward the open sea. This, then, was the pitiful remnant of the proud expedition that had set sail so shortly before, and the white men in mercy let them go.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW IT HAPPENED.

"DID you do that?" asked Mary Pell gently, indicating to Mason the now desolate northern part of the island.

"Yes," replied Phil. "I found the rock was very soft, so I drilled holes in it and filled them with that new army explosive, detonite, which conveniently lifted the top off the hill. It was nothing, but now that it is all over, I am glad."

"You don't look it," replied the girl, glancing at him keenly, "or sound it."

"By 'glad' I mean relieved," said Phil dully. "Relieved that it cannot happen again. As for real joy, I haven't known what it meant for many days."

"Why?" Mary's voice was soft with half-maternal tenderness.

"It is cruel of you to ask when you already know," he cried sharply.

"But I should so love to have you tell me yourself."

Phil looked up into her face with a throb in his heart. Then he realized the hopelessness of the situation.

"This is all wrong," he cried passionately, "you have no right to be here. I had forgotten it for the moment, I was so tired. We are forbidden ever to speak together; I—I wish—you would—go."

"I have the right of my age and of my womanhood in a case like this to come to whomsoever I will—and I choose to come to you and tell you that whatever others have said or believed about you, I have not said or believed. A man who, in the face of his own discouragement and disgrace, has given himself to the safeguarding of others as you have done, never was capable of dishonor—"

"Mary!" he cried, and stretched out his hands to her.

But she put his look and his appeal gently away for the moment.

"Father is ill in one of the houses, and I want him to see you. It is nothing serious, only over-strain and exhaustion. He has been talking of you considerably of late, and I want you to become friends."

Walking forth together a terrible sight met their eyes. The village was on fire and burning rapidly. The flames, spread by the wind from the five large houses at first ignited, had taken quick hold on the thoroughly dried wood and canvas of the others. Since the failure of fuel on the Burma all pumping had, naturally, been impossible, and now there was no water supply with which to fight the flames.

"Which house is your father in?" asked Phil anxiously.

"He is safe enough for the present, but perhaps we had better move him at once to avoid any possible confusion at the end," replied the girl, turning toward the beach end of the village.

All about was a heart-breaking scene of desolation. There was hardly a woman or child who had not lost a male relative, and the grief which had been so long pent up now burst forth. Some of the survivors were digging a long trench for the burial of the white dead, while others indifferently hauled the bodies of the Dyaks to the bay and dumped them in.

Mary and Phil found Captain Wadham at the bedside of Mr. Pell, his damaged shoulder in splints and his face drawn with

weariness. When they had moved the old man beneath the shade of a spreading tree, Pell looked at Phil and smiled. Then he held out his hand.

"I've just been congratulating Captain Wadham," he said, "and now I want to congratulate you. Had it not been for his training and your mechanical application, the Burma's whole company would have been wiped from the face of the earth."

"Had it not been for Ezra Winters's latest invention, which is truly a scientific achievement that would astound the world, could the world but know, we would none of us have been saved," replied Phil, taking the hand of his former employer.

"Oh, by the way, where *is* Winters?" asked Wadham. "We mustn't neglect the old chap."

"Albertson tells me he is still on the arm of the cove with his newly built machine, and that he is in bad shape for want of food and from exposure. Yet he will not forsake his contraption for a minute. I have ordered half a dozen men to go out and bring him and the machine in, if the latter can be moved."

"By George! Mason, you never forget anything," said Pell admiringly.

"I never forget that I am under suspicion for embezzlement in your eyes," retorted Phil quickly, "and while we're on the subject, I might say that I would sooner be cleared of that before the world than have done all the little things I have been able to do here."

"My boy," said Pell, "the days of that suspicion in my mind are ended. I have no idea *who* took the money, but of this I am certain—that you did not. And it was the things you have done for all of us here, and the spirit in which you did them, that brought me finally to this conclusion."

"I think if we get together on this we can very soon find out who is guilty, a thing that has been impossible before because of your restrictions. When was the money stolen?"

Phil spoke in a cool, determined way.

"I d-don't know," admitted Pell hesitatingly. "When we came back from Naihati, just in time to catch the Burma, Bilton, my manager, told me the circumstances in the hour or so before sailing, so I didn't get all the details firmly in mind. But I should imagine it was about February 1, from his account. That was four weeks after we had left Calcutta for the hills."

"It was January 4," said Phil quietly, "that I was charged with the embezzlement of the—"

"Aw, beg pardon for intruding, I'm sure," remarked Wadham, edging away.

"Oh, wait a minute, Wadham. I'd much sooner have you hear this out," cried Phil, his old suspicions leaping again into his mind.

Yet there seemed to be no self-consciousness about the young soldier. He returned to the group and lit a cigarette nonchalantly.

"Perhaps you remember Waring, my assistant, Mr. Pell," continued Phil. "He came down with the fever on the morning of the fourth and was still seriously sick when we left, but he couldn't be charged with the crime, as his books were O. K., and he could, or, rather, did, answer all questions satisfactorily even in his illness. That left no one but myself to blame, so I have had to shoulder it."

Suddenly they were all startled to hear a heart-broken sob from Mary, who had grown paler and more frightened-looking as the conversation continued. She ran to the bedside of the old man and knelt down.

"Oh, father," she cried miserably, "I did it myself, but I didn't know until this moment. And I am to blame for all this unhappiness! Oh, I am so sorry, so sorry! And you, Phil! How can you ever forgive me?"

"Tell us all about it, and I'll see," he laughed back at her, almost foolishly, because of the tremendous relief.

"Oh, *that's* it, by Jove! is it?" exclaimed Wadham enigmatically, fishing into his inside pocket.

"You remember, father, that it was Captain Wadham and I who got you to go inland to Naihati to look at a location for a summer home?" Mary continued. "The captain was interested in the proposition."

"Yes?"

"We left on the evening of January 3. Oh, I could have spared all of us these months of pain and misunderstanding if Bilton had only been explicit. He, too, gave me the idea that the theft occurred much later than it did, so I never connected events. Well, now comes the part, father, where you are to blame.

"All my life I have been brought up with a wrong idea about money. I have always had access to the cash drawer of your till, with the privilege of taking money

out as long as I made it known to the cashier in charge. On the 3d of January I went into the office and asked for Phil. He was not in at the moment, but I talked to Waring, who seemed flushed and excited, and he gave me two thousand dollars."

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Pell. "What on earth did you want it for?"

"I'm coming to that in a minute," replied the girl unhappily, "for it was all done on your account. Waring gave me the money and said that as he had never handled a transaction like that before, he would make a note of it and let Phil enter it in the books. Even then he was in the grip of the fever, and must have forgotten it, for he certainly never recalled it in his delirium."

"But what did you do it for?" queried Mr. Pell impatiently.

"I was buying you a birthday present for next year," said the girl, with a catch in her voice. "It's the dearest little bungalow in Naihati, and I was going to give it to you when we went back in the summer. Captain Wadham and I thought we would keep it as a little surprise for you, and he kept the deed with him for fear you might discover it in my luggage."

The captain handed over to Mr. Pell the long, legal-looking document that had cast Phil into such depths of despair. He gave a great cry now when he saw it.

"Then you're not married?" he demanded eagerly of Mary.

"No, I haven't been asked," she replied, blushing and looking at the ground.

"God knows, *I've* asked you often enough," cried Wadham bitterly, "and you have refused me always."

"Yes, but the man I love hasn't," she said softly.

"Let us take a walk down the beach to a spot behind that big rock, Mary," suggested Phil. "I want to speak to you about something."

Thus these two found their love and their life-long happiness on that day of awful carnage. Their joy was tempered with tears, for in the long trench lay many a friend who had lived beside them in the village of Rossile.

CHAPTER XII.

EZRA WINTERS'S ATONEMENT.

"I CANNOT live long, and I must clear my conscience before I go."

Ezra Winters, if possible, thinner and weaker than before, lay on a cot in the hastily constructed shelter that had been erected for the wounded. Next him lay Captain Ross, whose strength was gradually increasing, and around were gathered Mary, for whom Winters had especially asked, Philip Mason, Wadham, and a few others.

"There are hundreds of deaths upon my head," went on the old man in despair, "but, thank God, I have been able to save hundreds that might have been lost. I sank the Burma."

Those beside him started back involuntarily, and Captain Ross raised his head to gaze bitterly upon the old man. Winters quailed before the look.

"All my life I have been an inventor only for the purpose of sinking the Burma and bringing her captain into disgrace, but it was not simple. Ah, I cannot talk long, I am so weak.

"Well, as you know, I invented the elastic dry-dock, and I built it for the purpose of some time getting the Burma into her. When the time arrived, I was the happiest man in the world—and then I put my other machine into the ship."

"What machine?" asked Phil. "Something we have never heard of?"

"Yes. A machine for the gradual wrecking of vessels. For years I had studied steel, its make-up, its composition, its powers of resistance. I tested until I found the unit of destructive vibration; that is, the frequency with which steel must be struck so that plates, even if riveted together by our most modern processes, will be gradually forced apart, even though they should be fastened again and again.

"Then I set to work on a contrivance which would produce this effect. It consisted of two padded hammers operated by electricity, and these I concealed, when the Burma was in dry-dock, between her first and second bottoms. The power I smuggled by an unseen wire from the dynamo room, and started the machine."

The old man sank back almost exhausted with the effort of speech, and his listeners waited, scarcely breathing, for him to continue.

"My name is not Ezra Winters," he suddenly burst out; "it is Richard Whiting, twin brother of Captain Thomas Whiting, who commanded ships on this same line twenty years ago."

"The Captain Whiting who killed himself about the time the Burma went into commission?" cried Ross anxiously.

"Yes," snarled Winters, with some of the old fire and hatred in his voice, "Thomas Whiting, who killed himself—whom you drove to suicide with a broken heart. The line had promised him the Burma after his years of service, but you, whose uncle was a director in the company, used your influence to get the command for yourself, placing my brother in an evil light. He was discharged from the service for no known reason, and shot himself in grief.

"Is it any wonder, then, that I hate you—that I devoted my whole life to the mission of bringing you to shame and wrecking your ship? But, oh, God, I did not want to harm these innocent people, so many of whom have died. I reckoned the length of time it would take for my machine, one hammer continually pounding each side of the hull, to wreck the vessel, and it was due to occur when you were safely inside Manila harbor. But that storm struck us and delayed us five days."

"Is that why you disappeared when you heard the vessel was leaking?" asked Phil.

"Yes, I couldn't calmly stand and see the vessel sink with all on board, and yet I wouldn't give up this thing for which I had spent my whole life. So I hid in the hold, resolved to drown like a rat when the vessel went under. But I hadn't the nerve.

"When she finally did sink, I felt the water gradually creeping up and couldn't stand it. When I reached the deck you were all off in the boats. Then I saw the sharks, and I knew that death with them was mercifully swift, so I leaped overboard, only to be saved by Mason here. And I cannot bless him enough for his act, for it gave me time partly to make up for what I had done. I shall try to reward him before I am through.

"The rest is short. I saw our situation. I knew that many must die. I cast about for means of doing something, and realized that the dynamos would give out when they were most needed. Into my mind came the recollection of my invention for getting power out of the waves. God must have forgiven me at least a portion of my sin, for in a dream I saw the last defect overcome, and set out to construct the contrivance if I could. The men with me were killed and I should have died of starvation had not Albertson come.

"The machine is simple. It is an inclined plane on a two-wheel support which is run into the sea. A mechanical contrivance—but I will only tell Mason that—transfers the waves' energy to a rotary wheel to which can be affixed dynamos. There is also an apparatus to store part of the energy against calm weather. It is barely twenty feet long, yet I can get five hundred horsepower immediately.

"Mason, your work here proves you to be a man of wonderful mechanical ability. I hear that you have been cleared of a charge against you by Miss Pell, who was always so good to me. And I hear also—well, I want you both to be happy. I am dying, and I give you this machine to patent and use as your own forever. When a paper has been drawn up, I will sign it before witnesses, and thus partially atone for the terrible calamity and hardships I have worked upon you both—"

Suddenly the faint voice of the old man was drowned by a great cry of joy from without.

"A ship! A ship!" came the glad shout, and then the words: "A steamer bearing this way. We are saved!"

On the broad decks of the Afghanistan the survivors of Rossile Island watched with thankful hearts the land of their sorrow fade below the horizon. Only two, who stood by the taffrail, silent, thought of it with joy. They heard a step behind them. First Officer Barney of the Burma spoke a word of greeting and congratulation.

"It's a funny thing how the Afghanistan came to turn off to Rossile at all," he said. "Captain Chisholm was telling me. They were a little out of their course, due to the report of a new island having risen in the sea, and were nearly fifty miles away when they heard a tremendous roar as of an explosion.

"'There comes the island,' we all said, Chisholm told me, and they turned the Afghanistan's nose in the direction of the sound. Your electric mine that blew the top off Burma Hill is responsible for our ultimate rescue."

"No," replied Phil solemnly, "it was Winters's invention, and I shall always give the credit to him. Poor fellow! I wish he could have lived, for he was just beginning to see the facts of life in the right light. And the Burma, I'm afraid she's a total loss."

"Yes, but Winters signed away any guilt from Ross to himself. He could sink the ship, but he couldn't raise her," said Mary, who had been present at the last interview between the old sea captain and the inventor. "He forgave Ross and exonerated him in the eyes of the company. I am so happy that he died in peace of body and spirit!"

Barney walked away, and the two lovers, arm in arm, watched the crimson light dying over the blood-red sea.

Phil was the first to break the silence, glancing tenderly at his companion.

"It was the island of both our testing and our triumph," he said softly; "of our sorrow and our joy, of our nothing and our all. Let us always remember it."

THE END.

A CHICKEN COUP.

BY HOWARD DWIGHT SMILEY.

What Came of Landing a Waterless Tract on a Tenderfoot, and Why Poultry Grew Scarce in the State.

IT was Uncle Sam himself who started the Alkali Junction land boom. When he began his little irrigation experiments in the great Southwest and made two peach-trees grow where naught but a rattlesnake had basked before, folks back East began to wake up and amble our way, looking for little ranches where they could live in peace and comfort in a place where for thirteen months o' the year the thermometer registers one hundred and ten in the shade—without the inconvenience o' the shade.

Through a political pull or something else—it didn't cost anything, whatever it was—Buck Miller got a concession on about four thousand acres o' land, known as the Chuckwalla basins, which lay about twenty-five miles south o' Alkali, and on the strength o' the irrigation reports the land boom started.

"Yes, sir; this land is going to be worth its weight in gold almost before you know it," Buck was assuring Reuben Court, a recent arrival from Michigan. "Just wait until irrigation hits there and you'll see it blossom forth in a manner that will make millionaires o' its happy owners in no time at all.

"Now, as I was saying, Mr. Court, this here particular four thousand acres I was reserving for a gentleman from Oregon that got killed in a wreck on the way here, is the finest piece o' land in this vicinity, and the biggest bargain you ever saw at twenty dollars an acre; five hundred down and the balance on easy payments. You can't afford to miss it."

"I can't, hey?" says Reuben doubtfully. "O' course I'm looking for a location, but this land ain't irrigated yet, and—"

"Just a matter o' time," Buck assured him, and then opened up on that benighted tenderfoot all the founts o' his oratory and argumentative abilities; and let me state right here that when Buck does that, something is bound to happen, and it generally does so in his favor.

There was nothing to it. Before he realized it, Reuben had bought that tract at Buck's price, and had paid down the five hundred, which was exactly all Buck expected.

He knew as well as any o' us that brother Court would take one look at that sun-baked, isolated stretch o' sand; discover that the nearest source o' irrigation was the Gila River, one hundred and fifty miles distant, o'er hill and dale and mountain range, and then he'd go home a sadder but wiser man, leaving the tract open for Buck to sell to the next man up.

Naturally Reuben wanted to look over his purchase, but for obvious reasons Buck declined to act as guide. He found him one, however, in the person o' old Tomato Bill Wilkins, a desert tramp and prospector, who, being temporarily out o' a grub-stake, was glad to get the job.

So Reuben hires a pair o' broncs and a buckboard and away they went out into the desert. They were back again in forty-eight hours.

Immediately on sighting them, Buck went into temporary seclusion, until the wrath o'

the tenderfoot should have spent itself and he had departed. The rest o' us gathered near to hear his views o' the swindle.

Howsomever, if Reuben was disappointed with his purchase he didn't show any indications o' it. On the contrary, he got busy the minute he alighted from the buckboard.

First off he went straight to the blacksmith-shop and bought three old borax wagons, as big as box-cars, and a water-tank trailer, which used to belong to the Furnace Creek Borax Company before they busted.

As soon as he had done this he hunted up the carpenter and instructed him to put roofs on the wagons and end doors, so as to make 'em good and tight.

Then he had a hurry-up consultation with Gus Zanger, the butcher, which left that gentleman gasping with amazement, and rushed off to the depot, while the rest o' us gathered around Gus for details.

"He's going to raise chickens out there in the desert!" the astonished butcher informed us. "He wanted to know where he could buy a few carloads and enough ice for refrigerating purposes."

Well, I'd heard o' ambitious tenderfoots, and had met several during my little lifetime who had peculiar ideas, but this was coming it a little bit over anything I'd bumped into so far. I hunted up Tomato Bill for further particulars.

"Yep," says Bill calmly, "I 'low as that's what we're agoin' to do. He's putting up the money ag'inst my experience."

"What the hotel do you know about chickens?" I demanded. "You never saw a bird bigger'n a road-runner in your life!"

"Mister Court's been in the chicken bus'ness for ten years back East, an' knows all erbout 'em," Bill answered solemnly.

"Then, where in blazes does your experience come in?" I asked, plumb puzzled.

"Why," says Bill, winking one eye wisely, "I'm agoin' to feed the chickens."

"Oh, you be?" says I sarcastically. "Going to fatten 'em up on chuckwallers and gila monsters, I s'pose, and water 'em with mirages!"

"No, sir," answered Bill seriously. "We're going to fatten 'em accordin' to rules, on good yaller corn; we'll tote the water out in the tank."

Well, he had me going, but he was right, nevertheless. Blessed if Reuben didn't wire to Tucson for two carloads o' live chickens, and one o' ice to follow in three weeks.

The chickens arrived in three days, for he had paid the top price for them, and he and Bill loaded 'em into the borax wagons, together with about twenty bushels o' cornmeal and some other fixings, and away they went for the farm, forty-mule strong, and water-tank trailing on behind.

That tenderfoot was spending a powerful heap o' money on his chicken farm, it seemed to us, and where he was going to find a market, or how he could figure a profit when he was buying 'em at retail, hauling 'em twenty-five-mile out into the desert, together with feed and water, was more than any o' us could figure out. General opinion was that he had gone crazy with the heat, and we let it go at that.

At the end o' three weeks here come Bill with the wagons, as chipper as a sparrow and as full o' information as a stone image.

The most we could get out o' him was that the chicken farm venture was proving a grand success; that he was to wire for two more carloads, and had that ice arrived yet?

It had, and Bill lost no time loading up his wagons and filling his water-tank. Then away he scoots for the farm, leaving us as much in the dark as ever.

In four days he was back again, and Reuben with him. They pulled up in front o' Gus's place, and Reuben called the butcher out.

"Like to buy some nice poultry?" he inquired, as he opened up one o' the wagons.

Gus took one look inside and nearly fainted. Except for what ice that remained in the wagon, it was nigh full o' nice dressed chickens.

"Well," says Reuben, after waiting patiently for Gus to come to; "want any?"

"I—I—how much be they?" asked the bewildered Gus.

"Five cents a pound."

"Five ce—why, man, you paid eleven cents live weight, besides the freight and hauling, and ice! How—" Gus stopped from sheer amazement.

"That's all right," answered Reuben cheerily. "What I pay for 'em is my business. What I sell 'em for is yours. If you don't want 'em, I'll peddle 'em, or ship 'em to Tucson. I'd do that, anyhow, and get a higher price, only I'm in a hurry."

"You must be—to get rid o' your money," answered Gus. "Stand out here where I can get a good look at you; I never seen a crazy man before."

"Nor you haven't yet," snapped Reuben, as he climbed onto the wagon. "If you're going to talk that way, I'll have to pass you up and do some peddling."

And peddle he did. Three borax wagons o' chickens is a powerful heap to dispose of in a town o' seven hundred inhabitants, but at the price he asked, he had mighty little trouble doing it. Everybody bought enough to last a week, and inside o' two hours he had disposed o' the last one.

The second consignment had arrived from Tucson, and they lost no time loading these into the wagons and refilling the water-tank. Then Reuben paused at the depot long enough to wire for two more carloads to be shipped at once, together with a supply o' ice, and back they go to the farm once more without one word o' enlightenment.

And they kept that up for three mortal months, while we set around and watched 'em drive in and out again, and tried by every wile and guile we knew to wring the mystery out o' Bill, without the slightest degree o' success.

I reckon they'd been going yet if the supply o' chickens hadn't finally give out. Don't believe there was another one left in the State o' Arizona, or her adjoining sister States, when they let up, and to the last Reuben was frantically wiring for more chickens, with no more to be had.

Then one day he threw up his hands in despair and went back to his farm empty-handed. We could all see that he was mighty disappointed though.

A week later him and Bill drove into town with their whole outfit, looking glum and sad.

"What's the matter?" inquired Gus. "Chicken-farm busted?"

He wasn't feeling particularly kindly toward Reuben, seeing how the tenderfoot had nigh put him out o' business by keeping the town supplied with chickens at five cents a pound for three months.

"I guess so," answered Reuben gloomily. "Can't get no more chickens."

"Which, if you've got any money left, is a mighty lucky thing for you, I'm thinking," says Buck Miller, who'd come out of his seclusion long ago.

"Oh, I don't know," chirped Reuben. "I figure I've made a profit of about ten dollars each on them chickens."

"Ten what?"

"Sure! Ask Bill."

We all turned to Bill for the explanation.

"You see, boys," he grinned, "there's an old dead river-bed running through that tract, the bottom o' which is covered with sand so full o' fine gold that she fairly glitters.

"I discivered her about four year ago while I was prospectin' through there, but ain't said nothin', seein' I didn't have no money to work her, an' there ain't no way to tote water in there in sufficient quantities to work the dirt.

"I knew, too, that if I said anything to you fellers about it, that would be the last o' it, so far as I was concerned.

"So I just laid low an' waited my chance, which come when Mr. Court blew into the territory. I put him wise to the lay o' the land on his promise to give me a slice o' the profits, which same he has faithfully done."

"But what's all that got to do with chickens?" demanded Buck.

"Why, jes' this: When Mr. Court sees that sand all full o' yeller particles, he gets an idea immediate. 'I bet we can get this gold out o' here without water,' says he, an' there and then he unfolds a plan that's plumb amazin', seein' as comin' from a tenderfoot.

"Well, we gets busy buyin' chickens an' yeller corn-meal. When we're ready to begin, we throws a few pecks o' the meal around promiscuous on the sand an' turns the hens loose.

"Naturally they has to rustle pretty lively for a livin' on such fine feed, and as a hen ain't got no sense o' taste, an' the gold-dust looks almost identical to the corn, they gathers up both without distinction or 'scrimination.

"We gives 'em three days o' this, after which we kills and dresses 'em, carefully removing the crops; an' do you know, boys, that them crops has been assayin' an average o' half an ounce o' gold each!"

Nobody said anything for a spell, and I reckon if we hadn't witnessed practically the whole transaction with our own eyes, there'd 'a' been some shooting right then and there. It sounded like a little bit the biggest lie that was ever invented.

"Yes, boys," chipped in Reuben, "I guess it's over with now. During the past three months we've carted out about 30,000 chickens to that farm, and I figure that they've netted me an average o' $10 each, or $300,000 for the lot.

"I paid $10,000 for the chickens, spent about $5,000 more for ice and meal and freight, and so forth, and have given Bill $85,000 for his share, leaving me a clear profit o' $200,000, which is all the money I'll ever ask for in this world. So if any o' you boys care to go out there and continue operations, you're welcome to what's left. I'm satisfied, and I'm going back home to the State of Michigan. So, boys, I bid you good-by!"

"And there ain't a chicken left in the State!" groaned Buck Miller, as we watched him go.

THE SHOOTING AT BIG D.

BY FRED V. GREENE, JR.,

Author of "The Taint of Manhattan," etc.

A New Yorker on a Wyoming Ranch in a Game of Bluff That Brought Him into Nerve-Racking Situations.

CHAPTER I.

AT ODDS WITH MANHATTAN.

"YOU'RE late again, Monroe."

Mrs. Crawford glanced furtively into her son's face, and her own clouded a trifle as she read there an increase of the growing fretfulness.

But he only nodded his greeting curtly, and sat down to the meal upon which his parents had already started. He ate rapidly and in silence, and when at length he had finished he looked up to gaze from one to the other.

"Oh, it's just great to work like a slave all day long," he sneered, "and then have to stay after hours."

"Perhaps it's only a temporary rush," his father put in mildly.

Young Crawford only jerked his head in disdain, then suddenly faced them again.

"I tell you, it's against all the laws of nature to be kept cooped up in an office as I am. Why, when I get through at night, my head aches as if it would split, my eyes are watery from the strain of working under electric lights, my mouth is dry and parched, my legs ache, and—"

"You must be a very sick boy every night, Monroe," his father remarked in his quiet way.

The young man was somewhat taken aback at these words, and stared hard at his father; but, finding no indications of sarcasm in his face, he pushed back his chair, and the three started toward the library, where the son threw himself into a chair.

Monroe Crawford had just passed his majority. He had graduated from college that spring, and after a six weeks' vacation had accepted the position his father had secured for him in the bank.

At first he had entered upon his duties with a will; and all had gone well until early in the fall, when Tom Lockwood, a former college mate, who had spent the summer on a ranch in Wyoming, stopped in New York to pay him a visit.

Then the element of dissatisfaction entered into Crawford's life.

Always a great lover of outdoor sports, he had given them up when he entered the bank's employ, and had apparently settled down to a steady grind of indoor work. But with Lockwood's appearance all this was changed.

He suddenly arrived at the decision that there was small future for him in the banking world, and expressed a desire for the wild, romantic life of the West. And although his father pointed out to him that if a man couldn't make a living in the metropolis, there was small chance of his doing so elsewhere, Monroe's opinion on this subject differed materially.

"It's just the thing to broaden one," he insisted. "I want to try it, anyway."

"But not at this time of the year," his father contended.

"Why not? What is more invigorating than the zero weather they have out there? It puts life into one's system, and makes the blood rush all the faster through the veins."

All his father's objections were of no avail — Monroe was determined that the Western life was necessary to make a real

man of him. Lockwood had vividly pictured it, and Crawford was determined to try for himself.

But whenever he brought up the subject it was so quickly frowned down by his parents, who dreaded to have their only child exposed to the dangers they knew would confront him. Thus he became sullen and morose, and dissatisfied with the world in general.

Then his mother had recognized the fact that he was not as healthy looking as he had been when he had returned from college. Realizing that the confinement of the bank should be counteracted by some form of exercise, he had been a regular attendant at a gymnasium two nights a week. But when the cowboy desire seized him, even this had been neglected, and the fact showed plainly in his face.

His mother withdrew from the room, and Mr. Crawford stared thoughtfully for some moments at his son.

"Monroe," he said at length, "I'm sorry you're so dissatisfied."

"I don't see much evidence of it," the other retorted.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean just this, dad," and the son swung his chair around. "I've come to the conclusion that I'll never make a banker. I don't like it—in fact, I detest the word 'bank.' So what's the use of trying to succeed in a line that's distasteful? It can't be done, and I'm only wasting my time."

"But there is a good future for you," his father insisted. "Mr. Blakely, the cashier, who you know is a friend of mine, assured me only the other day that you were doing well, and that he'd push you along just as fast as he could."

The boy faced his parent determinedly.

"Dad, you never worked in a bank, did you?"

"Why, no; but—"

"Then you're not justified in speaking with regard to it. I am. I've worked in one, and I *know*. Why, dad, the only future there is for any one in it is the hope that the man ahead of you will either die or get fired. And from all I can learn, the average bank clerk holds the record for length of life. And as for getting fired, why, that's as rare as pink sparrows. So, do you wonder I want to get out of it?"

"There's always a chance for any one, and—"

"Yes, but it's like a Presidential candidate on the Prohibition ticket. They always put one up, but he's never elected. But he thinks he has a chance, I suppose, just as every bank clerk thinks he has a chance of being promoted to cashier."

"And so he has."

"Dad, there's only one cashier in a bank, and there's a raft of clerks under him." Monroe screwed his face up until it showed his absolute contempt for his fellow workers. "Of all the weak-chested, flabby-muscled, white-livered bunches I've ever got among, this crowd is the worst."

"But what would you do to alter matters?" his father asked.

"Alter matters with regard to them?" his son sneered. "Do you think I'd take that job? No, indeed, because I'm not interested in them. It's Monroe Crawford I'm interested in, and I can easily change *his* conditions."

"How?"

"By getting away from them," was the quick answer, and he added eagerly: "By getting out in the open air, and being able to expand my lungs with oxygen—not that germ-filled stuff one breathes in the bank. That isn't air—it's poison."

He paused an instant, as if expecting some retort from his father, but not getting any, continued:

"I want to get out where a man *is* a man—where you fight for what you get—where strong muscle counts for more than an ability to add up a column of figures correctly—where one isn't hemmed in by four walls that seem to move a few inches toward you every ten minutes. I want to go out there in the West, where the only wall they know outside of the bunk-house is where the prairie meets the horizon. And I tell you, dad, I won't be happy till I *am* there."

"I'm sorry you feel this way," Mr. Crawford said sadly, and the tone he used touched his son more deeply than he cared to admit.

"I'm sorry, too, dad—hanged if I'm not. Sometimes I get to thinking, and then I grow so darned dissatisfied with everything that I wish I'd never asked Tom Lockwood here."

"But he only presented the bright side of things."

"That may be true, but I'm man enough to realize that every rose has a thorn, and that they don't stop at one."

"Then you do realize that a life on the prairie has its hardships?"

"Certainly. That's one of its charms."

"But think, Monroe, of the kind of people with whom you will be brought in contact. They're not your kind. They're rough, uncouth, and blasphemous, and place no more value upon a man's life than we do upon the ordinary dumb creatures."

A frown gathered on the son's face.

"There is where you show your ignorance," he contended. "The old-time lawlessness has entirely disappeared. In fact, it really never did exist to the extent fiction-writers would like to have us believe. And from what Lockwood tells me, there are more college men out there than illiterate roughs. And why shouldn't there be? Is there any school in the world that will broaden one more than a few months of that life? Is there any study that brings us nearer to nature? Is there any surer way of drawing mankind closer than the life out there, where the wonders of earth are on every hand, and the work of man is mostly lacking?"

For some moments neither spoke. Each one was busy with his own thoughts—thoughts that followed along two distinctly different channels.

Then the younger man suddenly rose.

"I'm going for a walk," he announced, and without another word passed from the room, and a few seconds later the opening and closing of the front door proved that he had gone out into the night.

Mr. Crawford again fell into a brown study, and so deeply was he lost in thought that he did not hear his wife enter.

"Monroe has gone," she said in a tone that made it neither a question nor an assertion.

Her husband started slightly at the sound of her voice, then sank back again into his chair.

"Yes—for a walk," he replied.

Mrs. Crawford sat down in the chair her son had so recently vacated, and her voice was tinged with sadness as she said:

"John, I fear Monroe will go West in the end."

"He won't wait till the end," her husband declared. "If he only would—"

"Yes, and I fear—"

"But *he* doesn't. That's the trouble. I've tried to reason with him regarding all the dangers and hardships of a life there, but all to no avail."

"Then you think he's determined?"

"I know he is, and what's more, I know he'll go."

"Do you really think so, John?" she asked in apprehension. "Oh, I wish there was some way to persuade him to give up the idea."

"But there isn't. I know him too well to hope for such a thing. Monroe is a strong-willed boy, and once he makes up his mind to a thing, nothing can turn him."

"But my wishes—"

"He may respect them," Mr. Crawford interrupted, "and he may delay his action on account of them. But they will not alter his desire. And furthermore, during the delay he will be as unhappy a mortal as can be imagined. Yes, he'll be more than unhappy, and—"

"Then you think we should let him go?" she interrupted, her voice full of alarm.

"I think it would be for the best. Let him have the experience—a few months will suffice, I'm sure, and then he'd be very willing to come back. In fact, I think he'd be more than willing—he'd be *delighted*—to reach New York again."

"Oh, I—I can't bring myself to consent," Mrs. Crawford stammered in dismay.

"But I really think it's the only thing to do. But something may come up to change his ideas. We'll wait and hope so, at any rate."

CHAPTER II.

THE GOAL OF DESIRE.

It was yet early in the afternoon of the next day, and Mr. Crawford, who had not gone to business that morning, was seated in the library, when to his surprise Monroe entered the room, his face wreathed in smiles.

"Why—you're home early," his father said.

"Yes, I'm home early," Monroe repeated, and without bothering to unbutton his overcoat, he flung himself into a chair. "Dad, I've thrown up my job at the bank."

"You—you have!" the elder of the two stammered regretfully.

"I couldn't stand it another hour, dad. Why, honestly, I'd rather have taken a dose of poison than to know I had to spend my life cooped up there in that hole. It was making me a crank. I was getting so that I could hardly be civil to you or mother. But now—" and he finished the sentence with the first hearty laugh that had escaped his lips in some days.

Mr. Crawford could not help but realize

the change which had so suddenly come over his son. The deep lines which had become so prominent in his face of late seemed eradicated, and there was a boyish enthusiasm in his words and tone.

"I'm free, dad!" he went on. "Free to go when and where I please! I'm not bound down with hours or bosses. I'm not caged up any more, as I was there in the bank. It was never intended that men should be forced to spend most of the day within four walls. What were daylight and sunshine given to us for, if they weren't to be enjoyed? But in a bank what chance has one to appreciate either, when even in the middle of the day you're forced to work under electric light?"

"I hope you haven't made a mistake, Monroe," his father said sadly.

"Does any one make a mistake if he follows the dictates of his own conscience?"

"Sometimes—sometimes."

"Then if one does, the entire blame rests upon himself. I've taken that chance now, but I know I'm safe. I *know* I am."

"Then—then, what are your plans?" Mr. Crawford queried slowly. "Have you made any?"

"Indeed I have, dad," the other replied enthusiastically, "and you know what they are without asking." He looked straight into his father's eyes as he added: "Dad, I'm going West."

The other shook his head regretfully.

"Then the desires of your mother and myself count for nothing with you?"

"I know you both want me to be happy. That's just as much your desire as it is to keep me here with you. But I can't stay and be contented, too. So I want you to agree to my going. I may not like it—it may prove to be vastly different from what I have pictured. In that case, it will be better for all of us that I give it a trial, because if it should turn out that way, I'd be very glad to get back, and *mighty* thankful to know I have a good home to which to come. Don't you see, dad, it's better for me to go?"

For a moment Mr. Crawford did not speak—his brow was furrowed in thought. Then he faced his son again.

"I think you're right. In fact, I know you are."

"Then you consent?"

Young Crawford's face was wreathed in smiles of joy.

"Yes—I consent," the older man replied, but there was a lack of enthusiasm in his tone.

"Dad, you're the best ever!" Monroe exclaimed. "And I know you'll never regret your decision."

"But where do you intend going? And when?"

"I really have made no plans as yet. As I figured it out roughly, I'd go to Cheyenne, and look over the ground. Then I'd strike for the ranch districts, and take the first job that was offered."

"Perhaps I can suggest something better," his father rejoined. "You see, a few years ago I had some business dealings with a man out in Wyoming—a typical ranch-owner."

"You *did!*" the other exclaimed excitedly.

"Yes, and I have never told you of it—purposely. It's some time since I've had any communication with this man—not since you were a mere boy. But a few weeks ago he wrote me, inquiring about my family, and inviting me to spend some time with him next summer."

"Don't you suppose *he'd* give me a job?" Monroe asked excitedly.

"Perhaps. I can't say for sure."

"Then write him. Find out. If he will, it'll be just great."

"That's my plan. I haven't answered his letter yet, but I'll do so immediately. I know if it's possible for Jim Decker to take you, he will."

In due course the answer arrived.

"Decker writes, Monroe," Mr. Crawford announced, looking up from the letter, "that he'll be very glad to have you come."

"Does he really?" his son queried, almost incredulously.

"Yes, and he also says that if you are willing to put up with conditions as you find them on his ranch, he'll be glad to keep you as long as you'll stay. But he makes mention of the fact that the bunk-house has neither steam-heat, hot water, or enameled bath-tub."

Monroe snorted disdainfully.

"Who wants those things out there? That's the West—not the East."

"I prophesy you'll find a great difference between the two," his mother put in.

"I hope I do. If I didn't expect to, I'd stay here. But it's the change I want. Why, I can almost picture myself on my pony."

"A cow-pony is vastly different from an

Eastern saddle-horse," Mr. Crawford remarked. "Particularly a cow-pony that they call an outlaw."

"A what?" Monroe inquired.

"An outlaw. When you get out there, ask Jim Decker what an outlaw pony is. Get him to show you one. But if you try to ride him, pick out a soft spot on which to fall when he throws you."

"Oh, I'm not so sure that the animal would succeed in doing that. I'm not a greenhorn with horses. I've ridden in the Park quite a little."

"So you have," his father said with well-feigned sarcasm. "And there's so little difference between that and a forty-mile dash over the prairie on an outlaw."

Monroe glanced at him curiously—he was not certain whether his father was in earnest or not—but as his face showed no indication that he was joking, the conversation quickly drifted to an outfit, and from that to other preparations.

Two days later, after a leave-taking that brought the tears to his mother's eyes, and a choke in his own voice, Monroe Crawford was on his way to the land and life which had, for some time past, been uppermost in his thoughts.

It was a long, tedious trip, and where at first the scenery and passengers had interested him, they finally proved boring. When he awoke early in the morning of his last night on the train, and knew that already they had crossed the State line into Wyoming, he was delighted that his goal was so soon to be reached.

And this delight was heightened as the train drew up to a little shed that served as a station, and three typical plainsmen boarded it to take seats in one of the day-coaches. This was Crawford's chance, and leaving his Pullman, he went into the other car and sat near them, so that he could study their dress and manners.

How picturesque they looked!

He feasted his eyes upon them until at length he had to return to his own car, as he knew the train was nearing the town which marked the end of his trip. When it stopped soon after at a boxlike shack of a depot, he stepped from it to the platform.

And as he did so, a tall, lanky man walked toward him.

"Your name Crawford?" he asked, as with one sweeping glance he took in the newcomer from the tips of his shoes to the crown of his derby.

"It is," Monroe replied. "Are you Mr. Decker?"

"Wal, in some respects I am, though folks round here ain't got much use fer that there title 'Mister.' My name's *Jim* Decker to every one 'bout here, an' I don't see no use makin' any 'ception to the rule, far's you're concerned."

"Dad has told me a lot about you," Crawford managed to blurt out as he extended his hand—the man's words and manner rather took him aback.

"Wal, guess he ain't told you no more 'bout me then he has me 'bout you. So I guess we ought to know each other putty well, eh?"

As he spoke he wrung Crawford's hand, and the grip of steel caused the new arrival to wince with pain.

"Yer dad tells me ye want to learn to be a cow-puncher, an' thet I'm to teach ye. An' as he said in his last letter thet I was to help ye pick out an outfit, let's perceed to do so, an' incidently relieve ye of some of thet Eastern money. My hosses is over at the hotel."

As Crawford walked beside Decker, and the two started up the narrow, snow-covered street that was the only one in the town, he realized that many pairs of eyes gazed at them through the frost-covered windows.

At length they halted before a store.

"Best place in town to buy things," Decker said as he led the way into what the average New Yorker would consider a veritable curiosity-shop.

"Tenderfoot fer an outfit, Buck," he told the shopkeeper, and it wasn't long before every little detail had been selected, even including the cartridges for the revolver and rifle which were among the things purchased.

"We'll be back fer them things in a few minutes," Decker said to the man, and as they passed out to the street again, he added to Crawford: "We'll go down to the hotel fer the hosses, come back here fer them things, an' then hike fer the ranch."

"Yes, then for the ranch," Monroe repeated with a chuckle.

CHAPTER III.

THE FLOWER OF THE RANCH.

THE two men climbed into the rickety spring wagon and, with a yell at the bony horses, Decker drove down the street to the

store where Crawford had made his purchases. These were piled on with the other supplies which Decker had bought, and they were soon out on the prairie, where the road became little more than a trail.

On they drove, with the two men carrying on a desultory conversation. But the bouncing of the wagon over the frozen ground failed to add to the comfort of the ride, although it did tend to keep their blood in good circulation. Monroe heaved a sigh of relief when, late in the afternoon, Decker pointed to what looked like a spot on the horizon.

"Thet's my ranch," he announced.

To Crawford, who was cold, hungry, and so shaken up that he ached in every joint and muscle, this was welcome news. But, as he stared ahead, it seemed as if many miles still separated them from the ranch.

As the ponies finally reached the scattered group of buildings, Decker drew them up with a jerk, and Crawford glanced about to see faces peering at him from many doorways. At the entrance to what he soon learned was the cook's domain stood a Chinaman, all smiles, while from the bunk-house there came five men in the regulation cowboy costume. Then, as he rose to spring to the ground, he caught sight of a pretty girl at the window of another building. This caused him some surprise.

"Come on down," Decker directed; and as his feet came in contact with the frozen snow it stung them severely, for they were very cold.

The cowboys crowded about, and stared at him curiously.

"Now you fellers get that stuff unloaded," Decker directed; "and take Crawford's kit into the bunk-house."

Then he faced Monroe.

"An' as fer you, ye'd better come in the house a minute an' get thawed out."

He jerked his head toward the building in which Crawford had caught a glimpse of the girl, and started toward it, the Easterner willingly following.

Crawford's first view of the ranch buildings was anything but as he had pictured the place in his mind. Little more than rude shacks, they stood out upon the prairie, paintless, cheerless, and uninviting.

As they neared the door of the main building it opened, and the decidedly pretty girl appeared, her jet black hair, slim figure, and Western costume all making a strong appeal to Crawford.

She held the door open as Decker stopped and pushed Monroe into the room. And as he passed her the girl bowed her greeting.

"Kittie," Decker said, addressing his daughter, "this is Mr. Crawford's son, jest in from New York, and, by Harry! he looks it. And this is my gal."

She smiled warmly—and Monroe made mental note of a beautiful set of teeth—and extended her hand.

"I'm glad to meet you, Mr. Crawford," she said.

"And so am I glad to meet you," he returned.

"They's one thing thet's puzzlin' me," Decker put in.

"And what's that, father?"

"I'm wonderin' what to call my new cowboy. They ain't no 'misters' out here. Crawford's too durned long, and Monroe sounds like it was his last name." He slapped the Easterner heavily on the shoulder as he added:

"Boy, I got to git a nickname fer you."

"That's up to you," the other laughed.

Suddenly the old fellow broke into a hearty guffaw.

"I got it! Just the very thing! Ye look like ye hed money, so thet's yer nickname. An' it's short fer Monroe, too. 'Monny.' See the point?"

Kittie did not join in her father's mirth, and Crawford forced a smile as he replied: "It suits me if it does you."

"All right, then. You two set down an' git acquainted. I got to go out to see the boys a minute. An' if thet chink don't hev grub ready in fifteen minutes, I'll tie him on a bucker to-morrow, an' send the two of 'em kitin' off to the south."

Crawford glanced toward Kittie as her father stalked out, and when the door closed after him she said:

"Father's growl is worse than his bite. He wouldn't let John get two miles from the ranch for half the cattle in the foothills. Cooks are hard to get out here, and when you do find one, it's a life job for them. They couldn't get away if they wanted to." Then she added, as she nodded toward a big home-made chair: "Won't you sit down?"

By this time the cold in his bones had begun to thaw out, and with it his tongue loosened to the extent that inside of five minutes Crawford was perfectly at ease. He was soon carrying on an animated conversation, in the course of which he ex-

plained how he had longed for a touch of prairie life.

The girl shook her head wisely.

"I guess a lot of Easterners get that fever," she said. "Leastwise, it seems so. But it doesn't take them long to find out that it isn't all as they picture it in stories. Plains life doesn't consist entirely of riding about on a pony."

"Oh, I realize that fully," Crawford hastened to put in.

"And there's danger, even in that. If there's a prairie-dog's hole that isn't in plain sight, and there's few of them that are, and the pony goes down, it generally means a broken leg for him, and for the rider—well, it may mean a broken bone or two for him, too. Yes, and even a broken neck sometimes."

"But that's rather a rare occurrence, isn't it?"

"Yes, still it has happened, and will again just as long as prairies are prairies. But as you're out here, I hope you'll like it. Between ourselves, I'll give you three months of it."

She laughed heartily, and Crawford thought it the most silvery ripple he had ever heard. Kittie looked so picturesque in her flannel shirt and short skirt, with her mass of black hair piled so loosely on her head that many curls had escaped the holding power of the hairpins, that he already felt strangely drawn to her.

But he didn't join in her laugh. Instead, he straightened up a trifle, and his jaw squared with determination.

"Only three months, you say?" he remarked.

"That's about the longest an Easterner ever stays," she said. "Anywhere from one night to that time."

"But with me it's different," Crawford protested.

"Not a bit of it. They all arrive—and we've had a number of them in the past few years—just as full of ranch life as you are. It seems like a disease; but if it is, it's the easiest cured of any I know. Time, buckers, cowboys, and a Chinese cook, all mixed together in any proportion that happens to occur, is a wonderful prescription for what I term 'westitis.'"

She laughed heartily, and Crawford joined her this time. Then Decker stamped his way into the room.

"It gits so durned cold as soon as sundown thet ye'd like to freeze to death going from the bunk- to the cook-house." Then he faced Crawford.

"And now, Monny, thet you an' Kittie has got acquainted, come on an' I'll interduce ye to the boys. They's all anxious to meet ye."

Crawford followed the old man over the snow and ice that marked the path to the bunk-house, and they entered the semi-darkness of the room.

"Boys, this here is Monny," Decker called out. "A Easterner an' a tenderfoot. But he's goin' to be one of us, an' grow up to be one of the best cow-punchers in this part of Wyoming. Do ye hear thet, Bud Lawson?"

"Glad to meet ye," came from all parts of the room, and in the gloom to which Crawford's eyes had now become accustomed he made out the forms of the men.

"Ye see, Bud's s'posed to be one of the best hereabouts; but I can see where you'll beat him out if he ain't careful."

"At cow-punchin'?" one of the men asked, and there was a suppressed titter from the others, all except Bud.

"Now, what ye s'pose I meant?" Decker demanded, and there was a certain hostility in his tone that Crawford recognized, as he added: "You, Reckless—you're too durned free with that there tongue of yours."

No one spoke for a few seconds; then Decker went on:

"Now, you fellers git acquainted. Grub'll be ready in a few minutes, an' you take Monny in."

He then turned to Crawford. "An' after you've et yer fill, come over an' visit with me an' Kittie a while," he added.

"I'll be glad to do so," Crawford assured the ranch-owner, who turned and left the building.

For a moment there was an awkward silence, and Monroe realized that all eyes were focused upon him.

"Well, boys," he said at length, "as we are to spend some time together, there's no use wasting much of it in formalities."

"No, thet's right," came to him in a voice which he recognized as belonging to the man Decker had addressed as Reckless. "An' if ye take my advice, ye won't waste no time in them there city clothes of your'n. You're liable to git 'em greased up a bit, 'cause thet mess-house ain't the cleanest spot in Wyoming. I'll make a little light for ye."

"Thanks; I wish you would," Crawford said, and as the tiny flame partially lit up

the room he walked over toward the stove, about which three of the boys were seated. "I tell you," that doesn't feel badly in weather like this," he added.

No one ventured an opinion regarding this statement, and as Crawford glanced about the room he caught sight of his bundles piled up in front of one of the bunks.

"These are mine, I suppose," he remarked casually.

"They ain't mine," some one said, and this was followed by a chorus of disclaimers.

Crawford then proceeded to dress himself in the customary regalia, hanging his city clothes on the pegs at the side of his bunk. While he was doing so one of the men advanced toward him.

"Say," he began curtly, "I'm Bud, an' I sleep in thet next bunk."

"Then we'll be near neighbors," Monroe laughed.

"Yes; but if you snore, or do any other funny stunts at night, you an' me'll have a little argument. Do ye understand?"

Crawford stared at him in amazement The tone and words were so significant that he was at a loss to know what he had done to arouse such plainly evident animosity.

"Why—I—I never snore that I know of," Monroe stammered.

"Well, if ye do, I'll tell ye 'bout it," Bud growled. "An' if I has to inform ye thet yer a nuisance, I've got a peculiar way of doin' it. Jest remember thet."

CHAPTER IV.

THE ANIMOSITY OF BUD.

At that instant the call for supper reached the bunk-house, and the men all dashed out of it except Bud Lawson; he still remained staring at Monroe, who was too astonished to make any reply. Then the cowboy started toward the door, but he turned to face the Easterner when he reached it.

"I guess I've made myself pretty plain, ain't I?" he queried bluntly.

"Why—yes," Crawford stammered. "But I don't—"

"Then *see* thet ye don't," the other interrupted. "'Cause *if* ye don't—"

He stopped abruptly, then took a few steps toward the astonished New Yorker.

"An' they's other ways ye can make yerself objectionable to us," Bud snarled. "An' we ain't got no use out here fer objectionable cusses. We got a special treatment fer 'em."

With these words the cowboy wheeled and strode through the door.

For a full moment Monroe stared after him, totally unable to understand what he had done to bring forth these words. But of one thing he was certain—there was no room for doubt on that score—and that was that in some unknown way he had aroused Bud Lawson's animosity. But how, when, or where was a question he was unable to answer.

He slowly went on with the changing of his costume, and when he had finished he glanced down at himself, so pleased with the picture that he forgot for the moment the fact that he had already made one enemy.

He had no idea that at that very instant he was being discussed by the men in the mess-house.

"Boys," Bud said, as he joined those who were already eating as if their lives depended upon it, "boys, we've got a tenderfoot among us."

This was no new information to them, and they turned again to their dinner.

"Do we want one of them chicken-hearted, interferin' Easterners in our midst?" Bud went on.

"He looks like he was a harmless cuss," Reckless put in, without raising his face from his plate.

"Looks is deceitful," Bud declared. "An' he's got the smooth, slick, oily ways of speakin' thet takes with a gal."

No one spoke, although they all now saw why Bud resented Crawford's appearance at the ranch. Every cowboy for miles about was aware of Lawson's infatuation for Kittie Decker, and also knew that, while she gave him no marked encouragement, he considered her his personal property.

"An' he's a friend of Jim's, too," Bud continued, after an awkward silence. "Leastwise, Jim knows some of his family, he told me, so as a pussonal favor to Jim, I suggest that we 'nitiate this Monny, to see what he's made of. They ain't no use of Jim payin' him fer bein' a cowboy, an' lettin' him eat up his victuals, if he's one of them kind what would go lopin' over the prairie like a dog with a tin can tied to his tail, whenever he heard a coyote howlin' at 'im."

No one spoke, and faces were bent well over the plates.

"Wal, ain't none of ye got no tongues nor ideas?" Lawson demanded angrily.

"Wal, thet's up to you, Bud," Reckless drawled. "If you feels thet Jim Decker has 'pointed you a committee of one to 'vestigate this here cuss, why, go right ahead. I was only thinkin' of suggestin' thet bein's he's a friend of Jim's, mebbe 'twouldn't be a bad idea to consult with *him* regardin' it 'fore ye started on yer work. Jim might hev ideas, too, the same as you has, an'—"

Reckless stopped abruptly in his advice, which Bud was receiving with a sneer, as Jim Decker himself entered the room.

"Where's Monny?" he asked.

"Guess he's in the bunk-house yet," some one replied.

"Don't he know grub's ready?"

"The last I saw of him he was gettin' into his togs," Bud explained, and the tone he used was so significant that it did not escape the ranch-owner, who stared at the cowboy an instant, then stepped up to him.

"Look here, Bud, you an' me's been friends fer a long while, ain't we?"

The other nodded doggedly.

"An' we's likely to be fer a long time to come, pervidin' you minds yer own business. But let me tell ye one thing. This here Crawford is a friend of mine, an' as sech, anythin' thet happens to him, happens to me, too. Understand?"

Bud refused to reply.

"O' course," Decker continued, "I ain't runnin' no Sunday-school class, an' I ain't raisin' no objections to harmless jokes, an' sech like. But they must be harmless."

"We wasn't thinkin' of nothin' else," Reckless put in. "He seems like a decent sort of a cuss, but Bud ain't never hed no hankerin' for Easterners. Thet's all thet ails Bud."

Decker stood in silent thought a moment, then said:

"When he comes in, tell him to come over to my shack. He'll eat grub with me to-night."

The door had hardly closed upon him when Lawson, whose face was already red with rage, burst out: "With *him*, eh! Ain't *we* good enough fer him to eat with?"

"Perhaps Kittie wants company," Reckless put in slyly.

Bud was too choked with rage to speak immediately, and before he could control himself Crawford walked in, his Western get-up changing his looks materially.

"Jim was here a few minutes ago," Reckless informed him quickly—he wanted to get him out of the room before Lawson's outburst should come—"an' he wants ye to come over there fer yer grub."

"Really?" Monroe queried dubiously, fearing the man was playing a joke on him.

But Bud was on his feet instantly, his cheeks purple with rage.

"Ye don't believe it, eh?" he shouted. "Yer practically callin' Reckless a liar, an' if he ain't got sand enough to stand up fer himself, an' make ye eat them words, I'll do it fer him."

This outburst figuratively took Crawford off his feet, and he stared in utter amazement as Bud advanced toward him with drawn revolver.

"Take it back, I say!" Lawson bawled.

"Why—why—you don't understand," Crawford managed to stammer, but the enraged cow-puncher cut him short.

"Ye insulted Reckless, an' when any one insults any of the boys on this ranch, they insults us all."

"Don't ac' like sech a durned fool," Reckless broke in, as he seized Bud's arm in an effort to bring him back to his senses.

But Lawson was now in the throes of a form of jealous insanity, and he threw Reckless off as if he were a piece of paper, and reaching Crawford's side, pressed his revolver against him.

"Ye got jest thirty seconds to take it back," he snarled.

Monroe's face paled perceptibly, and he shot one quick, appealing glance at the others, to realize the fact that he could expect little interference from them.

"I—I take it back," he managed to stammer. "I—really—you misunderstood me. I—I didn't mean it as it sounded, and I'm—I'm very sorry—I spoke as I did. I really am."

Crawford was not a coward by any means, but under such circumstances, whatever presence of mind he had was scattered to the four winds.

A bitter smile played about Bud's mouth as he lowered his revolver.

"Wal, it's a good thing ye are," he remarked coldly. "We don't really want the bother of shippin' yer body back there to where ye come from."

Then he added, in a tone of determination:

"An' let me tell ye, young feller, thet in the future don't make no statements thet ye ain't willin' to back up with a gun.

'Pologies don't count fer much out here, an' sometimes 'fore ye can make 'em the other feller's got the drop on ye, an' then it's too late to make 'em, if ye wants to."

Crawford seemed either unable to speak, or else unable to think of anything to say, and Lawson suddenly faced him again.

"An' now beg Reckless's pardon," he directed.

Monroe felt that discretion ordered him to do as bidden, so he turned to the other cowboy with:

"I—I apologize."

"Now git out of here," Bud commanded. "An' be lively about it."

Crawford needed no second urging—he made his exit as hurriedly as possible, glad to quit an atmosphere that seemed laden with trouble for him.

When the door closed after the New Yorker, Lawson broke into a loud, although somewhat bitter laugh.

"Wal, boys," he chuckled, "I guess we got thet durned cuss's number, ain't we? Why, he ain't got sand 'nough in 'im to brand a heifer. He'd be 'fraid of hurtin' the critter."

"Ye sure did make him turn pale," one of the men agreed.

"Turn pale!" Bud snorted. "Why, thet feller's scared out of ten years' growth. An' I s'pose he's in there now, tellin' Jim an' Kittie what great things he done back there in the East. But they don't count fer nothin' out here."

"S'pose he'll tell Jim 'bout what jest took place?" Reckless queried.

"Wal, what if he does?" the other sneered. "Let 'im. An' if he does, Jim'll know what a wuthless cuss he is. Why, the quicker Jim knows 'bout him, the better off we'll all be."

"But 'tain't no use scarin' the life outen the kid the fust night he's here," Reckless said slowly.

"What you talkin' 'bout?" Lawson demanded in astonishment.

"Wal, I'll tell ye. Ye see, I was to New York once, an' it was all so strange to me, thet it jest took all the nerve out o' me. I tell ye, I was wusser'n a baby, an' I figure thet if goin' there 'fected me thet way, why wouldn't it ac' the same way on this here chap?"

"Say, are you takin' his part?" Bud demanded angrily.

"No, I ain't," the other returned. "I'm simply statin' thet mebbe the kid has some nerve, but he ain't jest had a chance to git his hands on it since he come here."

"Wal, if thet's the case, we'll give him plenty of chance to want to find it, and thet durned quick," Lawson ended with a hearty and significant laugh.

"I'd like to git him on a bucker," one of the others ventured.

"Wal, you'll git yer like all right, Bump," Bud declared. "To-morrer I'm goin' to git him on one of the durndest outlaws on the ranch, if I has to bind him hand an' foot to do it. An' if he turned pale to-night at jest thet little fake gun-play, he'll turn green, yaller, an' pink when the critter starts to workin'. Jest you wait an' see."

Apparently the men were willing to wait. The meal had progressed in silence for some moments, the Chinese cook being kept busy replenishing the food on the plates, when in passing Lawson he stubbed his toe against that person's boot.

"Ye durned chink!" the cowboy exclaimed, and the Chinaman made a dash around the table, dodging as he did so a large piece of sour dough which some one threw at him.

Then Bud stared from one to the other, a heavy sneer on his face.

"Boys," he said slowly, "they's a sayin', an' no one ain't never been able to contradict it, thet a chink cook is the lowest an' meanest cuss thet's allowed to live in Wyoming. But they's got a equal in thet there tenderfoot from New York. Ye never seen the chink what hed sand 'nough to keep from runnin' from a prairie-dog, an' this here Monny ain't, neither. He's jest as bad as a Chinaman."

No one ventured to deny or affirm this statement.

"Wal, ain't he?" Bud demanded hotly.

"Mebbe *some* tenderfoots is," Reckless said.

"*All* of 'em is," Bud corrected. "Every durned one of 'em. I know, an' I tell ye they ain't no exceptions. An' I'm goin' to prove it to ye."

"How?" some one asked.

"I got an idea," Lawson chuckled, and the rest of the boys were all attention.

"Ye see," Bud continued, "a tenderfoot turns pale at the sight of a gun, an' if they's a shootin' bee in progress, they looks fer a hole in the groun' to swaller 'em up. An' if they can't find no hole, they takes it on a run. An' when a scared tenderfoot starts

to lopin' 'cross the prairie, they ain't nothin' short of the devil hisself kin catch 'im."

"Wal, what's the plan?" some one asked as Lawson paused an instant.

"Ain't got none made yet," Bud replied knowingly. "But they'll be one, an' when they is, ye'll all be treated to a funny sight. I kin jest see him now, an'—"

His loud laughter prevented his completing the sentence.

CHAPTER V.

THE SHOOTING BEE.

"ANY of the boys hev anythin' to say to ye?" Decker inquired, with apparent carelessness, after the three were seated at the table.

Crawford shot one quick glance into his questioner's face, but the blankness there betrayed no knowledge of what had just happened in the mess-house.

"Why, no," he replied. "Why do you ask?"

"Wal, I'll tell ye," the old plainsman went on. "Ye see, cowboys is peculiar critters, an' the most peculiar thing 'bout 'em is how they hate an Easterner more'n a rattlesnake. I swear I dunno why it is, but it's allus been so, an' I s'pose allus will be, until they move New York City right out here in Wyoming, so the boys can see thet all them as lives there is sensible human bein's."

"If we have to wait till then, I'm afraid none of us will live to see the time," Kittie laughed.

"Wal, Monny, they's jest this 'bout it," Decker chuckled. "Ye've come out here to be a cowboy ain't ye?"

"That's my intention, and I'm determined in the matter," Crawford replied.

"And have you got lots of determination?" Kittie queried.

"Plenty, and then some to spare."

"Ye'll need all ye got," Decker asserted. "It's this way, Monny: the boys is great fer gettin' a tenderfoot out here, an' then testin' him to see how much grit he's got. An' the more grit he's got, the more determined they gets to take it all outen him. Ye see, they really needs a little fun once in a while—life's putty slow here on the ranch, an' when they gets a chance to have it, they ain't lettin' the chance slip by 'thout makin' a grab fer its tail, if they can't ketch it by the head."

"Which is another way of telling me that I'm in for a few things," Crawford observed.

"Wal, mebbe—mebbe. An' ye see, I can't tell 'em to let ye alone altogether, 'cause if I did, they'd think ye was scart of 'em, an' then yer life would be 'bout as miserable an existence as could be imagined. They'd be bedevilin' ye all the time. An' if ye stands up an' shows ye ain't afraid, they knows they ain't got a *regular* Easterner to deal with, an' then they tries all the harder to git ye goin'. So lookin' at it both ways, I can't see but the only thing fer you to do is to face 'em like ye was one of 'em. Then they'll git tired of goin' at ye all the time, an' *make* ye one of 'em."

"And how long is that apt to take?"

"Wal, they ain't no tellin', but from what I've seen—"

"From what *I've* seen," Kittie interrupted, "I've never known of a case where the Easterner was made one of them in the true sense."

"Wal, what I was goin' to say is 'bout the same as what Kittie just says, on'y I was goin' to put it a bit different. I was goin' to say thet when all cattle rustlin' was over, an' when Wyoming got the same climate as Southern California, 'stead of this here mixed breed we does git—"

"Father, don't joke about it that way," Kittie interrupted. Then turning to Crawford, she added:

"Really, it isn't quite as bad as that."

"If it is, I've got a lot of music to face," Monroe remarked seriously.

"Wal, I ain't the one to deny thet," Decker admitted.

After that the talk lagged until the end of the meal. A feeling had come over the New Yorker that, all things considered, Tom Lockwood had either been a great exception to the rule of Wyoming, or else had been a master hand at exaggeration. And as he recalled all the pictures of ranch life he had mentally drawn, his spirit sagged, and his ardor cooled.

Decker retired soon after the conclusion of the meal, leaving the two young people to themselves. Kittie, realizing that Crawford was not in a particularly talkative mood, did all in her power to keep the conversation upon the city and the life there.

Suddenly there came a tap on the door, and the Easterner started in apprehension. But before Kittie could bid the person

enter, the door was pushed open, and Bud Lawson came in, his face as black as a thunder-cloud.

"What do you want, Bud?" Kittie inquired.

"Where's Jim?" the newcomer growled, glancing about him.

"Gone to bed," was her curt response.

"I wanted to ask him somethin'."

"What?"

"I was goin' to ask him if I could go to town to-morrer. Thet's some things I wants to get over there, an'—"

"Principally a new supply of whisky," she interrupted, and the smile on her face prevented the cowboy from resenting her remark.

"No, you're wrong, Kit," he declared. "They's some other things I wanted, 'an' as they ain't much to be done on the ranch this weather—"

"You'd better wait and see father in the morning. That will be plenty of time, because you wouldn't dare start till the sun is well up."

Lawson glanced from the girl to Crawford, who had been a silent listener to the conversation, and he bestowed a look upon him that proved he was awaiting his chance to show plainly how unnecessary he felt this intruder was to the calm and quiet of Decker's ranch.

Bud shifted uneasily from one foot to the other, and once or twice opened his mouth as if he would speak.

"Is there anything else, Bud?" Kittie asked sweetly.

"Yes, there is," he retorted hotly, but as if to catch himself, he added: "Thet is—ye see—"

"I'm listening," she put in.

"Wal, never mind. I'll see Jim in the mornin'," he blurted out, and started toward the door.

As he pulled it closed after him, a faint "good night" reached the ears of the pair in the room.

"A queer sort of character," Crawford remarked thoughtfully.

"Yes, he is. But let me give you a little advice."

"I'm ready to take all that's being given away," Monroe told her.

"Bud Lawson is a peculiar fellow, and I'd suggest that you have as little as possible to do with him. He is very quarrelsome, and his hatred of Easterners is so strong that it has really become a sort of passion with him. But in your case it's even worse than that."

"In what way?"

"Well, I'm not given to conceit when I say that Bud is in love with me to a greater or less degree, and if I am to go by what he tells me and every one else who'll listen to him, it's principally greater. But it's all on his side. He's a good enough chap as far as strong arms, a big heart, and a courage that fears nothing is concerned. But—well, perhaps I'm looking a trifle high, but Bud isn't exactly my style."

"I think I understand," Crawford said contemplatively. "Yet he means well, I suppose."

"To me, yes. But to any one who looks at me the second time, no. I can just picture him there in the bunk-house all the while you've been in here to-night, going on like a Comanche Indian on the war-path, and the boys adding to his rage by encouraging him in it. And as for his wishing to see father—well, I think that was just only a ruse to make sure you were here alone with me."

"It seems to me"—and Crawford stared thoughtfully at the opposite wall—"it seems to me that Bud Lawson and I won't be on speaking terms for any great length of time."

"Please don't be foolish," Kittie pleaded. "Remember, he's as strong as a horse, and fairly quick with a gun, although real gunplay isn't one of Bud's accomplishments. He can shoot pretty well, but there's dozens of the boys hereabouts who can give him lessons in it. In fact, some of the boys we've got here are very good shots. Are you?"

The suddenness of the question surprised Crawford, and he replied unthinkingly: "Yes—oh, yes. I'm *quite* a shot."

"Hip?"

"What's that?"

"I mean, do you shoot from the hip, or do you bring the gun up?"

"Why—up, of course. I never heard of any other way."

"But there is," Kittie told him. "In a shooting bee, the very smallest fraction of a second counts, and as it takes a fraction of a second to bring the gun from the hip to arm's length, you can see that hip shooting would be a very good thing for you to practise."

"I certainly can," Crawford agreed, "and I'll try it as soon as I get a chance.

I thank you for the tip, but, of course, you can readily understand why I'm not familiar with that method of firing. In New York, where I have done all of mine, the only revolver practise we get is at a target."

"Then you are a pretty fair shot?" she queried.

"Yes, I am," was Crawford's answer, and he made it as emphatic as possible.

He marveled to himself at the prevarication and the ease with which it came out. As a matter of fact, he had never used a revolver, even for target practise, but he had done a little rifle shooting, and he considered this qualified him as a marksman.

"Then you'll be able to take care of yourself," she told him. "But whatever you do, don't let the boys think they can bully you. If you do—well, the quicker you buy your ticket to New York the better off you'll be."

Crawford threw all his self-reliance into the words that assured her she had little to fear from that direction, and a few moments later he bade her good-night and went out into the darkness to pick his way carefully and slowly across the ice and snow to the bunk-house door.

Suddenly a piercing howl, that came from an animal seemingly almost beside him, caused Crawford to spring to one side in fright, and as he drew out his revolver he made out against the white snow, and only a few yards away, the form of a coyote.

But he hesitated to shoot. In the first place, the suddenness of the cry had scared him to such an extent that his hand shook so that a good aim was impossible. And if he should fire and miss, he would betray the fact that he was not much of a marksman.

By this time he saw that the beast was not coming for him, and he again started toward the bunk-house, all the while keeping a sharp lookout to make certain the coyote did not steal up on him. But before he reached the building, it seemed to him as if the prairie must be covered with the brutes—their howls made such a noise that it was a relief when he reached the door for which he was bound.

He turned the knob, but it did not open.

Then he rapped lightly upon it, and as he did so, he imagined that the coyotes were crowding in upon him—their cries kept getting closer.

Again he rapped; this time much louder.

"Who's there?" a voice called from within.

"It's Monny," he said. "Let me in."

After a wait of a few seconds that seemed many minutes—with the coyotes snapping only a dozen feet away—the door opened, and Crawford pushed his way quickly into the building.

"What's the matter with ye?" Bud demanded hotly. "Are ye 'fraid of a few coyotes?"

"Of course not," Monroe declared. "But it was cold out there."

He rubbed his hands as he stood before the big stove in the center of the room, and from the heavy breathing that came from the bunks on the other side of it, he concluded that all but Bump and Lawson had gone to bed.

Then he glanced toward the greasy table against the opposite wall, where the two men were playing cards by the dim light of the oil-lamp. He watched Bud as he resumed his seat and picked up the cards he had laid down on the table when he let him in

Lawson glanced at them, then jerked his head up quickly, to stare hard at the man opposite him.

"Wal, what ye lookin' at?" Bump demanded.

"You changed them cards!" Lawson shouted, as he sprang to his feet, and the three men in the bunks roused up at the sound of his voice.

"I *what?*" the other cried; and he, too, stood up and glared at the man across the table.

"You tried to cheat me!" Bud declared, and instantly the right hand of each man went toward his hip.

Crawford stared, as if rooted to the spot, unable to cry out a warning, and before he realized it, there was a crack and a flash from Lawson's revolver. The man opposite him sank down limply in his chair—Bud had shot a fraction of a second before he could—and then he swayed and fell to the floor.

But almost before the wounded man reached it, Monroe jerked out his revolver, and without waiting to take aim, fired pointblank at Bud Lawson.

Instantly the cowboy clutched convulsively at his heart, his head fell back, he reeled a few steps, then sank with a crash full length upon the floor.

(To be continued.)

FATE IN BASSWOOD.

BY GARRET SMITH.

A Graphic Tale of an Adirondack Experience in Which Both Snow and Sunshine Play Their Part.

IT'S nothing to-day but an old stump on the summit of the Red Mountain Trail, blackened by many Adirondack winters. But to the seared conscience of Jules Martine it is a monument dedicated to one day of his life, the day of his great guilt.

Yet Jules never passes that way without kneeling for a moment before the old stump and breathing a prayer of thanksgiving that the great basswood tree which once grew there had smothered his offense and kept it from the recognition of the law.

Nor was the least credit due the sinner for this secrecy. Had he not boasted from one end of St. Pris to the other that he would shoot the greenhorn Terrell on sight, giving him time only to bring his weapon into action and make of it a fair duel?

Small wonder, then, that Terrell, on starting forth into the forest the next morning, that of the fated day, bore with him his heaviest hunting rifle and kept it ready for use, though it was early spring and such action laid him open to suspicion of intending to shoot game out of season.

True, there were those besides Martine who said privately that Terrell ought to die. The Red Mountain tract had for generations been public land. The men of St. Pris had hunted and trapped there at will, and game laws had been a dead letter. A majority of the inhabitants of the little village made a living from the output of the Red Mountain forest, together with what was practically the same thing, the income from greenhorn hunters.

Now all was changed. The territory was to be sold to private owners, who, after the manner of their kind, would fill the forest with "No Trespassing" signs, and St. Pris might starve or move.

Terrell, despite his riches, a tendency to tuberculosis, and a general ignorance of mountain life, was not a bad sort personally. He had come to the woods filled with the utmost good-will for its people and unaware of the prejudice against him.

But he was the first to fence off a section of their free ancestral woodland, and therefore upon his head fell the undivided wrath of the mountainside.

The night of Martine's threat Terrell had gone to the village to do some trading, and there had met with black looks. And in the little general store he had bumped into Jules Martine, who, contrary to the repeated advice of Father La Monte, had been drinking again.

Jules, winking at his associates, had insolently warned the newcomer to see to it that he put up no signs upon his tract, and that he allow any one to hunt there who chose.

Terrell had laughed at him, winking in his turn at those around, and warned the tipsy young man not to let him catch him doing any poaching.

In reply Martine struck the other in the face.

In an instant there had begun one of the liveliest fist battles ever witnessed in that region. To the intense surprise of every one, the pale and slender greenhorn, a trained boxer, emerged from the fracas triumphant.

Jules, badly whipped, had sputtered around the rest of the evening about how he would start on a hunt for his punisher, rifle in hand, first thing in the morning.

"See to it you give him a fair show, Jules, lad," said a grizzled old veteran of the woods who sat on one end of the counter. "Remember, to shoot a man unarmed is murder."

There was general assent to this, and the listeners grinned as they approved, for they knew the greenhorn was no shot and that Jules was one of the best in the woods. He would have the stranger at the same disadvantage with a gun that the other had over him with his fists.

The incident worried Terrell not a little. He wished to be on friendly terms with the mountaineers, for he had come there to stay

winter and summer till his health was restored. He knew Martine only slightly, and for all he could tell the fellow might make good and be lying in wait for him at any moment, though aside from his occasional over-indulgence in whisky, the Frenchman had a good reputation in the woods.

But Terrell was a man of nerve. No mere threat could swerve him from his daily routine. He was devoting his mornings to chopping wood for exercise. He would continue to do so.

So he set out on his snow-shoes that next day, ax in one hand and gun in the other. But before settling down to his strenuous exercise of felling a forest monarch, he decided to make a search for any possible traces of his enemy. If the man was lying in wait for him, it would be well to see him first.

He had followed the trail half way up the ridge when he saw, leading out of an obscure cross-trail, fresh snow-shoe tracks. Turning, he followed them for an hour without getting any nearer their maker.

Once he heard a rifle-shot in the distance. Perhaps it was Martine sounding defiance or warning. Very well, he would not be outdone. He fired his own rifle in the air.

There was no answer. Still he followed the trail, thinking it might lead around to his own cabin. Instead, after a little, it crossed the borders of his property, and though he searched for some distance along the line, there was no sign of its return.

No doubt the track was that of another. Or if it was Martine's, the morning air had cooled his impetuosity and he had given up the chase. Terrell, much relieved, turned back to the main trail and was soon at the summit of the ridge.

Here was a commanding spot. He could see any one approaching for some distance either way along the trail. Moreover, there was the huge basswood, standing there as if defying a puny mortal to attack it with his tiny ax. Only scrub-oak and low bushes grew for some distance around the monarch.

Terrell leaned his gun against the other side of the trunk, removed his outer coat, and went at the great wood with swinging blows.

But the greenhorn, more accustomed to the ways of the stock-ticker than to the tricks of an ax, made slow and uneven work of his chopping. The March sun climbed a long way up the slope. The snow, lodged in the branches over the woodsman, began to drip under the growing warmth.

At length the bows, trembling under the blows of his ax, sent a little shower pattering around him.

That showed him that he had at last weakened the support of the great tree. It would soon come tottering down.

He paused long enough to remove his gun from its dangerous place against the trembling trunk. Placing it against another tree where it would be well out of reach of the impending crash, he had returned half-way to his task, when suddenly he stopped short. For an instant his blood froze in his veins.

The dark, glowering face of Martine had suddenly emerged from the thicket. The Frenchman's gun covered Terrell's heart.

The man was still somewhat intoxicated. An ugly, uncompromising light gleamed in his black eyes.

"You know what's coming to you!" he growled. "But I'll give you a chance. Get your gun and stand right where it is. Then it's the man who can shoot first and straightest. Remember, the moment you turn about with the gun in your hand I fire. So move quickly."

There was a sneering confidence in the fellow's tones that gave Terrell no comfort. It was evident that the duel was to be merely a technicality. Should he allow this man to shoot him in the back while he was stooping for his own weapon?

Terrell's native stubbornness and pride asserted itself. The woodsman should enjoy no such triumph. Then, too, this idea of a fair fight might be a drunken obsession, and by refusing to take advantage of the terms Terrell might outwit his adversary.

"So it's a fair fight you're offering me, is it, Jules Martine?" he said with slow emphasis. "You think you'll escape murdering me in cold blood. Well, I'll give you no such relief for your conscience. Here I stand. You will shoot me down as I am, unarmed and helpless, or not at all. And you'll have it on your conscience ever afterwards. Now fire."

Terrell folded his arms across his breast, looked the other steadfastly in the eye, and waited. He was surprised at his own coolness. He laughed at the baffled fury in the other's face, now roused to white heat.

But instead of thwarting the woodsman

from his purpose, Terrell produced the opposite effect. There was only an instant in which the menacing gun wavered. Then the baffled look vanished before the onrush of madness. Jules Martine forgot all his fine scruples about fair fights.

The gun snapped back to position and the buck-skinned thumb raised the hammer. At that instant a loud snapping and rending smote the silent air. The great basswood was falling toward them! Martine's back was toward the tree, and he stood between it and Terrell.

The crackling of the wood arrested his trigger-finger, and he whirled in time to see his danger, but too late to avoid it.

Terrell, farther away, might have escaped; but, with the instinctive chivalry of a gentleman with red blood in his veins, he dashed forward involuntarily to snatch his enemy from peril.

Then, at the same instant, the great trunk struck them both.

Only an instant of confusion, and Terrell realized that he was practically unhurt. He struggled about till he cleared his head and shoulders of snow, only to find that his legs were pinned down firmly, and that he was there to stay as long as the basswood remained in position.

Six feet away lay Martine. He, too, had cleared the upper part of his body, and by the vigor of his struggles and his profanity was demonstrating that he likewise was not seriously injured. But his legs were no less securely fastened.

Just opposite a point half-way between them, standing upward in the deep snow, where it flew when its owner went down, was Martine's rifle. It was a few inches out of the reach of each of the basswood's prisoners.

The two men glared at each other, then at the rifle. And at the same instant they clutched for it. Both missed it by about six inches.

Terrell felt a glow of triumph at his enemy's failure rather than chagrin at his own. He was glad he couldn't reach the gun himself. He did not wish to shoot his helpless foe, and was unwilling to have any such temptation within reach.

Then the thought came to him, as it must have come to the other, that unless by some very improbable chance some one should pass that unfrequented spot they would perish there together from exposure under the great basswood.

And neither shouted for help, Martine restrained by the fear that some one might come who would not view his actions with charity, and Terrell by the thought that an alarm would most probably bring a partizan of Martine's who would release him and allow him to complete his murderous purpose at once.

The fellow was still a little drunk. Let it be hoped that relief would wait just long enough to allow Martine to become once more a reasonable being.

The Frenchman saw the sneer that came to the other's face. Again his fury mounted high. He struggled like a crushed serpent, clawing the snow and reaching madly for the rifle.

"Here," murmured Terrell in maddening accents, "is the man who just now prated of a fair fight. For what, pray, do you wish your rifle? Would you like to shoot a man who is not only unarmed, but is pinned down so he can't use his fists?"

This reference to his drubbing goaded the Frenchman to still greater fury. He struggled to reach the gun till he was completely exhausted, then he fell back and cursed till his breath was gone.

"I'll kill you like a rattlesnake!" he whispered.

For a time they lay eying each other in silence and the sun mounted higher and higher, and their heavy clothing was soaked with melted snow.

At length Martine looked again at the gun. Terrell saw in his face a sudden gleam of triumph.

Terrell, too, looked at the gun, and then he understood.

Metal placed on snow or ice, in some way or other, the countryman says, by drawing the heat from the air, will melt its way through. Martine's rifle had lodged in the snow, barrel up, and leaning toward its owner at a slight angle. Now, as if impelled by the hand of a malicious demon, the weapon was slowly tilting over toward the Frenchman and leaving behind it a deep groove in the snow.

It was now Martine's turn for a smile of triumph. The crazing after-effect of drunkenness was upon him.

"See that!" he exclaimed. "That shows who's right. Shall a stranger be allowed to come to our free forest and fence it off and rob us of our living?"

There, chilled to the bone with wet snow

and benumbed by the pressure of the wood on his limbs, Terrell listened for the first time to the full story of the real and imagined wrongs of the woodsmen. And as he listened he found, despite the approach of death and the murder in the eyes before him, that his heart was filled with pity for these simple people who knew little of any law but that of might.

So the sun moved slowly over toward the mountain-peak and the snow melted around the weapon, and it crept nearer and nearer its owner's murderous hand. Not a sound broke the silence around them.

Terrell thought over all the chances, and in them saw no hope. If the gun reached Martine's fingers while his frenzy was still on, there was no doubt that he would shoot his enemy on the instant. If any one came to their aid before then, it would probably be one who would hand Martine his gun and calmly watch the execution.

But suppose no one came. The sun would soon pass behind the mountain, and the snow would begin to freeze. If the freezing began before the gun reached Martine's hand, then they would both lie there and freeze to death under the basswood.

Whichever turn fate might take, it made little difference.

So the gun crept on, and the sun drew near the mountain, and Martine continued to smile in triumph.

For a long time neither spoke.

At length the sunlight faded, and a chill fell over the mountainside. Martine knew what this meant. Once more he struggled to reach his weapon.

Terrell held his breath for a moment. The Frenchman missed the dark barrel by a bare inch.

But now the condemned man could see by sighting across the gun-barrel at a twig beyond that the progress of the rifle was slower. The snow about him was becoming crisp. At the same time he was growing almost insensible from cold and lack of circulation.

Again Martine reached for the gun. This time he missed it by a bare half-inch.

But now the progress of the weapon seemed checked completely. The Frenchman struggled again and again, but got no nearer to it. Finally he settled back with a groan of despair and baffled rage.

Darkness was closing in, and with it went the last chance of any human rescue.

Yet, now that it seemed less likely to avail, both men decided almost simultaneously to shout for help. Alternately and together they hallooed and waited long intervals, but there was no response.

Desperately they thrashed their arms about the free portion of their bodies to delay as long as possible the numbness from freezing.

Martine was now perfectly sober. There was no longer any frenzy in his glance, only unquenched hatred and the inscrutable expression of a brave man facing death.

Then Terrell felt a sudden thrill of hope. For moments he waited, fearing it was only the delusion of a freezing man.

He stirred a little, and then a little more. It was true. At first he could make nothing of it, but after a little thought and examination of the tree over him he understood what happened.

But he took good care that Martine should not yet know of this great discovery.

"Jules Martine," he said solemnly, "this day you have committed a great offense. You have been guilty of murder in the eyes of God, for in His book He says that he who hates his brother is a murderer. You did more. You were about to kill a defenseless man, and only the falling of this tree kept your hands free of blood and saved my life."

He paused. For a moment the other remained sullenly silent, then, as if struck by a new thought, he buried his face in his hands, and to the ears of Terrell came a murmured prayer. Martine was repentant.

"And now," Terrell went on, "you are to do a long penance. I am going to rise up and take your gun. I could shoot you if I would, just as you purposed to shoot me. Instead, I forgive you. I am going to make you my gamekeeper, and you are going to serve me long and faithfully. And the villagers of St. Pris are going to continue to hunt on my land as they have before."

As he talked Martine had looked up wonderingly and incredulously. Then, to the man's amazement, Terrell, with a swift wrench of his body, drew himself out from under the basswood and staggered to his feet.

When the great tree went over, a large part of the wood through which Terrell had not yet cut bent, instead of breaking. As the day advanced the snow that weighed down the fallen limbs melted away and lightened the load. Then the freezing of

the water in the bent fibers of the trunk had stiffened them till the great trunk had sprung up a little from the ground—just enough to release Terrell.

Using a dead limb near by as a pry, Terrell a moment later had released Martine, and after an instant's hesitation the two shook hands.

Terrell kept his word faithfully. And that is why Jules Martine kneels to-day in thanksgiving before the stump of the old basswood.

A $30,000 HOODOO.

BY CASPER CARSON.

Author of "Within the Hour," "A Gentleman of Leisure," "In the Lap of Luxury," etc.

The Story of an Inheritance That Brought a Man Misery of Mind and Peril of Body.

(COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE.)

CHAPTER I.

OUT OF THE SKIES.

SAM DIXON, home from the funeral, was in a festive and opulent mood.

Not that Samuel was cold, or hard-hearted, or anything of that kind; but even the most emotional person in the world would have found it hard to leak tears over the death of an old maid second cousin whom he had never seen, nor even heard of, so far as he could remember, until the astounding news arrived the day before that in dying she had left him heir to a comfortable estate.

And, as a matter of fact, Sam's heirship was in no way due to any sentiment of affection or tenderness toward him on the part of the deceased Cousin Lydia; but resulted entirely from a falling out between her and the director-in-chief of the Darbyville Home for Disabled Cats.

The long-suffering director-in-chief had for more years than he liked to remember practically taken orders from Cousin Lydia and allowed her to dictate the affairs of the institution according to her own sweet will and caprice, upon the understanding that when she died her property was to come to the Home.

But at last there came a point whefe even such a worm as he had to turn.

From some unaccountable whim or prejudice, the old lady suddenly demanded that hereafter no Maltese cats should be admitted.

The director-in-chief sought to argue her from the position by pointing out that Maltese cats were as liable to disablement as those of any other breed, and that in an asylum such as theirs neither qualifications of race, color, or previous condition of servitude could justly be applied; but he might as well have talked to the wind.

Cousin Lydia held out stubbornly for her contention; and when at last the director-in-chief, driven to a corner, flatly refused his consent, she sent for a lawyer, and announced her intention of changing her will.

"Whom shall I make the beneficiary?" blandly inquired the attorney, as he set about his task.

Cousin Lydia stared at him blankly. She had not given a thought to that phase of the matter, and for the moment she was stumped.

For years her sole interest had been wrapped up in the Home for Disabled Cats. She knew nothing and cared less about any of the other charitable institutions of the neighborhood; and having quarreled at one time or another with about every one living within a radius of a dozen miles, she had no friends or neighbors she felt willing to enrich.

"Is there no relative or member of your kinfolk you would like to remember?" suggested the lawyer.

"Ha!" His question gave her an inspiration. "Let's see," she muttered. "Didn't Jennie Dixon write me, in that last letter of hers, that she had a son, a young man who had just come to New York to make his way?"

She rose stiffly from her chair and, hobbling over to the mantelpiece, took down from behind the clock the three-year-old letter to which she had referred.

"Yes, here it is," as she perused the yellowed, time-stained sheets. "She gives me the address where she says I can find him, if I ever go to the city. 'Samuel Dixon, No. 974 West Twenty-Second Street.' My, my! Just think of little Jennie Dixon having a grown-up son, and him making his own way in New York."

She fell into the ruminative silence of old age, until the lawyer, growing impatient, finally interposed:

"Then is it your wish to bequeath something to this—er—Mr. Samuel Dixon?"

"Yes," she nodded. "Yes, I guess I'll help this boy of Jennie's along."

"And how much shall I put him down for?" holding his pen poised.

But the old lady had grown weary by this time of being "pestered."

"Oh, give it all to him," she snapped. "Just take that other will of mine and scratch out wherever you find it says 'Home for Disabled Cats,' putting in his name instead."

Accordingly, the new will was duly signed, sealed, and delivered, and in it Samuel Dixon, Esq., of New York City, was designated as sole heir and residuary legatee.

Whether Cousin Lydia would have repented and again altered her last testament to its old form can never be known.

She sustained a stroke of paralysis that night; and the next evening Sam, returning to his boarding-house for dinner, found on the hall table the letter notifying him of his good fortune.

Naturally, he was at first inclined to regard the matter as a joke set up on him by some of the waggish spirits in the house; but when he had made some cautious inquiries, and learned that the communication was a genuine one from a firm of reputable lawyers, his wonder and bewilderment knew no bounds.

He went around all that evening in a sort of half daze, scarcely knowing whether he was standing on his head or on his heels.

By the next morning, however, he had been able to assimilate the great news to a certain extent, and was in a more normal condition.

The first thing to do, he felt, was to test the reality of this Aladdin's dream which had come to him so unexpectedly.

The letter from the attorneys had stated that the estate in its entirety amounted to about thirty thousand dollars, which, as there were practically no debts, could be turned over to him almost immediately; but that really meant less to Sam than a postscript which announced that, if he were in immediate need of funds, the firm stood ready to advance him any sum up to five hundred dollars without delay.

Thirty thousand! That was nebulous and indefinite—a mere term such as a million is to most of us. But five hundred; there was an amount that lay within his comprehension.

True, he had never had so much in his possession at any one time. The most he had ever been ahead of the game was when he saved up fifty dollars to buy himself a dress-suit. Still, he could imagine just about what one could do with five hundred dollars, and it seemed to him like wealth.

Therefore, he lost no time in getting down to the office of the law firm which had sent him the letter and presenting his demand.

His heart beat wildly as he was ushered into the presence of Mr. Parkinson, the junior partner, and he was quite prepared to find the whole affair a hoax; but, nerving himself up to the ordeal, he managed to stammer out his name and a request for the promised advance.

"Certainly. Glad to oblige you," assented Mr. Parkinson without a moment's hesitation. "How much shall I make it for?" as he drew out his check-book.

"The whole five hundred dollars," gulped Sam.

Never until the stipulated amount was nestling in his pocket did he feel that he could actually believe in his new-found affluence.

Parkinson merely nodded, and, filling out the check as directed, sent a clerk across the street to the bank to get the cash.

"Your cousin was an old and valued client of ours," observed the lawyer while they were waiting. "I suppose, of course, you will go down to the funeral?"

Sam had not thought of it before, but now it struck him that this would be the only decent thing to do.

He was no hypocrite; but since he had seen that check drawn he had begun to entertain a much more tender feeling for Cousin Lydia.

"Poor old girl," he reflected. "I guess, after all she has done for me, I ought to

be able to spare time enough to see her properly laid away.

"Yes," he responded to the lawyer's question. "Oh, yes; I shall go down, without fail."

Then, since the clerk had by this time returned with the cash, he stuffed the crackling notes into his pocket, bade the junior partner good morning, and left the office, enjoying for the first time in his life the blessed sensation of opulence.

If J. Pierpont Morgan had anything on Sam at that moment, it was not in the feeling that the world was his.

CHAPTER II.

FEELING HIS OATS.

From the lawyer's offices Sam took the Subway to the drug-store where he was employed.

He kicked himself afterward for not having used a taxicab to signalize his triumphant arrival; but he was new to the uses of wealth as yet, and such a thing never occurred to him until too late.

For a moment, too—so strong is habit—he quailed and trembled under the boss's outraged scowl as he entered the door.

"Nice time for you to be putting in an appearance," snarled his employer. "Keeping banking hours nowadays?"

Sam felt of the five hundred dollars in his inside pocket to reassure himself that he was not dreaming; then braced up and faced his angry superior.

"Yes." He smiled sweetly. "I am keeping 'most any kind of old hours that I choose."

With elaborate nonchalance, he strolled over to the cigar-case, selected a tinfoil-wrapped perfecto, and carelessly tossed a dollar into the cash drawer.

The boss stared at him in open-mouthed amazement, uncertain whether to turn a seltzer bottle on him or call for the police.

"Look here!" he spluttered, advancing angrily. "Are you drunk or crazy? Don't you know I'll have to fire you if you keep up this kind of thing?"

"Oh, no, you won't!" Sam lighted his big black cigar and puffed a cloud of smoke into the air.

"I won't, eh? I'd like to know why not."

"Because I've already fired myself. I'm simply here to get my wages and a few things belonging to me."

"Oh"—a light dawned on the boss—"you've got a new job; is that it?"

He considered a moment. Up to this outbreak, Sam had always shown himself a good, steady, dependable fellow. He was popular with customers, too, and the store would undoubtedly feel his loss.

"Say," he ventured cautiously, "I wouldn't be in too big a hurry to make a change. If it's a question of more money, I shouldn't wonder if we could come up to any figure the other people may name."

"I don't think so in this case, Mr. Mackinnon," and Sam shook his head. "You see, the other people's figure is thirty thousand dollars."

"What!"

The proprietor backed away behind a neighboring show-case, and seized a handy Hunyadi water-bottle as a weapon. He was sure now that his recalcitrant employee was either intoxicated or mad.

But Sam had begun to weary of his joshing.

"Yes," he announced. "To give you a straight story, Mr. Mackinnon, I have fallen heir to that amount of money."

The drug-store proprietor's manner changed as if by magic.

He set down the Hunyadi bottle and advanced from behind the show-case with beaming smile and outstretched hand.

"Let me congratulate you, my dear boy. This is good news indeed!"

He paused a moment; then in a sort of fatherly tone went on:

"And have you decided what disposition to make of your legacy? No, of course not; it is a little too early for that yet. Still, if I might suggest, there is a wonderful chance for a young man right in this very store. You know what the business is, and are familiar with our trade, and all the rest of it; so I really can't conceive of any more desirable arrangement.

"And thirty thousand dollars"—he stroked his chin reflectively—"thirty thousand dollars would buy a very tidy interest, a very tidy interest, indeed."

But Sam's face hardened, and he involuntarily thrust his hands into his pockets, as though to guard his precious lucre from assault.

"No," he declared emphatically, "I am never going to put up another prescription, or sell another toothbrush as long as I live."

"Well," the proprietor returned, "it's your own affair, of course; but I'd be will-

ing to wager that the day will come when you'll regret turning down so advantageous a proposition."

And in a state of undeniable pique he turned away, muttering something about "a fool and his money."

Dixon, however, paid little heed to either him or his strictures; but, puffing at the long, black cigar, went around the store, rapidly collecting the things that belonged to him and wrapping them up in a neat parcel.

He paused uncertainly a moment before his diploma as a pharmacist, which hung framed by the prescription-desk. Should he take it, or leave it behind? The thing was his, and represented many an hour of hard study and patient industry; but, as he had said, he was done with the drug business for good and all, and consequently had no further use for such credentials.

Finally, though, he decided that it might be interesting to keep the diploma as a relic of his early career, and, taking it down, he added it to his other possessions.

The cashier informed him upon inquiry that there was seven dollars and fifty cents coming to him; but also stated that she was a little short of cash for the time being, and asked him if he could not step in for it later in the day.

"Oh, sure; any time that's convenient," said Sam indifferently. "I don't know that I can come in to-day; but I shall probably be around in this neighborhood some time or other, and then will drop in to collect—if I happen to think of it."

As the old song goes, "My, what a difference a few hours make."

"Just listen to that," commented the cashier *sotto voce* to the proprietor, as Dixon stepped back to the telephone-booth to order a taxicab, that crowning luxury having at last suggested itself to him. "Yesterday, if any one had asked him to wait ten minutes for his pay, he'd pretty near have torn down this cage of mine to get it; but now he acts like seven dollars and fifty cents wasn't hardly worth picking up."

Perkins, one of the other clerks, who had been out on an errand, came in at this moment, and stood listening open-mouthed to their conversation and to the peremptory orders his late fellow employee was shouting into the telephone.

"What's the matter with him?" demanded Perkins. "Gone bughouse?"

"No, not yet," snorted the proprietor, "although it wouldn't surprise me if that or anything else should happen to him, the way he's carrying on. He's fallen heir to thirty thousand dollars."

"He's what?" gasped Perkins.

"Fallen heir to thirty thousand dollars. And a nice show he's making of himself over it," beginning to recount in reprehending fashion Dixon's actions since coming to the store, and especially his refusal to entertain the idea of a partnership.

Perkins, however, was paying small heed to the boss's vindictive complaint. Some thought of his own had evidently occurred to him; and his sharp-featured face, with the eyes that were set a trifle too close together, took on an expression of sly shrewdness.

He sidled up ingratiatingly toward Sam as the latter came out of the telephone-booth.

"They're saying around here that your money has made you swell-headed, old chap," he murmured; "but I don't believe that for a minute. I tell them that you're not one of the kind to forget old friends."

"No, you bet I'm not." Dixon hotly resented the aspersion cast on him. "I'll show these people so, too. Come around and see me as soon as I get back to town, Perkins. You'll find that you are more than welcome."

Then he hurried out to the waiting taxicab and was rapidly whirled away.

The drug-store proprietor watched his departure with a disapproving shake of his head.

"There's a young man," he observed darkly, "who, unless I miss my guess, will come to a bad end."

"Shouldn't wonder," assented Perkins; but to himself he added: "I'm hoping, though, that it won't be until after I've had a chance to get that thirty thousand."

CHAPTER III.

DOUBLE LIABILITY.

THE next two days were busy ones for Sam, and by the time they were gone a goodly chunk of the five hundred dollars advanced to him had been dissipated.

In the first place, he had felt it incumbent to purchase a wardrobe suitable to what he considered his station, and while he was going around from clothier's to hatter's, and from hatter's to haberdasher's, the

busy little taximeter — for Dixon now scorned any other method of conveyance— clicked away his ten-cent pieces in an unceasing stream.

Then, too, there had been his trip down to Darbyville and the performance of his duties as chief mourner at the obsequies to occupy his attention: so that, really, he had scarcely had a half minute to think things over since he had come into his property.

Back now from the funeral, though, and a little tired from all his rushing about, he went up to his room after dinner, and, donning a bath-robe and slippers, prepared to make himself comfortable.

It was not the little, old hall bedroom on the third floor which he had occupied ever since coming to New York. No; one of the first things he had done on receiving the news of his legacy was to notify his landlady that he would take the vacant "first floor front," with private bath; and while he was away his things had been moved down for him, and duly installed therein.

He had an open fireplace, and by his orders a cheery blaze was crackling in the grate; so, wheeling the couch up in front of it, he stretched himself out at full length, and through clouds of tobacco-smoke began to plan and dream.

He could better realize now, since he had got over a feeling of tremulous fright every time he crackled a twenty-dollar bill and had begun to taste some of the luxuries of life, what the possession of thirty thousand dollars really meant.

Ah, what a time he was going to have! Not that he was going to play the goat and blow it all in. Not by a jugful. Twenty-five thousand he was going to put safely by to invest in some profitable business when he got around to it, and found a line which suited him.

But with the remainder he was first going to take a year's travel. He would see London and Paris, motor through the Riviera, visit Florence and Venice and Rome, and perhaps — if the money held out and he found he had the time—he would go on to Egypt and the Holy Land, or even to India and Japan.

Glowing pictures he built up of all that he was to see and do, while the smoke-wreaths eddied and swirled about his head in the flickering firelight.

And then his calm contentment and romantic dreaming was suddenly broken in upon by a knock at the door.

"Come in," called Dixon, supposing it to be merely a maid with the towels, and not troubling to bestir himself.

But instead, when the door opened there stood Perkins, his former fellow clerk at the drug-store.

"Oh, hallo!" said Sam, not with any great excess of geniality.

It was true, he had rather urged Perkins to come to see him; but that was in a moment of heat and to offset the accusation of swell-headedness. And, anyhow, he had not expected the fellow to take him up on the invitation quite so soon.

The visitor seemed in no way abashed by the coolness of his reception; but came in and closed the door, blinking around at the room with his narrow, close-set eyes.

"Pretty swell quarters you have here, old man," he observed.

"Oh, so-so," with affected indifference. "A chap wants to live half-way decently, don't you know. Pull up a chair to the fire, and help yourself to a smoke."

Dixon waved his hand toward a box of cigars on the table.

Now, Sam was honestly and somewhat against his inclinations trying to show a properly cordial spirit and made his guest feel at home; but Perkins, on the lookout for a slight, regarded each friendly overture as a separate insult.

"The supercilious hound!" he raged within himself. "Talk about getting chesty over a little money! Why, he acts like he was president of the City National Bank and me a sweeper-out in the third basement."

No hint did Perkins give, however, of the bitterness which was consuming him. He seemed tickled with gratitude, and fairly cringed in his attitude toward Sam.

"I know I oughtn't to have acted on your invitation so quick, and come butting in on you this way," he said apologetically, when he had settled himself in a big armchair and lighted one of the proffered cigars; "but I was so interested in your good luck that I felt I just couldn't wait. I wanted to hear more of the details than you were able to tell me at the store the other day.

"Then, too, I happened to learn something this afternoon," he added, "which I thought it might be well for you to know."

"What is that?" inquired Sam lazily.

He couldn't conceive of Perkins bringing any news which might cause him especial concern.

"Why, you know, this windfall of yours was written up in the papers?"

"Yes, I saw the accounts," not without a certain gratification. "The *Gazette* gave me half a column, with the head-line: 'Eighteen-Dollar Drug Clerk Gets Old Maid's Fortune Away from Home for Disabled Cats!'"

"Exactly. And a lot of other people besides you saw those accounts, too. One of them was old Silas Darke."

"Old Silas Darke?" repeated Dixon, looking puzzled.

"Yes, the money-lender. Don't you remember that stock company the drug clerks got up year before last?"

"Oh, you mean 'The Great Indo-American Chemical Works,' eh?" Sam laughed amusedly. "That was a crazy scheme of Bill Torrance's, the head prescription man over at Meikeljohn & Co.'s. He thought if about ten of us would club in together to manufacture various prescriptions we had worked out, there would be all kinds of money in it. So he organized us into a company and had it regularly incorporated under the laws of West Virginia. I remember I got fifteen thousand dollars' worth of stock for a five-dollar bill and the recipe for a calisaya compound I had doped out."

"But the concern busted, eh?"

"Sure, it busted. Torrance boomed it along for a time, and really managed to do considerable on credit in the way of preliminary advertising and all that kind of thing. But there was no actual money back of the shebang, don't you understand? And presently when the bills fell due, and the creditors began coming down on us like a thousand of brick, 'The Great Indo-American Chemical Works' collapsed."

"Ah, that was the point I was trying to get at. Now, do you know, that at the time of the failure all the claims against the company were bought in by old Silas Darke at auction? He makes a specialty of doing that sort of thing, I believe, in the hope that somehow or other he may find a way to realize."

"Well, he got richly fooled that time." Sam laughed again. "As I told you, there was never more than fifty dollars in the treasury at any time, and the other assets wouldn't even make wadding for a shotgun.

"Yes, indeed," he scoffed, "a healthy time old Darke or anybody else will have trying to realize on those claims."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Perkins gravely. "At any rate, I know Darke is going to try a shot at it; for I overheard him telling Mackinnon so this afternoon. He said he had read those articles in the papers about you, and he came around to find out if they were true.

"I overheard them, as I say," Perkins went on; "and, of course, as soon as I dropped on to what they were talking about, I rubbered for fair. I wanted to be able to put you wise, if there was any trouble brewing."

"That was certainly mighty friendly of you, Perkins, and I'm a thousand times obliged. But, as you say, I don't see where this Darke party cuts any especial ice. I was no more concerned with Torrance's fool scheme than any of the others."

"No; but you've got money, and they haven't. That makes all the difference in the world. This is a West Virginia company, and under their laws, so Darke told Mackinnon, any stockholder is liable for the debts of the concern up to double the amount of his stock. He says you held fifteen thousand dollars' worth of stock, and if you now have thirty thousand dollars in money, he is going after it. As I understand, he intends to commence suit against you in the morning."

There was no question about Sam's being interested now. In a flash of consternation, he saw all his newly acquired riches slipping away from him.

"Great Jehosaphat!" he exclaimed, sitting up wide-eyed on the side of the couch. "What am I going to do?"

CHAPTER IV.

SHORN BY HIS OWN HAND.

PERKINS could not restrain a smile of gloating triumph at the sight of the other's dismay.

He hastily hid it, however, behind his hand, and when he spoke, his tone was as sympathetic as one could possibly have asked.

"It's certainly tough lines, old man," he said, "to have a thing of this kind that you think is dead, and buried, and done with, bob up all of a sudden to slap you in the face. But certainly something can be done. There's always a way to get around these affairs, if one only starts about it in time. Why don't you see a lawyer?"

"That's so." A ray of hope illumined

Sam's downcast visage. "Funny I didn't think of it myself. I'll go right down and see the firm that's had charge of my property."

Then he suddenly realized that it was well along in the evening, and the law-office long since closed.

"What am I talking about, though?" He jerked out a new gold watch, one of his recent purchases, and held up the face to his companion's inspection. "After ten o'clock. No chance of getting hold of them to-night. I'll have to wait until morning."

"And by morning," commented Perkins, "old Darke will have filed suit against you, and it may be too late."

In the guise of friendly interest and a desire to help, he thus kept piling on the gloom, until he had reduced poor Sam to the verge of panic.

Then, as if with a sudden recollection, he made a suggestion.

"By Jove," he exclaimed, "why didn't I think of that before?"

Struck by the tone, Dixon ceased his lamentations and glanced up.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Why, that Henry Decker, an old schoolmate of mine, and one of the squarest, shrewdest lawyers at the bar, lives only a couple of blocks from here. Of course, I hesitate recommending anybody you don't know for so important a matter as this; but since you can't get hold of your own attorneys, and are in such a desperate fix, I should certainly advise you to consult Henry. He's made a tremendous success in his profession, and you can take it from me that whatever he tells you will be absolutely straight goods."

If he had expected Sam to offer any objections, he was destined to be relieved.

The latter, regarding it as a case of almost any port in a storm, could not get to Henry Decker's fast enough; and bundling himself into his coat, he rushed his companion along at such breathless speed that they were before the lawyer's door almost sooner than it takes to tell it.

Possibly, had the legatee of the thirty thousand dollars been in a less distraught and agitated state, he might have considered it strange that one of the leaders of the New York bar should live in a dingy back room on the third floor of a shabby boarding-house, and likewise that his personal appearance should match his environment.

Henry Decker's trousers were shiny on knees and seat, and fringed at the bottom. His linen was frayed and far from immaculate. His hair was greasy and unkempt, his finger-nails in mourning, and his chin bristly with a two-days' stubble.

Furthermore, neither his manner, which was oily and fawning, nor his countenance, which was cunning and crafty, was such as to inspire confidence, while to top off the picture, he exhaled a pervasive odor of beer and onions which induced the reasonable surmise that he had dined at a free-lunch counter.

Sam, however, was not in critical mood. What he wanted was some one who would save his fortune from the menacing clutches of old Silas Darke, and since he was not inclined to question too closely the methods to accomplish this, perhaps he was just as well pleased to find his attorney of a rather palpably unscrupulous type.

At any rate, he showed no hesitancy in seeking the fellow's counsel, but sitting down, described in detail the plight in which he found himself, and asked to be advised what he should do.

"Hum!" The "shyster" lawyer looked grave and reflectively scratched his ear with the tip of his pen. "I will not attempt to conceal from you that you are in a very serious situation. There can be no doubt from what you tell me that you are legally responsible for the debts of this defunct stock company up to the full amount of your inheritance.

"Neither can there be any doubt, if the claims reach such amount—which with interest and costs of collection they probably do—and if Darke chooses to press for payment—which from his announced intentions he apparently does—that, since your assets, being in course of probate, are unable to be concealed, he can strip you bare, take away every penny of which you stand possessed."

He paused impressively, as though to let this terrifying representation sink in; then went on.

"Now," he said, "I am a lawyer, and supposed as such to uphold the regular and orderly processes of the law; but I have been long enough in practise to realize that many a court proceeding, although carried out on strictly legal lines, may be the means of working a grave injustice, and this seems to me most emphatically such an instance.

"So, because I am convinced of this,

and also because you have been introduced to me by my dear old friend Perkins, I am going to try to help you out.

"I do this in spite of the fact," he carefully explained, "that ordinarily I shun as I would the plague anything which by even the narrowest margin might be termed an evasion of the law.

"Now, listen." His face unconsciously pinched up into an expression of wily duplicity. "If Darke files this threatened suit against you, and a summons is served while the property still stands in your name, nothing can save you from making full payment; for, with judgment entered against you, he can drag you into supplementary proceedings and force you to disclose every penny you own, and also what disposition you may have made of any of your property since the time of commencement of suit.

"Manifestly your only resource, therefore, is to get the property out of your hands before any papers are served on you. Then you can face undisturbed any judgment he may obtain; and in supplementary proceedings, since they are not allowed to question any of your transactions prior to the commencement of suit, you can swear with a clear conscience that you have no property subject to levy, nor have disposed of any in order to defraud your creditor.

"That, sir," he concluded, "is the only method I know whereby you will be able to checkmate your adversary; and since, as you say, he is liable to commence action in the morning, I would suggest that the thing be done at once. The usual person to whom such transfers are made is naturally one's wife; but you, as I understand, Mr. Dixon, are not yet married?"

"No." Sam shook his head.

"Ah, only a deferred happiness then, I am sure. A fine-looking, manly young fellow like you is certain to have a lovely and charming little wife before very long. However, as I have already pointed out, what we require is some one to take over this property to-night. Perhaps there is a brother or sister who would serve the purpose."

"No, I am an only child, and none of my people live in New York anyhow. Since Cousin Lydia died the other day, I have not a relative anywhere nearer than St. Louis."

Unobserved by Sam, the lawyer cast a quick, significant glance across the room toward Perkins. The crucial point of the game had been reached.

"Ah," he commented, pursing up his lips, "it comes then, perforce, to a choice of some friend or acquaintance. Is there anybody in that category you feel you can trust, and who at the same time would be willing to accept such a burden of responsibility?"

Dixon gazed around, and rather hopelessly scratched his head. Acquaintances he had a plenty—friends, in the sense that much-abused word is generally employed—but who among them would he care to have the handling and control of his money? Most of them were like himself—reckless, irresponsible, unanchored.

Then his roving glance fell upon Perkins, and instantly his face cleared. The very man! Careful, temperate, saving, generally considered a "tight-wad."

Hurriedly he announced his decision.

"Oh, not me," deprecated Perkins, seemingly overwhelmed. "Choose somebody else."

But Sam insisted that he must accept, and the lawyer, too, added his urgings, declaring that a better selection could not have been made; so Perkins was finally persuaded.

Fifteen minutes later Sam returned to his boarding-house, freed—though only *pro tempore*, as he fondly believed—from the carking cares of ownership. Legally, he owned nothing more than what he had on his back; and Perkins was the possessor of Cousin Lydia's thirty thousand dollars.

CHAPTER V.

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

For two or three days Sam lived in his fool's paradise, chuckling gleefully whenever he looked at the summons which had been served upon him as promised in the suit begun by Darke.

He would pay no attention to it, he told himself. Let the old sharp go ahead, and get a judgment, if he wanted to. Sam's turn to show his hand would come when Darke tried to collect.

Still, he was not entirely an imbecile, and from time to time uneasy qualms would come, as he recalled the unprepossessing aspect of Henry Decker and his surroundings, or reflected on how little hold he had upon Perkins, if the latter should prove undeserving of his trust.

In order, therefore, to silence these misgivings and divert his mind, he plunged into a round of gaieties, going to the theater every night, dining out at expensive restaurants, and hiring automobiles for long trips out into the country.

Under the strain of these disbursements, what was left of his five hundred dollars rapidly disappeared, and finally one morning, as he rather ruefully counted over what he had in his pockets, he decided that he must make another draw upon his lawyers, and that, too, without delay.

Accordingly, he betook himself to their office, and as before was ushered into the presence of the junior partner.

But this time the atmosphere of warm cordiality which had characterized his former visit was lacking. Instead, there was a chilliness which could be actively felt; and when he rather haltingly proffered his request for some more money, the junior partner became almost indignant.

"Will you tell me what possible claim you have on us, Mr. Dixon," he demanded, "when you have disposed of all right, title, or interest in your cousin's estate?"

"Oh, but I haven't," Sam eagerly explained. "That sale I made is only a bluff. I thought Perkins would explain that to you when he came down with the papers."

"The sale only a bluff?" repeated the junior partner. "What do you mean?"

"Why, that it was only done as a subterfuge, a ruse to protect me from having to pay an unjust claim. When the clouds roll by, I shall have the property back again in my own hands, all right."

Then he related in detail the character of the stratagem to which he had lent himself.

The lawyer listened carefully, his face growing graver and graver as the story proceeded.

When Sam had finished he touched a button, and asked that one of the clerks in the outer office be sent in.

"Hardwick," he questioned the man on his appearance, "what was the name of that attorney who was up for disbarment in connection with the Throckmorton will case?"

"Henry Decker, sir, and he only escaped disbarment by the skin of his teeth. He ought to have got it, as a matter of fact, not only then, but a dozen times before; for there isn't a more disreputable rogue in the profession. He'd rather be mixed up in something shady than not."

"H-m," was the junior partner's only comment. "I thought it must be the same man."

He turned to Sam, who was looking rather white-faced and faint as a result of the report he had just heard.

"Now," said the junior partner, "tell me what you know about this friend of yours, the drug clerk Perkins, to whom you so blithely signed away your rights."

"Oh, Perkins is all right, I am sure." Dixon spoke almost defiantly in the effort to bolster up his own sagging faith. "The other fellow may be a crook and a scoundrel; but if so Perkins has been as much deceived in him as I was. Yes, indeed, I'll back Perk to the limit for being true blue, and he's a friend worth having, too. Why, it was he that tipped me off as to what old Darke had up his sleeve."

"Then I suppose since he's such a good friend of yours, and was, as you say, merely acting as a sort of agent for you in this matter, that it was with your knowledge and sanction he retransferred the property?"

"Eh?" Dixon bounded from his chair as though a cannon firecracker had been let off under him. "He did what?"

"Retransferred your property. Sold his interest to one Joseph Snedecor for a stated consideration of twenty thousand dollars. The papers were filed with us yesterday."

"But what did he want to do that for?" gasped Dixon, utterly bewildered and at sea.

"Well," the attorney explained, "perhaps he realized that so long as he held the property, it wouldn't be hard by proving fraud, and collusion, and conspiracy, which it looks to me might readily be done, to get it away from him.

"But with the money in his pocket, he could afford to snap his fingers at anything you might try to do; for the sale to an innocent third party would stand, and you'd have a job and a half to make him disgorge any of the purchase price.

"In short, young man," the lawyer went on sternly, "I think you have fallen in with a precious pack of scoundrels, and have got yourself most beautifully fleeced.

"And now," he ruminated, "so far as I can see it, you are between the devil and the deep sea. To prove conspiracy and fraud against Perkins and Decker, which you might possibly do and get your prop-

erty back, simply means that old Darke would come in and gobble it up; while there can scarcely be a doubt that in keeping it out of Darke's clutches Perkins and Decker are grabbing it for themselves. You are the loser in any case."

"But is there nothing I can do?" demanded Sam desperately.

The junior partner shrugged his shoulders. "Nothing that I can see, unless you eliminate one or the other of the factors from the problem. If old man Darke would only obligingly die, that would settle the whole manner in a jiffy."

"How?"

"Why, that would end the suit against you, and before his heirs or executors had got around to filing another, we would have put the blocks to Perkins and Decker, frightened them into making a settlement, and have turned over the property to a responsible trustee, so as to safeguard you against levy or judgment."

"Oh, I see."

"But I'm afraid there's no such good fortune in store for you as the old man passing in his checks. His kind never die.

"Still, I should say," he added thoughtfully, "that your best hold in this matter was to get rid of Darke."

"Get rid of Darke?" Sam started. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, I mean that he is at present your chief stumbling-block. With him out of the way, the handling of the two rascals would be, to my mind, an easy matter. Therefore, you've got to scheme out some way to get him off the track.

"I'll tell you," he counseled, "if I were you, I'd go to him myself, tell him the straight story just as it happened, and explain to him how he is standing in the way of your recovering your money. Then make a proposition to him. Tell him, if he'll withdraw this suit and stand aside, you'll agree to give up half your legacy to him as a compromise.

"Possibly he may refuse; but I don't think he will. He ought to see that it's just as true for him as for you that half a loaf is better than no bread at all."

"Yes, I think he will see that," agreed Sam; "but if he don't, I shall scheme out some other plan. For I realize very forcibly that the only show I have to win out is to get Darke out of the way.

"Yes," he repeated, and the lawyer later remembered the peculiar, set expression on his face, "one way or another, I have got to get Darke out of the way."

He started to leave then, but the junior partner halted him just as he was going out at the door.

"Oh, by the way," he called, "if you decide to go around and see the old fellow, it might be wise for you to take along a bottle of wine. They say a present of that sort is always a sure way to his heart, and that under the influence of a couple of glasses he will mellow and soften and agree to almost anything.

"Mind you," the lawyer laughed, "I don't guarantee results; but I give you the tip for what it is worth, and as I say, it might be well for you to act on it."

"Thanks," said Sam quietly. "I shall certainly follow your advice."

Then he went out, and the junior partner, having a hundred and one things to attend to, speedily forgot all about him, and the sad mess he had got himself into.

Nor did the busy lawyer even so much as give a thought to Sam's affair again until the following morning, when it was rather startlingly recalled to him on the way to the office by a head-line in his newspaper.

"Eccentric's sudden end," he read. "Silas Darke, a well-known character of the business world, found dead in his office. Was it suicide or murder? A half-emptied wine-glass at his elbow contained poison, and in a bottle on the table was enough cyanid to kill a regiment."

The junior partner crushed the paper together with a gasp.

"The bottle of wine I told him about!" he muttered. "And he a drug clerk with an accurate knowledge of poisons!" mentally piecing together the shreds of evidence.

Then he recalled the set expression on Sam's face the day before when he had declared:

"One way or another, I have got to get Darke out of the way!"

"I wonder," said the junior partner to himself. "I wonder if there can possibly be any other answer?"

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE POISON CLOSET.

RETURNING now to Sam Dixon, let us follow his movements on that eventful day.

As he left the law-office he had a peculiar feeling that the world had somehow come to pieces, and that the fragments were flying all about his ears.

It was the same sensation experienced by the boxer of the prize-ring when some inopportune left hook to the point of the jaw has stretched him dazed and helpless on the floor to take the count—a knockout.

And a knockout, indeed, that interview with the junior partner had proven to Sam.

Instead of being independent, able to gratify, as he had believed, all the tastes and longings which he had cherished for years without hope of ever seeing them realized, he was penniless, up against it in every sense of the word.

In the twinkling of an eye, so to speak, his riches had taken unto themselves wings, and now he was in even worse plight than before the news of Cousin Lydia's bequest had reached him; for, in addition to his other calamities, he was without a job, and it was hardly likely, in view of his show of effrontery, that Mackinnon would take him back, or even as much as give him a reference.

Yet he had to find something to do. The five hundred dollars advance money he had received was all gone, and, looking at his prospects in even the most sanguine light, considerable time would have to elapse for negotiations and dickering—a month or six weeks at the least—before he could hope to recover any of his stolen inheritance.

And then, so the lawyer had told him, the best he could possibly look for was half of the original amount—fifteen thousand dollars instead of thirty thousand dollars. How he would have to clip, and pare, and shrink all his plans to fit the decrease in his funds!

Yes; Sam's world—that world of pleasure, and travel, and freedom from care on which he had dwelt in imagination—had gone to pieces with a vengeance; and the shock had left his brain stunned and bewildered.

Yet he gave no evidence of this in his outward bearing. There was no wild stare to his eyes, no nervous twitching of the muscles to betray his condition.

There was nothing to cause any one to stop or look twice at him as he passed. His movements were apparently under perfect control.

Taking the elevator from the lawyer's offices on the eighth floor of the tall, downtown sky-scraper, he stepped in quiet, matter-of-fact fashion out to the sidewalk, and dismissed his taxicab.

There would be no more buzzing around town for him in that sort of vehicle for many a long day to come.

When he had finished paying the amount registered on the clock, together with the waiting charge, he found that he had but five dollars and forty-five cents left.

The five dollars he had use for, according to a plan of campaign which had begun to shape itself in his mind, and he tucked it carefully away in his vest-pocket.

This reduced his available working capital to forty-five cents, and when he had walked over to the nearest Subway station, and paid an up-town fare, the total was, of course, still further decreased.

Speeding along through the tube, he still maintained that impassive outward calm which rendered him inconspicuous in the crowds; but within, his brain was seething—on fire.

Over and over again the words of the junior partner kept repeating themselves in his ears:

"The only show for you is to get old man Darke out of the way!"

Yes, that was what he had to do, and he believed that he could accomplish it, too; for the fever under which he was laboring seemed to concentrate all his energies in the one direction, and he was thinking rapidly, clearly, and to the point.

He had, as already said, mapped out a pretty well-defined plan of operations; but he realized that to carry it through, and win the old man to his purpose, he would require all the powers of persuasion and eloquence at his command.

There was a hitch. In his present condition, he felt that he was physically unequal to the effort.

He could think and plan well enough. He could maintain an appearance of self-control, so long as he continued silent. But, if he tried to talk or argue, he knew that his overstrained nerves would snap like a keyed-up fiddle-string. He would probably scream out in the face of the man he was trying to convince.

He knew what would help the matter, though. A composing drug, a strong sedative of some kind. That would give him a grasp upon himself, and enable him to go through with the ordeal.

Yes, he decided, he would take something to steady his nerves; for, despite his horror of using "dope" of any kind, and dangerous though he knew such addiction to be, he felt that this was a situation which demanded even the most desperate measures.

He was aware, too, where he could get the stuff he required without any difficulty. In fact, he would be killing two birds with one stone, for he was already bound for the place he had in mind upon another mission.

Accordingly he left his train at a station above Twenty-Third Street, and proceeding a block or two on foot, entered a dingy, dusty, little, old-fashioned drug-store down in a basement on one of the side streets.

The proprietor, gray-whiskered and bespectacled, and looking almost as antiquated and out-of-date as his establishment, came out from behind the shabby prescription desk to meet him with a gruff but friendly welcome.

"Hallo, *m'sieu!*" said Sam; for he had known the queer old Frenchman a long time, and once had been able to do him a rather significant business favor. "I called to see if you had any of that wonderful old port wine left you were telling me about one day."

"*Vraiment!*" The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders. "But you are joost in time, *mon brave.* Eet ees now but two bottles that I have left, an' one I sell to nobody. I keep heem to celebrate my next birthday.

"Ze ozzer, though—" he bowed and spread out his hands—"ees yours to command, eef you so wish it."

"Let's see," queried Dixon, "the price is five dollars a bottle, if I remember right?"

"Five dollairs to you, *m'sieu,*" corrected the old man. "To ze ordinair' customer, I would not part with it for a sou under ten."

Sam, as he thought of that lone five-dollar bill reposing in his vest-pocket, and also of how much depended on gaining the good graces of old Silas Darke, reflected that he was fortunate.

Fishing out the crumpled note, he hurriedly thrust it into the druggist's hand, fearful lest when it came to an actual sale, the old fellow might repent of his generosity.

But the Frenchman stood by his bargain.

"Ver' well, *m'sieu,*" he nodded; "but you will have to wait two, three minutes, till I go down cellar and get eet."

"All right," Sam assented. "I'll 'tend store to fill in the time, and if you don't mind, I'll help myself to something I want while you're gone."

The old Frenchman shuffled off, but when he got to the cellar found that he had forgotten a candle, so came back after it; and as his grizzled head rose unexpectedly through the hatch, he saw Dixon with an almost guilty start turn quickly away from the shelves.

"*Sacré bleu!*" commented the druggist softly through his teeth. "I wonder now v'at he was doing at my poison closet?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE OGRE OF WALL STREET.

THE old Frenchman in his suave, diplomatic way, managed without offense to ask Sam what he had been up to; but failed to get a satisfactory answer.

Truth to tell, the younger man hated to confess the sort of stuff to which he had helped himself, for fear the other might believe him a "dope fiend"; so he flushed, and stammered, and finally at his wits' ends to evade a reply, grabbed the cobwebby bottle of port from the old fellow's hands, and fairly dashed out of the store.

The druggist, shuffling out to the door, stood gazing after his departing customer with a troubled frown between his eyes.

"He was at ze poison closet, and he does not wish to tell me v'at he took," he muttered into his beard. "Zat looks bad. Does he plan, zen, to keel heemself or some ozzer?"

He considered a moment longer; then gave a characteristically Gallic shrug.

"*Voilà!*" as he turned back into the shop. "Eet ees not my fault, howevair eet turn out. I do not sell ze stuff to heem. He take it heemself when my back ees turn'. I tell my friend, ze police captain, of ze circumstance; zen my skirts are clear.

"But"—he shook his head—"I wish he had not come to me. Now, I take no comfort all ze rest of ze day."

Meanwhile, Sam, quite unconscious of the sinister suspicions he had aroused in the old fellow's breast, was hurrying back to the Subway station, intent only on catching a train down-town and obtaining his interview with Silas Darke as speedily as possible.

On the way, though, he slipped into his

mouth one of the tablets he had abstracted from the jar at the drug-store; and, as he had expected, found by the time he reached his destination that it had produced a wonderfully quieting and tranquilizing effect upon his nerves.

He walked into the presence of the wily old financier as clear-headed, cool, and composed as he had ever been in his life.

"Humph!" Darke did not so much as glance up from his desk, piled high with papers. "What do you want to see me about, young man?"

Sam caught a cue that it would not be to his advantage to beat about the bush or go into long-winded explanations.

"I want to see you in regard to that lawsuit you've brought against me," came back his answer, sharp and direct.

"Well, what about the suit?" growled Darke. "Only in telling me, don't forget to keep your eye on that sign yonder." He jerked his head toward a "Be brief" placard hanging on the wall.

"I'll not forget," smiled Sam. "In fact, I can state my whole errand in seven words. I want you to drop the thing."

The money-lender, as though he had not heard, picked up a document from his desk, and read it through.

"What consideration?" he snapped at length.

"No consideration."

Darke finally deigned to honor his visitor with a survey. Wheeling about in his chair at his response, he studied the young man intently from under his heavy eyebrows.

"I was just calculating whether or not to kick you out of the office," he vouchsafed grimly. "Ordinarily, the chap who would come in and make a break like that to as busy a man as I am, is some fresh whelp who has nothing to back him up but his impudence. You look, however, as though you had some brains along with your nerve; so, I'll take a chance on you for a minute or two, anyway.

"Only don't forget," he added, stretching out a heavily-shod foot, "that this is still in working order, and if you don't make good, it'll very promptly come into play."

"All right, Mr. Darke," agreed Sam; "if I don't at least interest you with my argument, I'll stand for the kicking.

"But, first," seizing his opportunity, "before we get down to business, let me ask your judgment on this port? It was especially imported by an old friend of mine, and knowing you to be a connoisseur, I decided to bring it along and find out what you thought of it."

"H-m!" Darke glanced disparagingly at the label. "Most of these so-called 'rare vintage' wines are humbug—mere doctored stuff."

However, he drew the cork, and pouring out a few drops into a glass, sipped at it critically.

Then a delighted expression spread over his face, and he hastened to pour out a more generous bumper.

"Why, my boy," he cried enthusiastically, "this is simply delicious. I shall insist on your telling me where you got it."

Another glass followed the first; and as the junior partner had predicted, the old fellow's gruffness mellowed surprisingly under the influence of his favorite beverage.

He began asking Sam personal questions in regard to himself, and presently, in the course of their conversation, it turned out—what may seem a wonderful coincidence, but really isn't, when one considers the frequency with which we remark, "How small the world is, after all!"—that Darke had at one time lived in the little village from which the other came, and that he had actually been a boyhood playmate of Sam's father.

"And so you are Jim Dixon's son?" The old man beamed. "Well, well, I might have known it; for you are the very spit of him, as I remember him, only grown a little older.

"And you seem to take after him in other respects, too." He chuckled meaningly. "Jim was always one of those unlucky chaps, forever in hot water of some kind."

"Yes," admitted Sam feelingly; "as you say, it seems to run in the family."

Darke took another swallow of the wine, and leaned over to tap the young fellow on the knee with his knotted forefinger.

"Here, here!" he adjured him. "You don't want to go getting down in the mouth. Perhaps this mess you've fallen into can be straightened out without so very much difficulty after all. Go ahead and give me the facts, boy! Let's find out just where we stand."

Accordingly, Sam once more rehearsed the sorry story, omitting nothing, although more than once he found it galling to his pride to narrate some of his folly with those shrewd old eyes bent on him.

Darke made no comment of any kind until the tale was finished; then he simply remarked:

"Well, you've had your lesson, I guess. Doubtless you'll never let yourself be made such a fool of again."

He fell silent once more for a space, his lips pursed up as though considering.

"So your lawyer told you," he asked at length, "that if you could get this suit of mine out of the way, you would probably have no difficulty in making these confidence men disgorge the legacy they have euchred you out of?"

"Yes, sir; and he told me to offer you a compromise of fifteen thousand dollars."

Darke rose heavily from his chair, and walking over to his safe, came back with a little packet of papers.

"There," he said, flinging the bunch down on the table, "are all the assets and evidences of indebtedness against the 'Great Indo-American Chemical Works.' There is no need to talk of a compromise, my boy. I make them over absolutely to you, and I shall give instructions to have the suit against you dropped to-morrow."

A bottle of old port wine, and a little judicious "jollying" had been all that was necessary to tame the "Ogre of Wall Street."

CHAPTER VIII.

A FRIENDLY TURN.

SAM at first could only gasp his astonishment and relief.

"I—I—" He attempted to stammer some sort of thanks; but Darke stayed him with a gesture.

"It's no particular goodness of heart on my part," he disclaimed. "It's only squaring up with myself, in a way, for having allowed a cheap trickster to rope me in, and use me for a catspaw.

"I, my boy," he confessed in a tone of deep disgust, "fell for Perkins just about as hard as you did."

"You fell for Perkins?" Dixon stared at him. "He bamboozled you, too?"

"Yes, indeed; although he didn't get any money out of me. He used me though exactly as he wanted to; and I didn't have sense enough to see through his little game.

"Perkins told you, didn't he," he proceeded to explain, "that he had overheard me making inquiries about you and your legacy, as a result of having read about the affair in the newspapers?"

"Yes."

"Well, he lied."

"Lied?"

"Yes; he lied straight out from the shoulder. Instead of me making inquiries, it was he who brought the information to me. I had never read the articles in the newspapers, or, if I did, they had made no impression on me.

"No, it was this way," the old man went on. "Perkins had learned in some way that I was the owner of all the unpaid claims against the 'Indo-American Chemical Works,' and he must have remembered that you had been a stockholder in the busted concern; for he came to me, and asked me if it would not be possible to collect those claims off you?

"I told him that it would be possible, provided you had any money; and he answered then:

"'Oh, he has money, all right! He has just fallen heir to a legacy of thirty thousand dollars."

"They say down here in Wall Street that I am a hard man, Dixon," he observed, "and maybe I am; but I tell you, that proposition went a little against my grain.

"'Look here,' I said to Perkins, 'those claims cost me a mere song, and I guess I can afford to lose it, if I never collect a cent on them. Anyhow, I'll be dashed if I am going to take this money away from an ambitious young fellow who is probably planning to go into business on it.'

"'Oh, you needn't have any sentimental scruples of that sort,' he sneered. 'Dixon is simply blowing in the money as fast as he can, and you might just as well have it as the touts and gamblers who are hanging on to him like so many leeches.'

"Well, when I heard that, I began to figure the same way; and I told him, I guessed I'd bring the suit.

"I supposed, of course, that he'd tipped me off to get a piece of money for himself, and accordingly asked him what he thought would be fair?

"I remember now that he grinned in a very peculiar way.

"'Oh I'll leave that to you,' he said. 'I'll be perfectly satisfied with whatever you see fit to give me after you've collected your money.' And he repeated over in a sort of significant way: 'After you've collected your money!'

"Just think of me not dropping to his game then and there!" He shook his head wonderingly at his own obtuseness. "I must be getting fat-witted in my old age; for, of course, he was simply laughing at me, knowing that I would never collect a cent.

"All he wanted me to do was to play bogy man, and frighten you into handing over your property to him; and I played right into his hand as easy as if I was some green 'come-on' crossing the North River for the first time in his life.

"No, my boy," he concluded, "it'll not be hard to prove fraud and conspiracy against this Perkins person. All you will need will be my testimony, and I'll give it with pleasure, even though it does show me up—

"But, say!" He interrupted himself to rise and grab Sam by the arm as the latter made a sudden flying leap toward the door. "What's the matter with you, and where are you off to in such a hurry?"

"I'm going after that confounded thief!" panted Dixon. "And what I'll do to him, when I get him, will be a plenty. Let me go, I tell you!"

He struggled and fought in the firm grasp of his captor, but to no avail. The powerful old man held him in restraint with ease, and finally forced him into a chair.

"Now, sit there," he said sternly. "You're in no condition to have any argument with this man at present, or even to see him. The chances are that you'd lose your head first dash out of the box, and start to murder him, and then you'd be in a worse fix than ever. Why, you had a glare in your eyes just now like a maniac's; it fairly frightened me."

"I know," Sam admitted, calming down under the other's strenuous exhortation. "My nerves are all gone to pieces to-day, what with one thing happening on top of another, and the least little thing seems able to send me up in the air.

"As you say," he went on, "I should probably have tried to kill Perkins, if I had met him just now. Thinking of all that he had done to me, and hearing your story of his treachery, I suddenly began to see red, and was overwhelmed with the one desire to get my hands at his throat.

"But"—he drew one of the old Frenchman's tablets from his pocket and slipped it into his mouth—"you need have no fear for me. I have the means here to control myself and keep my rickety nerves from running away with me."

"What is it?" asked Darke, observing the almost immediate effect produced on the young fellow by the medicine.

The excited flush had already passed from Sam's face, the restless gleam from his eye; the rigidity of his muscles relaxed; he was normal and at ease in every respect.

"What is the stuff?" repeated Darke.

"Oh, a rather powerful sedative. I don't like to fool with it, for it has an insidious way of getting a hold on a fellow, and besides, it is believed to have a cumulative toxic effect on the system. But to meet a condition such as I have been in to-day, there is nothing else which quite so thoroughly fills the bill."

"Why, wouldn't it be a good thing for me, I wonder?" speculated the old financier. "I am subject to rages which fairly tear me to pieces, and then, too, I suffer terribly from insomnia, which nothing seems to relieve. Tell me, what is the name of the stuff?"

But Dixon resolutely shook his head.

"No," he said. "I wouldn't risk recommending this to any one."

"At any rate, give me just one tablet," begged Darke. "I have scarcely closed my eyes for two nights now, and I would give almost anything just to sit here in my chair and sleep this afternoon."

Sam, however, still demurred.

"Pardon me, Mr. Darke, but I don't dare take the chance. You might carry that tablet to a druggist, and find out what it is, and then the jig would be up.

"I'll tell you what I will do, though," he relented. "If you're really so in need of a nap this afternoon, I'll dissolve one of the tablets in a glass of wine, and leave that for you. I'll guarantee you it will do the work."

He suited his action to his word, and then, after a little further conversation, bade the man who had so befriended him good-by, and went out.

The last he ever saw of Silas Darke was sitting there in his office, the glass of ruddy port at his elbow.

CHAPTER IX.

WO FOLLOWS WO.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when Sam left Darke's office. An

aching void down about the waist-line also recalled to him the fact that it was past lunch-time.

He therefore decided before proceeding up-town to remedy the deficiency in the interior department.

True, his exchequer did not permit of any such sybarite repasts as those in which he had recently been indulging. To be exact, his capital had now dwindled to thirty-five cents. But he was hungry enough not to be over-choice in the matter of provender; so he turned his steps unhesitatingly toward the nearest pie-and-milk foundry.

There was no particular hurry about getting up-town, he felt; for the game was now unquestionably in his own hands.

With Darke to back him up, all he had to do was to let the perfidious Perkins know that all his fraudulent plotting was discovered, and the latter would wilt like an unstarched collar.

Rather than face a criminal prosecution, he and his accomplice, Decker, would be only too willing to make restitution of their plunder.

In fact, Dixon felt jubilantly certain that his diverted legacy would be back in his own hands by the next day, if not sooner. Practically, all that would be necessary would be a curt order to Perkins to stand and deliver.

Accordingly, he took things in a leisurely fashion, eating his pie and milk with a relish which somehow his meals at the swell restaurants had failed to impart, and finding both so good that he ordered a second helping.

At last, though, he turned his steps up-town, and in due course of time—probably a little after five o'clock—arrived at his destination.

He halted a moment in the doorway of the drug-store, between the tall red and green bottles which, with the reflection of the setting sun, glowed like harbor-lights in the windows on either side, and surveyed the interior.

Mackinnon, he could see, talking to a drummer in the back of the store. Barlow was at the perfumery counter, and the new clerk who had taken his own place was chatting with the boy at the soda fountain; but there was no trace of Perkins.

Probably the fellow had gone out on an errand, and he would have to await his return.

He stepped inside with a frown of impatience and accosted the cashier.

"How long do you expect it will be, Miss Carley, before Perkins gets back?"

"Before Perkins gets back?" She stared at him. "How should I know?"

"Why, didn't he give some idea of how long he would be gone?"

"Nothing very definite," she replied. "He told me he might stay two years, or five, or maybe for good. It all depended on how he liked it."

Now it was Dixon's turn to goggle and gape uncomprehendingly.

"Two years, or five, or maybe forever?" he stammered.

"Yes, that is what he said before he sailed."

"Sailed?"

Dixon's tone was too obviously bewildered to escape her attention any longer.

"Oh, I guess you don't understand," she said. "Hadn't you heard that Mr. Perkins was offered a position in South Africa, and has gone away to take it."

Sam staggered back from the window of her little cage, holding his head between his hands.

This was the worst and most crushing blow he had yet received. In the very moment of certain assurance of its recovery, that will-o'-the-wisp fortune had again danced out of his hands.

And yet, he told himself, it was just what he might have expected. He should have foreseen this move on the part of his adversaries and prevented it; for what more natural course could have suggested itself to them?

The legacy duly disposed of, and the proceeds in their pockets, was it not a cinch that both Perkins and Decker would skip as speedily as possible? Indeed, what possible incentive was there for them to remain and face the risk of prosecution, and being forced to surrender their ill-gotten gains?

No; they had done the obvious, and, according to their lights, the only sensible thing.

And now what was Dixon to do?

As his lawyer had warned him, the sale to Joseph Snedecor, as an innocent third party, would probably stand.

His only recourse had been to get hold of the rascally conspirators, and force them to disgorge, and they were now beyond his reach.

Of course his immediate impulse was to follow them; but even as the thought occurred, he recognized the futility of it, and shook his head.

Perkins had said he was going to South Africa, and for that very reason was probably bound in quite a contrary direction.

At the present moment he might be heading for Japan, China, South America, or almost any other spot on the earth's surface; and although in these days of wireless communication criminals find it less easy than formerly to cover up their tracks, still this was a pretty wide search to undertake without even so much as the vestige of a clue.

Besides, following a trail of that kind requires money, and plenty of it, and Dixon's funds were now reduced to a single, forlorn ten-cent piece.

Dazed and sick at heart, too completely overwhelmed to attempt to hide his misery from the gloating eyes of Mackinnon, he slouched out of the store, and stood huddled against the railing in front, vainly trying to discern some ray of light in the gloom which so thickly encompassed him.

And then a newsboy passed on the run, shouting "Wuxtray!"

Something in the unintelligible jargon the fellow was shrieking caught Sam's attention, and jerking out his lone dime, he called the lad back and purchased a paper.

Then his face went white, and cold panic seized him in its icy grip.

The "extra" contained the news of Silas Darke's death, and gave the intimation that it was probably due to murder.

CHAPTER X.

A BALANCE DUE.

THIS earlier narrative of the tragedy naturally did not contain the more complete details which were published in the morning papers.

If it had, possibly Sam would not have been so badly frightened.

About all that was stated here was that Darke had been found dead in his office, and that a glass of poisoned wine, supposed to have been prepared by an enemy, was undoubtedly the cause of his demise.

The blanks in the bald tale Sam was obliged to fill in for himself, and he did so in a manner that was anything but cheering to his spirits.

For instance, he never doubted but that the "dope" tablet he had dissolved in the wine was the poison referred to, and the direct cause of death.

Perhaps the old gentleman had had an extremely weak heart, or perhaps there had been some baneful chemical reaction between the wine and the drug which increased the latter's intensity.

As to that he could not tell. He only knew that what he considered a harmless dose had brought about a dreadful result.

And how was he ever to explain his part in the matter?

Of course he was innocent, entirely free from wrong intention; but who would ever believe him?

Against his bare, unsupported word would be ranged a crushing array of circumstantial evidence.

It could be easily shown that he had regarded Darke as an enemy—an enemy whose removal or elimination would be distinctly to his own advantage.

Had he not said in the law-office, in the presence of a clerk and stenographer, to say nothing of the junior partner:

"One way or another, I have got to get Silas Darke out of the way!"

Then, too, it was known that he had gone to the money-lender's office in anything but a pacific mood.

And last, but not least, he had at this very moment in his pocket a bunch of papers and documents which almost any one would regard as showing ample motive for the crime.

To secure these papers, it would be said that he had either "doped" Darke and by mistake given an overdose, or else that he had fixed the strength of the poisoned glass with deliberate intention.

The result in either case would be the same. He would be adjudged guilty of premeditated murder—that most despicable form of murder, one actuated by theft.

Every fact was dead against him; for who could possibly credit his own account of the incident?

If he should go on the witness-stand, and say that the "Ogre of Wall Street" had voluntarily given him the "Indo-American claims," and for no other consideration than that of doing a kindly action, he would be greeted with howls of derision.

The cold sweat broke out on Sam's forehead, and he had to clutch at the railing in front of the drug-store for support.

Visions of the electric chair rose grimly to his mind. Already, doubtless, the detectives were searching for him; and at any moment he might be recognized and taken into custody.

The impulse of flight surged up strong within him, and he took a quick step or so up the sidewalk; then with a poignant recollection of his financial condition, reeled back and subsided half fainting against the railing again.

Where could he go, or how hide himself from the hue and cry about to be raised in his pursuit?

Since purchasing the paper, he had only a nickel left in his possession—one lone car fare.

Then, as he stood aghast, and the bitterness of absolute disaster rolled in waves over his soul, he heard the cashier calling his name from within the store.

Dazedly he turned his face in that direction, and seeing that she was beckoning to him, he walked unsteadily toward her.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked in a bantering tone. "Have you gone deaf? I've been shrieking at you for the last two minutes, but couldn't get you to look around.

"You see," she explained, "I just happened to remember that you'd never drawn that seven dollars and a half that is coming to you here. Don't you want it; or do you scorn such paltry amounts now that you are rich?"

Dixon gasped. Strange as it may seem—or perhaps it is not strange, either, with so many things pressing on his attention—he had completely forgotten the small balance of wages due him from the drug-store, and now it seemed to come to him as a gracious gift straight from Heaven.

Want it? Was ever seven dollars and a half more welcome to any man? It meant safety, escape from the bloodhounds of the law, a chance to get away!

He grabbed at the little roll of currency she pushed out toward him as a starving man might grab at bread.

Then, without even a word of thanks or acknowledgment, he jerked his hat down over his eyes, and dashed out of the store.

Down the crowded street he sped, caught a west-bound Twenty-Third Street car, and with no idea of where he was going or what he intended to do, except that he wanted to put New York as far behind him as possible, took the ferry to Jersey City.

On the boat across the river, however, he overheard a woman beside him say to her companion:

"Yes, it is rather an expensive trip. Why, the railroad fare alone to Dabsonburg is seven dollars and twenty-five cents."

Fate had decided Dixon's destination!

When he landed from the ferry-boat, he walked up to the agent's window, and asked for a ticket to Dabsonburg.

CHAPTER XI.

"ONE SHALL BE TAKEN."

SAM acted on an impulse of exaggerated fear; but, as a fact, his departure was not any too soon.

Had he remained in the city another half hour, it would have been practically impossible for him to break out; for by that time, full and accurate descriptions of him were in every station-house, and the police net was closely drawn at all avenues leading out of town.

He was a "wanted man," and from the Battery to uppermost Harlem and the Bronx, an army of plain-clothes men and detectives were eagerly searching for some clue to his whereabouts.

If that fortunate seven dollars and a half had not happened to come his way, the chances were about a thousand to one that he would already have been lodged behind the bars.

The manner in which suspicion came to fall so speedily on him was simple.

One of the first persons to read an account of Darke's death was the police captain of a West Side precinct, and as he noted the incident of the poisoned wine-cup, his mind instantly flashed to the story told him earlier in the day by the old French druggist, and to which at the time he had paid but little attention.

All alert now, however, he at once communicated with the Central Office, and acting on his information, it was speedily demonstrated that here was an important clue.

A difficulty arose, though, over the fact that the Frenchman could not remember Sam's name, nor for a time where he had been employed. But at last, under the probing of the sleuths, he managed to come to the conclusion that Mackinnon's was the place where the young clerk worked; and then, of course, the following of the trail became easy.

A detective lost no time in getting across town, and confirming the old fellow's shaky recollection.

"Oh, yes," said Mackinnon, recognizing the officer's description, "that is Sam Dixon. It is true, as you say, that he did work here, but he quit about a week ago. However, he occasionally drops in on us. In fact, he was in the store only a very short time ago.

"And where is he now?" repeating the officer's question. "How can I tell you.

"But why do you want to know?" he demanded, struck by the urgency in the other's tone.

For answer, the detective merely turned back his lapel, and showed the silver badge of the police department.

"Eh?" Mackinnon stared fascinated at the significant emblem. "What is he wanted for?"

The man from the Central Office lowered his voice.

"For murder," he said impressively.

"For murder! Oh, great Heavens! Well, I always said that boy would come to a bad end.

"Wait a minute," he added. "Perhaps I can find out something that will be of aid to you. I didn't talk to him myself when he was in to-day, but I saw him having quite a chat with Miss Carley, and possibly he may have let fall to her some hint of his intentions."

He bustled off as he spoke; and although he was able to glean no information of direct value, his report certainly did not tend to relieve in any way the burden of suspicion resting on his former employee.

The cashier admitted that Sam had acted very strangely and unlike himself, more as a man half-distracted than in anything like his normal fashion.

She further told of the way he had grabbed at the money she handed out to him, and also of his wild dash from the store.

In short, the man from headquarters had no reason to feel dissatisfied over the results of his investigation; and as in the meanwhile a number of other clues had been successfully worked up, Centre Street reached the conclusion that the poisoner was unquestionably Samuel Dixon, and sent out orders to apprehend him at any cost, just about the time that he himself—a fugitive with wildly beating heart—was boarding the train for Dabsonburg.

The car which he entered was rather crowded, and consequently he had to take a seat with a young, rather spruce-looking fellow who obligingly removed his suit-case from the cushions to make room for him.

Sam bowed his recognition of this courtesy, and then sitting down, huddled himself into the depths of his coat, and pulled his hat over his ears, as though in this way he might be able to avoid recognition.

Oppressed with fears, he sat in a miserable silence, oblivious to all about him, only conscious of the consuming dread that at any moment a stern hand might be laid on his shoulder, and a voice announce in his ear that he was under arrest.

As his train pulled out of the station, however, and rolled on into the night, his first terror gradually subsided, and his tense attitude somewhat relaxed.

Presently, the conductor came around, and as he glanced at the tickets presented by Dixon and his seat companion, remarked carelessly:

"Both going to the same place, eh?"

The young fellow who shared Sam's seat seemed struck by this, and turning about, gave a very comprehensive survey of his neighbor, seemingly especially interested in the badge of a small pharmaceutical club which Dixon wore in his buttonhole.

"So you are bound for Dabsonburg, eh?" he finally ventured.

Sam reflected that a churlish pose would be more apt to arouse comment than if he were to observe the ordinary amenities of travel; so he mustered up a fair excuse for a smile, and nodded in affirmative response.

"Going to work at Dugloss's?" the stranger next inquired; but seeing from the other's blank stare that his surmise was incorrect, added in a tone of relief:

"Oh, I thought maybe you were, seeing that you're in the business. I'm going on there to try to get the job myself, and I was afraid that you might be going to buck me; for, I tell you, I'm pretty anxious to land."

With some show of interest, Sam inquired what Dugloss's might be, and the nature of the post the other was seeking; learning in response that the establishment referred to was a big drug-store with a wide patronage all around Dabsonburg, and that owing to the death of its proprietor, his widow was now seeking a competent manager to carry on the business.

"I've got first-class credentials here in my grip, and I'm hoping to cinch the job all right," added the young fellow; "but one

never can tell, and as you may imagine, I felt a bit leary when I heard where you were going, and caught the flash of that button you wear."

Freed of his apprehensions concerning a rival, the chap proved to be no wise backward in talking about himself. Indeed, he was, if anything, a shade too voluble, but as this relieved Sam from offering any confidences in return, or really doing much more than interject an occasional "yes," or "no," the latter did not seriously object.

His name, so the fellow said, was Saul Dudeny, and he told the story of his life in endless detail almost from the time he had been in the cradle.

He had been left an orphan at an early age, according to his narrative, his father and mother dying from typhoid-fever within a week of each other, and leaving him practically without a relative in the world.

From the time of his 'teens, he proudly averred, he had supported himself, and he seemed thoroughly well satisfied with the success he had achieved.

"If I can just make the riffle at Dugloss's," he harked back to that never-failing topic of interest, "I shall feel that I am fixed for life. There's a big field for a spry young man to work up there at Dabsonburg."

So he rattled on, dilating upon his hopes, and ambitions, and plans, never recking that Destiny had even then drawn his number from her box, and was balancing his account.

He was in the very midst of a sentence, when there came a sudden deafening crash and roar, a sickening sense of earthquake upheaval as he and Sam were both tossed into the air, and then the car was transformed into kindling wood about them.

CHAPTER XII.

A NEW START.

WHEN Sam awoke from a dream of pain and horror which had seemed to last for uncounted centuries, he found himself lying on a clean, white hospital cot, and ascertained upon inquiry that it was two days later.

Naturally, his first anxiety was in regard to how seriously he had been hurt, but the nurse quickly reassured him.

"You have nothing to complain of on that score," she said. "There was a concussion of the brain, but that has now passed away, and outside of the results of shock and a few minor contusions, you are as right as you ever were.

"Oh, yes, indeed"—she smiled—"you will be easily able to leave the hospital by the end of the week, Mr. Dudeny."

Sam started as he heard the name she used, and was about to correct her, when a sudden reflection came to him, and he turned the words upon his lips into a cough.

"How did you find out who I was?" he asked cautiously.

"Oh, from your things. The brakeman identified your suit-case as belonging to you. All that we could not explain was a package of papers—legal documents and such—that we found in your pocket."

"Yes," Sam assented, "those belonged to a young fellow sitting beside me. He had given them to me to examine, and I remember that I involuntarily thrust them into my pocket when the crash came.

"By the way," he questioned, "what became of him?"

"Killed outright."

"Killed outright?"

"Yes."

It was impossible for Dixon, much as he was shocked and really grieved over the untimely end of his passing acquaintance, not to feel also a sense of relief.

The way at least was clear for the adoption of an expedient which had suggested itself to him with the nurse's use of the wrong name.

Her next words decided him as to his course.

"I suppose I ought not to tell you," she said, "as it may excite you; but that man was a murderer."

"A murderer?"

"Yes, and a terrible one at that. He poisoned an old man in New York in cold blood, and was actually fleeing from his crime when the end came. There is no need to grieve over his death. The police were hot upon his trail, and he would surely have gone to the electric chair, if he had not been killed."

Unable to trust himself to speak, Dixon made no comment, but turned over and, closing his eyes, pretended to sleep.

There was no longer any question in his mind, however, as to what he should do. Fate and a blundering railway brakeman had conspired to sink his identity and thrust upon him that of another man; and he would accept the decree.

The die was definitely cast. Sam Dixon was dead; and when he went out into the world again it should be as Henry Dudeny.

Really, never was a cast-off personality easier to assume. The dead man had been without kith or kin, or, so far as appeared, any very close or intimate friends. and he had been on his way to a strange place where he was utterly unknown.

Moreover, his career, his qualifications, his experience, all matched closely to Sam's own. There was hardly a possibility that any slip or hitch could ever occur to disturb the serenity of the arrangement.

On the following Saturday, the survivor of the two who had started for Dabsonburg presented himself to Mrs. Dugloss, and, upon presenting his credentials, was duly taken on as manager of the drug-store.

CHAPTER XIII.

MET ONCE MORE.

FIVE years passed away, and in that period great changes came to Dugloss's and to Dabsonburg.

The drug-store had not only prospered under the new manager, but from it as a source had sprung up a tremendous enterprise which gave employment to thousands of men and women, and required vast buildings for its handling.

The Dugloss Pharmical Company was known all over the country for its products, and, by reason of its success, Dabsonburg had been transformed into a city.

Yet the rise of the concern, as has been the case with almost all our great industries, had been from very humble beginnings, and was almost entirely due to the energy and business acumen of one man.

Henry Dudeny, while looking about for ways to increase the business of his drug-store, had put up in a small way and for strictly local consumption, a certain calisaya compound which, strangely enough, was the same recipe Sam Dixon had "doped" out years before, and which had been his contribution to the assets of "The Great Indo-American Chemical Works."

The calisaya compound won public favor, as it happened, and presently there began to be a demand for it from outside sections.

Dudeny increased his output, and commenced some cautious advertising.

The sales spread, and he decided to advertise more extensively. First thing he knew Dudeny had a thriving business on his hands entirely separate from the drug-store.

Then he ceased his furtive paddlings near shore, and went in over head and ears.

He organized a company, planned a campaign of national advertising, and went into the wholesale manufacture not only of the calisaya compound, but of all the other formulas and recipes which had once belonged to the "Indo-American" company, and had been taken over by Silas Darke when he purchased the bankrupt concern at auction. They had brought no return to any one heretofore; but now they minted themselves into shining millions.

The Dugloss Pharmical Company expanded and prospered like Jonah's gourd, and Henry Dudeny, its president and general manager, was recognized as one of the country's big "Captains of Industry."

He had married Mrs. Dugloss, the widow of his predecessor in the drug-store, two years before, and their handsome home, especially since a little son and daughter had come to bless it, was said to be one of the happiest in the world.

In short, Henry Dudeny had practically nothing more to ask of Providence. Almost every conceivable blessing was already his.

Some such thought came to him one morning when he sat in his luxuriously appointed offices, waiting to receive bids upon some necessary supplies from the representatives of various drug-houses.

"Yes," he muttered, "things have come pretty soft for me; and there is really no sense in my becoming depressed and panic-stricken as I do sometimes at the thought that I am living on a concealed volcano. The past is a sealed book, and can never by any possibility be reopened."

He fell to musing with his head upon his hand, and so absorbed was he that he did not hear the steps of one of the drug-house representatives coming into the room.

But a moment later he was startled by a sudden amazed ejaculation:

"Sam Dixon, by Jove!"

And glancing up, he found himself looking into the eyes of his old-time, vindictive enemy—Perkins!

CHAPTER XIV.

TRACKED DOWN.

As was but natural, Sam attempted to bluff matters out, and insist that the other

had made a mistake; but Perkins was not to be swerved from his conviction.

"You can swear and protest from now until you're black in the face," he sneered, "that you are not Sam Dixon, but I'll never believe you.

"And I guess, if it becomes necessary," he added, "it'll not be so hard to identify you. There's Mackinnon and all the folks in the drug-store, besides a lot of other people in New York, who haven't forgotten how you look, even though you do wear all that alfalfa on your chin nowadays.

"My, my!" He rocked back and forth on his heels with malicious glee. "Just to think that the great Henry Dudeny should turn out to be no one but little Sammy Dixon, the murderer. And just to think that I should be the one to find it out! And just to think"—with a note of even more sinister significance—"how I am going to make Henry Dudeny pay for it!"

White as death, his features set like marble, the manufacturer sat in his chair, listening to this mocking tirade.

Truly, the book of the past had been reopened with a vengeance!

And was he now to live out his life in perpetual thraldom to the demands of his blackmailer, to rely for his safety upon the silence of such a reptile?

No; a thousand times, no! Better end everything at one stroke.

And as this thought came to him, a desperate expedient shaped itself in his brain.

There was a revolver in the drawer of his desk, kept there for protection against thieves or possible cranks.

What if he should take it, and first shooting down Perkins, then send a bullet crashing into his own brain?

His steady glance, as he reached this resolution, never moved from the grinning face of his adversary; but slowly and imperceptibly his hand stole ever nearer and nearer to the drawer where lay the revolver.

Then, just as he was about to seize it, he was arrested by the sounds of a struggle in the outer office. His secretary was trying to keep some visitor back, but the latter insisted on coming in.

"I will go in there, I tell you," the manufacturer heard the peremptory declaration. "Stand aside, and let me pass. I am a detective from New York, and I am after the murderer of Silas Darke!"

Ah, the game was up! The secret was known not only to Perkins, but to the police. There was no longer any use in trying to conceal the truth, or cover up his disgrace.

The manufacturer withdrew his hand from the drawer, and let his head sink on his breast.

But the detective, upon entering the office, scarcely even glanced at him. Instead, he stepped quickly across the room toward Perkins and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"What?" cried Dudeny in amazement. "Is that the murderer of Silas Darke?"

"Yes," answered the detective, "he covered up his tracks pretty successfully, but we've finally been able to run him down.

"This chap, it seems," he went on to explain, "had been wolfing a young chap named Sam Dixon by fraud, and knew that old Darke could prove it on him. So he decided to get rid of the old man, and, being aware of the latter's fondness for port, sent him a bottle of it dosed with cyanid of potassium.

"Darke, however, was too foxy to drink any anonymous presents, so he put it by on the shelf of the cupboard until he could have it analyzed.

"Then, as it happened, the office-boy came in while Darke was asleep beside another bottle of port which Dixon had given him, and by a piece of awkwardness knocked it over and broke it.

"Darke never awakened, and the kid was able to clean up the mess undetected; but, fearful that the old man might go off into one of his rages when he found out what had happened, he got down the other bottle from the cupboard, and opening it, set it at the old man's elbow.

"It is supposed that on awakening Darke helped himself to a glassful, and took a swallow. Just one was all that was needed.

"Then the office-boy, frightened to death, kept silent for a long time, but finally the matter preyed so on his mind, that he came to the police and told the truth. After that, of course, it was merely a matter of tracing down who sent the poisoned bottle.

"And now," as he gave his half-collapsed prisoner a shake, "come with me. We'll be beating it for the train.

"Good morning, Mr. Dudeny."

But Henry Dudeny made no response. He had fainted dead away.

THE END.

MR. KEEN'S DOUBLE LIFE.

BY FORREST HALSEY.

His Night in a Turkish Bath Sends This Bank Clerk Out into Strange Environment.

MR. KEEN set his jaw.

"I will," said Mr. Keen bravely.

Then terror overtook him.

He hesitated. Once more, gathering his resolution, he advanced to the door.

"People have taken them without danger," said Mr. Keen.

"I— There can be no real risk."

He entered the portal.

"I want to take a Turkish bath," said Mr. Keen to the clerk. And the perspiration broke out on his forehead.

Every Saturday night since he had been married Mr. Keen had waited an hour by the clock for digestion to work. He had once read a terrible story in a newspaper about a clergyman who had entered his bath half an hour after dinner and the bath had killed him, so one hour after dinner every Saturday night for twenty years Mr. Keen had entered his bath-room and turned on the hot water, laid out the clean clothes his wife had selected where no splashing could hit them, and taken a bath.

Mr. Keen was not afraid of baths. But—

Well, there seemed something delightfully wicked about the mystery of a Turkish bath. Not quite the thing for a man who has been married for twenty years.

Mr. Keen, as he took the little rubber ring with his key on it, wondered whether Eliza would approve if she knew.

He would tell her, of course. Mr. Keen had no secrets from Eliza. But would she approve?

Just then a wicked thought struck Mr. Keen. What good would it do her if she did not approve? It would be all too late.

Eliza had gone to spend the night with her mother. Married ladies should never spend nights with their mothers unless they have already made arrangements for their husbands' shelter during the sleeping hours.

Mr. Keen carefully put the ten dollars in his pocket into the little steel box that went with his key.

"Want to leave your specs, too?" asked the clerk.

Mr. Keen did not want to leave his "specs."

Mr. Keen would wear his specs, so that any impending danger might be seen and avoided.

That is just where danger, who had waited patiently on his door-step for twenty years, hoping for a chance at him when Eliza was not watching, folded Mr. Keen in its grisly arms.

Adorned with his steel-rimmed spectacles, Mr. Keen followed the white-clad Japanese to a door.

The door opened. Mr. Keen was in the Turkish bath.

Danger thought of Eliza, gave a loud chuckle, and entered with Mr. Keen.

I have said that Eliza had not provided for the protection of Mr. Keen during the night hours. I have wronged Eliza.

His bed was turned down for him by her own fair hands before she left. His night-robe lay across it. He was working late at the bank, so she had prepared no dinner. But she had told him just how much to spend, and where to go for his refreshment. Also, home on the dining-room table was the milk, the banana, and the saucer of "gripo-grits" for his breakfast.

Just before she had kissed him good-by that morning she had taken fifty cents from the family purse and bestowed it on him over and above his supper quarter, so that if any accident befell him he should have money in his pocket.

Yes, Eliza had made every provision.

But Eliza did not make any provision for the fact that the president of the bank would want his private account gone over, and certain little pieces of bookkeeping done on his private ledgers, so that he could go before the tax-assessors and swear with a clear conscience that he had not a dollar to his name.

Mr. Keen had been detained to make a

present to a corporation in New Jersey of all the wealth possessed by the noble and kind-hearted president of the bank, who lived in New York. Then the noble and penniless president had left ten dollars in an envelope for Mr. Keen, and had gone to give a box-party to a crowd of poor men, whom the tax-gatherers would shortly find had not the least idea what had become of the money they had had when they bought railroads and yachts and country places.

But Mr. Keen, having received ten dollars for making a pauper out of a millionaire, felt very strange after he had finished his dinner. He felt the ten-dollar bill. He thought of the poor, kind president, then he thought of that saucer of "gripo-grits."

Then he thought he would not go home.

He would take a Turkish bath.

One of his fellow clerks had told him that it was just the thing for the racking headaches that had come regularly of late to him.

Eliza had been worried by those headaches. She had fed him "orangfiend" for them, but they only got worse. Then she had tried "Old Dr. Danger's Headache Killer, one dollar the bottle—no cure, no pay"—but, after five bottles, the company had sent around a gentleman with a legal manner who had proved that Mr. Keen was cured, also that the furniture was liable to contract the disease known as a legal attachment unless his company had that five dollars for the cure. He got the five dollars.

Eliza decided to consult her mother. Mr. Keen decided to try a Turkish bath.

Those headaches frightened both of them. Could it be that he was coming down with an illness? They both shuddered secretly at the thought. The money in bank had taken a long time to grow; even now it was very small, and an illness with no salary would mean that the hopes inspired by the beautiful pamphlet, "Own Your Own Home on Long Island," would never be realized.

Yes, something must be done.

Only last week a doctor had charged five dollars for the pleasing little information that Mr. Keen was living under a great nervous strain, and unless his nerves were rested would give out. He suggested a quiet year in Florida.

Then Eliza had decided to go to see her mother, and Mr. Keen had decided to try the awful experiment of the Turkish bath.

The poor president of the bank had nerves. The poor president had his own Turkish bath. What is sauce for the president is sauce for the clerk, provided he can pay for it.

Mr. Keen had seen the sign, "Turkish Bath, $1.50." Mr. Keen could pay for it.

Half an hour later Mr. Keen rushed, gasping, out of a torture-box filled with white steam, and, completely blind from the mist on his spectacles, was seized by two huge, brutal hands.

He knew that the huge, brutal hands belonged to a huge, brutal fiend in a scanty napkin, who had been pounding and squeezing him, and, heedless of his yells, boiling him and freezing him. He trembled with horror at what was about to be done to him next.

"Git in the plunge now an' hav' a swim; then you kin go to sleep," said the coarse voice of the fiend.

Mr. Keen took off his spectacles.

He was standing on the edge of a tank. The fiend was strolling away.

Mr. Keen removed the rubber bracelet from his wrist, so that the key would not get wet, placed it beside his glasses, and entered the tank.

Mr. Keen dimly perceived another victim in the water.

"This water is very warm," snorted the other victim.

Mr. Keen did not think so. Mr. Keen thought it was the coldest water he had ever felt. He turned to get out.

"Going out?" said the dim, white figure.

"Yes—y-es!" chattered Mr. Keen.

"Oh, try it a little longer," said the victim. "Do you good."

Accustomed to obedience, Mr. Keen waded out farther.

When he looked again the dim, white figure had scrambled out of the water.

"Nothing like staying in a while to get the good effects of your bath," said the dim, white figure.

Mr. Keen chattered for two minutes more.

"Ho-o-w—h-ho-o-w—lo-o-o-ng s-should I—I—I s-stay?" he chattered at length.

But there came no answer. The dim, white figure had gone.

Mr. Keen decided that he would go, too. He did.

Scrambling out of the tank, he felt his way to where he had left his key and

glasses, slipped the key on his wrist, and the glasses on his nose.

Then he got a glad shock.

The Turkish bath had already begun to help him.

Why—not for years had he been able to see so plainly. The tiles, the lights, everything took sharper outlines.

Turkish baths were wonderful.

"All through?" asked the brute in the scanty napkin.

"Yes, and I feel so much better, thank you," said Mr. Keen.

"Come dis way an' sleep," directed the gentleman in the napkin.

Hours later, Mr. Keen awoke with a start.

Where was he? He looked about at the ghostly sheeted figures on the leather couches. Then he put on his spectacles.

No, he had not been mistaken last night. He saw every figure about him with remarkable clearness.

He also had no 'headache. Marvelous things Turkish baths!

How glad Eliza would be when he told her.

"Yuh said call yuh at seven. It's seven," said a muscular youth, attired in a weary air and a small towel.

"Thank you," said Mr. Keen. "I will dress."

Filled with exhilaration, he stepped past the sleepers into a corridor leading to the dressing-rooms. At the end of the corridor was a window filled with the most brilliant sunlight Mr. Keen had seen for years.

Oh, how glad he was that he had really had courage to take a Turkish bath!

How happy Eliza would be! How nice it would be to own your own home on Long Island!

He inserted his key in the door marked twenty-five. The door marked twenty-five did not open.

He tried again. Still the door did not open.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Keen. And tried once more.

"What's the matter?" asked the youth of the small towel.

"I can't open the door," said Mr. Keen.

"Gimme that key," directed the weary youth.

He regarded the number on it morosely.

"Thought so," he said in a fagged voice. "No use trying to get into twenty-five when your number is twenty-seven."

With which he opened a door.

"There's your clothes," he added with tired disgust.

"But these are not my clothes," cried Mr. Keen.

The weary youth never raised his eyes.

"Twenty-seven's the number, an' there's your clothes."

"But they are not my clothes." Mr. Keen's fat, little bare legs began to shake. "I want my clothes," he cried piteously. "My number was twenty-five. I was most particular to look."

"Your number is twenty-seven," said the youth finally. "Look at them clothes again. You might 'a' bought a new suit last night when you was soused."

An electric needle of terror ran down Mr. Keen's spine. The youth implied that he had been tipsy. If the bank should hear of this he would lose his position.

"I never had a suit like that," cried Mr. Keen.

The youth then did a very curious thing. Wearily he reached into the dressing-closet, languidly he picked a silk and shining hat from the hook, listlessly he placed it on Mr. Keen's head.

"It's all right, you see," he said. "The hat fits you. Them's your clothes."

Mr. Keen danced with terror.

He wore a sheet and a silk hat, and the calves of his legs shook with nervous tremors.

"But I never had a silk hat," he wailed. "I want my clothes. Please let me have my clothes."

The youth gazed at him with a look of bored disgust.

"All right," he said in the tone one uses to the confirmed liar, "I will see if yuh had twenty-five," and he departed.

Mr. Keen waited. Horrible thoughts rushed on him.

What if his clothes and his ten dollars had been stolen. What if the bank should find out he had been taking a Turkish bath. What if—

"Here's the key of twenty-five," said the weary one, returning. "Now we'll see if it is yours."

He opened number twenty-five.

Mr. Keen looked eagerly in. Number twenty-five was empty of clothes.

"You see," said the youth.

"My clothes," wailed Mr. Keen.

"Look here." The youth was angry. Mr. Keen was alarmed when any one became angry.

"Yuh put on them clothes an' settle it wit' the manager. I seen a lot of yuh fellers that don't know their own clothes in the morning. Put on them clothes."

Trembling in every limb, but wildly desiring some covering, Mr. Keen put on the garments.

"Yuh see, they fit yuh," said the youth, involuntary respect in his voice.

Mr. Keen was dressed very handsomely.

"Now come wit' me to the manager, sir."

Mr. Keen went to the manager. He knew he had been robbed.

Unprincipled criminals, they had seen that he had ten dollars, and they had gone about to steal it from him, concocting vile plots while he lay peacefully sleeping.

The manager to whom the tired youth appealed looked at the key, then he looked at Mr. Keen.

"Did you have any money?" he said coldly.

"Yes," cried Mr. Keen.

Then a second sweat broke over him. Suppose he had been robbed and could not pay for his bath? Why, they might put him in jail.

"Oh, well." The manager glanced into the box he had pulled from the rack. "I guess you'll find it all right, sir."

His voice was very respectful.

But Mr. Keen did not find it all right.

In the box was three yellow certificates, each marked one hundred dollars.

"But," began Mr. Keen.

"Ain't it all right?" asked the manager solicitously. "You remember I counted 'em when you gave 'em to me, Mr. Neblinck."

At the name four keen-faced youths sprang off chairs and gathered around Mr. Keen.

"Why, Mr. Neblinck," said number one, "I never would know you without your beard and mustache."

"Now, Mr. Neblinck," put in number two, "the *Daily Riot* would like to know—"

"Mr. Neblinck," and a stout, red-faced person thrust himself into the group, "I serve this subpœna."

And he hit Mr. Keen's shoulder with a paper.

"I am not Mr. Neblinck," cried Mr. Keen.

The stout, red-faced person cracked an oily grin and turned to the reporters.

"I knew I'd get him. I knew he'd have to come into town for that directors' meetin' to-day, so I— See here, boys, be sure and git my name spelled right this time."

"I am not Mr. Neblinck," insisted Mr. Keen.

"Go on, Cavinor." This from one of the reporters. "We spotted him as he went in here last night."

"Good trick, going to a dinky little Turkish bath when all the bunch were waiting at the ferries," added another.

"Gentlemen," cried the manager, "we have some of the best people in the city come here. Mr. Neblinck has come here for years. Haven't you, Mr. Neblinck?"

"*My name is not Neblinck,*" protested Mr. Keen.

Everybody smiled at everybody else.

"Call somebody that knows him. Call up his house. Any one there will tell you I am not Mr. Neblinck."

"Your car is outside, Mr. Neblinck," said the manager, shoving the money at him. "Dollar and a half for bath, and the barber said you promised him two dollars if he shaved off your beard and whiskers in ten minutes."

"An' he promised me five dollars fer rubbin' him so nice," put in an attendant. "My name is Jenks—J-e-n-k-s," glancing at reporters. "He said I was the best rubber in the city."

"An' you said I was to have three dollars fer takin' a telephone message," added another rubber.

The manager's fingers simply flew as they made change.

More keen-faced young men entered from a vigil at the employees' entrance.

"Mr. Neblinck, would you tell the *Daily Sparker* how you explain—"

"Mr. Neblinck, they say an indictment by the Grand Jury will be brought in to-day—"

"The district attorney says he will have you in the Tombs before night."

Mr. Keen sprang into the air.

"Do you think I am a criminal?" he cried.

No answer, but note-books flew out of pockets.

More spectators gathered. Outside the door, as it opened, Mr. Keen saw the brass buttons of a policeman.

"Call in that chauffeur," wailed the victim. "He will tell you I am not Mr. Neblinck."

"Here is the chauffeur," said a voice.

"Thank God," and Mr. Keen wiped the sweat from his pallid brow.

The crowd parted. A man wrapped in fur approached Mr. Keen. He was an absolute stranger. The crowd was very quiet.

The strange man looked at Mr. Keen.

"You telephoned for your car, Mr. Neblinck," said the strange man, "and Mrs. Neblinck says to please come right up and take breakfast with her at the Plaza."

Mr. Keen reeled back.

"I want my wife. I want to go home to my wife," he cried.

"I'll take you, sir." The chauffeur was very kind.

"Now"—he turned to the manager—"where is Mr. Neblinck's money?"

The manager gave it to him. He placed it in Mr. Keen's pocket and took his arm.

"I'll get you through the crowd, sir," he said briskly. "Mrs. Neblinck will be worried until she sees you."

He dragged Mr. Keen from the bath. The street was black with people.

Cries reached the dazed ears of Mr. Keen.

"Look at the old villain."

"Ain't he got a bad face?"

"I hope he gets twenty years."

"The old robber!"

"*I am not Mr. Neblinck,*" wailed the victim.

The crowd roared with laughter.

"Git in quick, sir," whispered the chauffeur. "They may git to throwin' bricks."

Mr. Keen got in quick. The car made its way through the crowd.

Mr. Keen felt the bills in his pocket. He looked at the luxurious interior of the automobile. He felt his wet brow. Then he looked at his face in a small mirror.

Then he gasped.

What had changed him? What had happened? He had read of men who had led double lives and never known of it. Could he be one of those people who passed as one thing by day and another by night?

Perhaps he had stolen away from the side of his dear wife after she was asleep, and all unknown to himself, played the criminal. Surely, there was something very strange about his face in the glass.

Very, very strange. Was it the silk hat, the rich tie with the diamond pin? Or was it—why, he was wearing huge, gold-rimmed spectacles!

Where did he get them, and the money, and the car, and the wife who was waiting for him at the Plaza?

Oh, poor Eliza! Mr. Keen buried his face in his hands.

Perhaps he was a criminal, a bigamist, a malefactor, and the poundings and steamings of that horrible bath had cleared his brain, as they had driven away his headaches. And if this were true what would Eliza say?

No—no—it was a mistake—all a mistake. Mr. Neblinck's wife would clear it all up. She would know her own husband.

The car stopped. More reporters were waiting.

"I am not Mr. Neblinck," Mr. Keen said in a weak voice.

Suddenly he secured some resolution.

"Gentlemen, come with me. Mrs. Neblinck will tell you I am not her husband."

They came. So did others. The elevator was jammed as it ascended.

They paused before a door.

"Now, gentlemen, you will see your mistake," said Mr. Keen.

A maid opened the door.

"Mrs. Neblinck will be here directly, sir," said the maid.

They entered a beautiful room filled with flowers and gilt furniture.

Mr. Keen breathed with relief. All would now be right.

A handsome, gray-haired woman, in a superb gown, entered.

She looked at the reporters with cool haughtiness.

"Madam"—Mr. Keen advanced—"there has been some distressing mistake made."

"I know it." The lady glanced scornfully at the reporters.

"Ah!" Mr. Keen's voice was an explosion of relief.

The lady drew herself to her majestic height.

"I know," she said coldly, "that you have done nothing dishonorable. It is a mistake."

"Thank you, madam," said Mr. Keen.

"How could you believe that I would think you had done anything wrong, Wilber?" went on the lady.

Bursting into tears she folded him in her arms.

"My poor—poor husband," she sobbed.

Something snapped in Mr. Keen's head. Then he fainted.

Mr. Keen sat up, the odor of pungent salts strong in his nostrils.

"Are you better?" said a voice. He was alone with the woman who claimed him as her husband.

He groaned and sank back.

"Come, come," said the brisk, business-like voice of the stately lady. "Listen to me for a minute. I will explain. You have done my husband a service we will never forget."

"Your husband?"

"Yes, Mr. Neblinck."

"But you called me your—"

The lady smiled.

"It's been fifteen years since I have been on the stage, but I don't think I ever threw more feeling into a part."

"But—"

"My huband is Wilber Neblinck. They wanted him to testify against some old business associates of his in the Steam Laundry Trust investigation. He has dodged the subpœna-servers for three months, but he had to come to New York yesterday. The reporters spotted him, and he took refuge in that Turkish bath.

"While there, he saw you, and noticed that you were about his size. He changed keys with you while you were in the bath, and bribed the attendants. He got the time he wanted to get out of town that way. Of course, no one knew him in your clothes and without his beard.

"I have just had a telephone from him from Jersey. He says you are to keep the money he left there. Also to go to an oculist at his expense and get some new glasses."

An hour later an oculist was talking to Mr. Keen.

"My dear sir," he said, "the glasses you are wearing fit you perfectly. Why do you want weaker ones? You will get very bad headaches from cheap spectacles."

A Sky-Scraper Conspiracy.

BY GEORGE C. JENKS,

Author of "A Misplay in Diamonds," "Doing a Favor to David," etc.

A Story of Plot and Counterplot Among the Steel-Workers on a Modern Tower of Babel.

CHAPTER I.

TROUBLE BREWING.

FAR up on the sky-scraper two men balanced themselves on an eight-inch steel beam.

The beam projected totteringly from the thirtieth story. The street was four hundred feet below.

Standing on their slight perch—a mere twig from the parent-stem of the gigantic building—the two men were practically alone.

Up through the void came faintly the jangle of street-cars. The hum and rattle of them was lost somewhere about the level of the fifteenth floor.

Now and then a sharp cry—an oath, an expostulation, a dog's yelp of terror or pain—darted up to them from the otherwise unheard turmoil of the busy city.

It was all so far away. Swaying on this narrow sixteen-foot length of steel, the sky above and emptiness below, the two men were as much in solitude as if they had been among the clouds in an air-ship.

True, there were other men squirming about in this bewildering steel-sinewed maze. But none were near. Their particular task just then isolated these two completely. Both were young, and their manner toward each other indicated that they were chums.

Each held by one hand to a steel cable no thicker than your thumb. The cable held up one end of their precarious foothold.

Suddenly, the beam under them, slowly turning in a half-circle, banged against another with a jarring shock.

One of the men clutched quickly at the cable with his other hand. His companion reproved him good-humoredly.

"Keep your nerve, Stanley. Don't get scared, bo."

"My nerve is all right, Jack. I don't have to get bumped off to prove it, do I?"

"No, of course not. But one hand's enough for any steel-rigger, and— Look out! Duck!"

Even as he spoke, he threw an arm around his comrade's neck and pulled his head down with a jerk. At the same time he lowered his own.

A thick rope, with a heavy weight on the end, had suddenly come from somewhere, driving straight for them. But for the ready movement of the young man, it would inevitably have swept them both off their beam.

They straightened up after the rope had passed. Perhaps they shuddered a bit as they realized what might have been. Then Stanley adjusted his cap with a tug at the peak, and remarked with a short little laugh, that certainly did not suggest mirth:

"That would have got us, if you hadn't seen it, Jack."

"Sure it would. But I *did* see it," returned Jack indifferently.

Nothing more was said about the rope and their successful dodging of it. Incidents of this kind happen a dozen times a day wherever men are building a steel cloud-climber. The workers know that perpetual vigilance is the price of their safety. Having this knowledge, carefulness becomes second nature. Their watchfulness and agility are mechanical.

These two young men, Frank Stanley and Jack Price, were like their fellow-workers in this respect. They looked on narrow escapes as a matter of daily routine, not worth talking about.

With a rattle of cogged wheels and the complaining squeal of cables going over drums, the beam slowly settled into its proper place. Another tiny, but important, bone in the great steel skeleton had been articulated.

When the forty-story building should be completed, it would be occupied by the Monckton Trust Company. The corporation was impatient to get into its new quarters, and the builders' contract had placed them under a strict time-limit. They had but sixty days more in which to finish their work. At the end of that period the great edifice must be ready, save for a few finishing touches.

Frank Stanley ran a practised eye along the beam, and saw that the ends lay evenly in their sockets, with the rivet-holes exactly opposite each other.

"All right, Jack!" he announced.

There was a clanking of chains. Then with more grinding and squealing, the wire rope pulled loose and drew up to the great derrick.

"Here, you fellows! Get hold of that line! Get a move on!" yelled an authoritative voice over their heads.

Instinctively they both ran along the beam to where the rope which had nearly brushed them off to a horrible death swayed to and from the building.

"We can't reach it," called out Jack.

"Why not?" bellowed the authoritative one. "It's right there, isn't it? What kind of dubs are there on this building? I don't know why I don't fire the whole worthless lot of you."

"That's old Zeb Grant, the super, with his usual grouch," said Jack Price to his chum, with a grin.

"I hope I'll always be able to keep my hands off him," was Frank Stanley's low reply.

"You *must* keep your hands off, Stan. You can't afford to do anything else."

"Oh, I know. A fellow working for a living has to nurse his job, of course. But when I think of what that man has done, and—"

"Look out, down there!"

Zebediah Grant was shinning down one of the steel pillars from the floor above. He dropped to his feet between the two young men.

"Get out of the way!"

Roughly pushing them aside, Grant ran to the edge of the floor. Reaching out into space, regardless of the four hundred feet to the street, he tried to get hold of the swinging rope.

A tall, lean man, with iron-gray hair and eyes that looked black under the heavy brows, was this Zebediah Grant. He had a square jaw and square shoulders, and the expression of his countenance can be described only as forbidding. It might have been carved out of some dark wood.

He was a martinet, and was cordially disliked by the men working under him. This rather pleased him than otherwise. At least, he had said so.

"You can't do it, Mr. Grant," said Price, as the older man grabbed for the rope unsuccessfully.

"Who asked for *your* opinion?" was the growling response. "It's the fault of that bone-headed, boozy derrick-man—or engineer, or whatever he calls himself. If

he'd let the rope swing in a little, I'd have no trouble. He must be drunk."

It is a well-known fact that a remark uttered in an obscure corner before one of a number of men working on a large building will travel all over it in a flash, if the remark is interesting enough to be worth while. So it was that, on each of the many floors of this new sky-scraper, from the cellar up, Grant's opinion of the engineer was repeated in less than two minutes.

The general expression was:

"Say, old Zeb has had the nerve to say that Dave May is drunk. Now wait till you hear from Dave."

It chanced that this engineer, Dave May, prided himself on the fact that he had never tasted intoxicating liquor in his life. He was secretary of a total abstinence society. It was his pleasure to hold forth on the evils of drink whenever he had time and could get an audience. To him the vice of drunkenness was the most deadly sin known to man.

Besides holding such strong views against drunkenness, Dave May had a violent temper when aroused. When the word got around to him, as it soon did, that Zebediah Grant had openly charged him with an offense of which he felt himself incapable, he swore to be revenged.

The superintendent, unaware of the hornets' nest he had stirred up, was still trying to reach that elusive rope. He was at the extreme outer end of a thick plank that stuck out farther than the others from the building.

Facing outward, and absorbed in what he was trying to do, Zebediah Grant did not see a stern-looking man, in greasy overalls, who had slipped behind Frank Stanley and Jack Price. The stern-looking individual was Dave May, the engineer. He was kneeling at one end of the long board on the other end of which stood the superintendent.

"Come over here, one of you men," ordered Grant, in his habitually rough way. "If that drunken engineer would only let the derrick turn a little more—"

That was all he got out. The plank under him suddenly tilted up behind.

With a wild and futile clutch—for a rope, a pillar, or anything else which might have been there, but wasn't — Zebediah Grant lurched forward into space.

But Zebediah's time had not yet come. Just as he toppled, Jack Price's firm hand caught one of his shoulders and dragged him back to the comparatively solid footing of the temporary flooring. At the same moment the board shot over the edge and went hurtling down to the street. They heard the crash, as it splintered on the pavement.

"That was a close call, Mr. Grant," said Jack.

Zebediah was too frightened and angry to reply. Suddenly he shook himself loose from Jack Price's grasp, and with an inarticulate gurgle of rage, hurled himself upon Frank Stanley. The young man was bending over the ends of a heap of long boards on the floor. Among them had been the plank which had tipped up and nearly caused Grant's death.

So unexpected was the burly superintendent's attack that Stanley was thrown flat upon his back. But it did not take him long to get up. He was young and active, and he hated this overbearing Zebediah Grant for more reasons than had appeared just then.

So, when he gained his feet after the knock-down blow — which owed at least seven-eighths of its success to its unexpectedness—he went for Zebediah with a fierce energy and scientific skill that soon turned the tables.

"Give it to him, Stanley!" urged the voice of Dave May, although the form of the engineer was not in sight.

"Look out, Stan! Mind the club!" shouted Jack Price.

The warning was too late. Zebediah Grant, finding that the youth and boxing dexterity of his foe were too much for him, had suddenly caught up from under his feet a large splinter of wood, about the size and weight of a policeman's night-stick. He brought it down on Frank Stanley's head viciously.

Probably only the fact that the blow was a glancing one saved Zebediah Grant from being a murderer. Even as it was, the young man dropped to the floor as if hit by a bullet. He had been knocked senseless by the blow.

CHAPTER II.

THE TIME LIMIT.

For a moment Zebediah Grant bent over the unconscious Stanley. Then he straightened up and threw down his club.

"He's coming to," he said indifferently. "When he knows where he is, send him to me in the office."

The superintendent went down a ladder two stories. Then he got on a rickety platform-elevator, used for conveying building material, and descended to the ground floor, in company with four wheelbarrows and some shovels.

Before Grant stepped off the elevator below, Frank Stanley was sitting up on the pile of boards on the thirtieth floor, his hands to his head.

Jack Price and Dave May, the engineer, were stooping at his side anxiously.

"What's happened, Jack?" asked Stanley, in a faint tone, as he looked about him. "What hit me?"

"Old Zeb," replied Price. "He landed on you with a chunk of wood. Does it hurt much?"

"It doesn't amount to anything. There's a bump on my head and it aches some. But I'm all right."

Dave May brought a tin cup of water. There was an apologetic expression on his grimy face.

"Have a drink, Stanley," he said. "I'm durned sorry over this. It was my fault."

Stanley hardly seemed to hear what Dave said, but Jack Price turned on the engineer quickly.

"Why, Dave? How was it your fault?"

Frank Stanley stopped drinking the water to hear Dave's answer. It was evident, from the way the engineer hesitated, that he had blurted out something he was sorry he had said.

"Well," he answered, at last, "it was my fault in—er—this way: If I could have got to old Zeb first, he would have had to—er—fight with me, instead of you."

"Why would he have had to fight with you?" demanded Price, still unconvinced.

"Didn't he say I was drunk?" shouted May, with sudden fury. "Wasn't that enough?"

He picked up the piece of wood with which Grant had struck Stanley, and dashed it down on the loose boards with all his might.

"That's what I'd like to do with him," he growled. "That loafer doesn't know how to treat men. I believe in giving a boss a square deal in general. But—him! Well, never mind."

Dave May had worked himself up into a violent rage. Ordinarily he was a rather silent man. The studious contemplation of steam and water-gages, while listening mechanically for signal-bells, is not consistent with excessive conversation. But now, as he talked about Zebediah Grant, he blew up, as it were.

"That fellow!" he shouted. "Why, he ought to be chucked off the building. If he *did* fall off, it'd only be an accident. But it'd be good for the men. Why, for two cents, I'd—"

It was at this point that Jack Price stepped in front of the infuriated engineer, and, pointing an upraised finger at him, said defiantly:

"Dave, *you shoved that board off just now, and you meant Grant to go with it.*"

"Why do you think—"

"Oh, now, own up! You *know* you did it."

Dave May walked away a few yards and stared at the sunlit waters of New York harbor in the distance for at least a minute. Then he strode back to Price and said defiantly:

"Yes, I did. What are you going to do about it?"

"It's none of my business," was Jack's reply.

"That's what I hold," grunted Dave. Then, turning to Frank Stanley, he queried: "What do you say, Stanley?"

Frank Stanley had recovered his senses and strength, and was standing by the side of his chum. He answered, with a curling lip:

"I say that pushing a man off a high building when he isn't looking is a poor way of getting even."

This curt reply took the engineer aback. Knowing that Stanley hated Zebediah Grant as much as any one in the gang—which was saying a great deal—he had not anticipated such a severe condemnation of his attempt at revenge. There was a cynical smile on his grimy face, as he retorted:

"Oh, you do? Well, that's too bad, for he thinks *you* did it."

"I'm going down to tell him he's wrong," said Frank.

Without another word he hurried to the ladder, on his way to the superintendent's office, on the street floor.

"Well, there's one thing," muttered Dave, as he looked after the young man; "he can't give me away, because he didn't see me do anything. I was slick enough for that."

With a wave of his hand to Jack Price, who was steadying the rope that had caused all the trouble, May went up to his engine, two floors above.

Frank Stanley found the door of Zebediah Grant's office wide open. Inside the superintendent leaned over a long table, like a carpenter's bench, on which were spread out a number of plans.

The office was a temporary structure, in the middle of what would be eventually the Monckton Trust Company's great public banking-room. There were two windows in its thick wooden walls.

Through the roof ran a pipe from a small stove that had been used in the previous winter and never removed. The little office had been under the open sky originally. That was before the great steel-ribbed building had grown over and around it.

For furniture there was, besides the long table for the plans, a roll-top desk and swing chair, two other chairs, a large fireproof safe, and a telephone.

Old Zeb looked up for an instant as Frank Stanley appeared in the doorway.

"Come in and shut the door. Turn the key," were the sharp orders.

Frank obeyed. As the door closed, the superintendent, who had pretended to be more interested in the blue-prints than in his visitor, suddenly turned his back to the table and croaked:

"You're a pretty scoundrel, aren't you?"

Frank Stanley, stung by the gratuitous insult, made an involuntary movement forward. Grant raised a menacing finger, as he said sharply:

"Don't try anything like that here. I've got men within call of this office that I can *trust*. Not like that sneaking gang on the upper floors."

"What's the matter with those men?" demanded Frank. "I work with them, and I've found them decent fellows."

"They may be decent in your eyes, though not in mine," retorted Grant. "But I've no time to discuss those cattle. I want you to tell me why you tried to tip me off that plank just now."

"I didn't do it."

Zebediah stretched his mouth in a silent laugh of scorn.

"I don't believe you," he said coldly. "Still, I don't think you did it all by yourself, and I had the satisfaction of punishing you for your share in it. I reckon you'll have a sore head for several days."

"Is this all you wanted to see me about?"

"No; that's nothing—the attempt on my life. I've been through that sort of thing before."

"Shouldn't wonder," was Frank Stanley's inaudible comment.

"It's something much more important than that," continued Zebediah. "I got you down here to tell you that I have received information of a conspiracy among you ironworkers."

"A conspiracy?"

"That's what I said," snapped Zebediah. "Some of your fellows are going to hold up the work so that the building won't be finished on time. That is, they would have done it if I hadn't made arrangements to block their game?"

"But—"

"That will do. You needn't take the trouble to deny it. I *know*."

"Well, why don't you discharge all the men you suspect? That would be only business," said Frank Stanley, with a shrug.

"It *wouldn't* be business, or I should do it," rejoined Zebediah. "If I fired the gang of ironworkers I have, I should have to break in a new crew—if I could get them. I suppose the union would interfere and not let me have any new men."

"Very likely," admitted Frank.

"And even if I got a new force, by the time they were familiar with things on this building, there would be no chance of getting it finished inside the time-limit of our contract. For every day we work after the sixty days we shall have to pay a heavy forfeit."

"I've heard that."

"Of course you have. Everybody has. If it were not so well known, I shouldn't be talking about it to you. Now, there isn't sixty days work to be done, legitimately, on this building. If we are not through two or three days ahead of time, I shall know there's been some monkey business."

"What has all this to do with me?"

"Just this," was the quick rejoinder. "I have noticed you several times looking at me as if you'd like to murder me if you dared—"

"Mr. Grant," interrupted Stanley, "do you know what you're saying?"

"Quite. To-day you tried to slide me off the end of that plank."

"It's a lie! Who says—"

"Keep quiet. I have the floor," roared

Zebediah. "I know I'm not a favorite with you steelworkers, and I don't want to be. But none of the others show their ill-will so plainly as you. I had you come down here, so that I could give you warning. You can hand it on to your friends."

"Why do you think I have ill-will toward you, Mr. Grant?" asked Frank, forcing himself to speak calmly.

"I don't know and I don't care. I only wanted you to know that I am aware of your ill-feeling, and that I am posted on all that goes on in this building. You and your gang may fancy you can stop me getting it up in time. But I'll fool you. I've never been licked by my men yet, and I won't begin to be now."

"You're exciting yourself about nothing," declared Frank scornfully.

"Am I? We shall see. There's only this about it. I'm going to have this job finished inside of sixty days, in spite of your conspiracies. I've *got* to use iron men. You have me crowded into a corner so far as that goes. But I can fight with my back against the wall, and fight to win. I'll show you that. Now, you can get out. Go back to your work."

"One minute, Mr. Grant," said Frank Stanley, as he unlocked the door.

"What do you want?"

"I just want to say that I have never heard anything about this conspiracy you talk of. I don't believe there is one."

"Oh, you don't?" snarled Zebediah, sarcastically. "Well, let me tell you that I *know* it exists. Will that do for you?"

"Yes; we'll let it go at that," answered Frank. "But, to prove that I will have nothing at all to do with it—if there really is such a thing—I'll report to you everything I hear."

Zebediah Grant's reply to this was a decided surprise to the young man.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," he yelled. "All I want you to do is to keep at your work. I wouldn't believe a word any of you fellows up there might say on that subject on your oath. Get out of my office!"

Frank Stanley went out.

CHAPTER III.

WHY STANLEY HATED OLD ZEB.

Jack Price was swinging loose from the building on a steel girder, when Stanley got back to the thirtieth floor.

"Hallo, Stan! Glad you're here!" sang out Price. "Steady the end of this, will you?"

"This" was the sixteen-foot steel beam on which Frank stood. It was seesawing violently, for an end of it had caught the side of the building and then been released with a jerk.

Stanley scurried out on a narrow girder to a dizzy corner, where there was absolutely nothing to cling to but the atmosphere.

It was a rather more dangerous situation than steel-riggers on sky-scrapers usually venture into. But Frank Stanley saw that his chum was in trouble, and there was only this one thing to do.

"Give me your hand, Jack."

Jack Price, balancing himself in the center of the seesawing, wabbly beam, with one hand holding the rope, gave the other to Stanley. The space between them was more than four hundred feet deep. It was literally hands across the valley of the shadow of death.

"Easy, Stan! Let her come slow. She'll only just clear that corner."

There was a minute or two of cruel, muscular strain, culminating in an instant of heart-stopping peril. Then the great girder sullenly swung clear and turned around deliberately in its derrick-chains.

"Lower away, Dave!" called out Price.

Dave May was leaning over the edge, two floors above, his hand on the lever controlling the derrick.

"All right, boys!" he responded.

Dave had taken the trouble to look down because he had heard Frank Stanley's voice. He wondered what had been the result of the interview in Zebediah's office.

A little later, Dave would ask Frank a few questions. There was no time just now, and he was sorry for it. He *did* want to hear what old Zeb had said about the tipping up of that plank.

The long, steel girder, hanging by the middle, plunged end-on into the thirtieth story. It was slowly lowered until it lay untidily across the floor. The sockets into which it was to fit were some distance back.

The girder would have to be carried over to its permanent resting-place by half a dozen men. Then, and not before, it would become part of the great building.

"Well, Stan, what did the old man say?" asked Jack Price, as he watched the hooks and chains at the end of the derrick-rope going upward.

"He said a lot of things, Jack. Some of them I didn't like."

"What, for instance?"

"He believed I tried to throw him off that plank into the street."

"Pass that up. We can both prove you didn't. What else?"

Frank Stanley looked about him cautiously. There was nobody near them. Several men were working on the same floor, but they were at least a hundred feet away. The racket from a riveting machine made it certain that anything he might say to Price would not be overheard.

"Why all this mystery?" asked Jack. "Has old Zeb been trusting you with state secrets?"

"He told me something I never heard of before. It is important, too, if it's a fact."

"Coming from the old man, it probably isn't," remarked Jack dryly. "But let's have it, anyhow."

"He insists there is a scheme among the men up here to prevent this building being finished on time."

"Rot!"

"That's what I think, Jack. But you can't knock it into old Zeb. He says he has positive information."

"From his spies, eh? Of course he has his gum-shoe brigade on the building. They all have. I'll bet this yarn is something the spotters have started just to 'make good.' If they didn't turn in a pipe-dream that smelled real once in a while, they might lose their jobs."

"That may be. There's one part of it, at least, that I know is not so."

"What's that, Stan?"

"He says I'm one of the ringleaders in the conspiracy."

"And you never heard there was one, did you?"

"No. Did you?"

"Of course I haven't. If I had I'd have told you, first crack. Why does he think you're mixed up in this thing?"

"He has noticed that I don't like him," returned Frank, with a slight smile.

Jack Price laughed aloud.

"Is that all? Gee! He might notice that in all of us. There isn't a steel-rigger or engineer on this job that doesn't hate the sight of him, the old slave-driver! As for Dave May, he never will get over being called a 'souse.'"

"That's all very well, Jack. But Zebediah Grant thinks I have it in for him harder than any of the others—*and he is right.*"

The bitterness with which the last few words were spoken made Jack Price look at his chum in surprise. Then he said, thoughtfully:

"I've sometimes imagined that myself. Ever since he came here, a month ago, to take charge of this work, it seems to me I've seen a change in you."

"I've felt it in myself," slowly answered Stanley.

"You always got along with Downing, who was super before old Zeb," murmured Jack reflectively.

"Downing was a different sort of man."

"There's no doubt about that. I guess that's why old Zeb came to take hold of things. He was afraid Downing was too easy, and might not get the building up in time."

"Downing got as much work out of the men as ever old Zeb does. More, in fact. The difference is that Downing is a gentleman, while Zebediah Grant is a—"

"That's what he is, Stan. You needn't finish," broke in Price, with a laugh. "We'll both think of the most detestable thing, a man could be, and know that old Zeb is *it* But even that doesn't explain why you hate him more than any of us. There must be something back of that."

"There is."

"Did you ever know him before he came to take charge of the work on this big building?"

"Yes."

"H-m!" Then I reckon that accounts for it."

"It does."

Frank Stanley's replies were mechanical. His memory had gone back to the time when he first became an enemy to Zebediah Grant.

"I'd like to hear what he ever did to you—before he came here," said Jack. "It isn't a secret, is it?"

"No. Only I don't generally talk about it. That's why I've never mentioned it to you in the six months we've been pards."

"I thought there must be something. Of course, he's a mean gazabo on general principles. But you always seemed to have the hatpin into him a little deeper than the rest of us," observed Jack.

The din of the riveting still filled the air with an unearthly clatter, and the gang of men at the other end of the immense floor-space were still busy.

Frank Stanley assured himself of these conditions. Then he said, speaking rapidly, as if loath to linger over an unpleasant revelation:

"You know, Jack, I used to be a sailor?"

"Yes. That's why you took to working on high buildings, isn't it?"

"I guess so. Well, before I went to sea I was a telegraph operator. Two years ago I signed aboard an old hooker carrying construction steel to Japan. The Golden Hope was her name. She was a bark—square-sailed for'ard and schooner-rigged on her mizzen-pole."

Jack Price threw up his hands helplessly and grinned.

"I beg your pardon, Jack. When I'm talking about ships it comes natural to use the lingo. Jim Millen shipped on the Golden Hope with me. He was an 'op,' like myself, and we'd worked together for years pounding out Morse. What made us think still more of each other was that we'd both been to sea before, and both had our 'A. B.' rating."

"That means 'able-bodied seaman,' doesn't it?" ventured Jack.

"Uh-huh! But about this man, Zebediah Grant. He was on the Golden Hope, in charge of the construction-iron. He was going to Japan to put up a bridge, somewhere back from Yokohama. He spent most of his time aft, with the skipper, but used to come for'ard once in a while to see that the steel was all right."

"Could he see it from the deck?"

"Some of it. They had stowed as much as they could below as ballast. But there wasn't room for all, and a lot of big girders were piled on deck and made snug with chains."

"I see. Go on with the yarn. We'll have to get to work soon. What did Zeb do to you on the ship? I suppose he did something to get you down on him."

"Yes. Some of the steel on deck broke loose one day, when there was a heavy sea on, and about half a dozen of the beams went overboard. Zeb made a terrific row about it. He blamed it mainly on Jim Millen. There was some loud talk, and the next thing I knew Zeb had knocked Jim backward down a hatchway. Jim has been lame ever since."

"Well?"

"Well, you see, Jack, we were very close, Jim and I. We'd worked as telegraph operators on the same wire, and we'd been shipmates on one long voyage before. On the Golden Hope we bunked together."

"I guess I can pretty well figure on what took place when that old pirate knocked your chum down the hatch," said Jack, nodding significantly.

"Yes, of course you can. Just naturally I cut a loose right swing for Zeb's jaw."

"Did it land?" asked Jack eagerly.

"No, I am sorry to say. The second mate jumped in between us. He got the punch on the shoulder. It hurt him even there, I could see. So you can imagine what it would have done to Zeb's jaw."

"The old curmudgeon! He ought to have got it."

"Yes, but he didn't. They put me in irons and kept me in the brig till we got to Yokohama. Old Zeb went ashore, and I never saw him from that day until he turned us as super of this job."

"What did he say when he saw you here?"

"Nothing. He didn't know me. That's not strange, however. He never took particular notice of the men on the Golden Hope, and I don't suppose he ever gave me a good look at any time—not even when I was sending that right swing over. Besides, I had a heavy mustache then. Sailors don't want to bother with shaving in the fo'c's'le at sea. On shore it's different. I have never worn a mustache in New York."

"I don't wonder at your hating old Zeb," said Jack, drawing a deep breath.

"It isn't for anything he's ever done to me, Jack. He was the cause of my spending three weeks of agony in a little cubby-hole far down below in that ship, with an iron on my leg. But I could forgive him that."

"I couldn't," interjected Jack.

"What I'll make him answer for, if ever I get a chance, is the wreck he made of Jim Millen. Before he was thrown down that hatchway, Jim was a well-built, active, finely proportioned man. To-day, he limps along with a cane, and, even with that help, he cannot walk far. Luckily he has a profession that doesn't call for muscular strength or activity — telegraph operating. He is working at that, and making a fair living. But the confinement grinds on him. He longs for the fresh air, and to be able to run and climb as he used to do in the old days."

"Does he know Zebediah Grant is superintendent of the building where you work?"

"No. I wouldn't dare tell him. Jim Millen has always had a quick temper. He has it yet, even though he *is* a cripple."

"Look out! Here come the gang," said Jack suddenly. "We'll have to see about moving that girder. You don't want to talk before these fellows. Any one of them may be a spotter."

Jack moved away from his chum, and Stanley was following him at a little distance, when some one whispered in his ear:

"Going to the meeting to-night?"

A man who had been working on the building less than a week, and whose name Stanley did not know, had sidled close to him. He had put the question out of the corner of his mouth.

It was evident to Stanley that this stranger had either made a mistake or was sounding him in the capacity of a spy. So the young man responded with the perfectly safe query, also in a whisper:

"Where is it to be?"

"In Dave May's room, at eight o'clock. There'll be some hot stuff there, too. You can bet on that."

The next moment the strange man had slipped away, and, with an innocent expression of vacuity on his face, was doing his part toward raising the ponderous length of steel girder.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NAME ON THE WIRE.

IT was supper-time in Mrs. Louden's boarding-house in West Fifteenth Street.

Mrs. Louden's husband had been a steel-worker. She became a widow one day, when, as he worked on the second story of a skeleton sky-scraper, a four-pound wrench slipped out of somebody's hand on the twelfth. It came hurtling down and struck him squarely on the temple.

It was like a heavy blow with a sledge-hammer. He was dead when they picked him up.

Steel-workers are a sympathetic class, and, as a general thing, the feeling of comradeship binds them together as with bands of their own familiar steel. The men who had worked with Louden soon learned that he had left no insurance, and had never saved anything from his wages. It was "up to them," as they expressed it, to take care of the widow.

In a month from the day of her husband's funeral, Mrs. Louden found herself mistress of a well-equipped boarding-house which had not cost her a cent.

"The boys" had made her buy all the necessary furniture and utensils, and they paid the bills. They only stipulated that she should get everything she wanted, and that it was all to be of good quality.

They also settled the first month's rent. Then they wished her luck, and a dozen of them came to board with her, to give her a start. There never was an establishment of the kind where board was more regularly paid.

All this was more than a year before. Mrs. Louden was a plump, good-looking woman of forty. She still mourned her husband in private; but, when presiding at the head of her table, as on this particular evening, she felt that she had no right to annoy her boarders with her personal sorrows.

So Mrs. Louden was more lively and talkative than any of the men around her. Steel-workers usually take a somewhat serious view of life. Perhaps their calling has something to do with it.

Frank Stanley and Jack Price boarded with Mrs. Louden. They roomed together. Dave May, the engineer, was also a boarder. Then there were nearly a score of others. With three exceptions, all were steel-workers, and more than half of them were employed on the new gigantic Monckton building.

As might have been expected, the conversation around the table on this evening—as nearly always, in fact—was about incidents connected with putting up high, steel-frame edifices. Men will talk "shop" when they have the opportunity, whatever their trade or profession.

There had been plenty of interesting happenings at the Monckton building that day.

"I tell you, gentlemen, it was an outrage," declared Dave May.

He took a cup of coffee from Bertha, Mrs. Louden's fourteen-year-old daughter, who was waiting on the table, and drank about half of it before he continued:

"Old Zeb jumped at Stanley without any reason—no cause at all. He did not give Stanley the least show. At that, Zeb would have been licked if he hadn't hit Stanley with a chunk of wood when he wasn't looking."

"Yes, and it must have been an awful

knock, from the bump it has raised," put in Mrs. Louden. "I wanted Mr. Stanley to let me bathe it with warm water, but he wouldn't."

"It wasn't necessary, Mrs. Louden," laughed Frank. "A little crack like that is part of the business."

"Not when it's done on purpose," she insisted. "An accident is different, of course."

The widow's eyes filled with tears as she thought of her husband.

"This boss of yours must be a terror," observed a man who worked on another building.

"He is," replied Dave May quickly. "And if I was Stanley, I'd make him pay for what he did to-day."

"How about yourself, Dave?" suggested Jack Price. "He handed you a jolt to-day, too, didn't he?"

Dave May frowned.

"Yes, he did. He said I was drunk—"

"Oh, Mr. May!" ejaculated Mrs. Louden, horrified.

"Yes, Mrs. Louden, that's what he said. Now you know, and everybody around this here table knows, that a man couldn't say a more lying thing than that about me."

There was a general murmur of confirmation. Dave put down his knife and fork and shook his fist at the world in general, as he added, in a louder tone:

"To think of his daring to say that about me—me! Dave May! It's a wonder I didn't choke the life out of him right there."

"Why didn't you?" asked the landlady.

"Because I aim to wipe off the score in another way. That's why."

The enigmatic wink which accompanied this threat was not overlooked by Frank Stanley. He thought of the tilted plank and the narrow escape of Zeb Grant from being smashed to atoms by a four-hundred-foot fall.

But he did not believe Dave meant to repeat any such attempt at satisfaction as that. An attack on the close-fisted superintendent's pocketbook might be a sweeter revenge, and not so dangerous. A charge of murder or manslaughter is an ugly thing to hang over a man.

Ever since the strange man had come to him on the thirtieth floor of the Monckton and whispered about the meeting to be held in Dave May's room, Frank had been wondering whether Zebediah Grant *was* mistaken about there being a conspiracy. Dave's significant words now suggested that perhaps he wasn't.

The talk drifted into other channels—but always about the steel trade. Two forty-five-story "jobs" in Chicago would start about the time the Monckton was done; another big automobile factory was to go up in Detroit; an addition to a cotton mill was talked of in Fall River, and a new shoe factory was projected in Lynn. Besides all these and some smaller contracts here and there, the building boom was still on in San Francisco. It was clear that there was plenty of work ahead.

"All we want is a super who knows his business and doesn't treat men like dogs. We can take care of the rest of it," was Dave May's dictum when, at length, he got up from the table and went out.

The other men drifted away by degrees. In ten minutes Frank Stanley and Jack Price were the only boarders left in the comfortable basement dining-room. They were chatting with Mrs. Louden.

"I wish you'd let me bathe that lump on your head, Mr. Stanley," said the landlady, as she helped Bertha clear the table. "It might turn out something serious."

"Oh, no. It's nothing."

"I hope you'll make that man Grant pay for it," she went on "You ought to, or bosses will think they can knock men about as they please."

"No fear of that," returned Stanley with a smile. "Not with steel men, anyhow."

There had been a ring at the front door. But, seeing that Bertha went up to answer it, Mrs. Louden paid no further attention. No doubt it was for one of the boarders. There were generally several callers every evening.

"What is the matter with this fellow Grant?" she said, continuing her indignant plaint. "I hear that every man on the job is down on him."

"He's out of temper because he's afraid the job won't be done in time, and his firm will lose money on it. That's the whole story. We have only sixty more days."

"But you can do it in that time, can't you? That's what I hear all the men say. That old Grant must be crazy."

"Oh, I don't know— Hallo, Jim! Why, I didn't know you were in the room."

Frank Stanley had broken off suddenly to greet a pale-faced man of about his own

age who came limping forward with a stout cane.

"Bertha brought me down," explained the newcomer. "She said you were here, in the dining-room, and I took the liberty of dropping in on you without being announced."

"You did quite right, Jim," replied Frank Stanley. "This is Mr. Price, Mr. Millen. I don't think you two have ever met before."

"No, but I've heard you speak of Mr. Millen very often," said Jack, as they shook hands.

"Not 'Mr.' Millen, I hope," said the owner of the name. "Frank has never called me anything but 'Jim' for a good many years."

"That's so," laughed Stanley. "Let me correct myself. Jack, this is Jim."

"Sit down, Mr. Millen," requested Mrs. Louden hospitably. "*We* don't need an introduction, do we?"

"No, indeed. Considering that I boarded with you six months before my folks came to New York, I guess we ought to know each other pretty well."

Mrs. Louden showed that she was pleased.

"But I didn't come here to talk you to death, Mrs. Louden. Frank, I thought you might be coming up to the house to-night. If you are, we can go together. I was down this way, so I just dropped in to see."

"Thanks. I guess I will go with you."

Mrs. Louden winked slyly at Jack Price, unseen by the others. Both knew that Jim Millen had a sister, Cora, and that Frank Stanley often found his way up to Jim's house even on evenings when Millen was obliged to be out. And it was not supposed that Frank went only to see Mrs. Millen, either.

"Come up to the room while I get ready, Jim, will you?" asked Frank.

"All right."

It was not easy for Jim Millen, with his twisted leg, to go up-stairs. But he never would admit that it troubled him. Frank knew that even a hint of such a possibility made him angry.

But, as they toiled up the three flights from the basement to the second story back room occupied by Frank Stanley and Jack Price, Frank took Jim's arm, and, without ostentation, helped him a little on each stair.

That Jim Millen appreciated the delicacy with which this was done he showed when they reached the landing at the end of their journey. Pausing a moment outside the bedroom door, he gave Stanley a light tap between the shoulders with his cane and murmured:

"Just the same old Stan!"

Jack Price threw open the door and stood back to let the other two go in first.

"You'd better sit on my bed, Jim," suggested Stanley. "It's more comfortable than that wooden chair."

But Millen did not sit down. On the contrary, as Jack closed the door, he hobbled close up to Frank Stanley, and said eagerly:

"Stan, there's something I want to ask you."

"Yes?"

"Just as I came into the dining-room I heard Mrs. Louden say something about 'old Grant.'"

"Yes. He's the superintendent of construction on the Monckton. He's a member of the firm that's building it."

Jim Millen's dark eyes, deep in their sockets, were fixed upon Frank Stanley's face. Into the middle of each ghastly-white cheek came a red spot. In low, deep tones that were almost a rumble, he continued:

"Stan, I want you to tell me straight, without any hold-back, isn't this man Grant one of the firm of Downing & Grant, who built that bridge near Yokohama."

"Yes," answered Stanley slowly. "He is the man."

"And he's the—the—"

Jim Millen swallowed hard and limped across the room and back, as if to compose himself.

"Don't get excited, Jim. Sit down," begged Stanley.

"He's the man I've been looking for, isn't he?" continued Jim, in tense tones, disregarding Stanley's pleading. "He's the—*devil*—who threw me down that hatch? Isn't he? *You* know. Isn't he?"

Backward and forward, backward and forward, went Jim Millen, with his pitiful limp, stumping his heavy cane down at every step. Once he stumbled. Frank Stanley ran forward to save him, but he pushed aside the extended hand, caught himself, and went on. He knew neither friend nor foe just then.

Jack Price looked at him pityingly. He had heard the story of that injured leg, and he could imagine what fierce longings for revenge must be surging up in the bosom of the crippled man.

"I didn't want you to know about his being here," said Stanley at last. "How did you find out?"

Jim Millen brushed one hand across his eyes and threw back his shoulders as well as he could, as if to shake off the spell of blind fury that had made him another man for the time being. Then he answered, in something like his ordinary tone:

"I heard it two days ago. A message came to him over my wire from Pittsburgh. It was addressed to 'Zebediah Grant,' and it was from the 'Downing & Grant Bridge Company.'"

"It passed through your hands at the office, eh?"

"Yes. At first I didn't think much about it. You know how it is when you are receiving. It's just mechanical. You get the words over the wire, all right. But often you're thinking of something else, and two minutes afterward you couldn't tell what the message was to save your neck."

Frank Stanley nodded. This was a fact known to every telegraph operator.

"How did you come to think about this particular message afterward?" he asked.

"It was the name of Grant. It brought back to me that day on the Golden Hope—that both of us are pretty sure to remember till we stop remembering anything. Then I got to thinking of the firm name I had just received—'Downing & Grant.' I recalled that 'Downing' was the name I had heard on the ship as having something to do with building that bridge at Yokohama. I'd never heard what Grant's first name was. It might have been 'Zebediah,' for anything I knew."

"It's not a common name," remarked Jack Price casually.

"It doesn't make any difference. I know this is the same Grant, and I'm glad I've found him at last. I didn't think he could stay in Japan always. I've always felt that I should strike his trail some time or other."

Again Jim Millen took up his nervous march. He limped up and down the room, thumping his cane down hard on the carpet at each step, and mumbling to himself. His rage was carrying him away once more.

Frank Stanley watched him anxiously.

So taken up were the three occupants of the room in their discussion of Zeb Grant that none of them had noticed the door slowly opening, until the voice of an unseen man announced, in low but distinct tones:

"The meeting is just going to begin."

Then the door closed.

Stanley ran and opened it again. But it was dark on the landing, and he could not see anybody.

The sound of footsteps on the stairs above told him which way the mysterious visitor had gone, however.

CHAPTER V.

IN CONCLAVE.

FRANK STANLEY was about to enter his bedroom when the rattle and slam of the street door opening and closing made him wait.

"What's the game, Stan?" whispered Jack Price.

"Keep quiet and we'll find out. Here are some people coming up-stairs."

Stanley slipped into the room, but held the door slightly ajar. Soon he made out the heavy footsteps of two men as they passed the landing and went up the staircase to the floor above.

He came inside and closed the door.

"Jim," he said, "would you mind waiting here a few minutes, while Jack and I go up-stairs? I want to speak to a man who rooms on the third floor."

Jim Millen had ceased his perambulations and was now sitting down, resting his chin on his hands on top of his heavy cane. He was in a deep reverie.

He started as Stanley addressed him, but seemed hardly to comprehend the purport of what his friend said.

"We won't be very long, Jim," added Stanley.

"Oh, all right, Stan," was the absent response. "I'll wait here. Don't hurry on my account."

Jim Millen fell back into his reflections and did not appear to notice the departure of the other two.

"What *is* all this, Stan?" again queried Jack Price, as they went softly up-stairs.

"A meeting in Dave May's room."

"Are you invited?"

"Yes."

"Then you are right in going," said Jack. "But I haven't been asked, and perhaps they will object to my being there."

"No, they won't. The man who told me knew that I'd naturally bring you along."

"All right, Stan. I'm willing. They can't any more than ask me to get out if they don't want me," returned Price carelessly.

Frank Stanley knew Dave May's bedroom well enough. As in all boarding-houses, it was customary for Mrs. Louden's boarders to visit each other's rooms now and then, to smoke and "swap lies."

A knock at the door caused the turning of a key inside. The door opened a little way. Then, as the light shone upon the two young men, it was flung wide. As soon as they had entered it was closed and locked again.

"Whoosh! It's hot in here!" said Jack.

There were eight men in the small apartment. With the two newcomers, the number became ten. Jack Price was right. It *was* hot. Six of the original eight men were smoking, and it was only through a thick haze of tobacco that Dave May was seen, seated at a small table, under the single electric light. He was one of the two who were not smoking.

Two of the company sat on Dave's trunk and two on his bed. The others leaned against the bedstead or wall. When Frank Stanley and Jack Price entered, they were content to join the standees.

"Dave ought to have straps, like the street-cars," whispered Jack to Stanley.

"Hush!"

"Now, gentlemen," said Dave May, "as we're all here, you will please come to order."

Nobody seemed to know exactly how to "come to order." So two of the smokers shifted their pipes from one side of their mouths to the other, and three other men coughed vaguely.

"I'll explain the purpose of this meeting," continued Dave May. "After that, we can decide what to do."

"Good old Dave!"

A little, smiling man, with a very red nose and watery eye, had removed his pipe to offer this friendly encouragement. Having done so, he put his pipe back between his teeth and smoked more furiously than ever.

"Gentlemen will please not interrupt the chair," was the dignified rebuke of Mr. May. Then he continued: "Everybody in this hall—I mean room—is employed on the steel-frame building now in process of construction for the Monckton Trust Company of New York."

"Wow! 'Process of construction' is good—real class!" muttered a solemn-visaged steel-rigger next to Frank Stanley.

Dave May glanced in the direction of the solemn man, but made no comment. He paused momentarily. Then he proceeded with his speech. It seemed to have been carefully prepared beforehand.

"For the past month," he declaimed, "the position of superintendent has been filled by one Zebediah Grant, who—"

Groans and hisses at the mention of this name forced the speaker to stop. He held up his hand in gentle protest. But there was a smile on his face that he could not keep off. He would have hissed with them if he had not been chairman. When the din had died down he continued:

"Zebediah Grant has not treated his men with the consideration to which they are entitled. He has been abusive and unjust. He has found fault without cause. He has tried to destroy our self-respect. He has picked out a certain man for insult of the worst kind."

"Down with old Zeb!" was yelled by some one in a corner.

Stanley saw that it was the man who had whispered to him about the meeting, on the thirtieth floor of the Monckton.

"That insult is going to be avenged!" went on Dave, his voice rising as his anger got the better of his studied elocution. "It's *got* to be! I say it, here and now—I—Dave May! I tell Zebediah Grant—for I know it will be carried to him—that he's made an ass of himself by lying about a man who has always led a clean, sober life. The contemptible cur! He said I was drunk! I'll show him! Rot him! I'm going to catch him where he'll feel it, and feel it so bad it may be the death of him."

"That's pretty straight, eh, Stan?" whispered Jack Price.

Stanley did not reply. He was too much interested in observing Dave May, who seemed to have lost all control of himself. The measured, dignified sentences he had uttered at the beginning of his oration had resolved themselves into a storm of half-incoherent invective.

He got up from his chair, pushing over the little table as he did so. Then he

strode tempestuously up and down by the side of the bed, to the great discomposure of the lounging pipe-smokers, whom the outburst had taken completely by surprise.

Dave May never noticed them. It is doubtful if he saw or heard anything around him just then. He marched up and down, swinging his huge fists and kicking savagely at the carpet when it rumpled under his feet. And all the time he thundered forth threats against the man he hated with such awful intensity.

"No man can call me a drunkard and get away with it," he declared, when he had cooled down a little. "For that one thing, if for nothing else, I would carry out the campaign we are here to begin against Zeb Grant. Maybe you men don't know how I feel when I'm accused of drinking."

"Yes, we do," corrected the red-nosed man hastily. "*We* know how it feels to get *that* handed to us."

"Well, perhaps some of you do," said Dave. "If so, you needn't be told that it's something which must either be proved or suffered for."

"Sure!" assented the ruby-nosed individual. "Make 'em prove it. That's (*hic!*) what I always say. Bully for Dave!"

"Now, gentlemen," continued Dave, resuming his forensic manner, "in these days we can't settle such injuries by fighting on a field, man to man. I wish we could. We have to get revenge for wrongs we suffer by other means. We must stand together in the great brotherhood of manly independence, for liberty, equality, and—"

Dave May stopped. He had gone back to his set speech. But, unfortunately, he could not recall all the flowing periods he had written out so laboriously without referring occasionally to his manuscript. That precious article, which had gone over with the table, had been replaced by some of the smoking men. Dave picked it up and tried to find his place.

Jack Price could not restrain his curiosity. Again he turned to Stanley, to ask, below his breath:

"What do you suppose he means? What is this revenge of his to be?"

"We shall find out directly."

"I don't know about that. It's hardly likely he'll give himself away until he is satisfied that everybody in the room is with him."

That Price was correct in this was soon shown. Dave May, having straightened out his sheets of manuscript, studied one of the pages for a few moments, and then ordered in a loud, official tone:

"The sergeant-at-arms will speak to each person in the hall—I mean, room (I've got it written down 'hall')—and get his pledge of loyalty to the cause. After that we will all take the oath of secrecy together."

"What's the bluff now?" was Jack Price's confidential comment. "I guess this is where we get off, eh, Stan?"

"I suppose so. But—listen! He's going to say something else."

Dave May had laid down the paper, and was holding up a hand for silence.

"We have not yet appointed a sergeant-at-arms," he said. "Therefore, I will undertake the duties of that office myself, *pro tem.*"

"That last crack is a hot one!" observed the solemn-visaged man who had once before audibly admired Dave May's selection of words.

Without further remark, Dave turned to the man nearest to him and whispered something. Apparently the answer was immediately satisfactory, for Dave nodded and passed on to the next without parley. The performance was repeated with equally satisfactory results.

"He's tackling the fellows he's sure of first," muttered Frank Stanley. "It will soon be our turn."

Sooner than Stanley had expected, Dave reached him, and bent down to speak in his ear.

"You're with us, I suppose, Stanley?"

"I'll have to know what it's all about before I can answer that question."

"You can guess, can't you?"

"It looks too serious a business to go into on guesswork," replied Frank. "I'd like to hear from you what it is."

"I should think that thump on the nut you got from old Zeb to-day ought to make it clear to you. Don't you want to get back at him for that?"

"Yes, and I intend to do it," was the emphatic reply.

Dave May's countenance cleared.

"That's all right," he said. "Some of the boys have got together to put through a scheme that will make old Zeb wish he'd never seen the Monckton job. They made me chairman, because they thought I got

it worse than anybody when he called me—well, you know what it was. Now, next to what he's done to me, I reckon you've had the rawest deal from him."

"Yes, I think I have."

"Then, I'll enroll you. We'll take the oath as soon as I've talked to the others. Price will join if you do, I know."

"Wait a minute. Join what? I don't understand."

"Yes, you do, Stanley. You know what it's all about, all right. We're going to hold up the work on the Monckton, and make old Zeb lose a hundred plunks, at least. That'll hurt him worse than losing a leg. We've got it all fixed."

"How?"

"You'll know when you've taken the oath."

Dave May's face began to show the effects of talking earnestly, but in a whisper. This exertion, together with the heat of the room, had made it the color of a half-boiled lobster. Frank Stanley, on the other hand, was comparatively cool and undisturbed.

"You say I'm to take an oath?"

"Yes."

"Well, Dave," said Stanley very deliberately, "I make it a rule never to give a pledge until every side of the proposition it concerns has been laid openly before me."

The anger which suddenly distorted Dave May's determined mouth and blazed in the depths of his eyes was enough to make a timid person quail. It happened, however, that Frank Stanley was not that kind of person. He merely looked at the furious engineer curiously.

"Does that mean you won't join us?" growled Dave at last.

"If it's a conspiracy against the contractors — which means playing traitor — it means just that," was the emphatic answer.

"Then, Zeb Grant is a friend of yours?" sneered Dave.

"No; he is my enemy. And for that very reason I can't afford to let him say I fought him with treacherous weapons." Then, in a louder tone, he added: "You'll have to count me out of this, Dave."

"Me, too," came from Jack Price.

Frank Stanley and Jack Price were on the pitch-dark landing, with the door of Dave May's bedroom closed, before the other men, peering through the tobacco-smoke, knew why they had gone out so abruptly.

As the two young men groped about in the darkness, trying to determine the situation of the staircase, Frank brushed against a man standing close to the wall by the side of the door.

"Er—I beg your pardon," stammered Stanley. "I didn't see you."

The response of the unknown he had jostled certainly was not what he had anticipated. Instead of acknowledging his apology, the person said:

"Why didn't you *stay* in there? I only wish they would let *me* take the oath."

The voice was that of Jim Millen!

(To be continued.)

The Hawkins Tack-Driver.

BY EDGAR FRANKLIN.

The Amateur Inventor Is Driven to Seek Refuge Aloft When He Oversteps the Bounds of Usefulness with His Latest Labor-Saving Device.

MORE than once I have been accused of carrying around too much business conscience.

There is no apparent reason for this, for I am otherwise strong and healthy, but the fact remains that I do go to a good deal of trouble to make certain that people are satisfied after they have dealt with our house.

For example:

When Winfield built his huge yacht, he desired that his very ample crew and their officers be provided with uniforms of a quality and variety—for different occasions—that would have staggered even the usual wealthy owner of a big private craft.

Winfield, in spite of his millions, knows how to buy what he wants himself. And

when he had finally placed his order for woolens with us, and the contracting tailor had taken the goods, Winfield's crew was due to receive about the most ornate collection of high-class clothes that ever went aboard ship.

Hence, when the big new yacht was launched and all but ready for sea, the report came to me that the crew was rigged out—and I was anxious to look over the outfit to make certain that our end of the job had been furnished in perfect condition. I telephoned to Winfield, and his secretary informed me that the crew would probably be aboard, ready for inspection or anything else, on the following morning.

Wherefore I purposed going to the far end of Brooklyn, to the basin where the Paula lay at anchor, and looking things over.

Hawkins was at my house the night before, and I mentioned casually:

"Going to be a fine day to-morrow for the man that can be outdoors."

"That has nothing to do with a man who has to stick in an office," the inventor answered sourly.

"Tied down to the desk, are you?" I inquired, with subdued rejoicing.

"Ever see me when I wasn't?" Hawkins asked, looking intently at the edge of my library rug.

I had—several times. I hated to remember the times. But they did not matter now. So long as Hawkins wasn't due to try a new torpedo on the hull of the Paula between eleven and twelve next day, we could forget the whole subject of weather conditions and past experiences; so we ambled on to something else.

I rode down with Hawkins next morning, and he left the train at his usual stop. I went to my own offices for a little—then plunged into the wilds of Brooklyn, and went on a hunt for the proper car.

At something after eleven, I stood out on the long wharf and stared thoughtfully at Winfield's yacht, while a hard citizen with the general effect of a brandied peach went to bring around his rowboat and take me off to her.

She was surely an amazingly fine piece of shipbuilding. A pleasure-boat in these days, she would have passed for a rather magnificent liner a quarter of a century back. I stared at her still as the powerful strokes of my preserved boatman brought us to the steps at her side.

Winfield, I was rather flattered to find, was waiting for me, and he shook hands cordially as I stepped to the deck.

For the vessel, he merely waved a hand and beamed.

"Have you ever seen it beaten?" he asked.

"I have never seen anything approaching it!" I murmured, staring at the flawless lengths of deck and brass and mahogany, stretching vastly either way from the thick, short, tan funnel in the middle of the boat.

"And the uniforms are up to all the rest of it!" pursued Mr. Winfield. "I've got every man shipped and fitted out, and we take our trial spin a week from to-day—or rather, our first trip. Ow!"

The last came as he rubbed a little red spot on his hand, and with his handkerchief dabbed off a drop or two of blood.

"Have you—er—injured your hand?" I inquired.

"Got a tack in it," Mr. Winfield snapped. "Yes, I think we've reached something pretty near perfection here. Just a few finishing touches to be put on—and off we go. There isn't a flaw in your—"

He stopped there.

For the moment I didn't see why; then I perceived a mate hurrying past, his face purple with anger, and one hand clenched in the other, with a handkerchief between.

"What's the matter with you?" Winfield asked.

"Th—that's all that's the matter!" said the uniformed gentleman—and it was a good deal less than he meant.

Winfield stared savagely as his officer unwound the handkerchief. I started back with an exclamation—for the hand was literally torn up across the back and bleeding freely!

"Did you catch it, too?"

"Yes, I caught it, too!" snapped the officer as he hurried on down the deck. "I'm going to open the doctor-shop and get something antiseptic!"

"Go ahead!" Mr. Winfield called after him. "I'll—er—attend to that!"

The mate vanished, and Mr. Winfield turned again to me with rather a strained smile.

"The uniforms—" he began dutifully.

And he stopped short again, and this time I had a hint of the cause of the trouble.

We were standing near the closed door of a passage, and from behind that door had issued a wild yell of pain, and then:

"Great Hades!"

"Well?" said a milder voice that struck the faintest familiar note in my inner consciousness.

"That was my foot, you clod!" yelled the first voice.

"Well, if you'll be good enough to keep your feet off the floor and your hands off me—" said the mild voice more shrilly.

And the door opened, and another officer stepped out, limping and cursing as might have cursed a fireproof record taken in the lower regions for the phonograph!

I barely noticed him as he ceased cursing. I had recognized that other voice. It was Hawkins—Hawkins, whom I had left safely stowed away in town! And now he was here, and—

At that moment he appeared in the doorway, scowling.

He was a weird sight, too. On his back was strapped a nickeled box about the size of a dress-suit case! From it a short, steel-wound, flexible pipe seemed to depend, and the pipe ended in a long nickeled nozzle, like the tube of a vacuum cleaner.

Or perhaps it bore more resemblance to a gun-barrel, for there was a sort of trigger at the upper end of it, and Hawkins's finger was on the trigger—and just here I emitted a scream of pain, for my arm seemed to have been shot off! Incidentally, that devilish gun-barrel had been raised for an instant as Hawkins gaped at Winfield, and I had heard a snapping, rather like a series of cap-pistol reports!

And now I was rolling my sleeve up unceremoniously—and picking no less than seven able-bodied carpet-tacks out of my arm!

"Hawkins!" Mr. Winfield roared. "Put that blamed thing down! What do you mean by mangling my officers, wounding my guests—"

"I didn't come out here to talk about that man," indicating me, "if he's one of your guests!" Hawkins replied with equal heat. "I came to learn whether the floors of this yacht are to be used as a boulevard during the few moments I shall be at work upon them!"

"Mr. Hawkins! The tender will be lowered and ready to take you ashore in five minutes!" the owner informed him.

"And the barnacles may sink your tender for all I care. I'll leave when I finish this job, and not before!" the inventor thundered in reply.

I fancied that Mr. Winfield was going to blow up and burst. His officer smiled gloriously.

"May I put him off the yacht, sir?" he asked politely.

Honestly, I don't know what would have happened if Winfield had spoken just then. I have a notion that he would have blasted Hawkins from the face of the earth and the waters thereof.

But as it chanced, he didn't speak, for a messenger-boy came along the deck with several envelopes, and Winfield read them.

"I'll have to go below and write answers for these, if you'll excuse me," he said to me. Then he looked at his officer. "Keep away from that idiot, Ames, unless he makes trouble," he added in a tone perfectly audible to Hawkins. "If he does, let me know."

With that he hurried away, and the officer, with a long, contemplating stare of fury at Hawkins, finally strolled after.

And we were alone—Hawkins and I and the sample-table of nickelwork!

"And I thought you were safe in your devilish office!" I said bitterly, as I finally worked my own handkerchief into comfortable winding about the bloody arm.

"That's a lie," said Hawkins politely.

"Say, I wish you'd call me a liar again!" I said heatedly as I stepped forward.

I must have seemed threatening. At least, Hawkins raised his long nickel pipe in something like defense—and it began to crackle!

Yes, it began to crackle and pour out a stream of tiny black things; and a poor, inoffensive little sparrow, who had flown out and perched on the rail, dropped to the deck with a dull thud—plugged full of tacks!

"What in blazes is it?" I gasped.

"It's a new kind of perfume!" said Hawkins. "We distil it from noses cut off fools who make a practise of poking them into other people's business!"

"Do you suppose—" I began.

"No! *I know!*" sighed the inventor. And he turned his back on me and stared at the heavy linoleum on the floor of the passage. He opened the starboard door of the passage and drew a long breath.

"This is simply the Hawkins Tackitite!" he explained. "And you want to keep out of its way!"

I obeyed. I stepped into an open door at the side and watched, probably much as the poor little birdie had watched a few minutes back.

Hawkins sighted along the meeting-point of wall and linoleum and found them to match. He gripped his machine-gun, or whatever it was, and placed it firmly at the edge of the linoleum. Then, pulling back on the trigger, he walked quickly the length of the passage—released the trigger—raised the tube, and smiled. And I'll be eternally hanged if the stuff wasn't tacked to the floor as perfectly and evenly as if a man had worked fifteen minutes over it!

Hawkins gave his tube a graceful shove alongside the door-sill; the floor-covering was anchored! He came briskly down the opposite side of the passage, with the same result! He covered the last door-sill in possibly three seconds—and the linoleum was a part of the yacht!

It is possible that I smiled grudging admiration, and that Hawkins caught the expression from the corner of his eye. At all events, he sauntered up to me and yawned.

"I suppose even *you* can understand that?" he suggested.

"It seems to work," I admitted.

"Thank you ever so much—you gawping—bah!" said the inventor. "Did you ever see or hear of anything like it? Answer, no! And you can't see any reason for this working, either. I'll make it clear to you, if such a thing's possible! Do you see this small case on my back?" he added sharply, pointing around to the miniature nickel trunk.

"There is a hint of something metallic there," I said humbly.

"And this"—he held up the tube and I ducked swiftly—"this is nothing more than a—well, a gun-barrel, with an interior construction all my own!"

I nodded.

"I never knew that anybody could shoot birds with carpet-tacks before," I agreed, looking at the unhappy little corpse.

"The thing on my back," Hawkins concluded sternly, "is merely a reservoir of about two million small tacks." He shifted it and grunted a little as he dabbed at the perspiration on his forehead. "When I press this trigger, thus, the tacks are driven out, point first, by another scheme of my own—so!"

He pulled a trifle too suddenly. Instead of mangling the sailor who was just passing along the deck, the Tackitite discharged some fifty tacks into a carved hardwood panel—one of a series that walled the passage.

The sailor dropped almost flat at the sound and leaped out of sight. Hawkins paled a little as he surveyed the ruined piece of wall—and then shrugged his shoulders.

"Serves the fool right!" he said with a sort of hoarse carelessness. "He has no business ranting around and making me nervous, when I'm putting down his stuff free of charge—and simply for future advertising!"

He took a last look at the panel, and turned away as a guilty man might turn from the remains of his victim.

"Come and take a look over the boat," he said hastily. "It's—fair. That's all."

I was glad enough to follow him out of that fatal spot. It would have been an exquisitely perfect example of my usual luck with Hawkins to have had Winfield come along just then and accuse me of destroying his carvings!

But if I followed Hawkins, rest assured that it was with the hope that we might stumble on Winfield, all the same, and that I might ask the use of his tender and escape, inspection or no inspection. And still—happy things like that don't happen to me!

The big, beautiful saloon was wholly empty of human life until we entered. The walls were done as only the country's foremost artists could have done them. The paneling was more than splendid. The floors showed four or five big oriental rugs, arranged artistically enough; and the rugs were striking me as slightly out of place, when—

"Bah! Another free job for me!" Hawkins sniffed. "I suppose that's where they want their rugs!"

"I'm sure I don't know anything about it," I said faintly.

"I'm sure you don't, too!" remarked the inventor pleasantly as he took a new hold on his nickeled gun. "Well, I *offered* to do it for what good it might do the Tackitite later on. Sit down. Griggs, for a minute."

He pursed his lips and squinted at the beautiful floor-coverings—and that undefinable, uneasy notion of their incongruity grew on me.

Evidently it didn't grow on Hawkins to any marked extent. He sized up the largest and handsomest rug and trained his gun on it. He began to walk, and as the trigger was pressed a buzzing, rattling sound proclaimed that tacks were going through that ancient gem at the rate of a thousand a second, or thereabouts.

Then it was done and Hawkins faced me calmly.

"Neat and swift!" he observed.

"What—what drives 'em out?" I asked vaguely.

"A schoolboy of ten, studying elementary physics, would spot that first," said Hawkins sneeringly. "Do you remember when they were experimenting with the little cars—driving them across New York without electricity or horses?"

"I—remember something."

"What did they use?"

"I don't know," I admitted.

"They used compressed air," said Hawkins. "I'll take the red one next!"

One minute and the red rug was built into the Paula. There was the next one, where heavy greens predominated, and Hawkins sealed its fate with his Tackitite. There was the last one, too—a superb piece of weaving in light tints and gold.

And when that, too, had had its overdose of iron tacks, Hawkins sat down heavily beside me and stared around with curling lip.

"Money-spending scheme of a man devoid of artistic intelligence or even good taste!" he stated. "If Winfield had asked a suggestion or two from me when he began decorating here, his money—"

The door opened.

It opened with a crash—and Winfield stalked in angrily. Hawkins leaped to his feet and—

"I thought I told you to get off this boat!" said Winfield.

"And I told you—"

"Never mind what you told me! Clear out of here!"

"I told you I'd get off when the job was done," Hawkins said with iron calm. "The job is now done!"

"Hey?" Winfield stared at him.

"I've fastened down the last of your rugs, to—"

Winfield's gaze shot to the floor—and his mouth opened in justified horror.

"What—what d'you suppose a man would be doing with loose rugs on the floor at sea?" he stuttered. "I had those sent down from the house to—to get an idea of the colors I needed in here. Why, a rug at sea—" he ended chokingly.

"These won't slip! I'll bet my life on that!" the inventor said grimly.

Mr. Winfield caught at his collar for an instant.

"You haven't been driving your hellish spikes through *those?*" he roared at Hawkins.

"The job is perfect!" said the inventor complacently.

For possibly ten seconds Winfield stood petrified. Then, with a leap, he reached down and caught at the red beauty wildly.

And, so far from being nailed down, the Tackitite seemed to have driven straight through it! With a faint ripping and tearing, the center of the rug came up loose in Winfield's hand! The border remained where it was!

I have seen many men in many kinds of rage. I have never seen a man in a fury like Winfield's, though. And, incidentally, I never want to see another!

Rumbling, roaring to himself, Winfield clutched at his lightest gem of weaving. It gave less trouble than the red one. It merely left the floor in one big, ragged square—and the frayed border was left behind.

Winfield, white to the lips, gave one glance at Hawkins. So did I.

For the first time on record, Hawkins was using something like horse-sense. He was in full retreat, half-ton trunk and all, through the doorway and out to the deck!

And just there I dropped unostentatiously behind a great chair and watched Winfield stand trembling for an instant—and then go bounding through the door after the inventor!

I did not hesitate. With a sort of fascinated horror, I raced out behind Winfield to see the end.

Sailors were on deck as I emerged, fifteen feet behind the pursuit.

They seemed to take in the situation at a glance. They rushed *en masse* at the inventor—and in a fraction of a second they were tumbling hither and thither, a screaming mass of injured humanity! It was weird—it was almost awful in its way! It meant that the Tackitite had been directed at them.

For the moment they were out of the combat, and I leaped after Mr. Winfield. Hawkins, for the weight he carried, had a splendid lead. To just what point he meant to escape, Heaven alone knew; the Paula could not have been over three hundred feet in length. But whatever the point, he was making for it like a race-horse.

On the other hand, though, Winfield was not doing so badly. The Tackitite happened to be in eruption under Hawkins's

frenzied clutch, and pointing deckward; and Winfield, at two-second intervals, was looking from the galloping inventor to the glaring, waving iron trail of big tack-heads, driven mercilessly into his beautiful fresh deck.

It would take much long, careful work to dig out those tacks and restore the original immaculate finish; and the realization of this seemed to spur Winfield's big body to greater speed.

An officer and a trim sailor leaped out from a doorway at the racket, and Hawkins dived past their outstretched hands like a hunted hare. They yelled at him—and he turned a wild face at them for a second. And when he turned, the deadly muzzle of the Tackitite turned with him; and the officer shrieked like a maniac and grabbed his right shin, and danced, screaming!

The sailor reached to catch him—and three little black dots appeared on the sailor's hand and he had trouble of his own.

From where I do not pretend to say, a gigantic negro appeared, all in white and with a white cook's cap on his wool. He tried to dive at Hawkins, football fashion. Also, he slipped headlong, and the inventor did a kangaroo leap over his big form.

And as he saw the heavy white apron flattened on the deck for a second or two, he made a move worthy of Napoleon. He slowed suddenly and aimed his muzzle at the apron—and the man was nailed down tight!

And Mr. Winfield had sprawled headlong over him!

It was time for a plain business man like me to step out of the picture. Dozens of feet were rushing up behind me, dozens of voices were shouting; and just as Winfield picked himself up, howling, and the negro, with a mighty effort, tore himself loose from the deck and took his place beside his galloping employer, I stepped into a niche beside the funnel.

Hawkins vanished forward.

I noted vaguely that people were collecting on the pier and staring out toward the yacht. I didn't blame them. A whole army of uniformed men seemed to be tearing past me now.

There was blue and gold, and there was white duck; there were light men and dark men; and men who were limping and cursing, and others who were waving bandaged hands and bellowing incoherently.

They were after Hawkins.

And while Hawkins seemed to have a good lead on this first lap around the yacht's deck, the pursuers would probably separate into two parties and get him on the second lap.

And when that collection of able-bodied citizens caught Hawkins and put a high polish on the job of avenging their own wrongs and their employer's—somehow it sickened me. I wanted to get away—to call for a boat—to—

"Griggs!"

I jumped one foot.

Hawkins, his Tackitite muzzle clattering after him, had slid to a standstill beside me, and was clutching my arm.

"Up there, Griggs! Up there!" he panted.

"Up—"

"Up there, man! Quick!"

He was pointing to the top of the funnel, perhaps fifteen feet above where we stood. He was gibbering, too, and rolling perspiration. He took the liberty of kicking me in his excitement. Then he grabbed a deck-chair and slammed it on the roof of the big jacket around the funnel.

"Get up here! Quick!" he screamed. "They're coming around the stern now!"

I obeyed mechanically. Somehow, I seemed to know what he wanted; and whatever he might have done to me in the past, I was willing to give him a little help in this last crisis of his life.

I jumped up into the chair and stood upon it—and Hawkins was beside me. He caught at me with one hand, and at one of the steel stays of the funnel with the other.

"Steady!" he gulped. "I'm going up to your shoulders, Griggs!"

He did it—I don't know how. Perhaps real fear will give a man the power to do anything. In any case, two or three terrific wrenches, and Hawkins was grinding his heavy heels into my shoulders.

Then he jumped for the funnel, kicking me clear without formality.

It really did not matter much. I merely toppled down, chair and all, and acquired a dent in the back of my head which is visible whenever my hair has been cut too short. There were stars by the billion, and I heard distinctly the splitting of timber when I struck; but friendly hands, somewhere in the crowd that had come with the stars, dragged me to my feet, and I was able to stand and see dizzily.

They were all there, gibbering and chat-

tering around the base of the funnel—Winfield and his officers and crew and all.

And perched somehow atop that funnel Hawkins sat, panting, mad-eyed, red, and wet, but with the Tackitite complete and his own person out of reach. In a way, it was one of the most dumfounding things I have ever seen Hawkins do.

He was talking, too.

"Don't you dare!" he screamed. "Don't you dare come near me! Don't one of you try to touch me! If you—do—" he panted, "I'll fill you so full—so full of iron tacks that—"

Winfield had found his breath again.

"Ames!" he roared.

The mate touched his cap, his teeth bared.

"Bring that man down. Take as many men as you need."

Twenty volunteers leaped forward. Hawkins gave a sort of nimble, monkeylike shift on his perch and brought the Tackitite to bear.

"Go 'way!" he yelled wildly. "I'll shoot low first, but—"

Mr. Ames advanced at a stride.

Then, albeit the Tackitite was swirling around crazily in Hawkins's shaky hands, all its attention seemed to concentrate on Ames's unhappy right leg. The trim officer leaped back, choking out scream after scream and hopping on his port limb.

And they laid him down on the deck, out of reach of the Tackitite, and discovered that, by gently lifting the trousers leg, roars of pain and dozens of carpet tacks could be drawn simultaneously from Mr. Ames's being.

Followed a long pause.

It was a first victory for Hawkins, but my blood began to turn chilly. What would they do to him now? Had he lost what little sense he had, completely? Wouldn't they actually kill him—a crowd of that size—when once they had him?

I glanced up.

Hawkins, tilted on the sharp, curving edge of the funnel, was crouched with his Tackitite clutched after the fashion of the melodrama bandit behind the hand-painted canvas rock.

And yet it seemed to me that his expression was changing—that he was actually getting back some of his old assurance. He began to look down defiantly. He also began to sit up with what looked like self-confidence. Was it conceivable that he was not going to surrender now, or—

"Come down here and give yourself up, Hawkins!" I cried warningly.

"Is that you, Griggs?" shouted the inventor. "It is! Well, will you kindly attend to your own affairs?"

I gasped. Hawkins managed to get to a position where it was possible for him to lay the Tackitite jauntily across his knees; and he looked down defiantly, and thundered:

"Gentlemen, if you do not feel that it is time for this asinine business to come to an end, I do!"

"Well, come down!" a terrifying bass chorus howled at him.

Hawkins started.

"I am coming down when I have the perfect assurance of bodily safety from you, Mr. Win—where is Mr. Winfield?"

Mr. Winfield apparently had gone into thin air.

A new roar greeted Hawkins, whose eyes were widening again. Some one threw an iron bar, which missed the inventor by several yards, and crashed musically through a big skylight. The men looked at one another and looked at Hawkins—and, abruptly, Mr. Winfield reappeared.

In one hand he carried a long navy revolver. The other hand was clenched tight, and his eyes were blazing.

"Come down!" he roared.

Hawkins stared stonily at him.

"Come down, or I'll kill you!" Winfield repeated.

"No—you won't!" the inventor chattered back suddenly. "You're a rich man, but there's lots of witnesses here, and I've got a little money myself; and if you dare to kill me, I'll neither sleep nor eat till I see you in—"

He stopped for lack of breath—and not a soul smiled!

Winfield stared at him for an instant, and the gun came down.

He drew a chair toward him and sat down with a grim smile.

"You're right, Hawkins," he said. "I'm not going to shoot you. But there is no law to prevent my men attending to the routine of the yacht's work."

It was a cryptic sort of speech. At the moment I made nothing of it, and there were no highly enlightened expressions around me.

But Winfield sat there, minute after minute and minute after minute. The rest of us stood about, shifting from one foot to the

other, and looking at Winfield, whose calm eye remained fixed.

And Hawkins found the answer a second or so before the crowd on deck.

Smoke was coming up out of that funnel.

From the first thin curl, there was never a doubt about it. It came swiftly, and it grew as swiftly. Hawkins twisted about and looked down, and he let forth one shriek of:

"Fire!"

"You bet there's fire!" shouted Winfield, as he stood erect and fingered the revolver. "Come down!"

The inventor gripped his Tackitite frantically. It gave a terrific series of reports—and a mass of small hardware crashed through a second skylight, apparently in one lump.

And then—Hawkins slipped.

Yes, with a faint yell, the weight of the machine seemed to buckle him together—and Hawkins, Tackitite, and all dropped out of sight, down the funnel, and into the furnace.

One great gasp—and silence settled on the whole white-faced crew. I looked at Winfield. His face was a pale green, and his knees were shaking.

And, just then, a gentle pattering was heard on the deck. We looked up together.

From the mouth of the funnel a steady stream of tacks was pouring into the air from somewhere below. It traveled some thirty feet in the atmosphere, spread — and a cascade of tacks clattered all about us. Not a hundred, nor a thousand, but thousands upon thousands of black carpet tacks soared into the sunny air and dropped again.

And then the storm ceased—and, somehow, I felt it in my bones.

Hawkins, wild and untamed inventor that he had lived, had gone down to death with his finger on the trigger and his gun empty!

The men stood with bowed heads. The owner of the yacht covered his face.

The rest is sad.

They located Hawkins in a twist of the funnel, at the side of the saloon. They went to work at the task of recovering his remains. They destroyed, according to estimates I heard on the spot, a little over eight thousand dollars' worth of art work and mechanical work—with Winfield tramping the abused floor the while, cursing the day of his birth and asking Heaven why he had let himself in for this terrible trouble.

What did it matter now that he had merely ordered a bundle of newspapers lighted in the empty grates to scare Hawkins off the funnel? What did anything matter? He was a murderer, etc., etc., etc.

Then they went through the last layer, and prepared to remove what was once Hawkins.

The body inaugurated the process by thrusting out one leg, planting the foot squarely on the chief engineer's chest, and knocking him flat. Then the rest of Hawkins followed hurriedly, bounced to the floor, and thundered:

"Well, it's blamed near time you dug me out, you—you—"

Winfield faced him, paralyzed, for half a minute. Hawkins, noting the change that was coming into his eye, glared silently as well. Then:

"I am willing to put you ashore unharmed," said Winfield very slowly.

"You'd better be—" Hawkins cried. Then he caught the eye again. "I am willing to go," he said meekly, as he rubbed his head with one sooty hand.

Slowly we three marched to the deck. The crew rushed forward—and Winfield's gun leveled at them.

"I'll shoot the first man that touches *this!*" he said quietly, and they fell back.

"If Griggs here hadn't—" Hawkins began pleasantly, as he was aided toward the stairs.

"Are you a friend of *this?*" Winfield asked me.

"I have been for years," I confessed.

Winfield held out a limp, cold hand to me as Hawkins staggered down to the waiting tender, distributing soot impartially over several white duck uniforms below.

"*Good-by*, Mr. Griggs!" he said emphatically.

He meant it, too, I reflected, as the tender landed us at the wharf, amid a curious crowd, and I allowed Hawkins to elucidate matters as he chose to the two policemen who were handling the curious crowd. Later, incidentally, I was quite positive that he meant it. That crew needed new uniforms; and, incidentally, my firm did not supply the goods.

The Tackitite itself? I don't know. Maybe it tacked itself tight to the inside of that funnel and is there yet. Hawkins tells me that falling on it saved his life. That is all I can tell about the Tackitite's present, and all I want to know.

In the Name of the King.*

BY ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE,

Author of "In Treason's Track," "The Spy of Valley Forge," "The Sword of the Emperor," etc.

Why Dirck Dewitt Was Sent by Charles the Second from Old England to New Amsterdam, and the Thrilling Adventures That Befell Him Under the Dutch and Among the Indians.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

THE story is told by Dirck Dewitt, born in New England, but sent to New Amsterdam as a spy by Charles II of England to ascertain the lay of the land with respect to the British attempting to wrest the New Netherlands from the Dutch. On board the ship Stadtholder, Dewitt loses his heart to Greta Van Hoeck, who seeks to make him reveal his purpose in sailing to the New World. He is about to comply when her brother Louis appears on the scene. There is no love lost between the two, and now they draw sword upon each other, and are hard at it when the combat is interrupted in startling fashion.

CHAPTER V.

THE STAND AGAINST COWARDS.

THERE was a confused babel of shouts from below, a sound of many running feet, of screams. An acrid gray cloud burst from the companionway. Van Hoeck and I fell apart. Our swords were free, but we made no further move to use them.

Pallid and aghast, we stood listening to the most awful sound that can greet the ears at sea. The sound of voices roaring:

"Fire! The ship is on fire!"

Up from below swarmed passengers. From rigging and deck quarters flocked the crew. Even the helmsman deserted his post; and the Stadtholder, steerless, came about with a jerk that nearly swamped her.

What use for my dull pen to describe that scene? The air was full of smoke, of clamor, of almost tangible horror. The passengers ran idly to and fro, questioning, screaming, lamenting.

The crew were in little better case. The mate, who was on deck, did what he could to preserve discipline, but demoralization reigned.

Nor could the panic-stricken ones be wholly blamed. Consider our position: miles from shore, in a flimsy wooden ship, low-laden with casks of wines, gunpowder, and spirits. And the ship afire! The spirit or powder casks must soon be reached. And then!

Captain Stein had not appeared on deck. With one or two of the braver sailors he was still below, fighting against hope to keep the fast-spreading flames from the hold. (I later heard that a drunken sailor smoking in his bunk had started the trouble.)

The sailors on deck, as soon as they could organize their panic-stricken members in any way, shoved through the confused mass of passengers to where the life-boats swung.

Down came the boats from their davits, onto the deck, where a score of hands seized and lifted them over the rail. There was no effort to lower them into the water in orderly fashion. Indeed, the task was impeded by the wild eagerness of each member of the crew to be near enough the rail to jump into the boats the moment they should touch water.

That way madness lay. And the mate saw the peril. Struggling to the rail, he leaped upon it. He had snatched up a boat-hook and was whirling it above his head.

"*Back!*" he roared. "back, you cowardly swabs! Passengers first! Starboard watch, detail six men to bring up provisions and water. Bo's'n! Stand by to—"

* *Began April* ARGOSY. *Single copies, 10 cents.*

He got no further. A forward surge of the fear-mad crowd caught him and shoved him bodily into the sea.

At that moment Captain Stein and his handful of singed, blackened fire-fighters came reeling up the companionway. Behind them, through the hatchway, burst a swirl of black-red flame.

Stein's glance took in the whole situation. He flung himself among his frenzied men. Had he arrived a moment earlier his authority might perchance have availed. But the sight of the flames had robbed the crew of their last vestige of sanity.

Bellow orders and gesticulate as he might, the captain could do nothing to stem the tide.

Boat after boat splashed into the water below, each bound now to the ship only by light hempen hawsers. And the crew made for the port gangway, where two or three of them had hurriedly affixed a companion-ladder.

Stein beat his way to the ladder-head and flashed out his cutlas.

"Get back there!" he screamed. "Passengers first! The cur who comes in reach of my hanger will get a carved skull for cowardice."

But the men, like frightened sheep, could not be stayed. True, those in front sought to back away from the short, whizzing blade. But the press behind them was too great. One red-headed Flanders man in the first rank of the fugitives was pushed forward just too far.

Down swept the captain's hanger, and down went the red-headed man beneath the slash. Yet, falling, he managed to raise himself to his knees, with the snarl of a hurt beast, and lunged viciously upward at Stein with a curved sheath-knife.

The captain's knees doubled, and he sank down across the body of the fallen sailor.

It had all happened with lightning speed. And, at the captain's mishap, the crew hurled themselves toward the gangway again.

But, quick as they were, one passenger was quicker. Louis Van Hoeck, sword in hand, cleared at a bound the two prostrate bodies and stood in the gangway, facing the men.

His lips were drawn away from his long teeth in a wolfish grin. His lean, tall body was crouched as if to launch itself upon the sailors.

"Now then!" he laughed (and his laugh was not good to hear). "Who is the first to hunt for safety past my sword-point?"

His cold, jeering fury, as well as his sudden advent on the scene, momentarily checked the rush. But only for an instant. Again the human wave rolled forward.

Yet that moment's respite had given me the time I needed to spring to Van Hoeck's aid.

There, side by side, we two enemies, who so lately had striven for each other's deaths, stood with bared blades, awaiting the onset.

And it came.

The men threw themselves madly upon the frail human barrier that stood between them and safety. It is a scene I do not even yet like to look back on.

I had fought before, but never like this. It was like trying to stem the stampede of a herd of infuriated wild beasts.

Yet, fierce as it was, the fight was brief. We two were skilled swordsmen. The wide rail on either side of us made the open gangway a niche where swiftness and skill could accomplish far more than in the open.

After the first rush, the men reeled back from the area of our fast-flying blades. And in the space between lay five bodies.

Van Hoeck was for dashing among our baffled foes and wreaking useless vengeance. But with one hand I forced him back to my side by main force, while with my sword arm I still menaced the doubtful, baffled crew.

"Quarters, all!" I shouted, taking advantage of their indecision. "Now, then, two men to enter each boat and to steady it while passengers descend! *So!* Now the women. Next, two of you pick up Captain Stein and lower him into a boat. Now the men passengers—and last, you sailors. In order there!"

My orders, given one at a time, were, to my surprise, obeyed as men are wont to obey whom sea-life has taught the habit of dull routine. Cowed, dazed, the crew worked as efficiently as though no danger threatened.

We let them pass us, two by two, until the boats were manned. With drawn sword, Van Hoeck guarded against the boatmen's pushing off prematurely from the burning ship.

Next, the women passengers, Greta among them, were helped in safety down the shaky ladder. Then Stein, not only

still breathing, but perfectly conscious, was lowered. The men passengers and the crew followed.

The fire had gained such headway I dared not risk sending below for provisions. At any minute now the flames might reach the spirit-casks or even the powder-kegs in the after-hold.

There was no time to waste. Shore was not many miles away. The night was calm, save for a light breeze. So provisions were not really needed.

As each boat filled I ordered it cast off and propelled out of the danger zone. At last every shallop and life-boat was full and had pushed away from the vessel's side. The dingey alone remained.

"You first!" I ordered Van Hoeck, motioning toward the little craft.

He glanced at me. In the moonlight our eyes met. I read no lessening of his former hatred despite the fact that we two had fought side by side and saved the lives of all on board.

"You first!" I repeated.

He shrugged his shoulders, slipped his sword back into the scabbard, and ran down the ladder. Into the dingey he sprang, cast off the rope, and, holding the tiny boat in place by means of his grip on the ladder, waited for me to follow him.

The flames were now bursting from every opening, and the deck floor was stinging hot under my feet. The smoke was so dense I could scarce see a yard in front of me.

I turned to grope my way down the ladder. As I did so, the portion of deck on which I stood rose straight into the air, carrying me with it as though I had been of a feather's weight. The rending, roaring sound of an explosion deafened me.

I felt myself whirled through space, millions of miles, the whole world around me agonizingly bright with myriad-colored lights. Then I sank into a cool darkness.

And I slept. Or died.

And after a time I dreamed. A strange dream. First I smelt Mayflowers strong in the air that had so lately been areek with smoke. Then I opened my eyes. I seemed to be lying in a boat of some strange description. Dawn was paling the sky. Above me, bathing my throbbing head, was a girl.

"Greta!" I murmured dizzily.

But it was not Greta. The face above mine was almost as dark as an Indian's. The eyes — large, luminous, soft — were alight with tender pity.

At her breast the dream-girl wore a mass of Mayflowers. A spray of them fell away, and dropped into my hand. My fingers closed about it.

I had a strange sense of rest, of utter peace. I was content to lie still, looking up into that sweet, dark face with its glorious eyes.

"You are very beautiful!" I whispered.

Then I fell asleep again.

CHAPTER VI.

I DROP IN FROM—NOWHERE.

FROM the dream and from the long dead sleep or brain concussion of which it was a part, I awoke at last, after what seemed endless centuries.

I opened my eyes, eager to see again that dainty little face with its great eyes. And I drew in my breath for a scent of the Mayflowers.

Poetical actions both, with direfully unpoetic results.

For the deep breath I took brought me only the pungent smell of waterside shipping and of city streets. The opening of my eyes gave me no vision of a girl's moonlit visage crowned by shimmering hair.

Instead, leaning above me were half a dozen men, all talking in Dutch. Behind and over them I saw the raftered ceiling of a large room. A wizened man in black was feeling my pulse.

"He is coming to his senses," said the man with professional unction. "The heart-beats are growing strong and normal. See, the color is returning to his lips. In a few moments at most—"

"What's that he is gripping in his other hand?" asked a deep voice.

Some one, I felt vaguely, began to loosen my unconsciously clenched fist. In another moment my fingers were opened. I heard another voice say in surprise:

"'Tis a spray of Mayflower, your excellency!"

"Mayflower!" echoed the deep voice. "The man was cast up by the sea. For weeks he had voyaged on the Stadtholder. Whence could he find a Mayflower? They grow not on the waves. Nor anywhere else that I know of save in our southern pine woods here in the New Netherlands."

"'Tis all savoring of mystery," commented a voice I knew. "Two nights ago the fellow was hurled into the air by the explosion whereof I told your excellency. I stood in the dingey, at the passenger-ladder's foot. The explosion knocked me into the sea and I had great ado in getting back into the boat. I scoured the near-by waters in vain, searching for him. Yet, this morning, he appeareth, full clad, and in dry clothes, lying senseless at the doors of the White Hall. 'Tis wholly past comprehension."

The White Hall! Surely I was not still in London! No, for these folks were speaking Dutch. And the last speaker was, past doubt, Louis Van Hoeck.

Then I remembered. Governor Petrus Stuyvesant had built near the Battery, in New Amsterdam, a State house which he named the White Hall.

Then I was in New Amsterdam! But how came I there? When the Stadtholder blew up we were far below Coleman's Point.

Now, no explosive known could hurl a man a dozen miles or more and lay him unhurt on a door-step, drying his sea-drenched clothes in the process.

Truly, as Van Hoeck said, the affair was "savoring of mystery"!

Yet, oddly enough, my reawakening mind dwelt far less on this phase than on the fact that a spray of Mayflower had just been found in my hand.

Back with a rush came the memory of that strange moonshine dream. Of the dainty girl whose tender eyes had looked down into mine, whose soft, cool, little hands had bathed my raging head.

The Mayflowers at her breast—the fallen spray of blossoms over which my hand had closed. Was it no dream? But if not, how came I to be—

"His eyes are open!" boomed the deep voice. "Lift him a little."

An arm was slipped under my neck and I was slowly and gently raised to a sitting posture.

I looked about me. The room was large and furnished in a rich, if tasteless, luxury. Through the open windows I could see the Battery foot, the low sea-wall that girds the southern point of Manhattan Island, the shipping, and the glitter of the waters beyond.

Save for Louis Van Hoeck, the men about me were strangers: stolid-looking burghers all of them. I wondered from which member of the group had issued that deep, rough voice of command. Then my eyes fell upon a chair of state at one end of the apartment. In it sat a most remarkable figure.

A man, heavily built, bald of head; harsh, arrogant, and ruddy of face. He was clad in blue velvet jacket, white puff shirt, and breeches of dyed buckskin, caught at the knees with huge bunches of gaudy silken ribbons.

An odd, almost laughable feature of his appearance was that from one of the silk-decked knees protruded a polished black wooden leg, banded heavily with silver.

And by this I knew him. The man in the chair of state was "Old Silver Leg"—in other words, his excellency, Petrus Stuyvesant, Dutch Governor of the New Netherlands, and one of the most strikingly picturesque figures of his day.

Stuyvesant! The man I had crossed the seas to outwit; the human lion whom all the colony feared! And at last, in this queer fashion, we were face to face.

Rising, and leaning on a gold-headed cane, he came stumping down the room toward the couch where I sat.

"Mynheer Dewitt," said he, "my compliments!"

I stared stupidly at him, my head still thick.

"You — your excellency knows my name?" I muttered.

"All New Amsterdam," he replied pompously, "knows the name of the brave man who saved the Stadtholder's passengers from fiery death. The man whose pluck and coolness made possible their escape. The man who, having saved all, himself stayed aboard the blazing ship, until—"

"Your excellency!" I intervened, in common fairness, "Mynheer Van Hoeck was first to spring to the gangway, to hold back the crew. I did but follow his example."

"Captain Stein saw all," returned Stuyvesant. "I have ever found him a truthful man, and I accept his version. The more so as it is backed by other witnesses."

"But," said I, "Van Hoeck it was who—"

"Who did a daring deed," assented Stuyvesant, "for which I give him full credit. But," he added dryly, "brute courage, unbacked by a cool head or common prudence, goes not overfar. When

the rush was checked, he was for charging, sword in hand, among the beaten men. That would have robbed his fellows of their last hope of safety. It was *you* who withheld him—who gave the calm orders that meant safety. New Amsterdam—Holland itself—thanks you, *mynheer.*"

As I bowed my embarrassed acknowledgment of his deep-voiced praise, I caught a sidelong glimpse of Louis Van Hoeck. He was eying me with a cold, concentrated fury.

"And now," continued Old Silver Leg, as if relieved at having got rid of his speech of gratitude, "perchance you can clear up this little mystery. You were aboard an exploding fire-ship two nights ago. The boats hunted high and low for you. Not finding you, they deemed you dead, and they made their way hither. At dawn to-day you were found lying outside this White Hall of ours. There is no bruise nor wound upon you. Your clothes are dry. How explain you that?"

"I do not explain it, your excellency," I answered. "My last recollection—my last lucid recollection — is of being whirled aloft by the explosion's force. Then—I awoke *here.*"

The Governor's keen little eyes, under the gray, shaggy thatch of brow, were studying me closely.

"Your last 'lucid' recollection?" he quoted suspiciously. "What mean you by that?"

"I—I had strange, impossible dreams," I answered uncomfortably. "So indistinct and unreal are they in my confused brain that I fear I cannot voice them. Nor would the idle fancies of a stunned man be worth your excellency's hearing."

"Was *this* an 'idle fancy'?" he queried sharply, picking up the Mayflower spray. "Such blossoms as these grow only on land, and usually not overnear to the shore. How did you come by it?"

A new spasm of dizziness overcame me as I strove to rise to my feet. Brain and body alike reeled drunkenly. I heard Stuyvesant's voice, as from a great distance, repeating:

"How did you come by it?"

"It—it was in her girdle," I heard myself answer weakly. "As she leaned over me, this spray fell into my hand. I—"

"He is delirious, your excellency," I heard the black-clad doctor whisper amid a buzz of wondering interest that swept the room. "It were best to let him rest a while ere you force him to further talk."

His words roused me, and in anger I shook from my senses the lethargy of weakness that had been stealing over me; a weakness that had made my tongue babble about the fantom girl, in spite of my will's guardianship.

"Your excellency," I said, less thickly, "I am a clerk by profession. May I hope to find service in your official household? 'Twas with that hope I crossed the seas. I will do diligent work—"

"And I shall prove Holland is not ungrateful for what you have already done," answered Stuyvesant with ponderous graciousness. "It hath ever been my aim to surround myself with men who were honest, brave, and quick of resource. The combination is rare. Yet, your actions show you possess it, far more than any written recommendations could attest. And, by the way, I suppose you have such recommendations?"

"My effects," I evaded, "were all aboard the Stadtholder. I saved naught."

"True! True! Consider yourself in my personal service. When you are stronger, we will talk over details. Come, *mynheers!* The council is at an end. Dr. Beekman, see that your patient is made comfortable in one of the sleeping rooms."

The burghers, led by Stuyvesant, filed solemnly out.

Louis Van Hoeck followed. As he passed my couch he muttered under his breath to me:

"There is an old saying that when a fight is interrupted, it will one day be resumed. The law here makes dueling punishable by death. But—there are other ways."

I scarce heeded him. For, with all my feeble strength, I was engaged in stooping over to pick from the floor a certain withered spray of Mayflower.

CHAPTER VII.

I PLAY MY PART.

A HUDDLE of crooked streets, sprawling east and west from the Hudson and the East rivers; two water-side thoroughfares: the Bowling Green and the Battery to the south; the old wall cutting off the city to the north. And there you have a picture of New Amsterdam as it was in these early days of mine.

North of the low wall (and of the lane running alongside it, which folk call the Wall Street), the growing town was already spilling a fringe of scattered houses, like fingers stretching out toward the distant villages that lay between New Amsterdam and far-off Haarlem.

Straight to the city's north ran the shady Bouerie Lane; through field, farm, and woodland, until, above, it ended in Petrus Stuyvesant's own country residence.

Up this lane, one day, a month after my arrival in New Amsterdam, I was riding, on my way to see the Governor, whose secretary I was newly become.

Through the pleasant May weather I cantered easily along. At a turn in the lane I came upon a merry group of equestrians on their way back to the city from a day's picnic on Haarlem Heights. Four or five officers from the fort—a few rich burghers' sons and daughters and — Greta Van Hoeck!

A horse had wedged a stone in its shoe. The group had halted while the rider sought to hammer loose the obstruction.

They saluted me gaily as I rode up. Returning their greeting, I reined in beside Greta. She had been chatting with two officers, and now turned, with tolerant good humor, to reply to my salutation.

The rider of the horse with a stone in its shoe called on one of his comrades for advice. The other officer rode with his fellow to the spot, leaving me for the moment alone beside Greta.

I was not so much at ease as I had been wont to be on shipboard. Since my convalescence, my work had kept me close in attendance on his excellency. At such rare intervals as my duties had permitted me to see Greta Van Hoeck, I had been pained and puzzled to note a subtle change in her.

True, we had never met alone. For, ever she was surrounded by a bevy of admiring young Dutchmen: and I could scarce get a word with her.

But it had seemed to me, even then, that she put me on a different plane than when we were together during those wondrous shipboard evenings. I could not define the change, but it hurt me. I was resolved to steal this moment of *tête-à-tête* to learn wherein I had offended her.

"Well, Master Secretary," laughed she, meeting my appealing glance with a level gaze as I drew up beside her, "your new dignity actually does not prevent you from speaking to a poor maid whom you knew in less favored hours?"

"Less favored hours? The most favored of my life!" I retorted. "For, did I not see you—and see you alone—every day?"

"Fair words! Fair words!" she mocked gaily. "And I am crushed beneath such honor from the Governor's own secretary!"

"Greta!" I protested miserably. "Why will you laugh at me? Cannot you see—"

"Cannot I see," she finished, "how grand a personage you are become? The Governor swears by you. He has made you his secretary, even over the head of mine own brother who came to him so highly recommended. And poor Louis, forsooth, must content him with the office of your assistant. Truly, I am honored at your condescension in deigning to notice me."

"Greta," I exclaimed, "you have no right to speak so! You know it is cruelly unjust. I ask only to be near you—to—"

"To tell me, perchance, of the Moon Maiden who leaned above you and showered Mayflowers into your hands? Oh, look not so glum! The tale has gone abroad. It has made you quite a hero in the eyes of these placid little New Amsterdam damsels. Who was she, Dirck?"

"The maid of my dreams?" I asked. "The woman whose face and voice are ever before me?"

"Aye. Who—"

"Men call her 'Greta Van Hoeck,'" said I. "But *I* call her—"

"The trick of speech is still yours," she declared. "It brings back to me those long, weary days aboard ship."

"Long? Weary? Would we were back there!"

"Nay, let us be doubly grateful we are not!" she cried. "Even the New World has enough gaieties to make one glad to forget—"

"To forget those we once fancied we cared for?" I queried bitterly. "*I* am not so fortunate."

"No?"

"No!" I repeated. "Our voyage seems to have been to you a dreary season wherein even so stupid a wight as I served to pass the time a bit the less tediously. To *me* it meant more. More than you know or would care to know. Moonlight spells 'madness.' Yet, I would the awakening were less sharp."

I made as though to ride on. But, womanlike, she sought to stay a victim who

seemed about to pass beyond her capricious reach.

"Dirck!" she called softly.

At the old, sweet note in her voice my resentment died. Again the mist of infatuation blinded me. I halted, and reined back beside her.

"I have seen you so seldom," she said, lowering her eyes. "Since we landed, you have almost seemed to avoid me. And after all your sweet protests, too! I feared you had but sought to lighten a long voyage by toying at mock love. Can you blame me that I feared to show my own heart when I thought—"

"Greta," I panted, "I was wrong! Brutal! Forgive me!"

She flashed her dazzling smile into my sorrowful, eager face.

"Let there be peace between us!" she commanded. "And, in token thereof, you shall tell me the secret that was on your lips that terrible night when—"

"I—I cannot!" I stammered.

Full oft since that evening of moonlit madness I had fiercely rebuked myself for the weakness that had led me to the partial divulging of my great mission.

"I cannot!" I repeated wretchedly. "Ask me anything else. The secret is not mine. If it were—"

"If it were," she interposed, "I wonder if it would still endanger your life, as you then told me it would? And if the king—"

"Hush!" I begged, with a startled glance toward the others.

"Tell it to me!" she pleaded, her eyes alight with cajolery, her lovely face perilously close to mine. "Tell me—*Dirck!*"

Again that wild intoxication mounted to my brain like strong drink. But, with a struggle that left me trembling, I cried again:

"Oh, I *cannot!* I—"

She must have seen that, strong as was her spell, my resolve was at last stronger. For, with a short, hard laugh, she flicked me lightly across the brow with the tassel of her riding-whip, as she rode off after the rest, murmuring:

"Perchance the little I already know might make rare telling. *Au revoir*, Master Secretary!"

I do not know why it is, but women can say things that sting and that worry me ten times worse than could any words from another man.

I rode on toward the Governor's home in anything but a happy frame of mind. On shipboard I had half believed that Greta returned my love. Since our landing she had dropped the dear old manner. To-day, for a moment, she had resumed it, and had set all my heart-strings to throbbing again—only to leave me with a mocking smile and with something very like a threat.

The peril conjured up by her parting words troubled me little, so far as I myself was concerned. As to its possible effect on my mission, that was quite another matter.

I had been working hard, day and night, to prepare the right sort of material for my report to the king.

While I had succeeded in some ways even better than I had dared hope, yet I did not wish to forward the report as complete until I could find out, past doubt, the way a certain large and terribly important element of the New Netherlands population would accept a change to English rule.

This element was—the Indian population. Across the East and Hudson rivers, and to the north above Haarlem, the land still teemed with savages.

The Dutch had more than once clashed with them. Under Governor Kieft, Stuyvesant's infamous predecessor, there had been a massacre of the helpless Indians who dwelt beyond the Palisades.

True, a peace had later been patched up, and Stuyvesant's just laws had done much to pacify the avenging savages. But—who can read the Indian mind? Even I, who had spent much of my youth among them, scarce understood their ways.

It might be that they were at heart loyal friends to the Dutch, and that they would resent British conquest by sending fire and tomahawk through every settlement of new-arrived Englishmen.

Or, if they still hated the Dutch, they might prove mighty allies to King Charles, in the event of a British attack upon the New Netherlands.

I must find out their attitude to my own satisfaction before sending report, and announcing that all was ready for our scheme's completion.

But how could I hope to study the situation? What chance had I, seated at a secretarial desk, to feel the pulse of this great, lurking element in our problem's solution?

I knew there were disaffected savages—Indians who resented Stuyvesant's order that liquor and firearms must not be sold to them. But how large or how small a per-

centage of their people these ever-threatening malcontents represented I could not guess.

My broodings were interrupted as my horse, from long habit, turned in at the wide gateway at the private drive that led up to Stuyvesant's mansion. I entered the Governor's study to find Louis Van Hoeck already at work over a sheaf of papers. One or two clerks were in the room, and Stuyvesant himself was stumping up and down, dictating a peppery letter to the ever-meddling Holland states general.

I went over to my desk and settled down to my routine work.

Outside, the bees were droning drowsily in the honeysuckle. Inside, the only sound, between the harsh-grunted sentences of Stuyvesant's dictation, was the scraping of quill-pens.

Seldom have I been present at a duller, stupider, more commonplace scene. Then, in the wink of an eye, came the change.

Something whizzed into the room, through the open window, with a funny little whistling sound, struck with a click against no less important an obstacle than Governor Petrus Stuyvesant's own sacred wooden leg, and clattered to the bare floor.

Everybody jumped up. I was first to reach the spot where, on the boards in front of the amazed Governor, lay a long arrow.

"Indians!" bawled a nervous clerk. "An attack!"

"Peace, fool!" growled Stuyvesant. "You will have all the womenfolk in the house screeching about us like a brood of peafowl. 'Tis no attack! The sentries, else, would have set up a hullabaloo ere now. Give me the arrow, Dirck."

I had picked up the missile, and now handed it to him.

"H-m!" he muttered, unrolling a strip of birchbark that was wound close about the shaft. "As I thought! I have heard of this sort of message. 'Tis no attack, I say," he consoled the still trembling clerk. "See, the arrow-head is blunted."

We crowded about him as he proceeded to stretch out the white birchbark sheet. On it were scrawled, in charcoal, a few laboriously inscribed words in very bad Dutch. The Governor, amid a general hush, read aloud:

EXCELLENCY:

I am your friend, for I sell my bearskins to your traders. But my people do not love you. The murder of our women and children by Kieft is burned into many hearts. Let your guard be sleepless. For my people swear to repay.

I glanced out of the window. Meadows and tilled fields rolled away on every side. The nearest "cover" was a tongue of woodland that ran out into the fields to westward almost a furlong distant.

From within the shelter of this the red-skinned "friend" must have launched his odd, anonymous communication.

The room was instantly alive with confused comment. Stuyvesant, smiting his silver-shod leg on the floor for silence, at length restored quiet.

"Perchance 'tis a silly, practical joke by one of our own graceless boys," he commented.

"Pardon, your excellency," said I. "This is a blunted *war*-arrow. The braves guard these weapons carefully, and neither give nor barter them. No boy of the colony could have procured *it*."

He looked at me in grudging admiration.

"You talk sense," he observed. "But where got you your knowledge of the different sorts of Indian arrows?"

"I have told your excellency," I answered boldly, "that this is not my first visit to America. As a runaway lad, I once traveled from Massachusetts Bay to the Delaware with a party of trappers. We lived for months among the savages. I picked up a knowledge of their ways and a smattering of some few dialects."

"So? I had forgot. Have you means, then, of guessing whether this arrow came from the tribes that dwell behind Breucklen or Haarlem or the Palisades?"

"I take it the sender was a brave of the tribes living beyond the Palisades," I answered.

"Why?"

"It was the Palisade Indians that Governor Kieft assailed. And that assault is spoken of in the screed you hold."

"I see. You are right. I would this had not happened. Have I not enough to vex me, with the states general at Holland ever interfering, the burghers of New Amsterdam grumbling, and the Swedes on the Delaware quarreling with our traders? And now this new menace!"

He was speaking to himself rather than to us. Presently he turned to me again.

"Since you have proven so apt in Indian

lore," said he, "what is your opinion? Is this warning important or—"

"Your excellency," I made reply, "an Indian seldom plays a joke. Nor does he risk being picked off by a sentry merely to shoot useless arrows through an open window. I take it the warning is not only genuine, but of real import. The sender is probably a hunter whose living is made by trading in skins with your people. Should the colony be destroyed, his livelihood would cease. Hence the message."

"It is good sense," the Governor agreed, his head bowed in thought on his chest. "Good sense. You have a level brain, lad. What suggestion can you make?"

All at once I saw my longed-for "chance" had come. I saw, too, that it involved fearful danger.

"Your excellency," I replied slowly, as though pondering my words, "some petty tribe may be mouthing threats. In which case we are safe enough. On the other hand, there may well be a conspiracy that runs through all the tribes west of the Palisades. In that event, New Amsterdam already lies in the hollow of Fate's hand."

"Tush, man," he broke in, "I know that. Don't preach a sermon. I asked—"

"There is but one way of learning the truth," I continued. "Send some one into the wilderness disguised as a trapper, and let him gather what information he can from the redskins."

"Gather information?" scoffed Van Hoeck. "More likely lose a scalp."

"*Much* more likely," I gravely agreed. "Yet should he escape alive, his news would be of value to the colony. Mynheer Van Hoeck," I went on maliciously, "perchance *you* will volunteer for the service. It ought to mean promotion — either in his excellency's service or in a better world."

"Peace!" cried Stuyvesant, checking Louis's angry retort. "Dewitt is right, as he has a way of being. Lad," he went on, addressing me in gruff friendliness, "there is but one man I know who could carry so ticklish an expedition to possible success. But, as it means dire risk of life, I am loath to ask it."

"There is no need of 'asking it,' your excellency," I retorted. "I beg you to let me volunteer."

The grizzled old warrior stamped his wooden leg in approval.

"Good lad!" he bawled. "And your reward shall be—"

"Your excellency," I interrupted (unconsciously using almost the same words as I had employed toward King Charles), "my reward shall be the serving of my country."

As I made the ambiguous speech the others applauded loudly. But Louis Van Hoeck remained silent. His silence and the strange smile that played about his thin lips vaguely alarmed me.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEAR NEIGHBOR TO DEATH.

THE forest — the forest that I loved! Mile upon mile of tumbled green, the big hills everywhere, and at their feet the fire-blue mountain lakes.

And through the mighty midsummer silences I strode. My bearded and bronzed face, my once dandified costume changed for the coarse fur garments of a trapper; my court rapier discarded for a long musket and hunting-knife—few at casual glance would have taken me for a New Amsterdam official.

For weeks I had roamed the greensward. Westward for many miles from Hudson River I had wandered. Here and there I had boldly entered Indian camps, chaffering for skins and tobacco, and winning safety by vague hints that on a future trip I might be able to smuggle to the braves some of the firearms and fire-water that Stuyvesant had declared contraband.

I had learned much. The tribes that occupied that vast tract of the New Netherlands, nowadays known as "the Jerseys," hated the Dutch. There was much talk of a descent upon New Amsterdam.

Daily the confederation was strengthening.

One element was lacking to make it perfect. That was the doubtful attitude of the Arareeks, a powerful northern tribe who held the Pomp-i-ton region.

Should the Arareeks favor war on the Dutch, the whole country west of the Palisades would be united. And Stuyvesant's best efforts could scarce save the city from attack — perhaps from destruction.

Thus it was that I had at last turned my face northward to visit the Arareeks. I had learned all I needed to know, save the exact feeling of this tribe toward the colony. When I should have determined that my work would be done.

I could then return to Stuyvesant with full information. What was infinitely more

important, I could send a complete report to King Charles and set in instant motion the machinery for making the New Netherlands an English province.

I was resolved to tell Stuyvesant the whole truth as to the sentiments of the Indians. Not only because I had pledged myself to do so, but because my plans included no massacre of innocent people.

It was enough for me to know the savages would welcome any change from Dutch rule. I did not wish to see a peaceful city harassed uselessly by hatchet and flame.

I had tramped long that day. I was very tired. I know I was in the country of the Arareeks. But just where lay their chief's village I could not guess. Reaching a lake's edge, I threw myself down for an hour's rest.

The soft whisper of the trees and the hum of the myriad invisible tiny forestfolk all blended into a drowsy lullaby note. I had meant only to rest. Instead, I slept—slept like a log.

From heavy slumber I entered at last the lighter, less dense realms of dreamland. It was a troubled journey through the shades. The thing that worst annoyed me was the fact that something restless and rather heavy was moving about on my chest.

I aroused myself enough to give an impatient twist to my pectoral muscles. The slow, irritating motion ceased at once. But the light pressure was not removed. Indeed, it seemed to concentrate on one spot.

I moved impatiently once more, half opening my eyes. My sleepy motion brought forth a sharp, whirring sound, dry as a locust's note. The sound came from somewhere very near.

I stared, still barely half awake. Then all at once I became the wakefulest, if most motionless, man in all America.

There, on the summit of my chest, just within range of my downcast eyes, coiled a rattlesnake. The creature was as thick as my wrist.

He had doubtless been crawling across my inert body when my sudden movement had startled him and awakened in his brain the rage that is such reptiles' second nature.

Coiled compactly, his flat, arrow-shaped head reared twelve inches or so in air, his long rattle spinning like an angry bee's wings—he had already drawn back his slender neck for a blow at my defenseless face.

It is a moment on which I do not enjoy looking back.

A bite on leg or arm from any of our American serpents can usually be healed by means of ligature and cautery. But a bite on the face or body cannot be ligatured, and is too often apt to be fatal, unless a surgeon is at hand.

I realized all this. I knew something of rattlesnakes; enough, at least, to be certain that the swiftest move of my hand or body in an attempt to dislodge the monster would not be one-tenth so quick as the stroke of that deadly head.

So, helpless, I awaited my fate. A bare three seconds, at most, had passed since I had opened my eyes upon the horror. They seemed to me three lifetimes.

So, here was the end of my youth, my high hopes, my life!

I watched the slowly, back-drawn venomous head with a queer, almost impersonal, interest.

I knew the creature was preparing for his stroke. So I had seen such a snake strike at a quivering rabbit in the New England hills.

The head poised, I closed my eyes. As I did so the air about me split into a thunderous roar.

Instinctively my eyes flew open. There was the serpent, still coiled and with upraised neck. But—I could not yet understand—*the head was gone!*

It was an odd, gruesome sight. I gaped at it, wondering if I were delirious from fear.

Then, as I stared, the neck slowly sank. The great thick coils relaxed. The body that had a moment before been so instinct with murderous life rolled limply off my chest onto the ground.

I sprang to my feet. I could not, in my dazed condition, even yet understand the simple miracle that had saved me.

Then my wondering eyes fell upon a canoe scarce fifty feet out in the stream. In it sat an Indian, whose slender fingers still grasped a smoking rifle.

And, all at once, I knew. The savage, paddling near shore—perhaps to investigate my own sleeping presence there—had seen the snake and fired.

The ball had carried away the reptile's head. It was a beautiful shot. A half inch to either side would have caused a fatal miss. Had the ball passed six inches lower it must have buried itself in my body.

To score such a mark called not only for wondrous shooting, but for a nerve of chilled

steel. So much hung upon failure that the coolest marksman might have been pardoned for trembling.

The setting sun streaming across the lake was in my eyes, turning the canoe and its burden into a jet black silhouette. I raised a somewhat shaky hand above my head in the "peace sign."

Then I called out, in the Delaware dialect and in the flowery language of redskin courtesy:

"A thousand thanks! You saved me from the 'Creeping Death.' O brother! My life lies at your feet."

The Indian had picked up the paddle that lay across the canoe's thwarts and, with a few long, easy strokes, brought the craft to shore.

There had been no reply to my florid speech of gratitude. So I tried once more, this time using the "Trader dialect" that passed current among the Five Nations and many of the tribes to southward.

"Brother," said I. "I owe you my life. Accept—"

The Indian stepped ashore and faced me, interrupting my halting speech with a laugh of silver.

"Twice have you called me 'brother,'" came the unexpected greeting, in Dutch. "And both times in a language you can scarce speak. Why not use your own native tongue? And"—with another laugh—"why not say—'*sister*'?"

It was a woman. Yes, and no Indian, though darkly sunburnt and in native dress.

But all these details, as well as my own ludicrous mistake, were swept from my thoughts by what a second glance told me.

She was the "dream maiden" who had saved me from the sea, and from whose girdle that mystic spray of Mayflowers had fallen!

CHAPTER IX.

THE WILDERNESS WOMAN.

I LOOKED at her—long and in silent amaze. She returned my gaze—at first in cool surprise, then doubtfully, at last in dawning recognition.

"The—the dream," I muttered, foolishly enough, "the maiden of the Mayflower dream!"

Her grave little face, with its childlike eyes, broke into a slow smile that made me think of a sunshine rift after a gray day.

"Herr Dirck Dewitt," she said in mock solemnity, "you are very welcome to the Arareek country. But I scarce expected to see you as a trapper. When last we met, you had more the look of a very wet man of fashion."

"You—you know my name?" I faltered.

"'Twas writ on a bundle of letters that fell from your jacket into the boat that night," she answered. "We found them—later."

"Later?" I echoed. "After you had saved me? It seems I am twice in your debt for the poor gift of life. Twice, out of empty space, have you come in a boat to save me."

"'Twas my father who saw you in the water that night," said she, "and who picked you up. He brought you back to your senses. Then, when you sank into a heavy, trancelike sleep of pain and exhaustion, it was he and our Indian boatman who laid you at the threshold of the White Hall in New Amsterdam."

"It was they who—"

"'Twere not well for my father to be seen by the folk of *any* city," she answered sadly. "That is why he dared not do more for you. But he made sure your life was in no peril ere he left you."

"You speak much of your father's goodness to me," I said, "yet—yet—it was *your* face that bent above me in the boat that night—*your* hands that bathed my bruised head."

"You were senseless," she protested. "How can you know? You opened your eyes but once. And then—"

"And then," I made answer, "I saw *you*. The Mayflowers—"

I broke off in my bewilderment.

"It somehow seems so natural—so much a part of my dream—to be speaking with you again," I went on, "that I half forget the strangeness of it all. A month or more ago, when I was cast into the Atlantic Ocean, you were there and rescued me. To-day, when I was in still more dire plight, fifty miles from that ocean, you once more come to my aid. How chance you to be here?"

"It is my house," she answered simply.

"But the Atlantic?" I insisted. "Is that, too, your home? Or—"

"My father," said the girl, "can have no home save the wilderness. His friend—under the same ban as himself and sharer of our exile—fell ill and longed to see

England again at whatever risk. We arranged for a Dover-bound sloop to meet him a mile off the Southern coast. We had rowed him to the sloop and were returning when an explosion shook the sea. We rowed near to the fragments of a ship. There, floating unconscious, we found you."

I wondered more and more. She wore the dress of an Indian. Her long brown hair lay loose in waving ripples. Her soft skin was tanned dark. Yet she had the voice and speech of a gentlewoman. She spoke of her father as an exile who dared show his face in no city.

"Tell me," I begged, "can I do naught for your father? I have some small influence at New Amsterdam. And—"

"No," she answered, with a little shake of her head, "the Dutch are not his foes. I thank you none the less."

"But," I insisted, "you said he dared not be seen in New Amsterdam."

"There are English in New Amsterdam," she replied; "yes, and Dutch burghers, too, to whom five thousand pounds were too rich a reward to be missed. He would be seized—"

"Your father?" I repeated, amazed. "But surely no man in the colonies is important enough to have a price of five thousand pounds on his head?"

"Nevertheless," she declared, "that is the sum King Charles of England has offered for his capture, dead or alive. Oh, in England the very name of Goffe—"

"What!" I cried, aghast. "*William* Goffe, the regicide?"

"The martyr!" she corrected me, her eyes flashing.

"Forgive me," I made humble amends. "I did but use the general term. I crave your pardon."

Europe and the colonies, too, had been scoured by British agents in vain search for this man. Well did I recall his history.

A stanch Puritan, Goffe had been one of the judges who had condemned to death Charles I, the King of England. Later, he had served right valiantly as general in Cromwell's army.

At the time of the Restoration, Charles II had shown scant mercy to the foes of his slain father. Against Goffe in particular his vengeance had been unremitting.

It was known that the "regicide" and his friend Whalley had fled to America. There all trace of them had long since been lost.

And this "dream maiden" was Goffe's daughter!

At my confused apology her frown relaxed. Now, at a thoughtless question from me, it was replaced by a glance of suspicion.

"And William Goffe," I exclaimed, "is *here*—in this wilderness?"

"Yes," she made answer. "There can be no harm in telling you. You have not the face of an informer or a seeker for blood-money. Yet, if you were English instead of Dutch, I should sooner go dumb to my grave than tell you as much as I have."

Somehow it was hard to lie to this clear-eyed, slender girl whose head came scarce so high as my heart. Nay, for some unexplained reason, I could not even deceive her by letting well enough alone. I must needs blurt out like any guilty schoolboy:

"But I *am* English."

She stared at me uncertainly.

"Your name," she murmured, in doubt, "is not—"

"I am English," I repeated, "or rather, American."

"An exile?" she queried hopefully.

"No," I said.

"Not—not a king's man?"

"Yes," I admitted. "I am in this very wilderness to-day on a secret mission for King Charles."

Why I said it, I don't know. In the case of Greta Van Hoeck, the secret had once been half dragged from me by mingled witchery and moonlight. At another time I had wholly resisted her coaxings.

Yet I had been feverishly in love with Greta. Now, this wilderness woman, whom I most assuredly did *not* love—whom I scarce knew—was making it impossible for me to hide my heart's secrets.

Let him who deems me weak remember I knew little of women. Also let him look into eyes like the dream maiden's and still resist their spell—if he can.

The effect of my words upon the girl was electrical.

Dropping her empty rifle and catching up my own gun, she coolly presented the weapon's muzzle at my chest.

"A spy?" she queried.

Still bewildered, I could only nod.

"The only secret mission that could bring a spy of King Charles to this part of the wilderness," she declared, "is the search for my father and a craving for the price set on his innocent head. You tracked him

here. I, in my folly, have confirmed you in your search. Oh, that any man could stoop so low!"

"No!" I cried. "You are wholly wrong —*wholly!* I—"

"The man who rescued you from drowning," she went on, a sad irony in her voice, "the man whose daughter has even now stood between you and death! But why waste words on such a creature? You are my prisoner, Master Spy! One move, except at my order, and I pull trigger. You have seen a sample of my shooting."

The humor of the thing slowly dawned upon me. Here was I, a giant, who could crush an ordinary man at a single blow. Here was she, a fragile wisp of a girl, scarce eighteen years old at most. Yet she was very determinedly making me her captive.

I had much ado to keep my face straight.

"I am indeed your prisoner," I replied. "Will it please you to place me on parole?"

"Parole?" she flashed. "One does not trust the word of spies! You will march in front of me to the canoe. If you turn or attempt to escape, I shall draw trigger."

Solemnly I moved down the bank to the waiting boat.

"Halt!" came the frigid orders of my captor. "Now enter the canoe. Go to the stern and sit down. Pick up the paddle!"

I followed instructions with cringing meekness. I seated myself in the stern, paddle in hand. She stepped into the birch-bark craft and took her seat in the prow.

"Now," she resumed, still covering me with my own rifle while she laid her empty weapon in the bottom of the canoe, "paddle! You *can* paddle, I suppose?"

"A little," I said. "In which direction?"

"To the left—around that promontory. When we round that we will be in sight of the village. Paddle me thither. You sought for my father. You shall find him—in the midst of two hundred loyal Indian friends. So I doubt me if your discovery will ever bring you the coveted five thousand pounds."

"Can you show me no mercy?" I groaned.

"None!" she returned firmly. "For injury to myself I would most freely forgive you. For harm to my blameless father there is no forgiveness. You came here to seek him. Very well! You shall have your wish."

"But will he not order his redskin friends to put me to death?" I whined.

"Probably," was her cold reply. Yet I saw a little shade of trouble cross her face.

"'Tis humiliating," I sighed, "to be made prisoner by a mere girl. And with my own rifle, too. I am half tempted to upset the canoe and—"

"At your first movement to either side," she warned me, "I shall fire."

Without further words, I submitted. Presently my long paddle-strokes brought the light canoe around the promontory. On a knoll above a cove, scarce a quarter-mile distant, I saw a cluster of huts and tepees.

At last I was in touch with the chief Arareek village. The girl, without turning, whistled long and shrilly. The note must have been a signal, for a number of Indians appeared from amid the huddle of lodges and started down to the water-edge to meet us.

From the largest hut I saw two tall figures emerge. One was that of a young Indian, scarce thirty years old at most, clad in the garb and insignia of a tribal chief. The other was a venerable man, dressed in black European clothes and with a snowy beard that fell well-nigh to his waist.

As we drew near to the village, a great black-crested loon rose from beneath the lake's surface a bare seventy feet from us.

The girl saw him. Her fingers twitched on the rifle.

"Pardon," I suggested humbly, "but I would not advise you to try a shot at him. You see—my rifle is not loaded!"

"*What?*"

"I drew the charge during this morning's thunder-storm," I continued shamefacedly, "and neglected to reload."

"And—and you *pretended*—"

"No, no!" I protested. "I *was* your prisoner—I *am*. Have I your leave to land?"

The canoe prow grated on the pebbly beach. The white-bearded man had been scanning me closely from under his arched palm. Now, as our eyes met, he hastened to the brink, both hands held out to me in eager welcome.

"My dear, dear boy!" he cried. "To think of our meeting again after all these years!"

As I returned his hearty grip, I glanced over my shoulder at the girl. Her sunburnt face was scarlet with mortification.

"*Oh!*" she gasped, encountering my amused gaze. "I hate you! I *hate* you!"

(To be continued.)

A MAHOGANY MYSTERY.

BY GEORGE B. WALKER.

Two American Sóldiers of Fortune Encounter an Odd Experience in Taking Up with the Offer of a Mexican Don.

"LOOKS kinder as if that gent in front was makin' the peace-sign to us."

The two men got out of the buckboard and lounged around to the back of it, with their rifles hung in the hollow of their arms ready for instantaneous use, as they waited for the approaching riders to come up.

"How do you do, gentlemen?" began the apparent leader of the band of Mexicans. "Are you Americans?"

Both men nodded.

"Good, very good. Would you like to make some money?"

The two white men up to this time had been entirely on their guard, but relaxed somewhat as the other continued:

"I am Don Manuel Feria, and I want two men of good nerve, who can both shoot and ride, to do a piece of work for me. It is absolutely legitimate, and I will pay a good price for it."

Then, noting that the two still held their rifles as if in readiness for trouble, he added:

"Come, I am a man who believes in the square deal, and you will both get good treatment. What do you say?"

"What's your proposition, *don?*" Jim asked as he bit off a large supply of chewing tobacco. "Me an' my pard is open to any kind of a deal, providin' it's on the square; an' the more chance there is in it for action, the better we'll like it. Eh, Dave?"

"Yep, you got it straight, Jim," the other agreed.

"Ah, that is fine! Very good indeed, my friends, and now to ride to my *rancho,* which you shall use as a base if you take up the proposition."

"Hold on thar, *don,*" Jim cautiously interposed. "What do we get out of it?"

"Well, gentlemen, I cannot at present say exactly; but not less than one thousand dollars apiece, and if things develop—" He shrugged his shoulders, then continued: "Well, you will get a great deal more than that. It is a good proposition, and you won't lose anything by taking it up."

His face was so honest and his manner so open that, coupled with the fact that they both badly needed the job, the two men, without a word, climbed into the wagon in readiness to follow their new-found friend.

Don Manuel, who had dismounted, swung up into the saddle again, and, leaving a Mexican as their guide, waved his hand and galloped away.

Jim and Dave, with the Mexican in the lead, drove steadily along, and in about two hours came in sight of a considerable grove of cottonwood-trees.

"Right thar is whar the *don* lives, I reckon, ain't it?" and Jim turned to the Mexican.

"Yes, Don Manuel lives among those trees," was the answer.

"Wal, the sooner I get out of this derned sun an' dust an' get a cool drink inter my constitution, the sooner I'll be satisfied. If there's two things I don't like in this country, it's the dust and the greas—"

Dave cut him short with a glance at their companion.

"Yep," he said, "it ain't so derned pleasant to have to stand for this dust; but it might be a whole lot worse, an' the only thing that's got me goin' is what the *don's* proposition is."

Conversation lagged, as is generally the case among such men, and nothing more was said until the grove was reached and they found themselves in a clearing in front of a large adobe building.

As they rode up, the *don,* who was seated on the veranda under the projecting eaves of the house, rose to greet them.

"How do you feel, gentlemen?" he inquired.

"Dry as a piece of blottin'-paper, *don,*" Dave answered.

Jim nodded to indicate that his partner had voiced his own condition, too.

Both men climbed down out of the buckboard and stretched deliciously after their long ride.

"Good," approved the *don*. "You shall both be cooled off. Chico, bring the gentlemen some drinks."

A young Mexican boy quickly left them, and as quickly returned with refreshments.

"Here's luck, my friends," and the *don* raised one of the glasses to his lips.

"The same to you."

"Good fortune."

The drink disappeared, also the *don's* languid manner. His face, from being that of a dull, inanimate personage, lit up, and he became the embodiment of hustle and the up-to-date business man. In fact, it appeared to Jim that he was unduly worked up.

"Now, for the proposition."

The *don* rolled three cigarettes and, handing one to each of his guests, struck a match. After several deep inhalations, he took a frayed and pocket-worn paper from his coat.

"Now, here we have the whole thing in a nutshell," he began. "This paper is a map of the surrounding country, and on it in red-ink, as you see, there is traced a trail. Some years ago I befriended a poor devil of a peon, who was being ill treated, and he gave me this map, telling me that it would lead to a fine forest of Mexican mahogany. Since then I have sent men to find it and report on the condition of the trees, but have never had any further word from them. They were all good men, and I think they must have met with foul play. Now, your business will be to go to the grove, size up the proposition, look at the thing from a business standpoint, and bring in a report to me. What do you say?" and the *don* leaned toward the two Americans eagerly.

"Me—why, I'll take that up in a holy minute," Dave broke out. "That sure looks like easy money, when all we've got to do is to foller a trail. I'm on."

"And you, my friend?" turning to Jim.

"Wal," Jim spoke deliberately, "if you're willin' to stand the preliminary expense in the way of a layout and grub-stake, I have an idea that me an' Dave will go you."

"Good! I'll have everything ready for you to-morrow at nine o'clock. And remember, if you make it, there will be a thousand dollars apiece waiting for you here. There might be something in the way of a bonus also."

Rising, he intimated that the interview was at an end, and left them—not, however, before saying:

"Chico will give you anything you want and show you to your sleeping quarters. Good night!"

The two Americans walked around the *rancho* buildings, talking over this latest incident in their lives.

"For my part, the proposition looks good to me, an' I'm goin' to find the *don's* mahogany for him. Why, it looks as easy as fallin' off a log," Dave summed it up. "How does it hit you, partner?"

"The proposition's O. K.," Jim returned, "but I don't like to work for a derned greaser. You see, Dave, if we don't make good, all o' these yaller-skinned coyotes will have one on us, an' we practically have to hold up the reputation of the United States. I guess the *don's* on the square, though; an', even if he ain't, I'm too old a hen to be caught by a spring chicken like him. We took him up; an' if we do win out, we'll have a nice little stake when we come back again. Now, I figger the best thing that we can do is to hit the hay."

Chico was called, and the two men were shown to a room, where in a few moments they were oblivious to their surroundings.

II.

THEY were awakened in the morning by Chico, who informed them that:

"Your breakfast is waiting you in the table on the dining-room."

After eating heavily they strolled to the front of the house, and here on the veranda they found the *don* pacing up and down as if he were laboring under a great excitement.

"You are ready?" he inquired.

"Yep."

"Well, here is your outfit waiting for you," pointing to a team. "Also, the map and my hand with all good wishes for a successful trip. Good-by!"

"The more I look at this the less I like it," Dave observed presently, after they were well under way.

"Wal, I'll admit he was unduly anxious to get us started, but that don't signify nothin'," rejoined Jim. "You can't tell nothin' about these greasers. Anyway, we got this map to foller, an' we'll make that stake or know the reason why them other men didn't come back."

For four days they journeyed over the dry alkali flats, and on the afternoon of the fourth saw the only vegetation on the entire trip. The flats were left behind, and they rose gradually among the foot-hills. The country was rough and forbidding, huge dikes of granite and limestone affording excellent shelter for waiting foes.

"Thar she is, Dave," Jim announced after a while, digging his sleeping seatmate in the ribs.

"Yep, sure enough you're right, Jim; an' pretty soon now we'll be scheduled to see a little life. Accordin' to the map, that waterhole we camped by last night was the last one before we'd be due to hit the grove. The *don* must've shore figgered we was bound to meet trouble, for he's give us them two extra rifles an' enough ammunition to stand off an army."

Jim resorted to his ever-handy plug and, after the customary evolutions, loaded both their own rifles and the two new ones.

"Thar's more in this trip than the *don's* merely wantin' to know how much timber there is in that grove," he declared, "an', if I ain't greatly mistaken, we'll soon be findin' out what it is."

The team of mules drew rapidly nearer to the edge of the forest.

Entering it with their eyes continually on the alert, the two men saw nothing of a disturbing nature, and after covering a short distance relaxed their vigilance. Dave drew a big sigh and leaned back in the seat.

But suddenly he became keenly alive as his eyes stared hard at a spot some distance away.

"What are you lookin' at?" Jim queried, as he, too, stared at the spot where his partner's eyes were riveted.

Before Dave could reply, a rifle cracked only a short distance away; and a second later, as he ducked for what slight cover the wagon provided, a bullet flattened itself against the rim of one of their frying-pans.

But Dave did not keep to his cover. Instead, almost simultaneously with the ping of the bullet, his finger pressed the trigger of his rifle; and as Jim's sight fell on the marksman, he, too, fired.

A figure swayed from behind a tree and dropped to the ground.

"I got him," Jim cried, jumping out of the buckboard and running toward the prostrate figure.

But he still kept in his hand the smoking rifle, and was prepared for any hostile movement on the part of his foe. When he reached the side of the latter, however, he staggered back in surprise; then, turning, beckoned Dave excitedly to him.

"Derned if it ain't a gal!" he shouted. "She ain't hurt bad, though, an' I'm goin' to take her with us. It's just a scratch in the shoulder," and, gathering the unconscious woman in his arms, he carried her back to the rig.

"Don't seem to be any more of 'em around, does there?" Dave remarked, accepting the thing in his phlegmatic way.

"That don't show nothin'," Jim answered. "I figger as how we'll meet a few more before we go much farther."

They both climbed into the buckboard, and placed the girl between them.

"Derned if I see what you want to be totin' a gal around with us for when we ought to be travelin' light," Dave observed.

"Wal, seein' as how it's the first woman I ever shot up, I'm kind of sot on takin' her along; and, besides, did you notice how—"

"Here's the rest of 'em now," Dave broke in. "Looks as if we're in for a hot fight. Now, if we didn't have this gal along, an' was—"

Poor Dave's sentence was never finished, for at this moment the approaching horsemen had opened fire, and Dave received one of their bullets. He slipped forward out of the seat and hung drunkenly over the dashboard.

"You yaller skunks!" Jim muttered under his breath. "If I didn't have this gal an' poor ol' Dave shot up, you'd never get me to run; but, like they is now, I've simply got to. If you foller me out on to the flat, though, I'll make some of you pretty sick O. K."

Turning the team, Jim lashed them into a mad run which, inasmuch as they were splendid animals, quickly drew the party away from the enemy.

He stopped when they were about a mile out on the flat and looked back. He had won a lead of possibly three-quarters of a mile over the pursuers.

After lifting Dave back on the seat from where he had been jouncing in horrible fashion during their ride, and also making the still unconscious girl as comfortable as he could, Jim got out of the wagon.

Going around to the back of the rig, he cut loose everything that was unnecessary, retaining only the water, rifles and ammunition, and a little grub.

"If we've got to run, we're goin' to run as light as we can," he told himself. "An' I'm thinkin' I'll receive these gents right here, 'cause it'll give the mules a chance to git breathed; an' we'll be fresh when *their* mounts is blown, bein' such sorry lookin' nags, anyhow. Yep," he decided, "that's what I'll do, an' here's one of my invites to 'em."

As he spoke, Jim picked up one of the rifles, knelt at the side of the wagon and, taking long aim, fired.

A moment later one of the oncoming horses went down in a smother of dust.

"Gosh! I didn't figger on shootin' a horse. This gun don't carry up nothin' like mine does."

When Jim's shot took effect at so long a range, the pursuers wavered for a moment, but quickly rallied again when a heavy, thick-set figure in the lead had turned on them with a brace of drawn revolvers.

"Uh, hu!" Jim nodded to himself. "So you're the cause of this, are you, Mr. Man? Wal, I'm glad I learned to shoot when I was a youngster, for I'm goin' to take the greatest pleasure in pickin' you out of the saddle."

This time he let them come up to within two hundred yards; then, taking a long sight at the leader, he pressed trigger.

The man fired at reached behind him and, bringing a rifle to his shoulder, fired at random toward the buckboard.

Jim ducked; but not quickly enough, for the bullet plowed a furrow along the side of his head, stunning him for a moment—not so much so, however, but that he was able to see the man he had fired at topple out of the saddle and pitch to the ground, where he lay.

Recovering his senses almost immediately, Jim picked up the gun he had dropped and emptied it into the oncoming horsemen. Then, jumping for the wagon, he gave them the contents of the third gun at close range with deadly effect.

They wavered, and as he picked up the remaining rifle and started in on them with that, they broke and retreated, going back to the spot where their leader had fallen.

Oblivious to the fact that he was bleeding profusely from the cut in his head, Jim climbed into the rig and started the mules at a slow trot.

"Gosh? I'm glad they wasn't Injuns," he muttered. "If they had been, I'd never've had a show; but these greasers ain't got no more sand than a jack-rabbit. I sure got Mr. Leader that time.

"It appears to me that the only thing I can do right now is to make the best time that I can to the *don's rancho*, whar Dave an' the gal can get fixed up. Gee, I hope Dave ain't hurt bad. Now," Jim continued, "what in the name o' common sense was that gal doin' in—"

At this moment the object of his thoughts regained consciousness.

"Where am I?" she asked vaguely. "Oh, yes; yes," as the memory of the preceding events flashed across her brain. "It's you, is it? I remember now, you contemptible dog; you cur; you renegade! Oh, how can any one degenerate so far as to treat a woman as you treated me? What a low animal you are to take advantage of your physical inferior!

"Where are you taking me? Back to that man, I suppose. How long before we reach them? Oh, what, where, why—"

As the realization stole over her that they were no longer in the forest, but were driving along over the open alkali flats, she broke off and added in a different tone: "Who are you? Where are you taking me?"

"Wal, marm, you see it's like this," Jim answered. "I done went an' shot you up, an' then one of them greasers hit Dave pretty hard, so there was nothin' for me to do but cut an' run, an' just now, as close as I can figger, we're makin' a bee-line for the ranch of one Don Manuel Feria, my employer, where you'll be able to get fixed up, an' whar Dave can git tended to, an' whar I'm figgerin' just about now I won't be so all-fired welcome.

"But, marm," he continued, "if you think I was takin' you back to that bunch of Mexicans what chased me out of the forest, you're clean off the scent. Why, I just finished a heated argument with them folks."

"Did you fight them?" the girl asked, with widening eyes.

"Yep; leastways you an' Dave an' the mules an' me fought 'em," he answered.

"Oh, they wounded you. Here, change places with me," and the girl, catching sight of the cut on Jim's head for the first time, immediately set to work bandaging it up.

"Yes, marm, we had a nice lively little chat back thar 'bout a mile, an' if Dave

hadn't been pretty sick, we wouldn't o' come away without more forcibly pressin' home our argument. As it is now, we're bound for our employer's house without nothin' to show for the time we've put in."

"You say you are working for Don Manuel Feria?" the girl questioned quickly.

"Yes, marm."

"Well, I am the *don's* daughter. My name is Natilla, and I see now how things are. He must have sent you out."

Jim pondered this development laboriously.

"Now, what a chance for her to be the *don's* daughter," he reasoned to himself. "What would she be doin' out there in the woods? More likely she's givin' me a game so as to steer me off from them mahogany trees we was sent after. Ten to one she's hand in glove with the bunch that's been gettin' away with the men the *don's* been sendin' out to locate that grove.

"However, I'll let her hand out any kind of chatter, an' apparently take it in. Seein' as how we is headin' direct for the *don's* ranch, an' stand a good show of makin' it without any further trouble from that bunch of greasers, it's a mortal cinch she can't do no harm; an', besides, I've simply got to get her arm fixed up whar I done went an' shot her."

Having made this resolution, he turned to the girl and continued his explanation, shading it slightly to suit his own needs.

"You see, marm, it's like this: Me an' my partner is two prospectors, an' we got a hunch from a nigger we helped once that thar was placer gold to be found in this country in certain localities; consequences was that we come down here, an' after knockin' around a while we went broke an' struck the *don* for a job. I guess he must've liked our looks, for he give us one right away."

"Well, daddy must have sent you out to the grove, didn't he?" he girl asked him.

"Sure, marm; an' that's the reason—"

He stopped abruptly.

"Uh, hu!" he grunted to himself. "She's sure enough leadin' us away from that bunch of trees, all right. Why, she ain't the *don's* daughter no more than a jack-rabbit," and Jim decided more firmly than ever that she was in league with the crowd with whom he had had the fight.

"Gee, she's awful pretty, though!" he reflected, as he stole a glance at the lady out of the corner of his eyes.

She was looking straight at him, and as he turned away and studiously unscrewed the top of an empty water canteen, she spoke impulsively.

"Won't you forgive me for firing at you back there?" waving her hand in an indefinite manner behind them. "I was so nearly crazed by the treatment I had received, having just escaped from that man, that I took you for one of the ruffians, and—"

"Now, marm," Jim interrupted, "if there's any apologizin' to be done, it's up to me. To tell the truth, though, I didn't know you was a woman when I went an' shot you up. Gee, I feel like a first-class coyote to think that me, Jim Dawson, has gone an' shot up a woman like you."

"No, Jim," she continued, "I don't blame you at all, for I was doing my best to shoot you and your partner. Besides, it was only a scratch, and you may consider yourself forgiven. I didn't faint from the effect of the shot altogether, but simply because I was so frightened and nervous and everything, and I just naturally couldn't stand any more. What is your partner's name? We must do something for him."

"Dave," Jim answered, at the same time thinking: "Gosh, if she's actin', she sure ought to be on the stage."

"Well, let's see if we can't ease him a little. Do you think there is any chance of our being followed?"

"Not as yet, marm," and to himself: "She knows derned well that since she's with us they won't bother to foller us, but will let her do the trick of leadin' off. Wal, all the farther she can lead us is to Don Manuel's ranch."

With Jim's assistance she bathed and cleansed Dave's wound, and in a few minutes they were rewarded by seeing him open his eyes with recognition in them.

"How are you, pard?" Jim asked, bending anxiously over him.

"By gosh, they ain't got me yet," Dave answered with a sickly attempt at a smile. "But say," he continued, "whar in the devil are we, Jim? Did you go an' run from that dirty bunch of greasers?"

"Yep, I shore did," Jim answered him.

"Wal, what in thunderation do you think the *don's* goin' to say when we come back without doin' our job? He sent us out after a bunch of mahog—"

Jim stopped him, winked furiously, then turned to the girl and said ceremoniously:

"Miss Feria, permit me, this is my partner, Dave. Dave, this is Miss Feria, the *don's* daughter."

Dave's eyes opened widely, as he looked at the girl.

"I shore am glad to make your acquaintance, marm," he said gallantly.

The girl acknowledged the introduction and fell silent, while Jim, through the medium of all kinds of signs and faces, endeavored to let his partner know his suspicions regarding her.

"Still"—Dave reverted to the subject that was uppermost in his mind—"I can't help thinkin' that the *don* is goin' to be sore at us when we come back empty-handed."

"Shore, he'll be sore; but circumstances was against us, an' we done the best we could."

III.

THE following three days were spent monotonously plodding along on the way back to the ranch. The time hung heavy on their hands, and what conversation they had only served to deepen the partners' idea that the girl was playing a game.

Jim had drawn Dave aside when they had camped for the first night, and explained the situation to him.

Jim's cut on the side of his head was practically past the danger point, and Dave was feeling better every minute, while the girl had completely recovered from what she called the nervous excitement of the previous days. The two men called it by an entirely different name.

At length the cottonwood grove surrounding the *don's* ranch crept into sight.

Two hours later saw them very near their destination, and Jim felt a vague uneasiness creeping over him, for on nearing the ranch the girl's eyes lit up as she looked at the various objects that came into view.

Consequently, on drawing up the worn-out team in front of the house, he was not so surprised as he might have been when the girl jumped out of the rig and into the arms of the waiting *don* with a glad cry of:

"Daddy! Daddy!"

"I knew it. I knew you would bring her back," and the excitable Mexican danced around the two thunderstruck men, shaking their hands. "As for that matter of pay—you'll get ten thousand apiece, as far as that goes."

Running up the steps of the veranda, he drew up chairs for them all.

"Now, boys," he went on, when they were comfortably seated, "I have a confession to make. I sent you out there under false colors."

Both men sat stupefied.

"Yes, I did; and it's the first time I have ever done anything but on the square. However, I had a motive, and I know that you will forgive me when I tell you what it was.

"To go back a few days before I met you, I should tell you that one Leon Rovirosa, a very bad man in this country, and a distant relation of mine, came to the *rancho* when I was absent and showed my daughter a note purporting to come from me, in which I apparently asked her to accompany him, and he would bring her directly to me. She, trusting the blackguard implicitly, did as he asked, and he took her up into the hills, intending to hold her for ransom."

"I was at a loss as to what course I should pursue—"

"Beggin' your pardon, *don*," Jim interrupted; "but was Mr. Rovirosa a heavy, thick-set person, with a big black beard?"

"Yes, he was. Why?"

"Wal, *don*," Jim announced, "you won't be troubled by him again in all probability. He was the leader of the gang we had a fight with, an' he got in the way of a bullet, if I ain't mistaken."

"Well, you did a good job, if you got him. That man was *De Farge*."

Both men started, for he had spoken the name of the most unscrupulous and notorious outlaw in Mexico.

"De Farge?" Jim repeated, with his mouth open.

"Yes."

"Wal, I got him all right, but not before he left me this as a souvenir," pointing to the wound in his cheek. "But go on with your story, *don*."

"Well," the *don* resumed, "as you both give evidence of knowing De Farge's reputation, I shall only say that in this district, which is in reality his old stamping-ground, the natives are deathly afraid of him, and for no amount of money could I persuade any of them to go out after my daughter, so when I met you two the other day out on the flat, an idea formed itself in my brain, and I carried it out. I know Americans well, having spent a great deal of time in that country, and having an idea of where De Farge would go, I decided to

send you two fellows up there on some pretext, knowing that when you got there you would get wind of this affair and would not come away without my daughter. I had to send you in without letting you know what you were going for, because Rovirosa had left warning that if I attempted to rescue my daughter, her life would be the forfeit.

"I'll admit it was crooked of me to send you in there as I did, but it has accomplished what I wished to gain, and I shall always be more than grateful to you boys for what you have done."

Jim sprang to his feet and stretched out his hand to the *don*.

"Wal, as far as I'm concerned, I'm sure plumb satisfied; for even if we didn't bring back the mahogany, we brought back somethin' a whole lot better."

"Mahogany?" the girl repeated slowly. "Why, there were thousands of acres of it where that man took me."

"What?" cried the *don*, in excitement. "Impossible, Natilla; you *must* be mistaken."

"No, no, father!" she affirmed stoutly. "I saw it plainly with my own eyes. In fact, I could take you right to it."

"Are you sure?" her father queried.

"Absolutely, father," she maintained.

The *don* stared from her to the Americans and opened his mouth as if to speak, but no sound came.

"If there is mahogany—" Dave ventured, but the Mexican cut him short.

"There is," he exclaimed, apparently convinced of the truth of his daughter's statement. "Natilla knows it when she sees it."

The girl nodded her head vigorously.

"And we're going to get it!" the *don* exclaimed. "Boys," he added, "if you're willing and able, we'll go out for mahogany after all."

In Quest of the Pink Elephant.*

BY ELBERT D. WIGGIN,

Author of "Nobody's Fool," "Not for Sale," etc.

A Story of Adventure in Africa, in Which the Reader May at First Mistake the Villain for the Hero, and Wherein the Former Gets Everything That He Deserves.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

THE story is told at the start by Mayhew, villain of the tale, who is in Cairo for his health, with $500 in his pocket, when he meets Frank Jackson with whom he frames it up to go in pursuit of a pink elephant, although Mayhew really means to give Jackson the slip after reaching Tubudu, where he has heard that there reigns a white queen, mistress of untold treasure, who is anxious to marry with one of her own color, her subjects being all blacks. Before starting they fall in with Colonel Darrell, a British cavalry officer, also bound in the same direction in company with his daughter Viola, and son Phil. A lion carries off one of the blacks, and Jackson is nearly slain by its mate, which Mayhew might easily have killed. As a matter of fact, he purposely hesitates to fire, and but for Viola Darrell happening along by chance and shooting the lioness down, Jackson would have been a goner. The colonel takes cognizance of these facts, and tells Mayhew that he will inform him later what will be done with him in consequence.

CHAPTER VII (*Continued*).

UP FOR JUDGMENT.

AFTER his brief announcement, the colonel paid no more attention to me than if I were a block of wood, but busied himself in instructing the bearers how to get the dead lioness back of the *laager*.

The others likewise turned me a decidedly cold shoulder, and without even glancing in my direction, set off together through the thicket; so, pretending an indifference I was far from feeling, I lingered behind the straggling procession on our homeward way.

When I arrived at the wagon, I found the bunch all gathered for the midday meal;

* *Began April*, ARGOSY. *Single copies, 10 cents.*

but no one hailed me, or asked me to join them, so not wishing to intrude where I wasn't wanted, I threw myself down under the shadow of a thorn-bush near-by, and signaled the cook to bring my food to me there.

The sun was now high in the zenith, and the heat, even up there in the mountains, almost stifling. It was our usual custom at this hour to outspan and let everybody indulge in a siesta; but to-day, although we were all worn out from the exertions of the hunt, no one except the blacks thought of taking a nap.

The Darrells and Jackson seated themselves in the shade of the ox-wagon and talked earnestly in low tones, while I, stretching myself out under the thorn-bush with my hat pulled over my eyes, watched them from under its brim, and indulged in far from cheerful reflections.

They were discussing me. I knew that well enough, and I also had small difficulty in calculating the probable result of their discussion.

In the code of earth's wild places—whether it be under tropic suns, or amid Arctic snows — there is one unquestioned law; the man who fails to come to the aid of a comrade in danger or distress is anathema.

Among a rougher crew, the offense of which I had so plainly been guilty would probably have led me to the end of a rope, or the facing of a selected shooting-party.

I had no fear of that with my present companions; but I expected no less than to be excluded from the party. What would probably happen, I decided, was that I would be given a horse and a supply of rations, and told to cut back to the settlements as fast as I could make it.

Nor would it do me any good to bluster about the $500 I had invested in the expedition. By the rules of the game, I had forfeited all my rights, even to that of life itself; it would be sheer generosity on the part of the others if they gave me a mount and food.

In short, I had lost my chance of getting to Tubudu. How I cursed my fool impulse of hesitation out there in the shadows of the thorn-thicket!

I might have known, I told myself, that I could not get away with such a thing.

I cursed the dead lioness, too, for being so long about her spring; cursed the Darrells for turning up so opportunely; cursed practically everything and everybody. But especially I cursed Jackson and that almost uncanny good luck of his which seemed somehow always to bring him out on top.

Watching him now as he sat in council with the others over by the ox-wagon, my sense of grievance grew.

He was doing most of the talking, I could see, arguing against me apparently from his urgent gestures, and making out the case as black as possible.

What sort of justice was that, I questioned bitterly, to give him free swing and deny me even the privilege of listening to what was said? The very lowest criminal is accorded the right to hear the proceedings against him, and to speak in his own defense; but I evidently was to be judged unrepresented.

At last, though, the rather lengthy conference ended, and Colonel Darrell, rising to his feet, strode over to tell me the verdict.

So certain was I of its nature that I did not even take the trouble to rise. I merely scowled up at him from under the brim of my hat.

"Mayhew," he said; "we may be making a great mistake; but after thorough consideration, we have decided to overlook the unfortunate affair of this morning, and let things go on as they are."

I sat up with a gasp of surprise.

"You are not—not going to chase me, then?" I stammered incredulously.

"No," he rejoined; "as I tell you, we have agreed to make no change in present arrangements. We will strive, in fact, to blot this unpleasant incident from our minds, and I trust that you will respond to the same spirit, and show us henceforth that our leniency has not been a mistake."

He paused, and half turned away, but on second thought, faced about again.

"Before dropping the matter for good and all, though," he added, "it would, perhaps, be only fair to tell you that this result is entirely due to the representations of your friend, Mr. Jackson. The rest of us were unanimous in condemning you as either a coward or worse; but he insisted so strongly that your action could not have been intentional, but merely as with himself, a case of shaky nerves, that he finally persuaded us to his way of thinking. After all, he had been the one chiefly injured, we thought, and since he knew you better than we did, we were willing to accept his charitable view."

I had to turn my face away to conceal the wave of resentment which swept over me.

So, it was Jackson I had to thank for my reprieve, eh? I felt that I hated the fellow worse than ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

"TO THE NORTHWEST."

I RESUMED my place in the party, and as Colonel Darrell had promised, no further mention was made of the episode which had so nearly ended in my exclusion.

Nevertheless, there was an inevitable stiffness in my relations with the crowd from that time on, and I could plainly read suspicion and dislike of me in Viola's eyes whenever they turned in my direction.

True, Jackson rather put himself out of his way to ride with me, and try to carry off things on the old basis; but I rebuffed all such efforts. I wanted none of his pity; and besides, I preferred to be by myself, the better to formulate my plans.

Consequently, our line of march was altered, and I now brought up the rear alone. Also, I did not join the others as heretofore when we outspanned; but moodily kept to myself, generally finding an excuse to take my meals a little late, and rolling up in my blankets in the evening, instead of gathering with the circle about the camp-fire.

Meanwhile, we forged steadily forward, making, according to the colonel, even better progress than he had counted on.

We had long since crossed the mountains, and now, abandoning the ox-wagon and our horses at the last outpost of civilization, were proceeding on foot in regular "through-the-dark-continent" fashion.

The going was certainly rough—we forded rivers, wallowed in swamps, and plunged through tropical forests, where it was a constant hurdle-race over fallen logs and obstructions of every sort; but the colonel kept the natives up to their work, and they swung along with our goods and chattels on their heads almost as fast as the slow, plodding oxen had transported them.

Indeed, if the truth must be told, I was the one who most delayed the expedition at this point. Anxious though I was to get ahead, I had small liking for the long, forced marches to which the colonel kept urging us, and I made a good excuse of my weak lungs to insist on shorter stretches.

What did I care if the others, even including Viola Darrell, were willing to go on without grumbling? My doctrine is, "Look out for No. 1, and let the rest of the world go hang."

Still, as I have said, we got ahead, and finally came out at Artufa, an Arab-Portuguese settlement on the edge of the desert.

I could write a book, of course, on our journey through the forest; but what is the need? The experiences of one African exploring party are not so different from another after all, and the hazards, the chances, the excitements of the thing have been written up time and time again.

The blacks mutinied on us as usual, and were only repressed by strenuous measures. We had hairbreadth escapes from drowning or from losing our stores in the rivers; from being sucked down in treacherous quagmires; from falling victim to the tooth and claw of ravenous beasts, and the poison of venomous serpents. We had ticklish encounters with more than one savage tribe; and there were nights when we lay awake from dark to dawn with fingers on the triggers of our rifles, guarding against an expected attack.

There were days, too, when fever, more to be dreaded than any of the perils I have mentioned, dogged our footsteps — times when we staggered on, babbling in delirium and seemingly consumed by a raging inward fire. Only the colonel's heroic doses of quinin, and the strict sanitary measures his military experience had taught him to enforce, saved us, I verily believe, from leaving all our bones to bleach there in the wilds.

But, as I say, of what avail to go into all this, especially since nothing occurred during that time which bears directly on the main issues of my story?

Imagine us then at Artufa with the forest behind us, and the barren, illimitable spaces of the desert ahead.

We were thinner and browner for our experiences — gaunt, disreputable scarecrows all of us, as compared with the trim appearances we had presented on leaving Nairobi; but we were seasoned articles now, tough as whip-cord, feeling able to surmount anything in the way of privation or difficulty that lay ahead.

We rejoiced, too, in the fact that here our wanderings afoot ended; for we had arranged to cover the distance across the desert by caravan, and were to secure our camels at Artufa.

I listened carefully while the colonel and

Jackson were chaffering for our new mounts, hoping in this way to secure some information as to the former's purpose and destination, but it was only to be disappointed.

The colonel withstood the corkscrew inquiries of the villainous-looking half-breed Portuguese dealer, and maintained secrecy in regard to his mission quite as successfully as he had done along the road.

"'Ow far you go?" questioned the fellow curiously before he named a price.

Rumor credited him, and I have no doubt justly so, with dabbling in the slave-traffic on the side.

"What's that to you?" rejoined the colonel. "Tell me your charge per day, and send your driver with us. At the end of the journey, if it be twenty days, or forty, I will pay him what is due."

"Ah!" The dealer gave a shrug. "But 'ow do I know eef my drivair come back? Zen I be out my camels an' my money, too. You tell me w'at way you go, an' how far, an' I geev you a price."

But the colonel refused to loosen up.

"Come," he said impatiently. "I will give you so much down as a guarantee and to cover any risk you may run. The balance I will pay your driver, as I say, at the end of the journey."

The dealer shot him a glance of resentment.

"Eet makes a deeference eef you go to ze sout'west, or to ze nort'west," he scowled.

"Why so?"

But the man was non-committal.

"Zat is ze regular rule," was all he would answer.

"Well, then, which is the cheaper."

"Ze sout'west," he said eagerly. "Ze nort'west will cost you twenty shillings more each day."

"Very well." The colonel smiled imperturbably. "We will pay the northwest price, and then go whichever way we please."

The dealer could have chewed tacks, he was so mad; but he had made his bargain, and had to stand by it.

I lingered behind, though, after the arrangements were completed, and Jackson and Colonel Darrell had moved on. I wanted to gain some enlightenment on my own hook from the tricky half-breed, and an idea had struck me.

"Look here," I said, approaching him and slipping a coin into his hand, "tell me in which direction is Tubudu?"

He gave a slight start, and eyed me narrowly.

"Tubudu?" he repeated. "Ees eet pairhaps zat your party is bound for Tubudu?"

"Possibly," I rejoined; "and possibly, too, I do not want to go there."

"Ah!" he leered. "Zey do not let you 'ave one leetle peep at ze map zey carry? You do not know ze way yourself, but follow blind; ees zat eet?"

"Yes," I assented gruffly.

And, indeed, it had been a sore point with me from the start that Jackson, although I was his full partner, would never explain to me the route, or give me other than very general information as to the locality of the country for which we were bound.

I do not think it was so much that he suspected any bad faith on my part, as that he was determined to be the leader in our enterprise, and to brook no questioning or interference with his plans.

I thought I saw an opportunity now, however, to learn what I wanted from this hawk-faced scoundrel; and I found I had not been mistaken.

He studied me a moment from under his half-closed lids; then asked cautiously:

"'Ow will eet help you to keep zem from going to Tubudu, eef you know w'ere Tubudu ees?"

"Oh," I answered readily, "that will be easy enough. When we near the country, I will pretend to go insane and will slip off in the night. They will naturally follow me, and I will lead them a chase which will bring them out far from their destination."

"But w'at good will zat do you?" He shook his head in puzzled fashion.

"Why, it will give me a chance to play hero, and rescue the girl, won't it?"

This was a pleasing fiction invented on the spur of the moment, for my real plans, as will be seen later, were entirely different; but the fellow swallowed it without a whimper.

"Ah, I see," he cried. "You will draw zem off in a fool chase until all ze food is gone, and zey are starving; but all ze time you keep heading for some settlement, and at ze propair time you guide zem to eet. Halfa, pairhaps, is w'ere you will bring zem out?"

"Halfa is the place I was figuring on," I nodded, although as a matter of fact, this was the first time I had ever heard of it.

"Good! Good!" He rubbed his hands

and chuckled. "You are one smart young man, and eet ees a smart scheme. Eet will mean many more days out for my camels, and mooch money for me.

"Yes, I will help you rescue ze young lady." He grinned again. "Tubudu, my frien', is off to ze nort'west, fifteen days' journey."

I slipped another coin into his hand and left him much gratified. Information of such a character gleaned from the blacks would have been inaccurate and unreliable; but this man, I felt, knew what he was talking about.

CHAPTER IX.

A NIGHT-WATCH TRICK.

THE next morning we left Artufa and, under the colonel's order, headed our camels to the northwest.

We were a caravan now, instead of a *safari* as we had started out, or a line of footsore pedestrians as we had straggled into Artufa; but, except for that one fact, there was no change in the character of the expedition.

Everything was still managed and carried along in high-handed fashion by a close corporation composed of the Darrells and Jackson. I was a pariah, an outsider, a mere follower, whom they never took the trouble to consult.

True, I didn't give them the chance. As heretofore, I kept to myself, and never mixed in their confabs; but the fact that I had no voice in any of the arrangements was naturally galling, and served daily to increase my bitterness.

I had more time now to think, as I rode easily along perched on my swaying "ship of the desert," and I found my chief pleasure in meditating on what was going to happen ere long to that uppish, insolent crew.

Every day I counted myself in glee as that much nearer my revenge, and when my heart was stirred to fury by the sight of Jackson and Viola philandering, I comforted myself with the reflection that their romance would not last long.

I know now that I was in love with Viola Darrell—Heaven pity me, I am yet!—but I thought at the time I only hated her, and exulted in the disaster which I was determined should overtake her with the rest.

Wrapped up in these vindictive thoughts, I took little note of outside circumstances, fulfilling each day's journey in a mechanical sort of way; mounting my camel when the word was given to start in the morning, halting when the others stopped, eating when food was brought to me, and at night rolling up in my blankets apart from the others to nurse my rankling grievances.

So, about nine days passed when, one evening as we were riding along toward sunset, I chanced to observe that my elongated shadow lay to my left.

I started, and frowned at my discovery, for I had not been conscious of any change in our direction since the start. To me, it seemed as though we had been traveling steadily in a straight line. Knowing that we had set out toward the northwest, and relying on the camel-dealer's assertion that Tubudu lay that way, I had never stopped to question our course.

There could be no doubt now, however, that we were traveling southwest. The shadow, falling to my left at sunset, was conclusive proof.

When, then, had we changed?

I wrinkled up my brows, as I cast my memory back over the days we had been out, and tried to recall some incident of each sunset.

The result surprised me. Unless I was mistaken, we had been going to the southwest for seven days. We must have veered from our original direction on either the second or third day out. Instead of journeying toward Tubudu, we were traveling directly away from it.

What could it mean? Had Jackson abandoned his quest of the pink elephant, without even so much as a word to me?

It struck me as a solution that perhaps he had gone in with the colonel on the latter's mysterious mission. That was the most likely explanation, I decided, for the divergence from our route.

The treacherous hound had simply thrown me down, and enlisted on a scheme which offered him better chances of success. I was plainly the goat.

To say that I was furious at this revelation of perfidy is putting it mildly. Ill-natured people may say that it was no more than I deserved, seeing that I had been framing up the same sort of a game against him, but I didn't see it that way.

I was mad all the way through, and I made up my mind then and there that I wouldn't stand for it. I proposed to have a prompt reckoning with Jackson, and find

out, as my right, just what were his purposes and intentions.

My first idea was to accost him as soon as we made camp that evening; but somehow the circumstances were not propitious, and on consideration I put it off until the following morning.

All stirred up and enraged as I was over the matter, though, I did not fall asleep, and long after the others had dropped off I lay awake, casting and recasting in my mind what I would say to Jackson.

The new moon, a slender little crescent, had long since set, and a deep, velvety blackness rested over the desert.

The camp lay wrapped in slumber, the camels squatting off to one side with their Arab drivers snoring beside them, and the rest of us in a line on the sand, lying swathed in our blankets like mummies.

We had had a hard, hot day of it, and everybody was pretty well tuckered out. The only person awake beside myself was young Phil Darrell, whose turn it was to keep watch, and he was nodding as he sat with his back toward me over by the fire.

Lying there watching him, and listening to the regular, heavy breathing of Jackson, about a dozen feet away on my right, a sudden brilliant inspiration came to me.

Why not take a peep at his chart, and find out just how far we had veered from our course, and where Tubudu really lay?

Strange, it may be thought, that this had never suggested itself to me before, seeing that I knew he carried the map on his person, and pricked off each day our exact location and the number of miles traveled; but, to tell the truth, my curiosity had never been sufficient hitherto to impel me to take the chance of being caught.

I had always felt that he would naturally tip me off when we were within a day or so of Tubudu, and that would give me all the time I required to perfect my plans.

But now that I was so evidently being deceived, it was plain that more decisive measures were necessary.

I looked again at Phil Darrell; he was still nodding sleepily by the fire with his back to me. Then, very cautiously, I rolled over and over in my blanket until I lay directly beside Jackson.

He was ordinarily a heavy sleeper, and the deep, slow respirations he was giving told me that a cannon fired off at his elbow would scarcely have roused him; nevertheless, I was wary.

Very, very carefully I passed my hands over his recumbent figure, and felt in his various pockets, but without result until at last I unbuttoned his flannel shirt, and, thrusting my fingers inside, closed on a little packet wrapped in oilskin.

I knew from the feel of the thing that it was the chart I wanted.

Quickly I thrust it away into my own bosom; then with an exulting heart, but no less cautiously than before, rolled back to my original position, and lay there, counting the slow moments and watching the stately procession of the stars, until Darrell concluded his watch.

Fortune favored me in that my turn at sentry duty immediately followed his, although I will frankly confess that never before had I so eagerly awaited a summons to that unpleasant task.

To my itching impatience it seemed centuries before he was ready to call me.

Finally, however, he roused up from his nodding posture, glanced at his watch, and then fiddled around, putting fresh sticks on the fire and doing things to fill up the few remaining moments left him.

My impulse was to spring up, of course, and tell him I was ready to relieve him then; but I did not want to do anything to raise a possible suspicion, so I lay still, feigning sleep, and tried to act as grumpy and unwilling as usual, when at last he came over and shook me.

I waited, too, until I was sure that he had lapsed into slumber, and took the precaution to bend over each of the other sleeping forms before I ventured to examine my prize.

But at last with trembling fingers I drew it forth, and, unrolling the map, leaned eagerly down to the flickering firelight to scan its tracing.

Then an incredulous oath escaped my lips. I leaned closer to look again.

Yes; there could be no mistake. The camel-dealer had evidently lied to me; for Tubudu was plainly indicated here as lying to the southwest, and the pricked-off route showed that it was now not more than forty-eight hours away.

CHAPTER X.

FRENCH LEAVE.

TUBUDU but forty-eight hours away!

It was patent that I could afford to lose

but little more time in effecting the stratagem which I had so long held in anticipation.

One point, it is true, still bothered me: why had the rascally camel-dealer so outrageously lied to me in regard to the situation of the country? But I had more important things to consider than the reasons for his mendacity, and I let it go as merely a sample of his inability to tell the truth on any subject.

There could be no doubt of the accuracy of the map. I knew Jackson well enough to feel sure that he had checked and counter-checked himself with every available bit of information until the thing was as correct as any such piece of conjectural topography could be.

The only question with me, therefore, was how to act upon this revelation which had come into my hands, and it didn't take me long to decide.

Procuring a piece of paper, I hastily outlined a rough copy of the chart; then quickly made my preparations for departure.

These last were simple. All I needed was a two or three days' supply of rations, and a little bundle I had prepared in advance, the requisites for my disguise.

Finally, everything being in readiness, I approached Jackson to restore his borrowed property. I didn't propose to run any risk of letting them guess that I had come into possession of their carefully guarded secret, and so possibly putting them on guard. Let them think, rather, that my going away was merely a wild whim, a bit of desert madness.

But in putting the chart back where I had got it, I was either less cautious than before, or else Jackson was sleeping less soundly; for as I withdrew my hand from his bosom, he stirred and opened his eyes.

I had to think quick in order to give an adequate excuse for my presence.

Swiftly slipping my hand to his shoulder, I shook him vigorously as though endeavoring to arouse him.

"Get up!" I whispered tensely. "I saw what looked like a dark shadow creeping along back here just now. I am sure those tricky Arabs must be starting something."

He raised up on one elbow and blinked out sleepily over the quiet camp.

"Have you counted them?" he asked.

"Yes, and they seemed all right. But I don't trust their 'possum-playing. That shadow, I spoke of, certainly looked mighty suspicious to me."

"Oh, nonsense, Mayhew!" he yawned. "This blithering old desert has got on your nerves, and you've taken to seeing things. That's all the matter.

"I'll tell you," he added reluctantly; "I'll get up and stand your watch with you, if you feel off your chump. You'll find that company will soon put all those shadows of yours to flight."

But for him to stand watch with me was just what I didn't want.

"No, no!" I demurred hastily. "I am not afraid, if that's what you mean. I merely thought that shadow was worth looking into; but, as you say, it was probably only a trick of my nerves. Go on back to sleep for another hour, until your own turn at watch comes. I will rouse you then, and we will take a thorough look around."

Nothing loath to accede, he sank back on the sand after a little further persuasion, and with a grunt or two was off once more to dreamland.

There was nothing now to delay me longer, and gathering my little bundle under my arm, I stepped to the edge of the encampment.

But before I stole away into the night, I yielded to a sudden impulse, and crept back to gaze a farewell on Viola Darrell.

She was so muffled up in a *burnoose* that I could see only the tip of her nose, and one rounded cheek, with the long, dark eyelids sweeping across it; but I could easily picture the rest of her lovely piquant face.

She lay breathing softly and easily like a child in slumber, and as I stood looking down at her, I wondered in my heart whether after all it might not have been better to play square on this expedition.

Perhaps, I mused, if I had acted the man, and met Jackson in a fair and open contest for her favor, I might have won this splendid, courageous girl myself.

In this softer mood, too, I recoiled with horror from the thought of her falling a victim to the fierce Tubudu warriors.

The temptation surged over me to wake her and the others up, confess my misdeeds, and warn them of their impending danger.

But then I recalled the look of disdain she had flashed me on the day of the lion-hunt, and the attitude of suspicion and dislike she had since maintained, and my soul hardened.

With a gesture, I brushed aside my weak

and foolish sentiments of pity. There could be no place for love or tenderness in my career. My part must be to win Verata and the treasures of Tubudu.

Without another glance at the sleeping girl, I shouldered my pack again and strode forth into the desert.

CHAPTER XI.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF A PARTNER.

As to what befell the expedition after my departure, I do not, of course, write of my own knowledge, but, save for a few minor discrepancies and errors, I am sure that the story which follows is substantially correct.

Jackson's turn at watch, it will be remembered, followed after mine; but unawakened at the hour, and heavy with sleep, he snored on until the sun had risen high above the horizon.

Then, simultaneously with the rest of the camp he awoke, and questioning naturally why he had been left to slumber, discovered my absence.

Greatly excited, he hurried to inform the others.

"What in the world can have become of him, do you suppose?" he demanded.

"H-m," commented Viola Darrell, cocking her head to one side. "It doesn't surprise me in the least. I have been expecting him to do that very thing for a long time."

"You have been expecting it?" Jackson repeated. "Why, what possible reason could he have? All his interests are identical with mine, and—"

"No," she interrupted sharply, "I have believed for a long time that he had a private scheme of some kind on hand, and was ready to leave you in the lurch the moment he found he had no further need of you. This proves to me now that I was right."

But Jackson shook his head.

"Nonsense," he protested. "What sort of an undertaking could a man embark on out here in the desert?"

"The desert does not extend very far," observed Colonel Darrell. "Remember, we are now but a few miles from fertile country."

"Yes, but Mayhew didn't know that," returned Jackson.

"How do you know he didn't?" It was Viola who again broke in.

"Why, he had no map or chart of any kind. As I told you once, our agreement was that I should lay our course, and he follow blindly, without any further information than what I chose to give him."

She laughed scornfully.

"And do you suppose for a minute that he abode by any such agreement? Knowing that you had the map, do you imagine that he let slip the many opportunities offered him for taking a peep at it? Pshaw! I don't believe it. I'll wager that he knew every day just as much about the route as you did."

Jackson gave a startled exclamation, and hurriedly thrust his hand into his breast; but as he drew out the chart wrapped as usual in its oilskin covering and apparently untouched, he again shook his head.

The colonel, however, added the weight of his opinion to his daughter's side of the argument.

"Trust a woman's intuition, Jackson," he said. "I, too, have felt from the first that there was something wrong about this fellow, and have been practically certain of it since the day of the lion hunt; but I couldn't quite figure out where it would be to his advantage to dump you. I believe, though, the little girl here has managed to put her finger on the trouble. He has an enterprise of his own entirely apart from yours, and has gone to look after it.

"Well,"—he waved his hand—"I, for one, shall not mourn his departure. Good riddance. I say, to bad rubbish."

But Jackson was not to be convinced.

"No," he insisted; "Mayhew may not have been the most pleasant traveling companion in the world, and there are many things about him I don't like myself, but I am satisfied that you are doing him an injustice in this matter.

"I believe, rather, that he has strayed away under the influence of some delusion or mental aberration.

"Indeed," he continued thoughtfully, "I am not certain that the poor chap has not been slightly 'off' almost since the time we left Nairobi. Perhaps he suffered a slight touch of the sun or something of the kind, which none of us noticed at the time, but which has been steadily growing worse. That would account for all his peculiar behavior, wouldn't it, even including the episode of the lion hunt, on which you all lay such stress?

"Yes," he repeated, "I am certain that

he must be out of his head. Why, now that I recall it, he woke me up in the most excited fashion only last night with some crazy story of seeing suspicious-looking shadows creeping around the camp. I assured him it was only a hallucination, and he went back to the fire to continue his watch."

"Well, that is undoubtedly a charitable view to take of him," said the colonel. "But for my part, Jackson, I think he is just a plain bad egg—rotten all the way through."

Jackson studied a moment, looking down as he scraped the sand into a little pile with his foot; then he glanced up and resolutely met the colonel's questioning eyes.

"Possibly you are right, sir," he said slowly and distinctly; "but he's my partner, you see, and I've got to give him the benefit of the doubt."

"What are you going to do?" Viola questioned quickly, her gray eyes widening.

"I'm going to hunt for him."

"Out there alone, over the desert? You will take that risk for a man who has openly played you traitor?"

"Ah," he returned, "but you see I am taking the chance that he is straight."

She started to make a further appeal to him; but he cut her off with a resolute gesture.

"Don't you see it's the only thing I can do," he said. "I took him on as a partner, and I've got to fulfil my obligation."

"Then," she turned to her father, "we will go with you, won't we, dad?"

But the colonel grimly shook his head.

"Impossible, my child," he answered. "The mission on which I am bound will admit of no delay."

"After all"—Jackson endeavored to speak lightly—"it is but anticipating our separation by a very little. We have never asked each other's destination, colonel, but I don't mind telling you that mine is Tubudu. I should have had to leave you in any event within the next forty-eight hours."

"Tubudu!" The colonel gave a slight start, but it was noticeable that he did not vouchsafe any information in return.

After that, Jackson's preparations were soon made, and he clasped hands with Viola Darrell to say good-by.

"It is agreed, then, that we will meet in London in the fall," the colonel heard them say, as they drew apart.

"Perhaps sooner than that," he muttered under his grizzled mustache, with a dry, quizzical smile.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PERILS OF A DAY.

THE Darrells, on their camels, pulled away to the southwest; while Jackson, picking up a trail which I had purposely left by means of dropping a handkerchief and one or two things of the sort, headed toward the north.

He had chosen to travel afoot, because he thought he could thus more easily follow my track, and more quickly overtake me; and except for the extreme heat of the day, he trudged steadily ahead until evening, but without, of course, ever catching a glimpse of me.

I had arranged for that by changing my course about a mile or two out of camp, and again traveling southwest; but he held to the north, peering out in every direction for some sign of me.

Indeed, he only desisted from his search when the moon went down, and it became too dark to permit of further efforts.

Then he rolled up in his coat, and fell into a sleep of utter exhaustion.

When he awoke the desert seemed strangely changed. The sky above was of a lurid, coppery appearance, with the sun rolling across it like a huge, hazy red ball. In that weird, uncanny light, objects on the desert and the hillocks of sand seemed curiously foreshortened and distorted. The horizon had a perplexing trick of appearing by turns but a mile or two away, and then receding to a vast distance.

The heat was intense, the air seeming like the blast from the mouth of a furnace, withering and scorching with its touch; but Jackson buckled up his resolution, and plodded on, although every step soon became a torture.

There was a constant temptation, too, to resort to the water-skin he carried, in order to quench his burning thirst; but knowing that his scanty supply might have to last him for several days, he sternly repressed the inclination, and treated himself only sparingly and at long intervals to a sip of the tepid fluid.

When I think of what he went through, as I have had similar experiences described to me, it makes me half mad to think that

any man could be such a fool. I'd like to see myself undergoing such an ordeal for the sake of another chap—partner or no partner.

Nay, nay, Pauline. I follow a different sort of dope.

Moreover, conditions grew worse as the day advanced. The sun was no longer visible in the coppery sky; but this did not serve to abate the heat. In fact, if anything, the air was closer and more stifling than ever.

And still he could discern no sight of me anywhere in his widest circle of vision.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, however, as he stumbled doggedly on, holding rigidly by his compass to the due north course he had chosen, he saw a black speck moving far away on the edge of the horizon.

The sight put new heart and vigor into him, and taking a long pull at the water-bottle, he started off at top speed in that direction.

But he had not progressed more than a quarter of a mile before he suddenly halted with a sharp exclamation of dismay.

There was not one dark speck now, but several; and, as the atmosphere cleared a bit for a moment, he could see that the party was mounted.

"It evidently isn't Mayhew," he muttered, gazing from under the shade of his hand, "unless he has happened to fall in with a caravan of some sort. The question for me, then, is, are these people friends or foes?"

Manifestly, however, he was not to be left long in doubt; for they had also seen him by this time, and were whirling in his direction as fast as their horses could carry them.

Jackson stood still and waited for their approach. It was all he could do, since there was no place to flee, and in any event they were bound to overtake him.

So nearer and nearer they came, his heart beating fast in his alternate hope and dread as to what their purpose might be, until finally that organ fairly stopped with a thump, as speculation gave way to certainty.

Close enough now for him to discern the fluttering feather head-dresses and bedizened swarthy forms of the riders, he recognized, from descriptions he had heard, that this must be a band of the fierce Tubudu warriors.

That their purpose was hostile also was fully evidenced by the manner in which they brandished their weapons, and by the shrill, menacing cries which began now to reach his ears.

Instinctively Jackson turned and took a hasty step or two away from them; then he paused and faced about again. There was nothing that he could do but stand his ground, and try to give as good an account of himself as possible before they finally overwhelmed him.

Grimly he set his jaw, and unslung from his back the rifle which, with his hunting-knife, was the only weapon he carried.

As he loosened up his cartridge belt and filled his magazine, he recalled some of the stories he had heard concerning the treatment of male prisoners, and decided that at the last he would hold out at least one shot in reserve for himself.

A moment or two was taken up with these simple preparations; then he had nothing to do but wait.

The Tubudus by this time were not more than a mile distant, and riding furiously toward him. The mêlée would certainly be on within a very few minutes now.

But as he gazed, he saw the band suddenly check its rapid advance, and start to point with excited outcries toward the heavens.

The next moment they had whirled about, and, lashing their horses, were fleeing away from him twice as fast as they had come.

Dazed, wondering at this unexpected maneuver, Jackson turned hurriedly about to see what could have caused it, and with a gasp at the spectacle he beheld, stood rooted in his tracks.

(To be continued.)

WELCOME.

So glad the word of greeting,
So sweet the kiss and smile,
That parting, for such meeting,
Were almost made worth while.

George Alison.

PUTTING IT THROUGH.

BY ELIZABETH ADAMS BANKS.

The Matter of Miss Brown and the Initial Letter. For Further Information Read the Story and See This Month's Log-Book.

THE letter started properly. The Toronto mail-man chucked it in the heavy, gray bag destined for Philadelphia; it reached there safely, and was delivered to the big store on Market Street. Then the trouble began.

This letter was addressed to Miss M. L. Brown, advertising department. The floor-walker of the basement got hold of it, and delivered it, correctly as he thought, to the desk of Miss M. R. Brown, catalogue office, typist, and person of all-around handy knowledge.

If you were offered a $2,500 position in a Toronto advertising agency, would you accept it? Would it offer you any inducements to leave the quiet charm of the Quaker City for the sterner gaieties of the pleasant Canadian life, especially if you were then earning only fifteen dollars a week, and felt yourself competent—well, to do almost anything?

Miss M. R. Brown opened the letter casually, expecting a request for a catalogue. She read: "Dear Madam: We have an opening for a particularly bright and capable advertising woman. Mr. Mason suggested you as having great possibilities of value to us. The position commands $2,500 annually, subject to yearly increase if satisfactory. Your services would be required at once. Please wire us your answer."

Miss Brown thought the sky had fallen! What a golden gate!

Then she looked at the envelope again and her brow puckered, for she saw that it was addressed to Miss M. L. Brown. Now, Miss Margaret Lane Brown was quite a different person. She was the particularly bright light of the real advertising department.

Miss Brown, of catalogue office, never daunted by anything, not even temptation, at once telephoned to see if Miss Brown of the advertising department were at her desk. Miss Brown was away on her vacation. Did not know where she was—Back in ten days—

Miss M. R. Brown put down the telephone-receiver and frowningly studied the letter. She wished the chance were hers. She knew Miss M. L. Brown was about to commit matrimony, and Toronto surely would not enter into her plans. The thing was that she herself had no reputation and no influence, and unless this proposition were accepted at once it meant the losing of the opportunity.

"I can bluff as well as any man—and most business men are fakers, anyway," she finally decided after painful consultation over night with a carefully developed Quaker conscience. She wired "yes."

The wonderful thing was that she put through her bluff. She reached Toronto in the midst of summer. Being a hard worker and shrewd gleaner of business information, she passed all the preliminary tests and got down to business. By sheer instinct and common sense, she was able to write acceptable copy, and with what she had gathered from former observations in her Philadelphia experience, she set up her advertisements uncommonly well.

It was astonishing with what skill she conducted the affairs entrusted to her, but she had been born with a genius for business. After six months the firm rubbed its hands and voted her an increase in salary.

Then it was the stroke fell! She had long expected it.

She was young and confident, but she knew the fates had it in for her undoing.

Her letters invariably had come addressed to Miss M. Brown or Miss M. R. Brown—she herself signed Marion Brown. Her contracts were written in this way. Suppose the Mr. Mason who had so highly commended Miss M. L. Brown should write to ask of her progress—and write out the full name of Margaret Lane Brown?

Oh, yes, she had been anticipating the blow to fall. Now that it had loomed up

in the offing it looked quite like an old friend, so often had she pictured a nameless "something terrible."

That morning a crisp snow sparkled everywhere. It was one of those splendid days which often herald spring up in the North. After a brisk walk to the office, her cheeks flushed the prettiest rose-color.

While still busy opening her mail, the office-boy, little red-haired Frank, came in with solemn visage and said in sepulchral tones: "Miss Brown, Mr. Haines wants to see you—right away." His tone implied instant dismissal at the very least.

Marion smiled. She was used to him—yet her heart beat faster as she walked down the corridor.

Mr. Haines was sitting at his desk with an open letter before him.

Mr. Bullerton the younger member of the firm, stood by the window, a slightly careworn look in his eyes—a little white around his good British chin, which our Canadian friends say shows will power, and other people claim proves obstinacy.

"Good morning, Mr. Haines. Good morning, Mr. Bullerton. Can I do something for you?" asked Marion brightly, forcing a smile,

"Yes, Miss Brown," answered Mr. Haines, looking at her kindly, for he liked Marion's frank spirit and indomitable initiative. "We have a treat for you.

"We want you to go to New York tomorrow. The fashion openings are on now, and our customers here always like to find out from us how near they are to New York styles."

"We have written Mr. Mason that you are coming and to look out for you, as you know so little of New York, but so long as you know him you are all right. Of course you can go, can you not?"

When a man expects you to say "Yes, thank you," you generally do it. Marion did. Said she would go certainly, if the business demanded it. Where was she to meet Mr. Mason?

That was all arranged, Mr. Haines assured her—they had asked him to call on her at the Martha Washington on Thursday—she would better go to this woman's hotel, being alone, etc.

There are many bright, strong girls who are brave as a man nine-tenths of the time—but for that other small fraction they are nervous, "blue," timid, and need to be mothered.

Marion had not received the salary she deserved in the Philadelphia house, and she had "made good" in Toronto. Probably she had done better work than the advertising Miss Brown would have done. And it had been fun—all the responsibility and sort of glory that had come to her.

But now it was all ended. After seeing Mr. Mason it would be all up—and if she failed to see him, her firm would consider it most strange.

Poor Marion's brain was in a whirl. The hours lagged unmercifully. Should she go into Mr. Haines and tell him of her imposture? For it really was that, confessed Marion to herself. But if an impostor, would they not think her a spy in other people's business as well, for she had been admitted into all the secrets, not only of the agency, but also of the various business houses whose advertisements she wrote?

Finally, she sadly packed her bag, put all her belongings into her trunk, and locked and addressed it, deciding that she would go away and send for it—she was sure she would never come back!

Mr. Bullerton came down to the train to see her off, and in his usual dignified fashion seemed sorry to have her go, even for the few days.

At last the train pulled out.

There is no one who can pile up fears like a woman.

Marion did more! She *hoped* something would happen. She decided she would rather *die* than go forward or go back.

Just outside of Albany it did happen in the shape of a railroad accident. Nobody was killed, but when Marion opened her eyes it was only to think "the blow has fallen," and then relapse into unconsciousness again.

Volunteers and doctors dug her out. A hurriedly summoned surgeon gave up the attempt to discover just how much glass had penetrated her body, and the exact location of breaks and bruises, which made her wince at the slightest touch.

They discovered the full tale of injuries with considerable difficulty in the hospital, where she was taken, finally deciding that they were painful but not necessarily dangerous. None of the other passengers had been hurt so badly as she—but then it was she who had wished something to happen.

When asked whom they should notify of her accident, Marion said no one. She

had no father, no mother, no anybody. She did not want to throw herself on the mercy of the Toronto agency.

So she became a martyr. Figuratively she was in sackcloth and ashes for her sins

II.

"HUMPH, what does this mean, Bullerton," growled Mr. Haines, as that gentleman entered the office the morning after Marion had started for New York. "Will Mason says that our Miss Brown is married—or"—glancing at the letter he held—"no, that his Miss Brown is married and he does not know our Miss Brown."

"Yes?"

"Yes? You are mighty cool about it," said the other man. "Perhaps you don't mind being fooled by a little Yankee."

"But you see I wasn't fooled," said Bullerton quietly. "I met Mr. Mason's friend half a dozen years ago—we both crossed on the same steamer. This child had such audacity that I decided to keep my mouth shut. When she made good I decided to wait until she told us herself.

"Wonder what she is doing now, though—and what will she say to Mason?"

At that very minute the boy brought in the morning papers, and in a seven-column headline was the answer:

"New York Limited crashed into by local—one of our popular townswomen hurt near to death."

And, of course, being a gentleman, Mr. Bullerton rushed to the rescue.

Yet, for all her remorse and her accident, the firm never gave back to Marion her position. They would not even allow her to return to Toronto for a year, and then—well, then she came back because she was Mrs. Bullerton.

PERILOUS HEIGHTS.

THE boy who lives across the way—a jolly little elf—
Procured a pair of poles one day, just to amuse himself.
He thought he wasn't tall enough. He fixed them nice and neat
With handles to take hold of and with blocks to fit his feet.
And now he's ten feet high at least. He proudly nods his head
And stalks around the sidewalk with a most uncertain tread.
He thinks he is majestic, though he's scarcely out of kilts,
It's fun to look at Johnny when he's walking on his stilts.

His father was an amiable and simple-spoken man,
But since he got an office, he has somehow changed his plan.
Most everybody likes him, 'spite of this desire of his
To make us think that he's much bigger than he really is.
He seems a bit uneasy when he's towering around.
He steps as though he wasn't wholly sure about his ground.
He tries to be impressive, but he wabbles and he wilts.
He makes us think of Johnny when he's walking on his stilts.

Anonymous.

HIS BROTHER'S ECLIPSE.*

BY LEE BERTRAND.

Bob Hillias Pleads in Vain, and Then Refuses To Talk, Which Puts Him in Worse Case Than Ever.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

Bob Hillias, brother of Morton, cartoonist on the *Champion,* is engaged to Katherine Gedney, whose father Richard, head of the bread trust, forms the subject for Morton's most incisive thrusts of lampooning. Until he shall quit drawing these pictures, Gedney refuses to allow his daughter to marry Bob, who pleads in vain with his brother to cease his attacks on the father. Beverly Robinson, dramatic critic of the *Champion,* overhears the conversation, and also what Bob says to Katherine in telephoning her later of his non-success. Mr. Gedney now forbids Bob to call and Katherine to write to him. Bob goes again to Morton, but is repulsed very decidedly this time, as the cartoonist shows him an anonymous letter, just received, telling the artist his life is in danger if he does not abandon his cartoons on Gedney. And Bob is dumfounded to discover all indications pointing to the fact that Katherine herself has written the letter on a new typewriter on which she is practising.

Unable to bear the separation, she so far goes against her father as to make an appointment to meet Bob, whom she then persuades to take her to his brother's apartments, that she may try her powers of persuasion. One of the offensive cartoons rests on the easel as they enter, and Katherine walks toward the window to recover herself from the sight of it. A brooch slips from its fastenings, and falls to the sidewalk four stories below. Bob hurries down to recover it and collides with a man carrying a vase who has him arrested. But he is at once dismissed at the police-station, and hastens back, only to find Katherine gone, and the inanimate form of his brother stretched on the floor, a bullet wound in his temple. The wound tallies with the caliber of a tiny pistol of Katherine's, and Bob's lips are locked on that account. So he is sent to jail to await the result of his brother's injuries.

Meantime, Beverly Robinson goes to the Gedneys' and traps Katherine into admitting that she was at Morton Hillias's rooms. The *Champion's* managing editor wants to use this, but Mr. Gedney threatens a libel suit if he does, so Robinson goes to the jail where Bob Hillias is confined and tries to get the latter to denounce Katherine. He fails in this, and then tells Bob that Katherine and her father have both turned on him, and are willing to let him go to the chair for a crime they know he did not commit.

CHAPTER XIII.

BOB GETS A SHOCK.

MORTON HILLIAS was still alive on the following morning when his brother Bob was led from his cell to the magistrate's court for a preliminary hearing of his case.

Bob heard this piece of good news from Captain Gilhooley, who stood regarding the haggard young man intently on his way to the patrol-wagon.

"Guess you're a pretty lucky fellow," remarked the captain. "You've got good cause to congratulate yourself."

"In what respect?" asked the prisoner.

"Your victim ain't going to die. I've just had a report from the hospital. Your brother's condition is much improved this morning, and the doctors consider him out of danger—as far as his life is concerned."

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed Bob fervently.

"Yes, it's a fortunate thing for you. You won't have to stand trial for murder now. Felonious assault is the worst we can charge you with."

"I wasn't thinking about myself," declared Bob indignantly. "I was thinking of my brother. Now that I know he's out of danger and going to get well, I feel like a new man."

"Well, he ain't exactly goin' to get well," said Gilhooley grimly. "Even though you didn't succeed in killing him, you've done damage enough. As a matter of fact, he'd probably be better off if that bullet you fired into his head last night *had* resulted fatally."

"What do you mean?" gasped Bob.

"I mean that as a result of your shot, that unfortunate young man is entirely out

of his head and, according to the hospital surgeons, he'll be an idiot for the rest of his days."

Bob staggered back.

"Good Lord!" he groaned. "How terrible! Poor old Morton!"

Suddenly he burst into a wild laugh.

"I guess I understand," he cried. "Why, you did that so well I was actually green enough to believe you. You're not telling the truth, of course. This is some of your dirty third-degree business. I've read a whole lot about the third degree in the newspapers, but this is the first time I've ever been up against it personally.

"You simply told me that to unnerve me. You're trying to scare me into confessing I'm guilty. There isn't any truth in it. My brother hasn't lost his reason. Oh, tell me that you didn't mean that?"

His grief and horror were so pitiful and so undoubtedly genuine, that the captain could not help feeling a little sorry for him.

"I regret to say that what I told you is the truth, my boy," he replied in a kindly tone. "Your brother's mind is a complete blank. He's recovered consciousness, but he's got no more sense than a year-old baby, and the sawbones down at the hospital think he'll always be that way.

"They say it's a very rare case. He's quite well in every other respect—in fact, he'll be able to leave the hospital in a day or so; but he must have somebody to look after him all the time, for he'll be as helpless as an infant.

"The doctors used a lot of high soundin' words in describin' what ails him and, of course, I can't remember exactly what they said, as I don't understand their lingo; but as near as I could make out, the trouble is caused by a splinter of bone from the skull or something like that lodging in a part of the brain which they can't get at.

"The bullet itself didn't enter the brain, bein' deflected by the skull; but it hit the skull hard enough to do a lot of damage to the works inside."

Bob received this information with a groan, and tears came to his eyes.

"Poor Morton," he muttered brokenly. "You're right; he'd be better off dead."

"Well," retorted the captain, with a clumsy attempt to be consoling. "You, at least, are much better off that he's alive. You won't go to the electric-chair now, that's sure. Ten years in prison is the worst you can get. You ought to be glad of that."

The wretched young man did not appear to derive any comfort from this remark. Without making any reply, he climbed into the patrol-wagon and was driven to court.

As he stepped out of the police vehicle at the entrance of the grim-looking courthouse, a big policeman on either side of him, Bob found himself the center of a crowd which had gathered on the sidewalk eager to get a glimpse of the man accused of shooting the well-known cartoonist.

In the front rank of this throng were several men with cameras—staff-photographers of evening newspapers, whose apparatus clicked busily as Bob came within range.

Some persons in the crowd started to hoot and jeer at sight of him, and somebody hurled an overripe tomato which narrowly missed Bob's head.

"He shot his own brother, bad 'cess to him," shouted a slatternly woman with a fiery countenance, shaking her fist. "I hope the brute gets the limit."

Fortunately for Bob it was only a few steps from the patrol-wagon to the prisoner's entrance to the court-house, so he did not have to endure this disagreeable experience for more than a fraction of a minute.

Brief as was the incident, however, it added greatly to his distress, for the hostility of this street mob had opened his eyes to the fact that public opinion was already set dead against him, and that unless he could prove his innocence beyond a shadow of a doubt, men would in future shrink from him with loathing as one who bore the brand of Cain.

When Bob was led into the presence of the magistrate, he found the space in front of the bench thronged with reporters, who had come to chronicle the first stage of what promised to be a sensational case.

In this group was Beverly Robinson, who, as soon as he caught sight of the prisoner, edged his way to the latter's side.

"I suppose you've heard the news about poor Morton," he whispered fiercely.

Bob nodded gloomily.

"Yes—is it really true? Is there no possibility of a cure?"

"None at all—if the physicians are to be believed. They say he's a hopeless case."

Bob shuddered

"Have you seen him?" he asked.

"Yes. I've just come from the hospital. Your brother did not know me—stared at me as if he'd never in his life seen me before. It was heartrending.

"He doesn't know anybody. His mind is a perfect blank. It is pitiful to see the change in him. Only yesterday he was so bright, so clever, bubbling over with good spirits, and now he's an imbecile—thanks to those darned Gedneys."

"Hush!" whispered Bob entreatingly. "Not so loud, please."

He glanced around him anxiously to ascertain whether any bystander had overheard Robinson's last words.

"Ah!" exclaimed the dramatic critic. "So you're still determined to shield the daughter of Richard Gedney? Don't want even her name mentioned here, eh?

"It's too bad you weren't permitted to visit the hospital before you were brought here. The harrowing sight of poor Morton as he is now, would make you change your mind about protecting the heartless woman who is responsible for his condition."

He was about to make one more earnest plea to Bob to denounce Katherine, but before he could say another word, the prisoner's name was shouted by a court officer, and Bob stepped forward to face the stern-faced magistrate.

"How do you plead, Robert Hillias?" demanded the latter, fixing his keen eyes upon the unhappy young man.

"Not guilty, your honor," replied Bob in a voice low but firm.

"Are you represented by counsel," inquired the magistrate, his face expressing surprise that no lawyer stood at the prisoner's side to defend him.

"If your honor pleases, I will conduct my own case," replied Bob. "I am a member of the bar, and able to look out for my own legal rights—for the present, anyway."

"Humph! You'd better get counsel to defend you in the regular way," grumbled the court. "When a man is his own lawyer, he comes pretty near having a fool for a client, you know.

"The charge against you is a very serious one, Hillias, and you will be unwise to take any chances. If you desire, I will adjourn this hearing so as to give you time to procure a lawyer."

"I thank your honor; but that is not necessary," replied Bob quietly. "I am ready to go ahead with the case, right now."

"Very well," said the magistrate." "We will hear the first witness."

A policeman stepped forward, and having taken the oath to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, proceeded to inform the court of the details of the shooting of Morton Hillias as far as they were known to the police department.

"How long before Morton Hillias, the injured man, will be able to leave the hospital?" the magistrate inquired sharply of the witness.

"Within a day or so, your honor. He's still a little weak; but otherwise there's no reason for his keeping to his bed."

"Well, in that case, perhaps it would be as well to postpone this examination until he is able to appear here and give his testimony."

The policeman grinned at this.

"Beggin' your honor's pardon," he said, "you'll have a long wait if you wait for that poor fellow to testify. You see, he's clean out of his head as a result of that bullet. He hasn't got the slightest idea who shot him, and doesn't remember anything about the shooting. He's got no more sense than a baby; and he'll always be that way, accordin' to the doctors."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the magistrate, in a shocked tone. "How very sad! He was such a talented young man, too. I have always enjoyed his cartoons in the *Champion*. They were so original and clever. I looked for them invariably every morning."

He glanced at the group of newspaper men. (His honor always made it a point to "jolly" the press—it was one of the secrets of his success in public life.) "And to think that he will never draw another one of those brilliant cartoons," he went on. "Dear! Dear! It's a terribly sad affair, indeed."

He then ordered that the case proceed, and the policeman, who had arrested Bob for colliding with the man with the vase, was sworn and testified regarding that incident.

Then the irascible old owner of the ill-fated vase himself stepped forward. He had been easily persuaded by the police to come to court and give his evidence against the prisoner.

He told of Bob's excited manner when the latter had rushed out of the building in which the shooting had occurred.

"He seemed to be in a state of wild panic," he declared.

"Well, Hillias," said his honor, frowning at Bob. "What have you got to say in answer to this testimony. It seems to

me the police have made out a pretty fair case against you. What explanation can you offer for rushing out of your brother's rooms in such a state of excitement, just about the time of the shooting?"

For a second Bob was silent. Out of a corner of his eye he could see that Beverly Robinson was awaiting his answer with breathless eagerness.

"I have nothing whatever to say, your honor," replied Bob quietly. "I'll waive further examination."

"Very well," said the magistrate. "In that case there is nothing left for me to do but to hold you for the action of the grand jury. I will fix your bail at five thousand dollars. Have you a bondsman ready?"

Bob was about to reply that he did not know anybody who would be willing to risk five thousand dollars' worth of property as a guarantee that he would appear in court at his final trial, when a middle-aged woman, flustered, but determined, stepped up to the magistrate's desk.

"I am ready to go on this young man's bond," she announced. "I have a boarding-house worth seventy thousand dollars and I own both the building and the furnishings, which I am prepared to offer as security."

Bob's benefactress was Mrs. Weller, his landlady. The good woman had read of his plight in the morning papers, and as he had always been a great favorite of hers, she had come to court determined to do everything in her power to help him.

Tears almost came to Bob's eyes as he tried to thank her; but she hastily cut short his expression of gratitude.

"Tut, tut, Mr. Hillias, it is nothing. I haven't any fear at all that my property is in jeopardy, for I am quite confident that you will make no attempt to run away. Why should you? You are innocent, of course. I know you too well to believe for a minute that you shot your brother, no matter how strong the evidence against you may be."

After the bail-bond had been made out and signed, Bob left the court-room, arm in arm with his landlady, a free man, for the time being, thanks to her.

"I suppose you are going straight to the hospital now, to see your unfortunate brother?" suggested Mrs. Weller, as they reached the sidewalk.

"Yes, I believe I will," replied Bob.

But after she had left him he did not proceed to the hospital. Instead, he walked over to the Subway and boarded an uptown train.

The residence of Richard Gedney was his destination. He felt that he must have an interview with Katherine at once.

Although he argued that it was preposterous to suppose that there was any chance of her being innocent, nevertheless, he could not help hoping against hope that she had not shot his brother after all.

At all events, whether she was innocent or guilty, he was sure that he would hear nothing but the truth from her lips.

Katherine would not lie to him. If she looked straight into his eyes and told him that she had not shot his brother, he would believe her—and a great weight would be lifted from his mind.

If, on the other hand, she confessed that she was guilty, he would assure her that she could rely upon his keeping her secret, and urge her that on no account must she dream of shouldering the responsibility for what she had done.

He must learn the truth right away. After he had had an interview with Katherine it would be time enough to visit the hospital and gaze upon the awful wreck of what had once been his talented brother.

When he reached the Gedney residence, his ring at the doorbell was answered by Barrett, the butler who, admirable as was his habitual self-control, could not avoid a start of surprise as he recognized the caller.

"You, Mr. Hillias!" he stammered. "Who—whom do you wish to see, sir?"

"Miss Katherine, of course."

"She's not at home, sir."

Bob frowned.

"Not at home? Where is she, Barrett?"

"She's out of town, sir."

"Out of town?" gasped Bob. "Surely, you are not telling me the truth. Where is Mr. Gedney?"

"Out of town, too, sir."

Bob looked at the man skeptically. He was beginning to grow angry, for he felt sure that he was being deceived.

"Were you instructed to tell me this?" he demanded sharply. "Are they at home—and do not wish to see me?"

"No, Mr. Hillias," replied the man earnestly. "I am telling you the truth. Neither the master nor Miss Katherine is in town. They left early this morning—before six o'clock."

"Where did they go to?"

"I couldn't tell you that, sir. They've gone on a yachting cruise somewhere. The master ordered the yacht to be got ready last night, and they sailed this morning. The master told me that they might be gone some weeks; but he didn't say where they were bound for."

"And did—did Miss Katherine leave any word for me?" stammered Bob.

"Not to my knowledge, sir."

Feeling sick at heart, Bob turned on his heel and staggered to the sidewalk.

"Ran away to save herself, without even a thought of me!" he muttered. "I didn't think Katherine would act like this. I apprehended that I would have a hard job persuading her not to confess her guilt in order to clear me. What a fool I was to suppose she'd care what became of me.

"She's a true chip of the old block after all — just like her father; heartless and conscienceless and selfish to the core.

"Maybe that dramatic critic was right. Why should I place myself in jeopardy to shield such a girl as she? It really does seem as if she's not worth it."

CHAPTER XIV.

FOR HIS BROTHER'S SAKE.

Two days later Morton Hillias was ready to leave the hospital, it being the verdict of the surgeons that it would be useless to keep him there any longer, as they could effect no change in his sad condition.

Bob was there to take charge of his unfortunate brother. It brought the tears to his eyes to see the blank expression upon the cartoonist's face, and to find that the poor fellow regarded him without the slightest sign of recognition.

"Don't you think he'll ever know me, doctor?" Bob inquired wistfully.

The house physician shook his head.

"No, I'm afraid not. He'll get acquainted with you in time, I suppose, as a child learns to recognize those whom it sees often; but he will never know that you are his brother. His mind will always be a complete blank."

Bob groaned.

"Poor Morton! What a terrible fate!"

"Yes," agreed the physician. "It's very sad to see a promising young fellow like him thus afflicted. In all my experience I cannot recall a more pathetic case.

"He certainly was a great cartoonist. Those sketches of his in the *Champion* were masterpieces—especially the series roasting old Richard Gedney for raising the price of bread."

Bob winced at this remark, and hastened to change the subject.

"Is he ready to go with me now?" he asked.

"Yes. Where do you intend to take him?" inquired the physician curiously.

"Home with me, of course. I live in a boarding-house, and my landlady has been kind enough to consent to his stopping with me there. I intend to devote the rest of my life to taking care of him. I shall do all in my power to make him comfortable."

"That's very good of you, young man," declared the physician. "He'll be quite a trial, I'm afraid. Taking care of a fellow as helpless as he will be no light task. It is creditable of you to undertake it."

"Pooh! I shall be doing no more than is right."

The house physician nodded.

"Yes, I guess, after all, it's the very least you can do—under the circumstances."

He placed such emphasis on those last three words that Bob flushed painfully, instantly grasping his meaning.

"Do you believe that I shot him, doctor?" he demanded indignantly.

The other shrugged his shoulders.

"What difference does it make what I think?" he answered evasively. "I hope, for your sake, that you are innocent, young man; but if you are guilty, you will at least be making all the atonement that lies within your power by taking care of your unfortunate victim for the rest of his days, as you say you purpose to do."

Their conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of a visitor—Beverly Robinson.

"Good morning, doctor," said the critic, ignoring Bob's presence entirely. "I have come to take away the patient, Morton Hillias. Is he ready to go?"

"Yes," replied the house physician, with a puzzled frown. "He's ready to go; but I don't know whether we can turn him over to you. This young man, you see, has already arranged to take him."

Robinson scowled at Bob.

"He can't have him," he declared indignantly. "Poor Morton is going with me. He was my friend and—"

"He is my *brother*," broke in Bob quiet-

ly. "Nobody has more right to take care of him than I."

"You're in a fine position to talk of a brother's rights," sneered Robinson. "I should think you'd have decency enough to step aside and leave poor Morton in the hands of those who are devoted to him."

He turned angrily to the house physician.

"Doctor, I demand that you turn the patient over to my care. I have come here to claim him not only as his friend, but as the representative of the *Champion* — the paper by which he was employed.

"In recognition of his distinguished services, the proprietor of the *Champion* has generously decided to provide for him for the remainder of his life, and I am authorized to make all arrangements to that end."

The house physician shrugged his shoulders.

"You will have to settle that with this young man here. I regret that there should be any controversy over the matter, but it is the rule of the hospital that all outgoing patients shall be turned over to their nearest of kin when they are not in a condition to decide for themselves."

"I protest against the enforcement of that rule in this instance," cried Robinson. "Surely, doctor, you must see that this is an extraordinary case. This man is accused of shooting his brother—of being responsible for his present deplorable condition. He is now out on bail awaiting trial for that atrocious crime. It would be an outrage and a scandal, under the circumstances, to deliver his victim into his hands."

"Under our laws," retorted the house physician, "every man is presumed to be innocent until he is proven guilty. Inasmuch as this young man has not yet been found guilty of the crime with which he is charged, it is not for us to say that he is not a fit person to have the custody of his brother.

"And besides," he went on, with a frown of disapproval at the dramatic critic, "you might at least be a little generous, my friend. If this young man is guilty, it is all the more reason why he should devote himself to the care of his unfortunate victim. Surely you would not seek to deprive him of his only chance to make partial restitution."

"Bah!" exclaimed Robinson. "He isn't actuated by any desire to make restitution. I fully understand his motive, and there is nothing at all worthy about it, I assure you.

"He is simply trying to influence public opinion in his favor so that the jury will acquit him when his case comes to trial. He thinks that by parading his devotion to poor Morton, he will cause people to say, 'There's an affectionate and noble brother for you—surely such a man cannot be guilty of attempted fratricide!' That's what his game is."

"It's a lie!" cried Bob hotly.

"Is it?" sneered the critic. "Well, perhaps you've got another motive. Perhaps you desire to carry off poor Morton to the home of that scoundrel Gedney, and keep him there under lock and key so that the old fiend and his infamous daughter can constantly feast their eyes on him and gloat over their work."

With an exclamation of rage, Bob hurled himself upon his tormentor: but the house physician quickly interposed.

"Come," he said sternly, holding the two furious men apart. "We can't have any such behavior in here.

"Take your brother, young man, and get out immediately. As for you, sir"—turning to Robinson—"I advise you not to attempt to make any trouble. If you think that Mr. Hillias is not entitled to the custody of his brother, you can contest the matter in a court of law."

Bob stepped into the anteroom in which Morton Hillias sat apathetically waiting. Although the door between the two rooms had been open, and he had heard every word of the controversy, he had manifested not the slightest degree of interest.

Now, as his brother stepped up to him and, placing his hand on his shoulder, said gently, "Come, Morton! Come, old fellow!" the unfortunate cartoonist, his head swathed in bandages, rose obediently and followed Bob out of the room.

Bob had a taxicab waiting outside, and he assisted Morton to enter it.

"Where to, sir?" inquired the chauffeur.

Bob gave him the address of Mrs. Weller's boarding-house, and the cab started off at high speed.

Although Morton Hillias had often traveled in taxicabs, and in the fast touring-cars of friends, he appeared to regard this ride as a novel experience, for throughout the journey he looked out of the window with the curiosity of a little child, and gave vent to extravagant chuckles of delight.

Tears came to Bob's eyes as he beheld this pitiful spectacle, and he was very glad

when the ride came to an end, and he gently led his brother up the front stoop.

Good Mrs. Weller herself opened the door for them, and pressed Bob's hand sympathetically as she saw how greatly he was affected by his brother's condition.

"I suppose you wish to take him right up-stairs to your room," she whispered. "I've had the extra bed placed there, as you requested, Mr. Hillias."

"Thank you," said Bob. "And would you mind serving our meals up there for a few days, Mrs. Weller? I don't think I'd care to—to bring him down to the table just now."

"Sure I will," replied the landlady. "You can have your meals brought to your room as often as you please, my boy; but don't go making a hermit of yourself now, because of any foolish sensitiveness.

"Your poor brother will be quite welcome in the dining-room. All my boarders have been told that he is coming, and all of them sympathize with him deeply, and honor you, my boy, for what you are doing. You don't have to shrink from having him meet them. They are all determined to do everything in their power to make him comfortable here."

"It is splendid of them," said Bob; "and as for you, Mrs. Weller, you are an angel. I shall never be able to repay you for all your goodness."

"Tut, tut!" exclaimed the good woman. "If you get talking that way you will make me very angry, Mr. Hillias. I am only too glad to be able to help you in your noble undertaking. It is splendid of you, my dear boy, to assume the care of your poor, helpless brother."

"It is nothing more than my duty," replied Bob solemnly.

A little later a terrible thought occurred to him—something which had not entered his mind when he had resolved to devote his entire life to caring for Morton.

Suppose he should be found guilty, and should be sentenced to prison for a long term of years? What was to become of Morton then?

"I suppose that fellow Robinson would step in and take charge of him," he muttered. "I wouldn't want that—no, I couldn't bear the thought of my brother being placed in the guardianship of that confounded dramatic critic.

"I won't go to prison," he declared fiercely. "I'm innocent, and they can't send an innocent man away. I'll fight for my liberty, tooth and nail—for Morton's sake.

"If the worst comes to the worst—rather than let them throw me into a cell and separate me from my poor brother—I believe I'll tell the truth, after all, and sacrifice Katherine."

CHAPTER XV.

THE LACE HANDKERCHIEF.

BEVERLY ROBINSON burst excitedly into the private office of the managing editor of the *Champion*.

"They've run away," he cried. "They've left town in a hurry because they were afraid to stay and face the music. Now maybe you'll not hesitate any longer about printing that story."

"Who's run away?" demanded the managing editor, with a puzzled frown. "For Heaven's sake, what are you talking about? I'm not good at guessing riddles."

"The Gedneys, of course," said Robinson. "I've just learned that the old scoundrel and his daughter have gone on a mysterious yachting cruise. They've been gone three days already—sailed the morning after poor Morton was shot.

"It means flight, of course, and flight is practically confession. Surely the *Champion* won't be running any risk now if it flatly accuses that Gedney girl of shooting Morton Hillias."

"Well, I'm not so sure of that," drawled the managing editor. "I don't exactly see the logic of your argument, Robinson. The fact that Gedney and his daughter have gone on a yachting cruise, as you say, is scarcely enough proof of her guilt to warrant us in accusing the girl or even to make it safe for us to assert that she visited Morton's rooms on the night of the tragedy.

"It's nothing at all unusual, you see, for Gedney to go off on a yachting trip. During the summer months he often takes short cruises. It would be pretty risky for us to assume that they've *run* away. If we printed a yarn to that effect he'd probably come back a couple of days later and sue us for libel.

"No, my son, you'll have to bring me more proof than that before the *Champion* will print such dangerous stuff. As long as young Hillias refuses to admit that the girl accompanied him to his brother's room

the night of the shooting, we can do nothing in the way of pointing the finger of suspicion at her."

"Well, how about this?" cried Robinson, and he produced from his coat-pocket a little square of lace which he dangled triumphantly before the eyes of his chief.

"What the deuce is that?" demanded the latter, regarding the dainty finery with astonishment.

"It's a handkerchief—*her* handkerchief. It's got her initials, 'K. G.,' embroidered in the corner, as you can see. I found it to-day—up in poor Morton's rooms."

"The deuce you say!" exclaimed the managing editor with lively interest.

"Yes, I went up there to rummage around a bit and see if I couldn't discover some clue that would help me prove my case against those Gedneys. I found this handkerchief lying on the floor of the studio very near the spot where poor Morton lay senseless that night. I guess that ought to be proof enough that she was there, eh?"

"It certainly ought to help a whole lot," assented the managing editor, a glint of satisfaction in his eyes. "You've done very well, indeed, Robinson. Have you informed the authorities yet?"

"No, not yet. I thought I would come here first and tell you about it, but I'm going to the district attorney right now. I've been to his office every day since the shooting, trying to persuade him to order the arrest of the Gedney woman; but either he's too timorous or else he's in the pay of old Gedney, for he has refused to listen to me, saying that without any proof to support my statement he positively declined to take any action in the matter.

"Well, when I go to him now, and show him this handkerchief, he'll change his mind, I guess." The dramatic critic chuckled triumphantly. "He'll have to take action now. He'll have to order the arrest of that girl and ask the grand jury to indict her.

"And once she's indicted," he went on fiercely, "she's bound to be convicted. Richard Gedney is one of the most hated men in New York, and no jury would have any sympathy for his daughter.

"The maximum penalty for felonious assault is ten years. I've looked it up in the law-books. If the district attorney prosecutes the case conscientiously — and it's up to the *Champion* to keep after him and see that he does—she ought to get the limit.

"Ten years in prison for Richard Gedney's daughter! I was in hopes that it would be the electric-chair; but, after all, a ten-year prison term will be pretty near as satisfactory." He smiled rapturously.

"How bitter you are toward that girl," remarked the managing editor.

"Why wouldn't I be bitter?" retorted Robinson. "She shot Morton Hillias—and he was the best friend I had."

"Is that the only reason, Robinson?" inquired the other, looking at the critic searchingly.

"Yes, that's the only reason," replied Robinson, almost sullenly. "Isn't it reason enough?"

"I suppose it is, and it's greatly to your credit, of course, that you're so eager to avenge Hillias. It shows that you're a good friend. But somehow, Robinson, I've formed the idea that you've got more of a motive than that for wanting to put this Gedney girl behind the bars."

"What makes you think that?" demanded Robinson.

"Well, for one thing, you're so exceedingly savage and there's such an ugly expression steals over your face every time you mention or hear the name of Gedney.

"I've noticed, too, from your talk that you seem to be more bitter against the father than you are against the daughter, and yet it was she who shot your friend Hillias—not the old man."

The dramatic critic paced the floor of the private office for a few seconds, without speaking, a scowl upon his pale face.

Then he wheeled abruptly upon the managing editor.

"I'll be candid with you, sir. You've guessed right. There is another reason. I hate Richard Gedney more than I do any man in this world. He ruined my father and drove him to suicide. That's why."

"Ah, I thought there was something like that in the wind!" remarked the other man. "And so you're trying to send the girl to prison in order to get revenge on the father?"

Robinson nodded.

"Gedney adores his daughter," he said gloatingly. "If I can get her convicted and sentenced to jail it will break the old devil's heart—and that's what I want."

"Isn't it rather rough on the girl, though?" remarked the managing editor

quietly. "Surely she wasn't at all to blame for the ruin of your father."

The *Champion's* dramatic critic shrugged his shoulders.

"I've got to hit at her in order to make him suffer. Besides, she won't be getting any more than she deserves. She shot Morton Hillias, and that's enough reason for sending her to prison, even if I were not seeking revenge on her father."

"Yes, I guess that's so," assented the other. "If she's guilty she deserves to go to jail—even if she is a woman."

"I'm afraid you're going to be disappointed, though, Robinson. You'll never get a conviction against her. Old Gedney will spend his last dollar if necessary to prevent it, and money can accomplish a whole lot, you know."

"All his millions sha'n't save her," declared Robinson passionately. "As I said before, public sentiment is very much against Gedney because of the suffering he's caused by boosting the price of bread. If I can get his daughter indicted, I am confident that it will be easy to get a jury to convict her.

"I'm going to the district attorney's office now," he went on, "to show him this and demand that he take instant action."

He glanced fondly at the dainty little lace handkerchief.

"Well, good luck to you," said the managing editor.

"Thank you. By the way, are you going to print that story in to-morrow's issue? Surely you won't hesitate any longer, now that I've turned up this convincing proof?"

The managing editor nodded.

"Yes, I guess we can take a chance on it now. With that handkerchief to back us up, we can afford to risk a libel suit.

"But why are you so anxious to have the yarn published, Robinson?" he asked curiously. "Is that also part of your campaign of revenge against old Gedney?"

"It is—I'll be quite candid with you—I want to cause the old scoundrel all the suffering I can, and the publication of the fact that his daughter is a would-be murderess is bound to make him writhe.

"And besides, the publication of that story in the *Champion* will serve another purpose. It will force the district attorney to take action whether he's inclined to do so or not. He won't dare to hold back after he has read our paper to-morrow."

Half an hour later Robinson was closeted with the public prosecutor and was triumphantly displaying to that official the handkerchief which he had found in the studio of Morton Hillias.

The district attorney was greatly impressed. He was a very cautious man, but absolutely honest—despite Robinson's insinuation to the contrary.

It generally took him a long time to make up his mind to prosecute a person, especially when that person was a woman; but when once he was convinced that there were good grounds for prosecuting, he was absolutely relentless and not to be turned aside from his duty by any influence on earth.

He had until now refused to pay any attention to Beverly Robinson's accusation against Katherine Gedney, for the sole reason that he had realized that there was no chance of convicting the girl on the dramatic critic's uncorroborated statement.

This new evidence—the finding of the lace handkerchief, however, changed the situation entirely, in his opinion.

"You are prepared to swear that you found that handkerchief in the room in which the tragedy was enacted?" he inquired.

"I most certainly am."

"Very good. It begins to look as if we shall be able to build up a pretty fair case against Miss Gedney. We ought not to have any trouble in getting an indictment against her now."

Robinson's eyes glittered.

"I am awfully glad to hear you talk that way, sir."

"You say, Mr. Robinson, that Miss Gedney is now on the ocean?" inquired the district attorney.

"Yes, I learned to-day that she and her father went aboard their yacht the morning following the night of the shooting, and sailed without leaving any word as to their destination or how long they intended to be away."

"That's too bad. I presume her father intends to keep her beyond the reach of the law. However, I'll go before the grand jury to-morrow, and ask for an indictment. I shall require you to be there to give your testimony, Mr. Robinson."

"I shall certainly be there," answered the dramatic critic in a tone that would have convinced the most skeptical that he intended to keep his word.

"Very good. Report at this office at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, please."

Robinson's face was radiant as he stepped out of the Criminal Court Building. He felt that he was at last within reach of his goal—it began to look as if he were going to succeed in wreaking vengeance on Richard Gedney.

The next morning Bob Hillias, on his way down-stairs to the dining-room, was excitedly hailed by Mrs. Weller.

"Have you seen this?" she cried, waving a copy of the *Champion* before his eyes. "Oh, I do hope that what this paper says is true. If it is, my boy, I congratulate you most heartily."

Bob glanced at the head-line and his face turned pale.

The *Champion* announced that the district attorney intended to go before the Grand Jury that day and ask for an indictment against Katherine Gedney on the charge of shooting Morton Hillias.

The newspaper gave in detail the case against the girl, laying much stress upon the fact that Katherine's lace handkerchief had been found in the room in which the tragedy had occurred.

The article ended with the following paragraph: "In view of the latest developments it is doubtful whether any further action will be taken against Robert Hillias, brother of the unfortunate victim of the shooting, who has been accused of the crime. He will probably be exonerated."

"Isn't it fine?" exclaimed Mrs. Weller enthusiastically. "Didn't I tell you that you'd come out of this trouble all right? I was positive they'd exonerate you. Oh, Mr. Hillias, I am so very, very glad!"

The good woman took both his hands and wrung them heartily; but instead of responding to her congratulations, Bob tore himself away, seized his hat, and dashed out at the front door.

"Seems to have gone crazy with the good news," gasped his landlady, as she stood watching his retreating figure as he hurried down the street. "And yet he didn't seem particularly glad. Judging from the look on his face, I should say he was quite upset by what he read in the paper. I wonder what's wrong."

Twenty minutes later Bob burst into the private office of the district attorney, fiercely brushing aside the attendant who tried to bar his way.

"I'm Robert Hillias," he cried, rushing up to the desk of the prosecutor. "Is that story in this morning's *Champion* true? Do you really intend to ask for an indictment against Miss Katherine Gedney on the charge of shooting my brother?"

The district attorney looked up from the legal document he was perusing and gazed calmly at the excited young man.

"Sit down, Mr. Hillias," he said, "and try to keep cool. Nothing is to be gained by going up in the air, you know.

"Now, in answer to your question—that story in the *Champion* is quite correct, although I consider it very reprehensible on their part to violate my confidence by making my intentions known to the public. I do intend to go before the Grand Jury to-day and ask for an indictment against that young woman."

"You must not do it," cried Bob. "I have come to protest against your taking such action. You will be doing her a great injustice. She is not guilty. She did not shoot my brother. She was not in his rooms that night. I went there alone. I am ready to swear it."

"Oh, come now," protested the prosecutor with an incredulous smile. "You cannot expect me to believe that, Hillias. Remember her handkerchief was found up there. How are you going to explain that incriminating fact?"

"That is easily explained," replied Bob. "It was I who dropped that handkerchief up there that night—not Miss Gedney.

"She gave me the handkerchief the previous evening, and I was carrying it around with me. It must have fallen from my pocket while I was in my brother's studio."

A change came over the face of the district attorney. He had not considered this possibility until now. He realized that if Bob insisted upon this assertion his case against Katherine Gedney would fall absolutely flat.

He looked at the young man searchingly.

"Are you telling me the truth?" he demanded sternly.

"I am telling you what I intend to swear to on the witness stand in the event of your prosecuting that girl," replied Bob. "I shall be a witness for the defense, and I will swear that Katherine Gedney did not accompany me to my brother's rooms that night, that I went there alone, and that it was I who dropped the lace handkerchief."

The district attorney sat deep in thought for a couple of minutes.

"If you are really determined to pursue that course, Hillias," he said at length, "I guess it is useless for me to have her indicted. I will concede that with you against us we would stand no chance of getting a conviction. That lace handkerchief was our strongest piece of evidence, and if you are going to accept responsibility for it, our case against her is completely shattered."

Bob heaved a sigh of relief.

"Let me point out to you, however," went on the district attorney, "that you will be saving her at your own peril. You would have gone free if that girl had been indicted. Now you will have to answer for the crime of shooting your brother."

"I fully realize that," replied Bob solemnly, "and I am satisfied to have it that way."

He left the office well pleased with the result of his visit. For, in spite of the fact that Katherine had treated him most shabbily—in spite of the fact that he had almost made up his mind to sacrifice her in order that he should not be separated from his helpless brother—he had discovered, when the test came, that he could not let the girl he loved go to prison while it lay within his power to save her.

CHAPTER XVI.

A PAINFUL CHOICE.

WHEN Bob Hillias returned to his boarding-house, Mrs. Weller was waiting for him in a state of great excitement.

"I've got more good news for you!" she cried. This is indeed a happy day. You will be glad when you hear what I am going to tell you."

"What is it?" inquired Bob somewhat apprehensively.

Mrs. Weller's previous piece of good news had not been regarded by him as such, and he feared another shock was in store for him.

"It's about your poor brother!" cried the good woman breathlessly. "There's hope for him, after all, Mr. Hillias. He can be cured."

"What!" cried Bob, his face lighting up with joy. "Are you sure, Mrs. Weller? Who told you? If that be true, it is good news indeed—the very best kind of news. But I cannot, I dare not, permit myself to believe it. The surgeons at the hospital told me there was no hope of a change."

"The surgeons at the hospital were mistaken!" cried the landlady, laughing and crying at the same time. "A greater authority than they has said so.

"A new boarder came here to-day. He arrived just after you went out. His name is Dr. Leopold Schweiger, and he is from Berlin. He's over here on a few weeks' visit, and my place was recommended to him by his friend, Count Hammerschling, who, as you may recall, stopped here a couple of years ago.

"Dr. Leopold Schweiger is one of the greatest surgeons in the world, Mr. Hillias. I looked him up in 'Who's Who,' and there's half a page about him there. He's a specialist on the human brain.

"As soon as I learned that, I got talking to him right away about your poor brother, and he at once became greatly interested in the case, and expressed a desire to see the unfortunate young man.

"I took him up-stairs to your room, and he examined your brother very carefully, making him go through all sorts of queer stunts, and finally he turned to me and said that he could be cured by an operation."

"Oh, thank Heavens!" gasped Bob. "Where is this great surgeon now, Mrs. Weller? I must have a talk with him immediately, and see if I cannot get him to perform the operation himself."

"He'll be down in a few minutes," replied the landlady, smiling at the young man's eagerness. "He went up to his room to write some letters— Here he comes now, I think."

A heavy footstep was heard descending the stairs, and a bearded man of distinguished appearance entered the parlor.

"Doctor," cried Mrs. Weller, "this is Mr. Hillias, brother of that unfortunate young man up-stairs. I was just telling him the good news."

"I'm glad to meet you, sir," said the German surgeon, who spoke English perfectly except for a slight foreign accent. "And so you are the brother of that young man, eh?"

"Yes," replied Bob. "Oh, is it really true, doctor, that he can be cured by an operation?"

"I cannot say for sure, of course," said the man of medicine gravely. "I do not want you to believe that the operation would certainly be successful, for it is very possible that you might be disappointed. I am firmly of the opinion, however, that such an operation as I have in mind would either

restore the patient to his normal mental condition or—"

He paused and Bob's face turned pale.

"Or what, doctor?" he gasped, fear tugging at his heart.

The surgeon walked over to Bob and laid his hand gently on the young man's shoulder.

"My boy," he said very solemnly, "I will tell you the plain truth. The operation I have in mind is an exceedingly delicate one. I have only performed such an operation twice in my career.

"In one case I effected a cure; in the other one I was not so fortunate. The patient died while on the operating-table.

"The chances of such an operation resulting fatally are about fifty per cent. Your brother would be running a great risk; it is no use shutting our eyes to that fact. It is for you to decide, my dear sir, whether you care to have him undergo such a risk. He is, of course, in no condition to make such a decision for himself."

Bob paced the floor agitatedly for a few minutes without replying. He found it very hard to make up his mind what to do.

Poor Morton, in his present sad state, he argued with himself, was not much better off alive than dead. Surely he would be doing his brother no good service if he were to refuse to permit this operation because of the attendant danger.

Morton himself, if he were capable of making a proper choice, would prefer to run the risk of death rather than go through the remainder of his life in his present pathetic condition. Bob felt sure of that.

But on the other hand, he argued, his brother helpless was better than no brother at all. Morton was his only kin. Bob did not want to be selfish, but he felt that he could not bear to lose him.

Then came another tormenting thought to make it doubly hard to decide.

If the operation were successful—if Morton were restored to his normal mental condition—he would, of course, remember all that had happened prior to the firing of that bullet which had benumbed his brain.

He would remember all about the shooting. He would know who shot him, and doubtless he would not hesitate to name the guilty person.

Bob groaned as this thought flashed through his mind. He felt certain that his brother had been felled by a bullet fired by the hand of Katherine Gedney. He realized that if the operation should turn out successfully, all his efforts to save the girl he loved would be in vain.

His brother would show her no mercy—Bob was convinced of that. He would appear in court as complainant against Katherine, and she would be sent to prison.

A cold sweat trickled down Bob's brow as he paced the room fighting fiercely with the temptation which had come to him—the temptation to sacrifice his brother for the sake of the girl he loved.

If he refused to permit the operation, Katherine would be safe and the world would be satisfied with his explanation that he had thus decided because he was not disposed to allow his brother to undergo the great risk which the surgeon had emphasized.

If he permitted the operation, his brother might die as a result of it, or his brother might live, in which case Katherine would go to prison. There would be nothing but misery for Bob whichever way the thing turned out.

In the midst of his painful deliberations there came a sharp ring at the front door-bell, and Mrs. Weller stepped from the room to answer to the summons.

Beverly Robinson stood at the door, a scowl upon his face. He had come direct from the district attorney's office, where he had been told of Bob's visit and of the fact that, as a result of it, there would be no attempt to indict Katherine Gedney.

Although he felt that it was useless, the dramatic critic, desperate at being thus despoiled of his revenge, had come to plead with Bob to tell the truth about that lace handkerchief.

"Is Mr. Bob Hillias in?" he inquired of the landlady.

"He's in," answered Mrs. Weller, "but I don't know whether I can disturb him just now. He's having a very important conference with the doctor."

"The doctor! What doctor?" inquired Robinson quickly.

"A great surgeon from abroad who says he can cure his unfortunate brother," said Mrs. Weller, who felt she must tell the good news to everybody she encountered.

"They're in the parlor now talking it over. There's to be an operation, and the doctor says it will be a dangerous one, but if it's successful, the young man will be just the same as he was before the shooting. Just think of that! Isn't it glorious news?"

Beverly Robinson's pale face had turned a shade paler. Without a word he brushed past Mrs. Weller and stepped into the parlor.

"I protest against this proposed operation," he cried wildly, turning first to Bob and then to the physician. "You have no right to put poor Morton's life in danger. As his friend—the best friend he's got in the world—I protest against it."

Bob stared at the dramatic critic in wonder. The latter's vehemence and agitation puzzled him. He had supposed that Robinson would be the last person in the world to object to an attempt to restore Morton to his normal condition.

Then, ignoring the critic's protest, Bob turned to the eminent surgeon.

"I have decided to run the risk of an operation, doctor," he said quietly. "My brother is ready whenever you find it convenient."

"Very good," replied Dr. Schweiger. "I congratulate you upon your courage, young man. I think you have chosen wisely. Let us hope that the undertaking will be a success."

Beverly Robinson stepped over to Bob's side.

"You daren't do it," he whispered fiercely. "You dare not allow your brother to be restored to his senses—because if you do, the girl you love will surely go to prison. Have you thought of that?"

"Yes," replied Bob with a groan, "I have thought of that; but nevertheless I have decided that the operation shall be performed. My brother is going to have his chance, no matter what happens."

(To be continued.)

AT LONE WOLF CABIN.

BY SEWARD W. HOPKINS.

A Flight That Has More Reason in It as Time Goes By, and Terminates in a Cheerless Spot That Comes To Be Hedged About with Mystery.

(A NOVELETTE.)

I CALLED my habitation Lone Wolf Cabin, for the good and sufficient reason that I had seen but one wolf since I had taken up my abode within its bare, but, to me, very hospitable walls.

This one wolf I had shot and killed. It was the only actual waste of ammunition of which I could accuse myself, for ammunition was none too plentiful to one in my position, and probably the wolf would have done me no harm. Moreover, it was unfit for food, and its hide wouldn't made a decent pair of shoes.

And there was one more reason why the two shots required to kill the beast might have been saved. I didn't care whether the animal killed me or not.

I did not build the cabin. I found it. Lost in the wilds of the foot-hills to the Cascade Range in the State of Washington, it looked good to me as a place for a man to hide.

Who built it I did not know. I did not ask. Had I wished to ask, it would have been impossible. There was no habitation within many miles. That was why the place looked so good to me.

I was a hunted man. Hunted with as much bloodthirstiness as the wolf I had killed. And so, in my mad, blind, wild, and unreasonable flight from the haunts and faces of men, this cabin in the heart of the forest, in a region where trails were few and roads almost none, seemed to hold out a welcome which I accepted.

All around the wilderness was primeval. No stage road broke its rugged way through the passes of the various ranges of hills, or crossed the many gorges.

No Indian tribe was near, and the closest town was somewhere—I cared not.

A crime had been committed. And that I may not be set down at once as a man deserving the curses of his fellow men, I must use a little space to explain it.

To begin, my name — when I permitted myself to have a name—was Robert Forrest. My father's name was William Forrest. My brother's, Tom. There were others whose names might be mentioned now, but if they

are found necessary there will be ample time to introduce them later on. The only exception I make to this is Lucy Dumont.

My father and James Dumont were partners in a large business in a city I care not to mention now, except to say that it was far from the Cascade Range. My brother Tom and I were employed in the counting-room. Both held positions of responsibility; both handled large amounts of money.

Tom was perhaps an inch shorter than I, but the resemblance between us was very great. So that I shall not say whether Tom was good-looking or not. The reason is obvious.

Lucy Dumont was the prettiest girl in town, and had a string of admirers. Tom was in love with her, and so was I.

Notwithstanding this rivalry, the bond between Tom and myself was stronger than that existing between brothers as a rule.

Tom was two years younger than I and of a rather livelier disposition.

Cutting out all the scenes of social gaiety, and saying no more at present about Lucy Dumont, I will leap at once to the fact that it at last became known that she had loved Tom the better of the two and had promised to become his wife.

This did not embitter me. I congratulated my brother, smothered my own hurt, and plunged a little more, perhaps, into worldly ways than I otherwise might have done.

Shortly after the engagement of Tom and Lucy was announced, I entered the office one morning and found Tom there ahead of me. He looked at me a moment with a white, scared face.

"Bob," he said, "I've got a headache. If father or Mr. Dumont wants me, explain my absence, will you? I'm going out for the air."

"Sure, boy," I answered. "Better get to bed earlier nights. You can't keep up the pace."

He smiled, but there was no mirth in his looks. He went out.

Shortly after his departure the two partners came in. My father, always a cold, stern man, looked around.

"Robert, where is Thomas?" he asked.

"Gone out, sir. He told me to explain his absence. He was up late last night, and this morning has a headache."

"H-m! Step in here."

Wonderingly I followed the two stern men into a private room.

"Which of you has been footing up the cash and making the deposits of late?" abruptly asked my father.

"Both of us. Why? Is anything wrong?"

"You may not think it wrong. But according to Mr. Stover we have been robbed of ten thousand dollars."

I gasped. A great rushing, roaring sound seemed to fill my brain. It was like the thunder of Niagara concentrated on the ear-drums.

Waves of heat and cold passed over me. Thoughts came, not in orderly array, as usual, but in a tumultuous crash that made me dizzy.

Ten thousand dollars! I knew that such a sum, while it would not cripple the firm, was a serious loss.

I knew that so far as I was concerned not a penny had been taken dishonestly. I thought of the nights Tom had been spending money like water with Lucy and their friends. Motor-cars and yachts and horses use up a big sum, and Tom had no more money than I.

I remembered in those mad flashes of thought that seemed to turn my brain into a boiling caldron, the love Tom and Lucy had for each other, and the love I bore them both.

There was not the slightest doubt in my mind that Tom had taken the money to make up for his rash expenditures.

Yet, in all the tumult of my brain there was at last some order. I had no one to think of except myself. To admit that I was the culprit was to drive myself from my father's presence forever, brand myself a thief, and perhaps, if Mr. Dumont insisted, go to prison.

This would destroy me—but only me.

To have the brand of the criminal placed on Tom would destroy him. It would hurt my father no more nor less than to have it placed on me. Thus far we were even.

But in Tom's case the horror went much further. It would destroy Lucy's happiness and her father's. She was an only child, and I knew how well the old man loved her.

And then, remember, I loved her myself.

These things swept through my brain while the two men sat with stern, white faces, their keen eyes bent fixedly on me, waiting for my reply.

In a moment, perhaps, Tom would return. I knew him well. Whatever might be my decision, I must make it quickly.

Or, if he had gone intending never to return, I needed to hurry in order to catch him, to explain, to tell him that I would take the burden to save Lucy and him. The happiness of one is nothing compared to the happiness of four.

"Well?" demanded my father sharply.

I folded my arms. My voice trembled. My heart beat wildly.

"Father, Mr. Dumont," I said, "I await your action."

II.

For a moment I feared for my father's life or reason. He became livid. He lurched in his chair.

Had I been a criminal I should have fallen at his feet, pleaded with him, called him endearing names. But I was acting a part. And I was unaccustomed to the rôle.

"He confesses!" groaned my father. "He admits his guilt. Away with him! Yet stay. There is much to be said and done. Of course, you know that this was not my money alone? Had you used money of mine, I would have forgiven you, or at least bid you go free. But that money was Mr. Dumont's as well as mine. He shall determine whether you are to be arrested or not."

Mr. Dumont was of cooler nature than my father.

"Let us think this over, Forrest," he said. "Surely, Robert has made no attempt to add falsehood to his—to his fault. And we must, in charity, look at the matter from all sides. Of course, under these circumstances, it will be impossible for him to continue in our employ.

"But we must use our judgment in determining the cause. We both know that Robert was in love with Lucy, as Tom is. And as both could not marry her, and Tom won, the natural effect on Robert was disastrous. I would say not to arrest. But—let him go somewhere, change his name, and never come here again."

"Go! You have heard the verdict! Go! You are no longer a son of mine!"

With my father's angry words ringing in my ears I left the office. I was bewildered, dazed. I made my way home blindly. Fortunately, my mother was dead.

I went to my room and packed what things I could carry in two suit-cases. I knew that if I ever sent for more clothes I could get them. But I never would. I was done with the old life forever.

I went to the bank and drew my money, which was not a fortune.

By two o'clock that afternoon I was on a train. My name was no longer Robert Forrest. Yet the letters on my suit-cases were "R. F." I resolved to adopt the name of Richard Flume.

All the remainder of the day I rode, with a burning—almost bursting—heart. Yet I felt no bitterness against Tom. He had been led by an excess of generosity into an extravagance he could not stand.

I had no evil thoughts toward my father or Mr. Dumont. They had, if anything, with their understanding of the matter, looking on me as a thief, been lenient.

I rode all night. The next morning I woke in Spokane.

Thus far my only idea had been to seek my fortune somewhere on the Pacific Coast, where questions concerning a man's antecedents are not quite so keen as they are in the East.

I ate breakfast, and without caring much about it, purchased a paper. Idly looking it over, I suddenly gave a start, and an involuntary exclamation burst from me. I saw, in large black head-lines, these horrible words:

"Murdered by dishonest employee! Reward of kindness!"

Then followed this account, which was not as long, naturally, as it would have been, and probably was, in a paper nearer home:

> Mr. James Dumont, of the firm of Forrest & Dumont, was found mortally wounded in his office in the Kling Building, this city, and unconscious.
>
> His partner, Mr. William Forrest, explained that this morning Robert Forrest, the eldest son of Mr. Forrest, was accused of embezzlement to a large amount, and admitted his guilt. Mr. Forrest was inclined to prosecute the young man, but Mr. Dumont, after some argument, persuaded his partner to permit the young man to go. It is believed that young Forrest, for some fancied wrong, or in a fit of temporary madness, remained near the building and fired at Mr. Dumont when he was alone in his office. A general alarm has been sent out for the capture of Forrest.

I sat with the paper clutched in my hand and my heart clutched in a grip of ice.

To my already disturbed brain this new disaster loomed up without a single hopeful

feature. I did not think of the meagerness of the details or the possibility of distorted facts, either by the careless work in the first investigation or in transmission.

Already damned as a thief, I saw no chance whatever of proving my innocence of the murder of Mr. Dumont.

I did not figure on the difference in time, or the possibility of proving my departure from home previous to the murder. I saw no way to prove anything.

"By Heaven," I muttered, "this is too much! I was willing to shoulder the cross of a thief, but they'll never get me for that murder."

Then the fox, the wolf, and the hunted dog that lie dormant in human nature came to the front. My brain became cool, but with no coolness of thought toward proving my innocence.

All my mental energies were now bent on safety. Escape was the only way. And I swept the world with my mental vision to study the possibilities.

To make an attempt to leave the country without a complete disguise would result in my arrest at the pier. Somewhere—somewhere, hidden in the rocks and valleys and mountains of the great West, there must be a refuge for me. I would find it.

I worked with a swiftness and precision born of desperation. I studied the maps. I could not very well, dressed as a gentleman, hire a conveyance to take me into the wilderness without some good reason for going there.

As yet there was no reason for fearing detection. The hour was early, and I was probably among the first to buy a paper. Making sure that no letters or papers in my pockets could identify me, I walked forth, assuming no other air than that of an ordinary visitor to the city.

I had no difficulty in getting what I wanted. In an hour I was dressed in a complete outfit for the mountains, and with my two suit-cases occupying but little space among a lot of canned foodstuffs, guns, ammunition, oil-stove, hammock, knives, forks, tins, and, in fact, everything suitable for camping, I drove out of Spokane.

I had absolutely no knowledge of the country, but headed in a northwesterly direction. I might, I thought, after a time, get across the border into Canada. Or, if I got near the coast, I might find an opportunity to escape either as a passenger or hand on a ship.

But there was one thought in my mind that would not down. To act on it might — and probably would — destroy me. Yet there it was, and thrust it aside as I might, it always returned with greater force.

This was that I would not go down to utter oblivion or annihilation without one attempt to make Lucy Dumont understand that I did not kill her father.

And so, after driving over roads that were but little used, and answering questions as occasion required, I came to a little hamlet called Yallup. Here I wrote a letter, signed it simply "R. F.," and, addressing it to Lucy, put it in the little post-office that occupied one-tenth of the general and only store in the place.

Then, making some purchases of sugar and flour and things I fancied I would need, and asking about the chances of prospecting, I went on.

Men glanced at me queerly. I did not look like a prospector. My skin was untanned. I knew nothing about roughing it.

But nobody molested me, and I continued on, with varying hardships, until one of my horses died. There was no near place at which I could buy another; so, leaving my outfit by the wayside and carrying my rifle and ammunition, I mounted my remaining horse and pushed on.

Thus I came to Lone Wolf Cabin.

III.

The day was growing old when first I saw the place. It had been so long since I had passed human habitation of any kind that I had begun to believe I had gone beyond the pale of civilization altogether. Yet here, where the road was the merest trail, there stood a cabin.

I was weary and my horse almost exhausted. We had traveled a considerable distance since leaving the wagon behind. I needed rest and food.

Moreover, I required time to sit down and smoke and think out some plan of action. I knew that the last day for facing men had about passed. By the following morning a complete description of me would be telegraphed throughout the land.

I must have a place to live. I halted my horse and sat on his back regarding the cabin carefully. There was a welcome look about it that was all the more welcome because there was no man there for me to fear.

It was still light enough for me to take

in the surroundings. There was no path leading to and from the door, and the latter sagged a little. It was clear that the cabin was not inhabited.

I dismounted and, still with the utmost caution, walked to the window. I peered inside. The place was bare. There was no sign that anybody had lived there for years.

It had evidently not been a settler's home. There was no sign that any attempt had ever been made to clear a garden-space. There was a tiny spring near the cabin, but no well. There was no barn.

I knew very little, as I said, about the ways in the rough portions of the country. My lines had been cast in pleasant places, and all my life I had lived in luxury. I was not much of a sportsman, and had done no camping out in the open.

I pushed aside the door and entered. The place struck me with a sort of chill On one wall, where the boards had been hewn almost smooth, there were figures.

At last I reached the conclusion that I had chanced upon a hut erected for temporary use by a party of surveyors. There was a sort of fireplace. This was the only evidence that it had been intended for human occupation.

I had a small deer I had shot that day. Taking it from the back of the horse, I prepared a portion for cooking. With the reins I tied the horse where he had room to graze, and then gathered some dried wood.

Rude as my camping outfit had been, it was luxury compared to the bareness of the cabin. But I managed to eat a smoky tasting piece of venison, and then, with my pipe, sat down on the one step of the door to think.

I had been thinking; God knows I had been thinking ever since I left Spokane. But there had been so much to confuse me and frighten me that most of my time had been spent trying to keep out of the way of men.

But now I could think with more results.

To begin, what had I accomplished? I had purchased a rather expensive outfit, and left it miles away on the road. It was too heavy for one horse, and I knew that by the following day it would be dangerous to try to buy another. And it was like giving myself up to the police to ask anybody to haul the wagon to the cabin.

There was only one thing for me to do. I would rest, and let the horse rest that night. In the morning I would ride to the wagon, take out half the load, and try to haul the wagon and half-load with one horse. Then I could go back the next day for the remainder of my goods and chattels.

The next thing was something to rest on. I could have brought my hammock, but no such idea had entered my head. But there were boughs enough to make a scratchy kind of bed, and it would have to do.

As to the future, I was totally in the dark. I cared not what became of me so long as I was not dragged back to the double ignominy of robbery and murder.

But the cabin was a shelter, and the future would undoubtedly work itself out.

I gathered some boughs and lay down to sleep.

In the night I heard a peculiar noise. I knew a wolf howled in some sort of way, but the only wolves I had seen were in the zoological garden at home. This sound, however, struck me as the cry of a wolf, and there was some evidence of fear on the part of the horse.

I got up from my none too comfortable bed and took my rifle. Probably the wolf was hungry. The odor of the roasting venison must have reached it.

I stalked the beast, and in the moonlight shot and killed it. Then and there I named my new home Lone Wolf Cabin. And I never saw another wolf.

I did manage to get some sleep, and in the morning made my ablutions at the spring. The horse and I shared this spring between us.

About seven o'clock I mounted and started toward the place where I had left the wagon. About a mile from the cabin the trail widened, and became almost a decent road. It was crossed by two other lanes of occasional travel.

But all around the country was empty of human life. I went on, wondering whether I was fortunate in being thus absolutely alone, or if it would not have been better to stop in some region where people lived.

But what excuse would I have for being there? I was no miner, prospector, farmer. Bereft of the only occupation I had ever had, I was a useless thing.

I might, if I had had time to think the matter out, have gone to a new mining town and opened a school. But I did not think of it, and, anyway, I was afraid. The terror was on me, and my wits were rattled.

I reached the place where I had left the wagon. It was not there.

I sat stupidly on the horse, staring all around me. There was no doubt about this being the place. The dead horse was there, minus his harness.

Somebody had chanced along and accepted as a gift of fortune my expensive outfit.

There was no use making a search. A wagon would not move itself. Nobody would take the trouble to move it a short distance and leave it.

Cheerlessly, with my head bowed on my breast, I turned my horse's head back toward the cabin. Surely, I was the most unfortunate of men.

I had read of many escapes and long wanderings. But these were either the escapes of men whose wits were sharpened by experience, or adventures sought for their own sake. I had never read of anybody being in such a frightful predicament as I was in, and innocent of all wrongdoing.

Of course, I had brought it all on myself by accepting the brand of thief, instead of letting it go where it belonged. I found myself almost regretting my act. But no, my love for Tom and my wishes for Lucy's happiness were predominant.

"Hang it!" I murmured. "I'm getting to be a driveling idiot! I'll pull through. I may starve to death. I may be eaten by wild beasts, or found and killed by men. But never, so register this on high, will I go back and answer to the charge of murder."

IV.

I was too weary and discouraged to do anything more that day. Discouragement will tire a man more than work. And certainly I had enough to dishearten me.

My rest that night was fitful. It was really no rest at all, though so worn out was I that I did fall into short dozes. Always, though, from these I woke with a start, picked up my rifle, and went to the door of the cabin to learn what that noise was that woke me.

But in my waking moments I heard nothing. It was innate terror that made me hear sounds in my sleep.

The next day I began a cautious survey of the immediate surroundings. It was a timber country, with here and there clear spaces that had been left bare by nature and not stripped by the hand of man.

Only in a straight line I saw stumps of trees that had been cut down years before, and now had strong new growth from the roots.

This was undoubtedly a line made by the surveying party who had built and occupied the cabin.

But all this had no significance for me. I walked through the great fir, oak, hemlock, and other timber, listening always for any warning sound, ready to shoot the owner of a human voice that spoke my name. For no man had heard me speak my name since I reached the State, and any man who knew it must be after me to drag me back to an inhuman charge and death.

But no voice spoke in the wilderness. I saw signs of wild beasts, but instead of being alarmed at their presence I was glad. Men were the enemies I feared. The animals would serve as food.

I found pretty little valleys through which streams flowed with soft rippling music, and I came upon a small lake that was so calm and peaceful I felt almost invited to lie down in the water and end it all. I stood on the shore and looked across, and a fine perch leaped into the air, glistened, and dropped back.

"More food," I said to myself. "But how shall I catch them?"

I pondered over this question, for fish would be a welcome addition to my fare.

I found in one gully a kind of blackberry. For this, too, I was grateful.

I was not in a country where a man need starve. And when the excitement of my pursuit had worn away, I might convince myself it would be safe to visit a village and make some purchases.

I saw no woodsman's hut, nor sign of the visit of human beings, although I knew the country had been explored. I knew there were large farms in the eastern part of the State, because I had seen them on my way. But by keeping away from the railroads I had found safety in the great silences of the forest.

Before night I shot a bear. I saw a deer, but I needed all my ammunition for food, and was no wanton killer. I had no desire merely to slay. But I would kill for food. And I felt as if I would kill any man who came to take me back home to prison.

After that exploration I did not leave the cabin for a week, except to hunt for

food. I contrived a hook with a pin I chanced to find in the lower corner of my hunting vest, and caught a few small fish, which I relished.

But the silence was beginning to have its effect. I was not accustomed to spending my time alone. The great and sudden change from the bright lights, the music, the songs and the laughter of pretty women and the talk of men, to absolute solitude was too much for a mind made haggard by the distress in which I was plunged.

I felt that I was going mad. The day came when I could not stand the strain any longer. I must see somebody.

I suppose the manner of preparing my food, and the monotonous quality of it had as much to do with my condition as anything else.

I realized that I was taking a risk. But my strength of will was leaving me. I have read that all men are much the same. They will flee from all mankind at the first hint of danger, but after a time spent alone, their longing for human companionship will drag them from security even for the sound of a voice.

If a stray dog had come my way and I had made a companion of him, there might have been some relief. There was little companionship in my horse. He was a cheap animal for harness use, and spent his time browsing.

This thought that I must see somebody and hear at least one human voice came to me suddenly after I had sat moodily thinking, and the depths of my misery had grown too great for me to bear.

At first I tried to reason with myself that the danger was too great. But the more my mind dwelt on the idea, the more my longing overbalanced the danger.

I knew it was a long way to a town, no matter which way I went. I resolved to give the horse his head, and let him take me where he would.

I had no saddle, and the reins were those I had used on the wagon. I cut these down. I made a rude blanket out of a bearskin, and throwing that across the horse's back, I mounted and rode away.

I went slowly, warily, watching every foot of the way for some one who might seize me. Yet I was going straight toward men.

The horse turned into a road I had traveled before. This was natural enough, as he had never been on any of the others. Furthermore, it was the most used, after a few others had become absorbed in it.

I reached a settled region, but it was settled sparsely. The farms were large and but partly tilled, and the houses far apart.

And finally I came to a town. It was a small, miserable place, which I remembered passing through before I lost my horse and left my wagon for somebody else to find.

There was one little store, in which was located the post-office, and as I rode toward the platform that ran the whole length of the front, several loungers slouched forward to have a look at me.

"How do, stranger?" said one. "Been ridin' pretty fur, eh?"

"Yes," I answered. "I am camping back here a few miles. I and a few companions. We ran out of a few things."

They eyed my horse with what seemed like suspicion.

"What's the name, stranger?" asked another.

There was no particular reason now why I should cling to the name Richard Flume, for the suit-cases with my initials were gone. But having chosen it, it came first to my mind.

"Dick Flume," I answered.

"Where from?"

This was a staggerer. I did not know the name of any city from which a camping party would be likely to come to that region, and not be known. A tall, lanky old fellow slouched forward.

"Whar did ye git the friends, Flume?" he asked. "Didn't I see ye ride past here upwards of a week ago?"

"Possibly," I said. "I'm a great hand to explore new countries."

The conversation was getting too warm, and to end it I dismounted and entered the store.

The proprietor was as loquacious as his loungers, but my order kept him busy. He fastened two jute bags together, placed my purchases in them, and made a load that would go over the back of the horse and weigh equal on each side.

The old inquisitive chap had followed me in. He gave a chuckle.

"Ain't buyin' cups an' plates, be ye? Didn't know how to fix for campin', I s'pose."

I laughed as easily as I could, which is not saying much for my skill as an actor.

"We let a lot fall and broke them," I told him.

Then to get away from their questions I put my load on the horse and rode off.

V.

My wild desire to hear the voices of men had been amply gratified. Instead of being pleased and more contented with my lot, I was filled with a fresh terror.

These fellows knew too much. If I had gone to a farmhouse as a tramp, I might have lodged in jail, but no such searching questions or suspicious glances would have been given.

It seemed that I always thought of the best thing to do after I had done the wrong one.

However, the thing had been done, and I must continue my caution. The possession of so many treasures in the way of food gave me something to think of. And I began to make my cabin a little more habitable.

I had bought an ax, a saw, a hammer, and a quantity of nails of various sizes. I might have purchased a saddle, but that would have looked like preparations to remain.

I had some oats for the horse, but he would get a very small quantity each day. He really needed none, for he did no work, and there was grazing enough.

I had bought salt, sugar, pepper, tea, coffee, condensed milk, and a few cooking utensils, all of which needed shelves or pegs on which they might be kept off the floor.

Suddenly, while I was undoing my various purchases I was struck with the fact that many of the packages were done up in sheets of newspapers. I had been carelessly throwing them aside, intending to use them for starting fires. But now I straightened them out and laid them aside for reading.

My work making rude shelves kept me busy, and I had no time to read that day.

My stores were in good, dry places. My supper that night consisted of wild fowl, tea, and potatoes; also biscuit.

How I reveled in that feast! Two weeks before I would have laughed at any one who suggested it.

I felt now like a king in my rude domain. If the man-hunters would remain away and let me alone, I felt that I could live in the hut a year.

I had broken the ice in the little town. It was called, I remember, Lucas. The suspicious looks that had been cast at me might have been the natural questioning survey of a mysterious stranger.

The effect of a good meal had calmed my mind to such an extent that I believed now I could go into Lucas at any time and purchase what I wanted.

Then, when I had cleared away the few dishes and washed them at the spring, I lit a candle, and sat down to smoke some store tobacco, which I confess was not the best I had ever tasted.

I read a few pieces of the newspaper scraps. They were old, and I saw nothing of my own case in them. They were papers of the State, and the murder of James Dumont had been forgotten there.

Thus had a cup of tea restored my confidence.

But as I sat, smoking and ruminating, questions arose in my mind that disturbed it again. Was I really so safe in going back to Lucas?

I had told the loungers at the store that I was camping with friends. It would seem odd if I continued to make purchases for one person's needs.

I grew troubled once more. But I shook this feeling off. I had not been accosted as Forrest, and was safe for the time.

The next day I went fishing. I had added a few hooks and lines to my purchases, and now had better luck. I was in clover.

That afternoon, having nothing to do, I sat on a rude stool I had knocked together, smoked my pipe, and read some more newspaper scraps.

Suddenly I started, sat up straight, and stared. I had a torn piece of paper in my hand, and saw this on it:

—FORREST HIDING IN WASHI—

——ieved to be the man for whom a search has been made that——ntry. No stranger case has ever interested the people of th—— hoped he will be found.

I sat, staring at the paper. Then I recalled the letter I had sent to Lucy Dumont. Of course, it had put them on the track.

What a fool I had been! Why had I not let her go on believing I had killed her father?

Dashing the suddenly aroused fear from me, I tried to read again. There was a name that attracted me. The article was

short. It merely stated that the general store and post-office at Yallup had been totally destroyed by fire.

What was it that I knew about Yallup? The name was in some way impressed upon my mind.

After thinking about it, the fact dawned on me that it was at Yallup I mailed the letter to Lucy.

Eagerly I sought the date. It was, so far as I could reasonably be sure, the same day I had stopped there.

Why, oh, why had I sent the letter?

But as I had done so, why, oh, why had it not been destroyed in the fire?

Now a new terror settled down on me. I was no longer safe in Lone Wolf Cabin. Once more, driven by the necessity of seeking safety, must I go like a hunted thing through wildernesses and slink past men's faces in the night, and hide myself from every human being?

I cursed myself for writing that letter. I cursed Tom for driving me to this extremity by adding one crime to another. In my mad delirium I cursed everything and everybody I knew.

But I was safe for the night In the morning, with a clear brain, I would think it out. I had now but a small outfit to travel with, and had learned much of the woods.

I would decide, after sleeping, which way to go. It made little difference to me, so far as personal convenience went.

But there was a fact that had begun to add itself to my many troubles. My money was about gone.

When that gave out, what would I do for the necessities of life?

I counted by little hoard, and my heart sank. A few more purchases such as I had made at Lucas would finish my pile.

It was growing dusk, and everything was quiet. Then suddenly I heard a horse. I got up, trembling with terror. Whoever it was, he was coming toward the cabin.

Then I fancied I could distinguish the hoofbeats of two horses. Then came voices.

I was mad. My terror was so great that I raised my rifle to shoot the first man who should come in sight.

Then, somehow, reason returned to me, and, gripping my rifle, I turned from the cabin and ran.

I plunged into the forest. I turned this way and that, now and then stopping to look behind. I could see but a short distance, anyway, but no one seemed to be following.

Suddenly I heard a shot.

What could that mean? I had shot in the woods, but to get food. The sound came from the cabin. What had happened there?

Bewildered, trembling, I stood still. Then I seemed to return to the normal creature I had been before I was branded as a thief.

I went back toward the cabin. I crept cautiously, and, when about forty feet from it, peered through a sheltering clump of bush.

Two horses stood before the door. A form, seemingly that of a man, lay on the ground. Another man was taking the supplies from my cabin.

I stepped out.

"Who are you? What do you want?" I asked.

I heard an oath. A revolver snapped.

Instantly I fired, and the man dropped to the ground.

As there were but two horses, there could be but two men. I went to them.

First I looked at the one I had shot. He was dead.

I looked at the other. He was breathing. I got close to listen to the hardly distinguishable respirations, and saw his face. It was my brother Tom.

VI.

I ALMOST fainted. Then, recovering myself with a tremendous effort, I knelt again beside him.

"Tom!" I said. "Tom, do you know me?"

No answer came from his lips.

"Oh, my Heaven," I cried, "after all my sacrifice, has it come to this?"

I could not think or reason. For the man I had killed I felt no concern. He had shot my brother and was robbing me. I knew that, even if arrested, I would be absolved from guilt in his case.

But I dwelt little on that point. All my concern now was for Tom.

I got him inside the hut and placed him on the bed of skins I had made for myself. Every animal I shot added to my comfortable couch.

It was too dark to see much, so I lit a candle. This did not suffice. I rigged up a candlestick and lit another.

In this light, none too good, I examined

Tom. The assassin's bullet had evidently gone through his lung. Cutting away his clothes, disturbing him as little as possible, I disclosed the wound.

I brought some water from the spring and bathed away the blood. Then, tearing a strip from a shirt I had bought at Lucas, I made as good a bandage as I could.

I had nothing in the way of surgical appliances. I had nothing with which to stay the bleeding. I was frantic. Somehow I must save Tom. But how?

I took an empty condensed milk can, washed it clean, and drove a nail through the bottom. I made a crane by driving a stake into a crack in the cabin floor and putting a cross-piece to it. In the can I put cool water from the spring, and hung it on the crosspiece right over the wound in Tom's chest.

It was the best I could do until I could get to Lucas for something better.

I had some whisky, and poured some of it down his throat so slowly there was no danger of strangling him.

I had the satisfaction of hearing him groan. It was a mournful enough sound, but it assured me there was some life left in him.

I had done all I could do. I left him, with the cool water dripping on the cloth over the wound, and went out to look again at the dead man. I put a candle to his face. I had never seen him before. I let him lie there till morning.

All night I sat at the side of Tom thinking—Heavens, how I was thinking!

What did this strange new thing mean? Why had Tom been the one to track me down when I had shouldered his crime?

And how had he come in the company of a man who shot him?

It was all very inexplicable. But a glimmer of light edged itself into my brain.

This much I could realize. Tom had not come to drag me back to stand the charge of murder. He would not do that, knowing that I had but to speak the word to let the authorities and the world know that he, and not I, was the thief.

I did not know whether Tom had shot Dumont or not. But even if he believed I had done it, he would not have come after me.

I knew now what was up.

My father had discovered that Tom was the one who stole the ten thousand dollars. I knew my father's temper. His rage at Tom for permitting me to be exiled, instead of coming forward and admitting his own guilt, would bring down upon him more wrath than my father had shown toward me.

And perhaps the fact that he shot Dumont had become known and he had fled before he could be arrested.

But why had he come to me? To share my exile, I suppose. It was a cheeky thing to do, at best. He could scarcely expect me to greet him affectionately.

Yet we were brothers. I had already stood by him, and he probably knew I would stand by him again.

And I would. That resolve came to my mind while I sat there with one candle burning, with an aching head, studying the whole miserable problem.

I thought of Lucy. For her sake, as well as for the love I had always borne Tom, I would protect him with my life.

Having cleared the mystery of Tom's presence, without going into the problem of how he discovered me, I turned my attention to the man I had killed.

How had he come into the matter? How had Tom picked up a fellow to accompany him into the wilderness, knowing so little about him that he fell a victim to his bullet?

The problem of this fellow was not so easy. He might have been an officer of the law; but, if so, why was he with Tom and after me?

Had he arrested Tom? Here was an idea that knocked all the others into smithereens, and it looked reasonable. If he was an officer of the law, and had arrested Tom, he might have come with my brother to tell me about it so that I could return home in safety.

If that was so, why had he shot Tom? Had Tom resisted arrest? Had there been a fight while I was running away?

It was too much for me. I sat dumb—stupidly dumb—till daylight.

Tom was sleeping or unconscious, I did not know which. I dared not wake him if sleeping, because I believed the sleep would be the best thing for him.

I went outside to take a good look at the dead man.

I had never seen him before. He was a man about forty, stocky in build, and I judged, when alive, not of a prepossessing appearance.

I examined his coat and vest for some badge or shield of office. There was none.

But while I was looking at his coat something about it struck me as being familiar.

I looked at it again. I turned down the collar to see the maker's name.

It was my own coat.

I stared at the dead face with more perplexity than ever. How did a stranger come to be wearing my coat? And why should a man who wore my coat shoot my brother?

I tried to think when I had worn that coat last. I could not remember. My thoughts were so befuddled that everything that had happened in the last three months were jumbled into a mass of impossibilities and incongruities.

I felt in his pockets. In the inside pocket of the coat there was a wallet. It was of Russian leather, and stamped on the flap was "T. F."

I opened the wallet. There was money there—much money. Bills of large dimensions. And some cards. I looked at one. The name was Thomas Forrest.

It was my brother's wallet. The fellow had shot him to rob him. I put the wallet in my own pocket.

I got myself some breakfast. There was much more for me to think of. Troublous questions crowded me closely.

I was almost mad with my perplexities.

VII.

It would appear that the natural course for me to pursue would be to go at once to Lucas, obtain the services of a surgeon, and acquaint the authorities with the situation. This occurred to me, but it was the very thing of all things which, in the disturbed and perplexed condition of my mind, I did not want to do.

I had resolved to protect Tom at any cost. True, his misdoings had already cost me dear, but I have told so many times why I was willing to take further risks for him that it is unnecessary for me to repeat them now.

As for the dead man, his case could wait. He was as dead as he ever would be, and delay would not injure him.

He had tried to murder Tom, and had actually taken his money, and the only problem concerning him at the moment was how to dispose of his body till Tom was able to explain the relations existing between them when they came to the cabin.

I had no thought of concealing the remains—to hide the shooting. I had committed no crime. I had simply shot the man who had shot and robbed my brother.

Finally I made up my mind, and stopped all further speculation. I simply dragged the body to a thick clump of alders and covered it with leaves.

Now I had three horses on my hands. If anybody came that way I might have to account for them. I turned them loose, but they remained near the cabin.

My only thought was for Tom. He certainly needed more attention than I could give him, and it was some puzzle to know just what to do.

I counted the money in the wallet. In all, it amounted to a little less than three thousand dollars.

A desperate man can do much with a thousand dollars. I had done so much thinking, and so many schemes of one kind or another had passed through my mind, that it seemed natural for a solution of this question to make its appearance the same as other questions had solved themselves.

I mounted my own horse, using the bearskin the same as I had before, and yet I could have used one of the saddles ridden by Tom and the dead stranger.

I rode to Lucas; and if my appearance had excited attention before, it seemed to throw the little place into a panic now.

A group of at least a dozen gathered on the platform of the general store. I did not dismount.

"Wal, Dick Flume," said the old codger who had been so sneeringly inquisitive before, "see yer friends?"

"Friends? What friends? It is not of friends I've come to speak. Where is the doctor? Is there one in Lucas?"

"Anybody sick?"

"I have no time to answer questions. Will you answer mine?"

"Surely so. Don't get huffy, Dick Flume. It's nateral when two men come along an' ask fur a man named Forrest, an' we don't know nothin' about him, to put two an' two together, an' see if they'll make six. Sorry ye feel huffy. Doc Crowberry lives down yonder, cross ther creek, near the little white church."

I did not tarry, but went on my way. I had no difficulty in finding the little white church, and the doctor's house near it.

I expected to find the doctor the usual old crusty country physician. But to my surprise, when there was a response to my knock, the man who came was about twenty-

six years old. He was a good-looking chap, of medium height, well knit, and his clear eyes seemed to have a courageous spirit shining in them.,

"Are you Dr. Crowberry?" I asked.

"I am. What can I do for you? You don't look very ill yourself. Stranger in these parts?"

"Yes. I'd like to have just a moment where nobody can hear us."

"There's nobody to hear now. Fire away."

"I am in trouble. There is, within an ordinary ride from here, in a place hidden from observation, a wounded man. I have every reason to keep his identity a secret, and also his whereabouts. Will you go blindfolded to that spot with me and attend him?"

He laughed.

"Friend, you don't belong near here, that's sure. Why, man alive, all the blindfolding in the world wouldn't make any difference. If this place is within a day's drive I could find it again, and if you tell me the direction I'll tell you now where it is. I am a botanist as well as doctor, and I know every foot of ground within twenty miles."

I hesitated.

"I will tell you this," he added. "I will not be a party to a crime."

"No, I would not ask that. This is a matter that does not concern anybody around here. In fact, it concerns nobody in Washington. The man who is wounded is my own brother."

"How was he wounded?"

"Shot."

"By whom?"

"I don't know."

"You are a city man. You are not accustomed to the wilds. What crime have you committed? Pardon me, but I am a blunt sort of individual. I've seen some adventures myself."

"I assure you I have committed no crime."

"I'll take a chance. I will not be blindfolded. I will promise, however, that if things are as you say, and appear all right to me, my mouth will be shut."

"Then come along."

"Smoke a cigar while I get ready. I'll have my man saddle my horse."

He gave me a cigar, and I smoked it impatiently until at last his horse was led to the door, and he mounted.

"Can't we go some other way than through the village and past the store?" I asked.

"I might answer you that question if I had the slightest idea where you are taking me."

I pointed in the direction.

"Yes. There is a road down by the old mill and a bridge over the creek. It is a trifle farther, but that doesn't matter. Come along."

As we rode along I began to like the doctor. His black leather case of instruments was strapped to his saddle, and he smoked and chatted as we jogged along.

"A fellow came after me once," he said, "and I went with him. He said he was traveling through in a wagon, and his wife was ill. He got me into the woods and tried to rob me."

"Well, what did you do?" I inquired.

"I knocked him down and went home."

"How do you know I won't try to do the same thing?"

"There is too much trouble written on your face. You are pale, and thinner, I believe, than you should be. You haven't slept much, and look generally done up."

"You are more than a doctor and botanist," I said. "You are a wizard."

"In these parts," he replied, "a man has to be all sorts of things. You haven't told me the whole story yet. I'll bet you'll let something go before we part."

I believed he was right. And thus chatting, we continued on till we reached the cabin.

VIII.

I DISMOUNTED at once, but the keen-eyed young doctor remained in the saddle. He seemed to take in everything at a glance. He turned to me with a whimsical look in his eyes.

"Where is the other man?" he asked.

I looked. There was, at that time, but one horse in sight beside the one I had ridden and the one he still bestrode.

"Why do you ask that?" I asked.

He pointed to the two saddles on the ground.

"You are using a skin, instead of a saddle. A man has been shot here, and the other is missing. Well, I don't know that it is any of my business. Where is my patient?"

"In here."

He flung his rein over a stump of a limb

and entered the cabin. He bent over Tom and began his examination.

"He is in a bad way," he reported; "but we can pull him through, I fancy. He ought to be where he can get better care, though. This is not exactly what I should choose for a hospital."

"But there are reasons why I can't have him taken anywhere else," I objected.

"I respect your reasons, but I must have somebody here who understands nursing. Have you had any experience?"

"None."

"Well, we can talk about that later. You can assist me now."

Tom was still unconscious. Crowberry told me what he wanted, and I did the best I could with the facilities I had. He seemed content, and went to work. He had all sorts of instruments and vials of medicines.

"You see, we have to be traveling cutlery establishments and drug-stores," he remarked.

He soon extracted the bullet from Tom's lung, and made a better job of the wound than I had. Then he administered restoratives, and Tom seemed about to return to consciousness.

"He has some fever," said the doctor. "We must not expect too much at once."

"Save his life. That's all I ask."

He fixed Tom as comfortably as he could and stepped outside.

"Now you are worn out. Will you accept a nurse if I send one?"

"But that makes another who knows the secret."

He was glancing at the ground.

"Who shot the other man—you?"

"I—how—what do you mean?"

He pointed to where the dead man had lain all night.

"That did not come from your brother," he said.

I shuddered.

"You are a regular *Sherlock Holmes* and *Dr. Watson* combined in one person. Yes, I shot the other man. Having told you so much, I will take you entirely into my confidence. I will even show you the man. You may be able to tell me who he is—or was."

I led him to the alders, and removed the leaves from the dead man.

"I never saw him before," said Crowberry, after a scrutiny. "He doesn't belong around here."

"Now," I said, "the facts are these. I was occupying this cabin to be safe. There was, so far as I know, no reason why my brother should come here. But he did come, in company with this man. I heard them coming, and, not knowing that my brother was one of them, I ran farther into the forest.

"I heard a shot, and came back. My brother was lying on the ground, and this fellow was carrying the stuff out of my cabin. I shot him."

"Well, between the business that sent you here to hide, and the shooting of this man," said the doctor, "no wonder you are white and worried-looking. You need your brother now as a witness to the fact that this fellow shot him before you did your shooting. We'll do the best we can. Now, how about a nurse?"

"I don't need any help. I am strong, and will obey your orders."

"Well, have it your own way. I will ride out to-morrow and see how he is getting on. I'll tell you what to do."

He got some fresh water from the spring and filled two small vials with some kind of mixtures, and told me just how to use them.

"If you find he is feverish, increase this. If he comes to his senses, don't let him talk too much at once. He'll pull through, I think."

"I thank you, doctor. Now, as to fee. We'll pay as we go along."

I handed him a fifty-dollar bill. He held it in his hand in a peculiarly hesitating way, and looked at me questioningly.

"It is honest money," I assured him. "You needn't be afraid of that."

"I'll take your word for it. It is more money than I have seen at one time since I came to Lucas. Well, I hope you've got plenty of them."

"I've got another one for you to-morrow, anyway."

"Then I'll surely come," he said with a laugh.

When he had gone I sat down near Tom and smoked. I had given up all concentrated thinking. All my hopes now were that Crowberry could make his words good and pull my brother through.

Tom was breathing in a free manner, and I took the opportunity to get a little sleep. Refreshed by this, I was ready for the night's vigil.

Nothing disturbed the stillness of the

time of darkness. The usual noises of the wood were not disquieting. No human being came near me.

I gave Tom his medicines at the times stated by the doctor. Toward morning I noticed a restlessness in him.

I felt a great desire to speak to him, but I curbed my impatience. If he was going to show consciousness that day I wanted the doctor to be present.

I was eating my breakfast of perch and coffee and biscuit when Crowberry arrived.

"You are early!" I exclaimed.

"I hardly slept for thinking about you. I've spent nights in the woods all by myself, but never under such circumstances as you are placed here. Let me see the patient."

He stepped in at the door and knelt down by Tom.

"He is better," he announced. "We will try something now to wake him up. There is not as much fever as I supposed there would be. He has a wonderful constitution."

He took from his case a vial of liquid, and asked for some water. He used but a few drops in a spoon and a few drops from the vial. He poured the contents of the spoon on Tom's tongue.

He then watched for results, and it seemed, even to my inexperienced eyes, that the result was quick in coming. The doctor turned to me.

"Has he seen you? Is he sure you are here?"

"No."

"Then take a walk around till I call you. It may excite him too much to find you at once."

Obeying, I went outside.

IX.

I THINK, notwithstanding all the mental turmoil I had been through, the half-hour I spent outside the cabin was the worst thirty minutes of all. I walked about aimlessly, smoking furiously all the time, unable to concentrate my thoughts on a single thing.

There was a jumble of questions hurling themselves at me, none of which I could answer, and none of which I tried to answer.

But the half-hour of suspense was over at last. Crowberry came to the door and beckoned me.

"He knows you are here. He wants to see you. Keep yourself calm, no matter what happens."

With my heart beating as it never had before, I entered the cabin. Tom lay with his eyes turned toward the door, and there was an unnaturally bright glitter of expectancy in them.

"Tom, old fellow," I said as I knelt by his side.

"Bob! Thank Heaven, Bob!" he cried in a low but painfully expressive voice. "How glad I am, Bob; how glad I am!"

"Never mind now, Tom; it is all right."

"All right? Did he tell you? I wanted to—but—he shot me, Bob."

"Yes, I know, Tom. Who was he?"

"Who? Why, Dowling."

I looked at him stupidly. I had never heard the name before.

"Did he get away, Bob?"

"N-no, Tom, he didn't get away."

"He shot me for my money, Bob."

"Yes, but that's all right, Tom. I've got the money. Hadn't you better wait till you are stronger?"

"No, I must talk. If Dowling hasn't told you—Bob—why did you admit you took that money from the firm?"

I stared.

"You knew you didn't, Bob. Why did you leave father and me with the impression that you were a thief?"

"Why—why—"

"Tell me, Bob."

"Why, Tom—I thought—you know I thought so much of you and Lucy—and wanted you to be happy—and I was only one—and—"

It was lamentably weak. But his manner knocked all my wits out of me. He closed his eyes a moment and then opened them, and there was a new light in them.

"Bob, tell me the truth. Did you think I took the money?"

"Well—you see, Tom, you and I had handled the cash—and I wanted you and Lucy and all to be happy, so—"

"Bob! Good old Bob! You did it for me! You thought I took the money; and because I was going to be married to Lucy, you shouldered the blame and went away under disgrace. Why, Bob, I didn't take the money."

"Who did? Who killed Mr. Dumont?"

"Mr. Dumont wasn't killed. He was shot, but not fatally. We all thought the wound was mortal, but the old man pulled through in great shape. It was Stover."

"Stover! Why, it was Stover who called father's attention to the shortage."

"I know he did, the scoundrel. You see, he had gone to the end of his rope. It was only a question of a few days when the shortage would be discovered. So he went to father and told him, throwing suspicion on us.

"But Mr. Dumont never believed that either you or I took the money. He had been watching Stover, and knew more about him than father did. So he went quietly to work that very day you left and began his own investigation. He discovered that it was Stover.

"He remained in the office after father left, and had Stover in. They had a quarrel, and Mr. Dumont accused him, and showed him proofs. He shot Dumont, and tried to escape. They got him, though, and he is in jail now. Mr. Dumont was unconscious for two days, and we could not get much out of him. But the police got Stover. Then the police of Yakima, of this State, sent word that they had arrested you."

"Arrested me?"

"Yes."

A grim smile appeared on his face.

"I know the whole business, Bob. You went to Spokane, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"And fitted out there with a team and a lot of truck for the woods?"

"Yes."

"Well, on the road to this place, a few miles back, one of your horses dropped dead. You left the wagon and came on with one horse."

"But how did you know all this?"

"I'm telling you. When we got word you were arrested in Yakima, I got there as fast as I could. Of course, it wasn't you. It was Dowling. You see, to make it brief yet plain, Dowling is a faker."

"Was a faker. He's dead now."

"You shot him?"

"Yes."

"Good. Well, Dowling was going through the country with a team selling a horse liniment he prepared himself. At Yakima he sold a lot and it was no good. Somebody made a stiff kick and ransacked his outfit, and found a wagon-load of camping-stuff and two suit-cases marked 'R. F.,' and some things with your full name on. At that time the police were looking for you, and Dowling was arrested as Robert Forrest.

"Well, we had a devil of a time, but finally I got the truth out of him. He had been behind you on the road and saw your horse drop. He pulled off to one side, where you wouldn't see him, and saw you leave on the other horse. When you had gone some distance, he went on and annexed your wagon to his. See what a rascal he was?

"He spent some time in jail at Yakima, and finally was let go on condition that he would guide me to the place where he got the wagon. He said he saw you turn off the main road, and could find the place again.

"I wanted to find you, Bob, to let you know it was Stover who took the money. Well, I started out with him, and we got off the track. I think now he meant to murder and rob me, because he knew I had plenty of money with me. But at last we reached this place—all alone in the woods—and you were not here. None could hear a shot, he thought, and he let me have it.

"So, Bob, everything is all right at home. And—Bob—old man—if anything could pay you for doing what you did—showing your love for me—name it. Perhaps I'll die. Then Lucy—"

"You won't die, Tom. You can't die. We won't let you die. The doctor says you'll pull through. And Lucy will be happy—we'll all be happy. I'm glad it wasn't you, Tom. But I would have protected you just the same."

His hand sought mine, and he lay with his eyes closed.

The doctor, who had listened, silently patted his hands together as though applauding. Then, in his own brusk and straightforward way, he took charge of things.

Under his management, and with the use of Tom's money, everything was easy. Tom was removed in an easy vehicle to the doctor's own house in Lucas. The body of Dowling was placed in charge of an undertaker, who eventually delivered it to a distant relative.

An inquest was held, and the verdict was that the shooting of Dowling by myself was justifiable.

Leaving Tom in Crowberry's hands, I hurried home, and my father met me with tears, and as he threw his arms around me he sobbed:

"Bob! My boy, forgive me for believing you."

"It's all right, father," I said. "I did what I thought was best."

Tom soon recovered sufficiently to come

home. I went to bring him. Lucy naturally was overjoyed. Mr. Dumont acted toward me like a father. The relations between myself and my own father became more loving than they had ever been.

Tom and Lucy were married. They are happy. I got over the old hurt, and after a long vacation settled down to business as one of the members of the firm.

Mr. Dumont retired, and I took his place. Tom will soon come in, and the firm will be William Forrest & Sons. Somebody said that "All is well that ends well." We, at least, have no reason to gainsay it.

THE END.

His Moving-Picture Past.

BY ARTHUR W. SULLIVAN.

Showing the Value of Prestige, and Nemesis Appearing in the Shape of Modern Invention.

SAM KELLER and I lived next door to each other all our young lives, and were inseparable. You know what a village like Oakville is — a quiet little place, with lots of local enthusiasm and very little performance to justify such high spirits.

Perhaps you remember the little old wooden theatre in Oakville. It looked as if it had hunted a lamp-post all its life, but despairing in its quest, had just stopped in the public square and leaned on the air for support.

Well, every so often there would come a stock company to town with a lot of ham-actors in it, and a wad of plays in the repertoire like "The Ten-Ton Door," "Out of Grime to the Sublime," or the "Tatterdemalion Countess," and a few hundred others, ranging from the "Cloak Model" to the "Black Crook."

These stock companies used to pull the small change out of Sam's pockets and mine every trip regularly. One of the worst lickings I ever got was for getting money out of father on false pretenses and then seeing "Chinatown As It Is." Sam and I would go home in a maze of wonder and worship.

Demosthenes never had anything on us. We would go out to the Kellers'-barn and pester the horses with our elocution. Whenever there was an amateur night Sam and I always appeared in a vaudeville sketch. Why, I got so used to getting the hook that I had a callous place around my waist like a regular belt.

Of course both our parents frowned on our ambitions along histrionic lines. They were stanch old Puritans in their beliefs, and to see their sons yearning for the reverse side of stage life made them more than sensitive.

They thought at first that our ambitions would wear off with age, but the older we grew the more we were in love with the profession, just like a few million more people that have about as much stage talent as a guinea-pig without that animal's unobtrusiveness.

When I became of age (Sam was two years older) we launched a scheme we had had up our sleeves for some time. We both knew that if we went on the boards we would be cut off without a penny, and we could neither of us afford that. So we compromised with our folks and our desires and started a moving-picture place. I don't remember where we got the money, but that doesn't matter.

You know where the new brick business block is across from Pop Feeley's drug-store? Well, in the old days there used to be a millinery-shop there. But poor Mrs. Fitz found that hats were the last part of feminine apparel to be considered here in Oakville, and had to tie up her hopes in her useless lace and ribbons and seek for more hattable localities.

Sam and I looked over the empty store and decided to rent it for three months. That would give us a fair chance to ascertain the result of our business venture.

Had we been the pioneers in Oakville of the motion-picture entertainment, our prosperity would have been assured. But

we were preceded by two other emporiums that had built up good patronage among certain classes. They were increasing the deposits in the Farmers' Bank about a hundred dollars a week.

In a town of a few thousand persons you can see that we were up against it. Furthermore, not only did our parents frown upon our venture, but all the F. F.'s did the same thing. We could not even hope for patronage from the families with whom we were on social terms.

The moving-picture place was looked upon as a haven for down-and-outers, street corner loafers, and workmen. The pictures were thought to represent every form of prohibited exhibition.

Decidedly, it was up to Sam and me to wake up the village. We simply *had* to put a ton of dynamite under the stodgy old burghers and institute an immigration past our glass ticket-booth.

I induced our hired girl to give up her job and act as cashier, and you can imagine the kindly feelings this aroused in mother. She couldn't get another girl by hook or crook. Finally, however, Katy came back, as you shall hear.

After we had rented the hall we proceeded to decorate it. We made it just as comfortable as we could. We used a rich green paper for the walls, and the trimmings and garnishings were in white. This was because we discovered a lot of the green paper in Sam's attic.

We gave the paper an hour to dry after our home-made paste slinging, and then, while it was still wet, we tried our lights, fixed up the lantern and hung out our shingle in the dramatic profession, so to speak.

The first two days were our biggest. Everybody that would permit himself or herself the disgrace of entering a nickelodeon, came to welcome us.

That's all they did do. There was no putting the bread of life in our mouths. They came, they saw, and then they beat it. *Veni. Vidi.* Vanish.

Sam and I found ourselves stranded on the reef of everything going out and nothing coming in. We were about the lonesomest, most forlorn pair of capitalists that ever sank other people's funds.

Our friends got to the pitying stage after they got through kidding us. The folks in "our set" merely pointed to us as a couple of lost souls, and when the rocking-chair brigade swung into action, it was always "just bad bringing up, you know. I'd like to see a son of mine—" etc.

Well, as I say, we were a pair of pathetic little objects at the end of our first week. The Argolier, which we called our neglected place of daily naps, seemed intent on doing for us what it had done for the little milliner before us.

Then it was that Sam and I held a council of war and decided that we would get people to the Argolier or sprain our ears doing it.

The resultant idea was mine, and in brief was this: To get Josiah Whitehead to be the guardian angel of our palace of entertainment.

Had we said it was our duty to have served for supper fried mosquito ears on toast, we would have set about the task joyously. But to get old Whitehead into a moving-picture show. Ugh!

Nevertheless, that was what we had to do or get the hook again, only this time in the neck.

Josiah Whitehead possessed several things of more or less popular appeal to us. The first was a villainous grip on the village. He was so confoundedly upright that he had been elected president of Oakville for eight years.

If his right eye had become paralyzed and dropped shut while he was talking to a young lady, the old fellow would have thought he was flirting and would have committed suicide at the town pump early in the morning, before the arrival of the village milkman. That's how straitlaced old Whitehead was.

Another thing he possessed was social position. If we could get him officially, as village president, to recognize and approve of the Argolier by his presence, not only would we be favored with the patronage of the town policeman, but would draw the highest class patronage of the village. This meant that the poorer class would follow suit, as it always does, and we would soon run our competitors out of business.

That would have suited us to a T.

But the first thing to do was to get old Whitehead into our toils. So we prepared the way by being regular at Sunday-school for the next Sunday and putting in more than our share of the collection. We could see that this made a hit.

So the next day we sent him a ticket, or

rather a card, on which we wrote strange words which said that the ticket was good forever, and that it admitted him and his descendants to all our shows henceforth even unto the third and fourth generation.

We might as well have sent the ticket to a Borneo cannibal. No, not quite. We got an answer the day after which, believe me, had been written on thoroughly annealed paper with an asbestos pen and sulfur ink.

Sam and I were not only the black lambs in the fold of Oakville. We were hardened criminals with designs on the morality and the peace of mind of the entire village. More than that, we were breaking the hearts of our families, and were it possible to do so, he would have the village policeman raid our show and close it up. He wound up with this fragrant remark:

"In the future, let all your relations with me and the members of my family be conventional in the extreme; and failing this, I will have to assert myself in another way by forbidding you the hospitality of my home."

When we got that letter Sam and I just stared at each other, particularly Sam. That last sentence took him by the seat of the trousers and booted him, mentally, into the coal-hole of despair.

Why?

Because the human shrimp, Josiah Whitehead, was possessed of a most comely daughter yclept Mabel, and Sam Keller and she had it all framed up for a double splice with a couple of round links made of plain gold, in the chain, and a large anchor attached signifying hope for the future for both of 'em.

And here was this human crane, with his long legs and longer neck, and pinhead brain, putting an end to the happiness of his daughter.

Well, Sam and I sat back and walloped the king's English for every forcible epithet it ever contained.

Sam got down-hearted, but that would never do. I grew madder by the minute, and by supper-time I could have chewed the jewels out of Josiah's watch. We were up against it, sure.

Sam was all for chucking the whole business at once, but I wouldn't hear of it. I was into the one big ambition of my life, and if there was any possibility of making money, I was going to do it.

Furthermore, I was going to get Josiah Whitehead into the building and obtain his sanction to our project. I was almost on the point of offering a reward for him, dead or alive, but thought better of it.

I cheered Sam up, arranged a clandestine meeting for him and Mabel, and the next day he showed up as chipper as a squirrel with a face full of nuts.

Mabel, he said, was with us heart and soul, and from that time on I pigeonholed Mabel for a wreath of immortelles when the right time came.

"She thinks," enthused Sam, "that her father is a lanky old wishbone, with a temper like a suddenly surprised polecat. She is sorry for us, and to show her faith in me she uttered certain words that make it quite suitable and imperative for you to shower down congratulations."

So they were engaged. What utter folly—and yet I didn't blame Sam, and I wished him all the luck in the world.

This complicated matters some, and as we were showing to a few more people a day (that is, losing perhaps a dollar a day less than before), we chirped up a little.

But I never lost sight of my idea. I would have Josiah Whitehead in our emporium if I never did anything else in my life.

But it had to be done *soon*. That was the point. Time was flying in a good old plodding biplane, but money was using a one hundred horse-power monoplane and passing the other machine three times to the lap. That's how fast it was going. And we were up in the air ourselves, at that.

But just at this time, when I was doing the lie-awake-at-night stunt trying to lure out an idea for the solution of our predicament, along came assistance as provided for in that great and good instrument, the Constitution of the United States. It was election time.

That of itself wouldn't have provided beefsteak and potatoes, but to our unalloyed rapture we learned one morning from the Oakville *Eagle* that "our great and good citizen, Mr. Josiah Whitehead, has been chosen as candidate for State Senator from our district."

And then followed two columns of unevenly leaded type, a regular panegyric on the village president.

Here was the whole matter in a nutshell. "Piggy" Burns had been our Senator just

long enough for him to think he had the job padlocked to his anatomy. He had never been straight in his dealings, particularly his political ones, and at the time of which I speak he was as crooked as a barrel of snakes.

He was allied with a ring, the name of which stood for political roguery. The honest and upright citizens who had elected him several times awoke to a realization of the smudge that was smearing the fair page of our local history, and decided to put Piggy into dry-dock for a while.

Consequently the campaign was waged on strictly moral issues. Josiah Whitehead represented the popular idea of virtue, and he had been chosen overwhelmingly to go in and clean out the record left by "Piggy" Burns.

You've seen a pouter pigeon. Well, that describes old Josiah the day after the two columns appeared in the *Eagle*. The State wasn't big enough for him.

He brought out a highly-polished frock coat and striped pants, and bought the corner druggist out of throat tablets. He went after "Piggy" Burns tooth and nail, and had Dan'l Webster lashed to the mast on the oratory proposition inside of a week.

The *Eagle* played him up as if he had been a $2,000,000 fire, and even the papers of the big city ten miles away began to give him a stick or two of type now and then, hidden down under the quotations of curb stocks.

One morning, about a week after his nomination, when the campaign was just beginning to get under way, a letter appeared in the *Eagle* right next to a large line of loud talk about the "distinguished candidate."

The letter was signed "Old Resident," and it just about took away my breath and Sam's. We hadn't known that our enterprise had a friend in the town.

The letter started off by saying what a fine fellow old Josiah was, and how famous he was for his sense of justice and impartiality. It lauded him to the skies as a candidate, and then the writer got out a good big hickory cudgel and sailed after Whitehead, skin and bone.

"I am a member of one of the best families in town, and I happen to know what a struggle two of our most estimable young men, Sam Keller and Ford Bemus, are having with their new moving-picture enterprise. I have personally," went on the writer of the letter, "attended several of their performances, and I can state that in moral tone, educational value, and entertainment they are far above the pictures offered by either of the rival establishments in Oakville.

"I happen to know, however, that the enterprise of these two energetic young citizens is so far a failure, and this I lay largely, if not altogether *at the door of our candidate*. Messrs. Keller and Bemus, who are of high character and constant attendants at the Bible class taught by Mr. Whitehead, appealed to him directly to sanction their perfectly reputable venture, by sending him a permanent pass. In return they received a most discouraging and discourteous letter. This fact has become public, with the result that the Argolier has been under a ban by our best citizens, a ban that threatens to wreck the business and hopes of two Oakville boys who have initiative and ability to make good.

"Mr. Whitehead should grant them the favor of his attendance at one of their performances. He should encourage ambition and originality in the young men of the day. If he thus discourages native talent in his own small home town, what will he do with the power entrusted to him by the people? I maintain that here is narrow-mindedness on the part of the candidate that will work us wo. What if some moving-picture shows are bad? Does that prove that they all must be so?

"No. Make an end, then, Mr. Josiah Whitehead, with this bigoted state of mind. Encourage these two young men and so encourage us to give you our votes."

That's about the way the thing ran. But better than the letter was a half-column of editorial comment, backing up the writer on his stand! I wanted to present the editor of the *Eagle* with our house and lot, which belonged, at the time, to father.

Well, sir, I wish you could have seen Oakville rise to the discussion.

We broke even on the next two days' business from the publicity the affair gave us. But that, we knew, was only sporadic interest, born of curiosity. After things quieted down we realized patronage would, too, so we had no false hopes. We weren't getting the good people, either, and they were the ones we were after.

We tried to find the author of that letter, but he was as shy as a bass on a sunny day. We wanted to give him the

pass that Whitehead had turned down. But after a lot of inquiries we gave up the quest and devoted our time to business.

Sam was as happy as a humming-bird. He thought he saw a house and lot built around Mabel. But he was a bit premature with his speculations. Business took the toboggan after three days, and we were no better off than at first.

We were desperate again. Even the appeal in that letter failed to move that old seventeenth century antique. He had a crotchety letter in answer to "Old Resident," that sounded hollow and smelled musty.

But here is where things began to come our way. The city papers took up the case. The papers of the opposition made more stock out of Josiah's narrow-mindedness than they could out of any other phase of his character.

The comparatively small matter of his withholding his patronage from us soon became, as will popular ideas, at times, the basis of a big share of campaign oratory. Mr. Whitehead found himself advertising us and defending himself at every political meeting he addressed, where some good citizen would rise to know what was his attitude on encouraging initiative, etc. And every such citizen got such a scorching reply for his pains that Brother Josiah's popularity began to take a tumble.

His campaign managers were plainly disturbed. But they could no more have bridled their favorite's tongue than they could have put him on the platform in tights. The people could see a rigidly honest representative in the Senate, but one who would be so disagreeable that every bill he entered would be tabled, and he would be put on the "hiring office-boys" committee instead of on the committee on "local post-offices."

And, of course, the nastier Josiah got about the Argolier the more the opposition papers walloped him on the same subject. Where at first he looked like a sure walk-over, along about the middle of the campaign "Piggy" Burns gave a grunt and opined to the press that he might have a look in after all.

So then Sam got his idea, and it was silk-lined, at that.

We took copious clippings from the *Eagle* and the city papers and we hiked for the office of "Dimp" Swazey, the political boss of Whitehead's party in our district.

He infested a plush and mahogany office, and wagged diamond rings under your eyes while the creamy smoke of his fat perfectos sifted through his well-oiled mustache.

He was oiled and pomaded clear through to his heart, that man. Suavity was his middle name, but when Sam and I stated our case in clear English, he cut out the soft stuff and got down to business.

"You boys have everything under the sun going your way," he said when we were introduced. "I know you want something of me. Now, what is it?"

Sam was the particular spokesman of that meeting. So he fixed Mr. "Dimp" with one of those going-to-conquer-the-world expressions affected by young college graduates, and lit into him as follows:

"Mr. Swazey, we will take just about five minutes of your valuable time. You know who we are. You must have seen these clippings—"

Sam handed over a bundle big enough to start a paper-mill with.

"Take 'em away," roared Swazey. "I've seen 'em till I'm sick to death of 'em."

"Well, then, to come to the point," pursued Sam earnestly. "We have determined to have the approval and presence of Josiah Whitehead sanctify the already perfectly moral atmosphere of the Argolier. We are young men of ability and brains. We are the focal-point of this campaign. We are struggling to succeed, and Mr. Whitehead's approval is necessary. No one but you can accomplish this result. Will you do it?"

"Dimp" Swazey, looked out of the plate-glass window for a moment, sucking loudly at the frazzled ends of his mustache and rocking creakingly back and forth in his swivel chair.

Suddenly he swung around toward us.

"Yes, by George, he'll come," cried the boss vehemently. "I thought you two fellows were a couple of beats that had Josiah where you wanted him. So, at first I would not let him accept any suggestions to go to your emporium. But I see you boys have the right idea. Sure he'll come. But I want you to promise this—to make your playhouse the party headquarters of Oakville. I want you to have big placards and signs out, and to run a picture of the candidate and some slides, etc., before and after every film. Then, when the time comes for his visit, we can all work together and make it the biggest rally and the turning-point of the campaign.

"Do you catch the idea?"

Did we catch it! Can Evers catch a baseball is just as foolish a question. We hitched to the idea with tooth and nail, arranged the details and went home to a very rejuvenated business.

That was the beginning of our success. After that, the plunks began hitting the till like a shower of rivets on a tin roof. We couldn't keep the proletariat away.

We hadn't lost any time putting out the little aids to good business suggested by "Dimp" Swazey, either. The front of the Argolier was scarcely recognizable with its howling banners and stupendous signs. In one day we worked sleepy little Oakville up to a pitch of enthusiasm.

To think that the village was to be the center of the political situation of the senatorial district! No such honor had ever before befallen the place, and all of Oakville that could leave its wife sifted matters in the rear of Denny Minahy's saloon.

We announced a series of pictures of the candidate, "life-size on the stupendous screen. A chronological history of the man destined to rule the State." Pictures furnished by "Dimp," of course.

We made so much fuss over Whitehead that every time he went by the Argolier and smiled at us and it (under instructions, of course) he seemed to add a cubit to his stature. One thing is sure, his popularity was starting to come up out of the slough of despond. The papers began to give him credit for a more liberal judgment and broader mind than he had ever before had.

The probability of his election increased right along.

It was now about midway through the campaign, and the fight was especially bitter. "Piggy" Burns was rooting for all there was in him, and he was unearthing a lot of good votes at that. But as soon as things began to swing toward Whitehead again, "Dimp" Swazey got busy.

One Monday morning, which as you know is the worst time in the week for moving pictures, "Dimp" darkened our door. It was all he could do to get through it. We were playing to a crowded house, and had a messenger outside to take a bag full of money to the bank at the end of each hour.

That's how prosperous we were, but, of course, we had very little that was really our money, the most of it going to the folks who had loaned to us at first. But we bid fair to be rich shortly at that.

Well, as I said, "Dimp" darkened the door. He had come to arrange the details of the grand attendance of Josiah Whitehead.

When we got through with our interview with him let me state that there were some doings planned. It was Monday, as I have said, and we decided to have the big jubilee that Saturday night, so that the Sunday papers could get all the benefit. There would be special seats for the press with every courtesy shown.

During that week things hummed with us. We changed our poster every day. We placarded the village from pump to the crossroads at the city limits. Our favorite slogan was "Vote for Whitehead, the man with the white record."

We increased the number of pictures of the candidate shown. We portrayed him in the bosom of his family, in the Sunday-school class. We showed his children, all but Mabel. Sam balked at that. We even threw a portrait of the cook on the screen to show how popular Josiah was with the working classes.

Every day we were visited by politicians and newspaper men. We had a special balcony built around the inside of the theater to accommodate the crowds on the eventful night. And we finally arranged for an orchestra to play at the performance.

Oakville was so excited that it fairly seethed. At "Dimp's" suggestion we numbered seats and sold them as they do at the best theaters. The house was all gone by Thursday. We managed to arrange for the accommodation of a few more people, but our last ticket left the glass coop early Friday morning.

Well, Saturday night came at last. Sam and I were in the seventh heaven of prosperity and happiness. He and Mabel were already planning to have paper at a dollar a roll in the parlor and a tapestry border over the green in the dining-room.

Their castle was almost a real one. They were planning to get married as soon as possible after the big show. They knew that Papa Whitehead could offer no real objection then. You never saw so elated a pair of youngsters in your life.

There was only one drawback to that last day. We had laid ourselves out on some special films from New York, and the things hadn't come. At last we got worried and prepared to run the old ones. It was a big shame.

But just as the parade was forming the rolls arrived. Sam hurried to the Argolier and got them ready for running. There was no time to reel them off before the performance. We had to trust that they were intact.

And speaking of the parade, that was some celebration, let me state. It started at the city hall. There was a brass band, furnished by Swazey. The candidate rode in a carriage with the prominent politicians. The procession wound around all the streets, brilliant with red fire. Josiah Whitehead bowed right and left.

And he had reason to. More than Oakville was there. The streets were lined with some of the most prominent people of the State. The band played, the people yelled, the red fire cast its lurid glow, and the small boys tagged alongside, perfectly happy.

The procession reached the Argolier at about half past eight. The place was full then. A lot of the wise ones had come early and got their seats to be sure to have them at the critical moment. The band continued to blare outside, while the celebrities and the newspaper men marched inside.

After every one was seated there was a dramatic pause. Then, in the silence, Josiah Whitehead entered and walked stiffly down the center aisle unattended, to his seat with his family.

At his appearance there was a hush. Then, like a cannon-shot, a cheer roared forth. It certainly was a good cheer, even for Oakville. It thrilled Sam and me up in the operating-coop.

The newspaper men were at their table down front, scribbling assiduously, and the orchestra was sawing wildly through the "Star-Spangled Banner." After five minutes the noise subsided, and then cries arose all over the house:

"Speech! Speech! *Speech!*"

Josiah sat in silence, but you could see with half an eye that he was thinking of his first sentence. Finally he arose and bowed. Then he sat down again. This doubled the cheers for a speech.

We rolled up the screen hurriedly, and a moment later the candidate mounted the platform and stood with one hand in the front of his Prince Albert coat, waiting for the bedlam to cease. At last it did. And then he spoke. That speech appeared verbatim in all the papers next day.

He started out with the American eagle and developed the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the Gulf to Duluth. After that he narrowed it down to the State, then the country, and finally, in half an hour, got somewhere near home.

After taking time out to enunciate his platform, he got down to the occasion of the evening. This was about nine o'clock. Then for fifteen minutes Sam and I felt as if we were destined to enjoy the Presidency of the nation in direct sequence.

We were estimable young men, in fact, remarkable ones. We had the ability to create success out of apparent failure. We were responsible for practically all the success of the campaign. He would encourage the initiative and progress of all ambitious youths during his tenure of office were he elected.

If there were any young men our equal, Mr. Whitehead had not as yet enjoyed their friendship. Any hasty judgments that he might have formed during the early part of the campaign were now abjured, once and for all.

Well, that's the way he went on. And the bunch that was jammed into the hall got up on its hind legs and lifted the roof with its approval. When Josiah sat down he was the most popular man in the universe, judging by the racket.

And pleased! He was blushing to the roots of his scanty white hair, and his slot of a mouth allowed itself the pain of expanding into a real smile.

Everything was fine. The audience was enthusiastic, the orchestra was earning double pay, and Sam and I were just bloated with pride. We looked at each other just like two puppies that have accomplished something they never expected to compass, and go around as important as if they were the godfathers of the whole of creation.

So we turned on the first pictures.

Sam himself handled the films to see that they were run at the right speed, and I sat up in the coop with him, watching the calcium light.

The first pictures were scenes in Japan, and brand new. They were about the first of that kind of picture that had hit the town, and the audience was tickled to death. Josiah rose after the reel was over and expressed his appreciation at our high-class educational entertainment, and this got some more howls out of the populace.

Then we ran a comic, entitled "Matrimony in Bulk." You've seen it. A young man advertises for a wife, receives about

twenty-five replies, and meets all the fair brides-to-be at a well-known rendezvous. They think he has put up a job on them, and then the pursuit race starts. It's a good set of pictures, and the crowd thought so, too.

The third set of views was "The State Senate Transacting Business." What a howl went up when we flashed that on 'em. And to make the enthusiasm greater, the middle of the film showed "Piggy" Burns talking to one of the high finance gang.

Well, believe me, the assembled citizens went wild. They pictured dear old Josiah in that assemblage carrying to a successful conclusion the affairs entrusted to him by them. Josiah was so tickled he couldn't have told a straight from a hectic flush.

That was really the *pièce de résistance* of the evening, but we thought we would wind up the show with a comedy-educational sketch called "At the County Fair."

So Sam turned her on, and the pictures were good. First they showed the trotting races, the stables, the grand stand crowds, etc. After that they turned to the champion blacksmith of the world, the balloon ascensionist, the tight-rope walker, and other side-show performers. The exhibits of fat and prize stock, poultry, vegetables, and fruit followed.

Suddenly the film switched to a side portion of the grounds. The pictures showed the backs of several men standing in front of a table behind which sat a cunning-looking rogue.

The audience was puzzled for a moment until two of the men who were at the table moved away, and the old shell-game was revealed in operation. You could see the manipulator's lips say, "Which shell is the little elusive pea under, gentlemen? Ah, you win, sir. You try again. See if you can't break me. This isn't gambling, gents, this is simply a game of chance—"

All of the players had stopped except one. He evidently was losing steadily, but he would not give up. He increased his bet every time, and just as regularly he lost.

The rest of the former players stood around and laughed or studied the long, white hands that manipulated the three nutshells. Finally, the man that was playing emptied his pockets. He piled bills and silver on the table and made a last bet.

He lost.

With an angry shrug, the man turned and walked away from the table toward the moving picture machine, which it was very evident he had not seen at all. The bright sunlight fell on his face.

It was Deacon Josiah Whitehead!

The picture showed plainly for a moment. And while the audience sat as stupefied as if it had taken ether, these words flashed large and white on the screen—

I WONDER WHAT HE TOLD HIS WIFE!

And then out burst such a roar of derision from the throats inside the Argolier, that I know the celestial bodies paused a moment in wild surmise. Such jeers and catcalls I have never heard anywhere, before or since. It was terrible.

Only the newspaper men were solemn. This was meat and drink to them, and they worked as they never had worked before.

It really was ludicrous for everybody except old Josiah. Here was the great and moral candidate for the Senate, completely wiped out at a sneaky little shell-game. It wasn't even good gambling.

You have admiration at least for the fellow that comes out in the open and dares the world. But to slink around by the fence at a county fair and go up against a sure thing like that—it was too much!

I shall never forget the look on old Josiah's face. I don't think I would like to see it again, either, on any face.

But I had no time to notice that. I saw Mabel jump up from her seat and come tearing up to the coop where Sam and I were.

"Quick, Sam," she cried. "Come with me. We've done it now."

Sam without a word ducked out, with his coat and hat in one hand, and left me to face the music.

I don't remember much of what I did. I didn't wait long, either. I rolled up the films and put them away, locked the coop, and made a getaway just as the shouting mob began to pour out into the street.

The next day was a bad one for Josiah. He didn't show up at church or Sunday school. Neither did I, but my folks told me about his absence.

The Sunday papers of the big city made a first page spread out of the thing. They hooted and scoffed and shouted at old Josiah till the welkin rang.

You wouldn't believe it, but that one per-

formance lost him the senatorship. He was held up to such ridicule throughout the rest of the campaign, and the Burns faction made such a furor over the incident that the "sterling candidate with the white record" went into complete and absolute eclipse.

Josiah protested and explained and pleaded but in vain. No one would listen to him. The papers that had been supporting him turned tail and left him in solitary and icy dignity, alone. It was one of those caprices of the public that no one can explain.

Six months afterward the truth came out. Josiah had been playing the shell-game simply to get evidence against the county fair officials for allowing games of chance on the grounds. He was conducting a moral campaign on his own hook.

That was the stuff that nobody would believe, but it proved to be a fact, and a more shamefaced lot of citizens Oakville never boasted when the news came out.

But that is not all. When Sam and Mabel skipped out that night they got married. It was their only chance. They did not show up for several days and when they did, Josiah was so stupefied that he forgave them in a sort of daze.

When the whole yarn came out we found that Mabel was the "old resident" who had written the letter to the *Eagle* and thus started the whole thing. She hadn't said a word, not even to Sam, for fear her father would get wind of it somehow. And you can imagine her terror when the film brought her ambitions to such a diastrous end.

Well, finally, old Whitehead forgave us all and took Sam into his own business. He's going to inherit it some day.

That whole affair convinced me so of my ability as a press-agent or publicity man, that I went into advertising, and I'm not a pauper by any means.

If only those films had arrived earlier! Then we could have run them over as we intended and have caught the frightful error that stood the whole political world of the State on its head.

But then, Sam and I would probably have ended our days in the Argolier, and old Josiah Whitehead wouldn't have been our governor-elect, as he is to-day.

Sic fatum est, as the poet said, which means that when you bet on a sure thing, a surer thing called fate is going to get to you and get to you *hard.*

ROY BURNS'S HANDICAP.*

BY GEORGE M. A. CAIN,

Author of "Devil's Own Island," "Steel Bracelets," "His Risen Past," etc.

In Which Is Set Forth the Fact that Job Hunting Has Sometimes More Than the Scarcity of Jobs To Make It a Heart-Breaking Pursuit.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DEBT OF JUSTICE.

THE gray eyes of the young saleswoman were buried in her handkerchief at the moment. Roy Burns hurried away before they should be raised to accuse him.

He needed no accuser. His own conscience was doing all that was required in that line.

For the next ten minutes he had the lavatory to himself. He spent them in pacing up and down its tiled floor. A hell of conflict was burning within him.

On the one side stood stern Justice demanding that he make immediate restitution. It did not cease clamorously pointing out that his stealing was costing another her livelihood. It painted most dismal pictures of the misery he was causing.

She had told him that the jewel had helped to keep up appearances. He had heard her threatened with dismissal because she failed to make a good appearance.

On the other side was the demand of those dependent upon him. Well enough he knew that the tenure of his position had become most uncertain. There remained no doubt in the world that he would be peremptorily discharged if he appeared again at the office in his old clothes.

In that case he would be unable to secure

* *Began January* ARGOSY. *Single copies,* 10 *cents.*

another position. Mr. Gordon could not be expected to recommend highly any one who had done as wretchedly as he had of late. If his garments had reached a point where they prevented his holding a job, they would surely prevent his securing a new one.

He thought of the bills that were pressing at home. He remembered that his sisters were complaining of the need of fit clothes for school. Mary was able to go out of doors with her almost soleless shoes only by wearing rubbers that were also nearly worn out. Helen's three-year-old coat was a constant embarrassment to him when he accompanied the family to church.

But they were none of them sick, argued Justice. The young woman he had robbed was spending her money to care for a sick sister. Besides, even though she had been of abundant wealth, he had no right to her property under any consideration.

You cannot pay for it anyhow, argued the devil, or whatever you choose to call that influence which tempts men to place their own interests above right. The diamond brooch, he was sure, must be worth at least a hundred dollars. His whole week's salary could not begin payment upon it.

Yes, flung back conscience, but it would enable that poor girl to get herself fit clothes, so that she could save her position. Perhaps, in the present circumstances, she would even prefer some money to the brooch itself.

The general rush through the wash-room to the coat-room, which was just beyond it, began. Roy realized that it was no place in which to pace the floor and fight with conscience. He began vigorously to scrub his hands.

While he scrubbed the battle continued. Each side made the most of its picture of poverty—the poverty at his own home—the poverty in the salesgirl's home. Back and forth he wavered, at one moment on the point of rushing out and giving the wretched young woman all his week's pay, the next instant trying to convince himself that his duty to his own family would permit no such restitution.

At length he knew that to scrub his hands longer must attract the attention of some of those who were waiting for turns at the basins. He went to the common towel and rubbed them dry.

As he left the room he glanced warily about for a possible sign of Miss Betts. He saw none. Then, swinging for a moment in the other direction, he went to the desk to secure her address.

"What do you want it for?" the manager of the floor asked suspiciously.

"I—I found something that belongs to her—just now. I think she might need it before Monday."

"What is it—let's see it," demanded the other man.

Roy flushed, and it took him a few seconds to form a reply.

"I haven't it here. It's in the coat-room."

"Are you employed here in the store?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where?"

"The credit department."

"What part?"

"Mr. Gordon's office."

As the floor manager fired these questions and gained satisfactory answers, he searched through a small book.

"Well, Mr. Gordon usually has good men—967 East Forty-Sixth Street is where she lives," the man spoke less surlily.

"Thank you," said Roy.

By the time Burns reached the street door, he had quite reversed his decision to go and find the young saleswoman. The devil had put forward a new phase of the question.

What will you tell your mother when you get home?

It was a purely selfish query. It involved solely the matter of his mother's respect for him.

Yet it was the question which turned him more resolutely toward home than anything else could have done. Not for nothing had he practised lying to his mother for the past two weeks.

And then he caught sight of the girl just leaving by another door. She walked with a stoop. Her none too prepossessing face was a study of misery.

"She'll have to take her pay to buy clothes," Roy thought in his heart. "She won't have anything for the sick little girl."

Miss Betts's sister might be an old woman for aught he knew. It was because his own little sister, Mary, had ever been his favorite and pet that the other sister assumed in his mental picturings the form of a girl of twelve.

He looked again for Miss Betts. He could not see her. But this time his good resolve held. He started to walk to her

home despite the distance. After he had paid her what he could, he might not afford car-fares for himself.

Suddenly a pasty-faced young man with a flashy vest blocked the way before him. Roy turned to pass, then discovered that the beady eyes in the pasty face were staring closely into his own.

"I've got you this time," growled the young man. "Now, you dirty loafer, I want you to settle up for sellin' me that fake diamond brooch."

The electric light on the corner flared up to extraordinary brilliancy at that instant. Roy saw that the pasty face was that of the pawnbroker's clerk who had compelled him to sell what he had only intended to pledge.

CHAPTER XIX.

AT THE TENEMENT'S DOOR.

Roy Burns shrank back for a second. Then it dawned upon him that he was going to have a chance to settle up his whole debt of honor for no more than he had got out of his wrong-doing.

"Give me the brooch, I'll pay you what you paid me quickly enough," he said.

"You will?" the pasty-faced young man asked eagerly.

"Certainly I will," Roy agreed almost as eagerly.

"Well, I ain't got it here; but if you'll come along with me, I'll get it fast enough."

"Where is it?" Burns asked.

He was not minded to get caught in any trap, and he knew nothing good of his present companion.

"Up on Forty-Sixth Street. I gave it to me lady-friend up there, supposin' it was the real thing. See? An' then she got kinder doubtful about it an' took it to a jooler yesterday. See? An' the jooler sed it was wuth just two-ninety-eight. See? Accordin', I'm in bad wit' me lady-friend. See?"

Roy was beginning to see. The knowledge that the diamond brooch was on Forty-Sixth Street made him shudder at the thought of what might have occurred had Miss Betts come across the pawnbroker clerk's "lady friend" wearing the jewel. Since that had not, however, come to pass, he went on to find out more.

Even if he had succeeded in selling a three-dollar imitation to this flashy youth for sixteen dollars, he could not feel that he owed the young man much. The pawnbroker's clerk should have known its value, and the circumstances of the sale hardly put him in a position to demand any restitution from Burns.

If it were really so cheap an article, why should he not go to a store where three dollars would buy one like it which would have the same intrinsic value as the one he had taken?

No, they must have made a mistake—or, rather, the jeweler to whom they had taken the brooch had sized it up by their cheap appearance. Certainly Miss Betts would not have made so much ado over so small a loss. He would better be on the safe side and pay the difference.

Since the restoration of the thing to the saleswoman would involve his confession of having taken it, it would be best by far to restore the original article. There was too much risk in substituting a cheap imitation where there was the slightest chance that the original should have been real.

And so he went along with the pawnbroker's clerk. When they got off the car and had walked three blocks to the east, Roy began to grow a little uneasy at the appearance of the neighborhood.

Not as yet very familiar with the poorer tenement districts, he felt unsafe with his companion among a crowd of people whom he took for toughs.

"Where is this place?" he asked finally.

"Just down on the next block," was the reply.

Burns decided to go on. The neighborhood did not look like a good one for a getaway from the young man in whose tow he was walking. But he determined that he would risk a break for liberty before he would enter any of the dingy houses here.

At last they stopped before one of them, a little dingier, though higher than the rest. A young girl, cheaply overdressed, came down the steps as they reached them.

"Hello, Nellie!" Roy's companion addressed her. "Is Mame home yet?"

"Yep—just went up-stairs. I seen her go in as I was comin' out of our place," replied the girl.

"Well, say, go up an' tell her to send down that diamond brooch, will yer?" the pawn-clerk requested.

"I will not—I ain't no errand-boy. Go up yourself," the girl answered saucily.

"All right; you stay here wit' me friend," he agreed, seeing he could not help himself.

Roy, if he was somewhat surprised at not being invited inside, was still more pleased. He watched the flashy youth ascend the steps with no little satisfaction at being left in the open.

And then he saw what surprised him very much indeed. It was only three figures, roughly painted on one of the well-worn steps of the house. But the three figures made the number; and the number was 967—that which he had been given as Miss Betts's address.

He was promptly treated to another surprise. The young woman in whose charge he had been so unceremoniously left seemed not a bit embarrassed by the situation. She looked Roy over with a friendly, even sympathetic eye.

"Say," she suddenly asked in a rather mysterious undertone, "are you the guy that found the diamond brooch at Stevenson's store?"

"Why, yes," Burns responded, utterly astonished that knowledge of the thing should be such public property.

"Well, say—you don't look as if you was rollin' in the cash drawer an' gettin' bills stuck to you very much. If I was you I wouldn't stand for this game of Joe Blumberg's and Mame Betts's. They're tryin' to get you both ways."

"Er—what?" stammered Roy, amazed.

"She put up some bluff about losin' a diamond, didn't she?"

"Why, yes." Still mystified.

Then the girl laughed, shrugging her shoulders.

"Well, she didn't lose it—you c'n put that under your bonnet. She seen some woman come in with it on her the day they had a bargain sale. See? An' then she seen it fall on the floor. She was scared to pick it up, 'cause the aisle man was hangin' around. So she left it there, an' went back for it after closin'. See?"

Roy nodded.

"An' it was gone when she come back. She must have seen you around there somewheres. Then, what happens but Joe comes up with a pin just like it. She reckernizes the design right off. She ain't wise how he got it, but she trots off to the jooler's with it, knowin' Joe ain't in business long enough to know a di'mond from a window-pane. See?

"Then, when she gets next it ain't the real thing, she starts in to give Joe a callin' down. An' Joe, bein' hot in the collar about it, tells her how he got stuck. With that she gets the description of you, an' she makes up her mind to work you. She ain't so hard up—only she spends too much for her clo'es, an' she's set her heart on a hat what she seen down to the store.

"She thinks you'll fall for payin' her some money. So she fixes up in the worst get-up they'd stand for at Stevenson's an' waits for you. An', when she found that wouldn't work, she sets Joe next to make you give up the money he'd paid for it. See?"

"Great Scott!" Roy exclaimed. "I was coming up here to give her twenty dollars as part payment for a real diamond I thought I had stolen from her."

"I thought you looked pretty green," the girl told him naively. "If you was a swell guy, I'd let it go, 'cause Mame's a good friend of mine, an' so's Joe. But—"

She cast a reflective eye toward the top of the seven-story tenement.

"Mame Betts lives on the top floor. It'll take Joe a minute or two more to get back down here," she informed Burns. "If I was you, just nice and quiet I'd beat it while your shoes is good. There's some guys around here that might help Joe if he hollered for 'em. So, twenty-three, quick—an' buy yourself some glad rags with them twenty bucks."

"Thanks, awfully!" Roy smiled in spite of himself. "I believe I will."

A trolley-car, of a different line from that on which Roy and Joe Blumberg had come up, was just approaching the corner, fifty feet away. Roy beat it to the corner.

On Monday morning Roy Burns made his last effort in practising deceit, in explaining how he had come to retain a found object so long.

"I found it two weeks ago, after you were closed up," he told the man at the information desk. "I forgot to bring it when I came back. I guess it isn't worth much."

It was an exact duplicate of the brooch he had picked up on the day he would mark for life as his "Black Saturday." He had purchased it at a bargain sale of wonderful imitation diamonds — for two dollars and thirty-nine cents.

"It hasn't been called for," replied the information clerk. "I guess you might as well keep it."

Roy pocketed the bauble. Then he went into Mr. Gordon's office.

"Well," said the manager, looking up at him as he entered, "I see you've got your new suit."

"Yes," Roy answered, "I've got it at last. I think I'll do better work now."

He did. Although two years have passed since then, Roy Burns is still in the business of collecting bad bills for the Stevenson store. By the time the family secured a settlement of the old estate there was not enough left to make it possible for him to finish his college course. He likes his work so well, and is so successful in it, that he hardly worries over his quite unfinished education.

A few days ago, it being very warm in the office—Roy is now Mr. Gordon's assistant manager—Burns hung his vest on the coat-rack. Something knocked it down, and a tarnished bit of gold, studded with worn imitations of diamonds, rolled to the feet of the manager.

"What the deuce is that?" asked Gordon.

"That," Roy now replied, "is my liar's warning."

"It's too hard for me," laughed the manager. "What's the answer?"

"Whenever I get a feeling that a lie might smooth things down a bit, I just touch that. It works like magic."

"I'm afraid I don't catch your drift, even yet."

And then Roy told the whole story, incidentally putting himself on a perfectly clear basis with Mr. Gordon.

When he had finished, the manager sat silent for some moments. Finally he spoke.

"Say, I guess I won't tell them to fire that new office-boy yet. Maybe he'll get a new suit in another week or two."

THE END.

THE SHOT IN THE NIGHT.

BY HELEN A. HOLDEN.

What Happened to Young Mansfield on His First Time Alone in the House on Whitney Avenue.

THE streets were deserted and silent. Even the houses looked gloomy and sleepy in the dim light of an occasional electric lamp.

Morton Hill Mansfield, Jr., looked up the street and down the street and frowned. He looked at the brownstone mansion in front of him and shivered.

It was an unheard-of position in which he found himself.

He went slowly up the steps.

The street was almost preferable to the big, deserted house. But he could hardly stay out all night.

Then he shook himself, and went on more quickly.

This blue funk he was in would never do. He must pull himself together.

He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out his latch-key. After several minutes' groping about in the dark he found the lock and thrust in the key.

Then a sudden thought stayed his hand.

All day he had been trying to adjust himself to a startlingly new order of things.

Up to this time the Mansfield household had existed solely and expressly for him. Suddenly it had decided that it could get along without him.

This fact alone was enough to fill young Mansfield with amazement and rage. But added to this was the prospect of an endless summer of hot days in a stuffy office and lonely nights in a big, deserted house. That life held anything but long summer days at their home on the Sound, and winters of travel, had never entered the lazy head of Morton H. Mansfield, Jr.

He had spent a leisurely two years in getting through the freshman class at college. Having then made up his mind that eight years of such life was a waste of time, he had decided to travel.

He had just returned from a year abroad with his mother when—the blow had fallen! Morton Mansfield, Sr., without asking his consent or consulting him, had arranged for his son to enter the office of a friend.

He had also arranged for him to take his meals at the club, but to live at home. Otherwise, young Mansfield, Jr., could shift for himself.

"But Morty has never been alone in his life before." Mrs. Mansfield had protested tearfully. "He'll die of loneliness, and—and—who'll see that he always has a clean handkerchief?"

"That's just it?" stormed Mr. Mansfield. "If necessary, he can learn to do without."

"Oh!" gasped Mrs. Mansfield faintly.

"You have made a fool of the boy long enough." Mr. Mansfield had at last taken a stand. "Tied to your apron-strings, he's about the same age he was when he came into existence.

"This summer, while we are away," he continued, "will give him the chance to shift for himself and show the material he's made of."

So it was that as young Mansfield was about to turn the key and open the door of the hatefully silent brownstone house on Whitney Avenue a sudden thought stopped him.

The family was gone, the butler and the maids were gone. Who had there been to see about the ice-water he always had, as a matter of course, on retiring?

As he thought of it, he grew thirsty by the minute. He felt as though he could never last till morning. His throat was already parched and dry.

"I would have expected the *mater* to have thought a little of my comfort," he reflected bitterly. "Every one seems to be suddenly indifferent whether I go hungry or thirsty to bed.

"It's a wonder they've provided any bed at all. They don't seem to show any great concern," he added gloomily, "about what becomes of me, or they never would have left me all alone in this great barn of a place."

The novel experience of sitting in an office all day had been beastly. It had got on his nerves.

A long evening at the club, where he knew hardly any one, had not made things any better.

To return to an empty house, and find that there was not even a drink of water, was the last straw.

Irritation, indignation, and anger at the way Fate was treating him was all that saved Morton H. Mansfield, Jr., from unmanly tears.

He wheeled about and plunged headlong down the steps and started down the street. The nearest drug-store that he would find out at that time of night was on the main street down-town.

He might connect with a car, otherwise he would have to walk the mile.

By this time he could hardly swallow, his throat was so dry.

He had walked about half the distance when a car overtook him. He boarded it, and was soon at the corner where the colored lights of a drug-store shone forth.

He had learned from the conductor that he would have ten minutes before the return trip.

During those ten minutes he drank greedily two glasses of vichy, and ordered a bottle to take home.

His first impulse was to order a case; but, on reflecting a moment, he realized that he had no way of keeping the stuff cold. So he ordered only one bottle. He would leave a solution of the dry future to another time.

As he climbed the steps of the house again he sighed with relief. At any rate, the greater part of the night was now past.

He fished in his pocket for his keys.

They were not there.

He searched frantically pocket after pocket.

No keys were to be found.

He put his bottle of vichy down on the steps. He used both hands to search at the same time.

Still no keys.

In sudden irritation he took hold of the door and shook it. Something rattled.

He put his hand quickly where the jingling came from.

There in the lock, from which in his haste he had forgotten to take them, were the keys.

Hastily grabbing the bottle from the steps, he opened the door, and entered the house.

The door banged shut behind him. The noise echoing through the empty hall made him jump.

His footsteps, as he crossed the hall, sounded as if there were a dozen men instead of one.

The boards of the floor squeaked and groaned as they never had before. With a sudden start he looked fearfully around.

There certainly was some one in the hall besides himself.

Some one, during his trip down-town, had noticed the keys in the door. It was the kind of chance for which a sneak-thief was always watching.

He gripped the bottle of vichy tightly in

his hand. With it as his only weapon of defense, he stood still and awaited the attack.

All the noises had stopped when he stopped. The burglars were waiting to locate his exact position.

He wished his knees would stop shaking. Vaguely he put out his hand to steady himself.

With an uncontrollable cry of fright, he shrank back. His hand had come in contact with some one.

His eyes having grown accustomed to the dark, he could make out the shadowy figure of a person directly in front of him. In an agony of suspense he waited. The other man also waited.

Why didn't he strike and have done with it?

Unable to stand the suspense longer, Mansfield raised the bottle in his right hand ready for a blow. Tremblingly he put out his left to make sure of the position of the enemy.

Still the man did not move.

He took hold with a sudden grip, ready to strike with the upraised bottle.

But instead of bringing it down with stunning force, Mansfield lowered a shaking hand, out of which all force had suddenly gone. Trembling with relief, he leaned weakly against the supposed thief.

He was a large, substantial mahogany hat-tree.

The Mansfield family had undoubtedly pulled it out from its accustomed place that morning to open the front doors for the exit of their trunks. In the excitement of the departure it had been overlooked and carelessly left standing in a direct line with the stairs.

Gratefully Mansfield clung to the hat-tree for support. It was some minutes before he could get his shaking nerves under any sort of control.

Still feeling weak and shaken, he dragged himself up the long flight of stairs. Each step creaked and groaned.

Reaching his rooms at last, he hurried in, locking the door swiftly behind him. He went quickly from door to door, locking each in turn. He had had enough excitement for one night. He did not care to run any more risks.

As he turned on the electric lights he sighed with exhaustion.

It was strange, he reflected, how loneliness could get on one's nerves. He surely had not been afraid. He dismissed that idea immediately. He was even proud of the way he had acted in his encounter with the hat-tree.

But the strangeness and the loneliness of the empty house had certainly told on him. Having left his latch-key in the lock had suggested the possibility of a thief. Otherwise he might have fallen over the hat-tree without giving it a second thought.

As young Mansfield reached these conclusions he found himself in his nightrobes and ready for bed. He hoped he would fall asleep immediately.

Just before turning out the electric light he remembered the bottle of vichy. It would keep much better unopened. But if he wakened during the few hours that still remained of the night it must be where he could easily get at it.

Against the wall, at the foot of the bed, was a small shelf with his favorite books. Pushing these aside, he put the bottle carefully on its side in their place and a corkscrew conveniently beside it.

Notwithstanding the unusual excitement he had just been through, he was tired enough to fall asleep immediately. In his dreams he forgot his troubles. He was with his family, as usual, at their home on the Sound.

He had always played a fairly good game of tennis, so he wondered why he was having such trouble in hitting the ball.

It was coming straight for him. It came nearer and nearer, and yet he seemed powerless to raise his racket and intercept it.

In another second it would reach him. He made a last frantic effort to lift the racket.

There was a loud report and a stinging sensation just above his heart.

Consciousness returned slowly.

"I'm shot," he murmured dazedly.

He put his hand to his side. In sudden horror it shrank away from what it had touched.

The jacket of his pajamas was already drenched in blood.

For a few moments he lay back, stunned.

Then the necessity of doing something roused him. He must not lie there and bleed to death.

A small table with a telephone stood at the head of his bed.

With one hand pressed over the blood-soaked wound, he reached out the other and caught hold of the receiver.

It seemed an endless time before Central answered.

"Give me 2767 Main," he whispered feebly. "It's a doctor, so keep on ringing till you get him." Then he fell back, exhausted.

Central began an insistent buzzing. It was all Mansfield could do to keep from crying out with pain from the vibration of it.

At last a sleepy voice answered.

"It's Mansfield — Morton Mansfield." The young fellow's voice came in gasps.

"Thought your family left town this morning," broke in the doctor.

"I was—left behind. Burglars have—broken in—I've—I'm—shot."

"Good Heavens, boy," exclaimed the doctor, "I'll be right up."

"Please—and notify the police—and—come quickly."

Morton sank back, breathing hard.

He wondered how long it took to bleed to death. He pressed his hand more tightly over his drenched side in a mad effort to check the stream.

Then his thoughts turned to his absent family.

They would be sorry now that they had turned him off, left him alone to shift for himself in a big, lonely, wicked city. If "it" really happened, if he did not last till the doctor came, he hoped they'd never, never be able to forget or forgive themselves.

A sneak-thief must have seen the keys; had slipped in, and then left them as they were in the door to avert suspicion.

He wondered where the burglar had gone. But all fear of the man was lost sight of in the agonizing pain of the wound.

A sudden, overwhelming thought struck dismay to his soul.

With unexpected strength he raised himself on his elbow.

Who was there to let the doctor in?

He had not thought of that before. But he must have a doctor to stop the spreading of that horrible, sickening damp spot just above his heart.

Perhaps if he began, and took it slowly, resting step by step, he might be able to make the front door by the time the doctor arrived. Anyway, it would be easier to do something than just to lie still and bleed to death.

He managed to raise himself to a sitting position. Then he was forced to rest for a few minutes, breathing heavily.

At last he struggled to his feet, swaying dizzily. He managed the few steps to the electric button on the side wall. The effort of pushing it took all his remaining strength. He leaned limply against the door-jamb for support.

When he had sufficiently regained his strength he cast a furtive, nervous glance toward the spot where the bullet had struck him.

There, just above his heart, was a large crimson spot!

His head swam and he reeled like a drunken man. If he had not grabbed at a near-by chair for support he would have fallen to the floor.

Reluctantly his gaze returned to the crimson spot. He gazed at it in speechless horror.

Suddenly his eyes grew wide with amazement. With lightninglike rapidity he tore open the jacket of his pajamas. With open mouth and staring eyes he stood gazing at the place where he expected to see the red blood pouring from a jagged hole.

There was no sign of a cut, not even a scratch.

He was as whole and sound as he ever was in his life.

He again felt of his jacket. It was soaking.

He turned it back and examined the outside. The red spot was still there. He looked more closely.

With a cry of mingled relief and anger, he pulled from his pocket a red-bordered handkerchief.

Shaking, this time from excitement rather than pain, he advanced toward the bed.

There in the middle of the bed was a small, dark object.

It might have been a bullet, but it was not. It was the cork of a bottle.

His gaze wandered to the shelf on which he had put the vichy-bottle.

There was the empty bottle, telling its own tale.

The warm room had caused the explosion. The cork had shot out with the force of a bullet. The sudden stinging sensation of the cork, followed by the drenching contents of the bottle, had succeeded in completely fooling him.

With mingled emotions, he sat down on the edge of the bed to think it over. Any minute the doctor might be there, and probably the police.

They must never know—no one must even

know—what had really happened. He must hurry and think out a plan of action. At last he had it.

With feverish haste he slid into his clothes. He grabbed up his hat, and let himself out noiselessly by the back door.

Day was beginning to dawn as he crossed the garden. Quickly skirting the garage, he entered a back street through a narrow alley.

All the way to the railroad station he kept to the side streets. He had no desire to be overtaken by an automobile bearing an irate, hot-tempered physician.

It was not till he was settled comfortably in the train that he relaxed. Then he laughed—laughed to himself till the tears came.

Had the police arrived at the same time with the doctor? What a jolly meeting they must have had, with the bird flown! They undoubtedly would force a way in. Then the search would begin for the injured man.

What would they do, what would they think, when he was nowhere to be found?

He felt almost repaid for his own trials when he pictured to himself the sudden awakening of the sullen brownstone house on Whitney Avenue.

He had a two hours' ride on the train. He slept a heavy, exhausted sleep most of the way.

As he drove up to the house—a cheerful, comfortable-looking place, overlooking the Sound—it had never seemed so attractive.

His mother and father were just sitting down to breakfast.

Their surprise at seeing him was nothing compared to what they experienced as he told his tale.

He carefully outlined the tragedy of the previous night, and then filled it in with flourishes.

He naturally avoided all mention of the vichy-bottle.

Entered the house—dimly conscious of other steps—instinct told him he was not alone—dismissing idea as lonely fancy (he admitted he was lonely), had gone boldly to bed—the sudden shot from out of the darkness — wounded and faint, he telephoned doctor and police.

By this time Mrs. Mansfield was sobbing hysterically. Mr. Mansfield was tramping nervously up and down the room.

"By the way, dad," said young Mansfield as he finished his tale. "I wish you'd just phone to the doctor. Tell him that while I was waiting for him I caught sight of a suspicious-looking individual making his way from the house to the garage. Without a second's thought I chased after him."

"A brave, but a very risky thing to do," interrupted Mr. Mansfield.

"Of course, I missed him," continued young Mansfield; "he slipped away and vanished in the darkness. Then I found I was on the outside of the house, without any way of getting in. Of course, it had been impossible to ask the burglar to wait while I looked for my keys.

"It was no joke standing around in the cool morning air. My wound was not at all serious, as I had at first supposed. There was really no need of seeing the doctor. I had just time to catch the train out here—so—fix it up with him if you can. If you can't—"

"It doesn't matter," finished Mrs. Mansfield hotly. "There are plenty of other doctors in the city. My darling boy," she continued, "what a night of horror you must have had. But how thankful I am to have you with us again safe and sound!" and Mrs. Mansfield threw herself affectionately in her son's arms.

"Oh!" groaned Mansfield, disengaging his left arm gently from his mother's clinging embrace.

"My dear, my dear!" wailed Mrs. Mansfield. "I forgot all about the poor wound. You must come right up-stairs and let me attend to it."

"No, mother," replied Morton quickly; "it really isn't worth fussing about."

"But I insist," urged the worried mother.

"You see, it—er—it's—er—all plastered over, and you see, I'd rather not open it. I'm going to take a nap now, and, after something to eat, I'll be ready for a game of tennis."

"Tennis!" repeated Mr. Mansfield. "You forget your wound."

"You see, dad, I play with my right arm, which is perfectly good and whole," explained Morton as he left the room.

"I never, never will forgive myself for leaving the poor boy alone in that wicked city," and Mrs. Mansfield got up to follow her son up-stairs to see that he was made comfortable.

"It was a pretty close shave for the youngster," said Mr. Mansfield solemnly, "but it proves what I told you. He only needed being left to shift for himself to show the stuff he was made of."

That Round-Trip Ticket.

BY H. E. TWINELLS.

An Invitation to a Sunday Dinner That Put Three People Through a Mill of Worries.

I AM a writer. A short-story writer. I consider it as legitimate a business as carpentering, in spite of the long-haired poets who still hang around editorial offices in the spring-time.

I get hold of an idea cheap and make it into a story, for which I obtain money—sometimes; the same as a plumber gets lead pipe at fifteen cents a foot and sells it for a dollar an inch. Only the plumber has the best of it; he always gets his money.

I am like a butcher, or a baker, or a grocer, or any ordinary business man. I wear my hair cut short, work ten hours a day, and take fifteen minutes each noon to rush out to the nearest lunch-counter and gulp down a hunk of pineapple pie and a glass of blue milk, the same as you do.

Well, to get out my soldering kit and begin work last Sunday, I wanted an idea. I needed one—just the same as a grocer needs a barrel of sugar—but my wife, my sister who was visiting us, and I were invited out to a sweetly sylvan suburb for dinner.

I didn't want to go. I wanted to stay home and dope out a plot for a story. I needed an idea, and, worse than all, I needed the money.

But I had to be polite and accept. I knew about what to expect; a beautiful suburb, walks not down yet, only twenty-seven minutes by rail from Broadway, but fifty-eight minutes by foot from the suburban railroad station, through the mud. But this friend of mine is a newly-wed, and bride and groom don't ever mind such things; they have each other to think about.

At the other end I could easily imagine what awaited us—burned beefsteak, cook just left, lettuce sandwiches, nasturtium leaves on the tomato salad, lots of garnishings and apologies, but little to eat.

I thought their asking us out there was a compliment until we reached the railroad station, and I had to scrape every pocket to pay for the three round-trip tickets. I found, then, that their invitation was an unnecessary extravagance. Three-sixty, the tickets came to, and we could figure on about a twenty-five-cent meal in return.

I paid for the tickets like a man, and rattled the thirteen cents in nickel and copper I had left. I had figured that the railroad fare wouldn't be much, and had brought along very little, forgetting that I had to deal with a conscienceless corporation.

We dusted off the cinders and took our seats in the train.

When the conductor came along I handed him my three round-trip tickets. He took them, gave them a perfunctory punch, and pushed them into a crevice in the top of the plush seat ahead of me.

I paid no attention, knowing that he would come back to give them another punch before tearing off his half of the tickets and giving me the return-trip slips.

Meantime I took off my coat, flung it over the back of the empty seat ahead, and placed my hat on top of it, being careful not to disarrange the tickets.

The conductor came back in about ten minutes, reached for the bits of pasteboard, accidentally knocked my hat off, and reached to the floor to pick it up.

Then he separated the tickets and started to punch them again, when he suddenly held them up, one in each hand, and asked: "Where's the other one?"

"I gave you three," I declared.

"There are only two here."

"You must have dropped one when you knocked my hat off."

He looked dubious, and we both scanned the floor. Nothing doing in the shape of a ticket.

I took my coat and hat off the back of the seat, shook it out carefully, and examined the pockets.

No ticket.

I looked in my hat. Same result.

Then I got mad.

"It was your own carelessness," I declared.

He disagreed with me. I argued. He got mad.

Finally he called the brakeman, who lit matches and looked under the seats. My wife stood up and shook out her skirts. We searched everywhere.

"You'll have to pay for the third ticket. I've had that dodge worked on me before!" cried the conductor, growing red under the collar.

"What dodge?" I queried.

"Why, after I punched the three tickets the first time, you carefully removed one, put it in your pocket, so you would be a ticket in—an extra ride, worth about sixty cents. That's the amount you'll have to pay me right now."

"The idea!" I gasped, my breath taken away at the thought of how guilty I must look in his eyes. "This is an outrage. It was your own carelessness. I won't pay."

"Then you'll get off the train."

"I won't do that either."

"I'll tell you," cried my wife, with sudden inspiration, "if he's so determined not to believe you, let him collect one whole round-trip ticket and one ride on the other."

"That's all right," he grouchily agreed.

"But that will leave only one ride back to town—what is one among so many?"

The situation was perplexing. The conductor was adamant. I could see in his eye that he considered me guilty, and I was a little self-conscious myself when I considered how suspicious the circumstances looked against me.

It would have been so easy for any one to abstract one of the tickets after he had punched them and blame him for losing it.

It certainly did appear that I had taken the third ticket and slipped it back in my pocket. I could easily see how the trick had been worked upon him many times before, and that, naturally, he would be wary. But I hadn't taken the thing, and yet I couldn't blame him for thinking I had.

He reached up and held his hand threateningly on the emergency rope. I didn't care to be put off in the middle of a prairie, and I knew I couldn't ask him to take thirteen cents in lieu of the sixty coming to him.

I asked my wife and sister if they had anything in the shape of money. My sister had a Chinese coin and a brass button in her card-case. My wife, being my wife, didn't have anything.

So finally I let the conductor keep a whole round-trip ticket and his half of the other. I took the one return ride, placed it carefully in my vest pocket, and pinned it in with a safety-pin. At least that wouldn't escape me.

One of us could get home on that and bring out money for the others. But that wouldn't be necessary; my friend Bill, with whom we were going to dine, would lend me the dollar-twenty needed for our two rides back. I didn't like to ask him, but the "urge" of necessity is great, and I never did like to walk the ties for thirty-odd miles.

Half an hour later we were dumped off at the bleak suburban station. I jingled my thirteen cents in my trousers pocket and tried to look optimistic.

It wasn't a very encouraging situation. You can be quite sure there wasn't any band at the station to meet us; only a boy with a mouth-organ. We asked him where Paradise Boulevard was, and he pointed to a dejected road full of ruts.

Bill Harper, my friend, lived at least fifty-eight minutes away, along a direct line of mud.

We splashed through the pools up to our knees, passed six houses on the two-mile trip, and finally came to the mystic seventh, the one Harper told me he lived in.

But there was no sign of it. The house looked dead. No smoking chimney to greet us; no pungent odor of burned beeksteak. The house had an unnatural, desolate appearance, like that of an orphan child standing there alone in the midst of that vast prairie.

"This can't be where Bill lives," I remarked to my wife and sister.

"I said all along we should have counted that chicken-coop back there as a house. We have probably overshot our mark," replied my wife.

"It looks like the typical suburban house where one might expect to be invited to dinner," said my sister.

I went up on the door-step and scouted around. Ah-ha! *Sherlock Holmes* on the job! There was a card over the door-bell, and that card read, "William Makepeace Harper."

"Here's the place!" I called to my family, stuck in the mud.

They came happily up the porch, and I rang the bell.

No answer.

I rang again.

Nothing doing.

"Gone to the country," suggested my sister with a giggle.

"How could they get any farther into the country?" I asked.

"Could it be that we were invited for next Sunday?" hazarded my wife.

"No, to-day is the day," I growled; "and if Bill isn't there, I'll borrow an ax from a neighbor, break down his door, and get in. Bill's got to be there. We must eat, and we must borrow a dollar twenty to get back home on."

I was pretty mad. I had wanted all along to stay home that day and get an idea for a story. This was an outrage.

"Look here!" cried my wife, pointing to an envelope I noted for the first time stuck under the edge of the door.

I pulled it out. It was addressed to me. With feverish fingers I tore it open and read the following:

DEAR JIM, WIFE AND SISTER:

We're so sorry. But we just got a telegram that my brother out in New Jersey is very sick and wants to see us immediately. It is imperative that we go at once and I can't tell you how sorry we are to break this dinner engagement.

We tried to get you on the phone just now, but you had already started out here. By the time you arrive we will have been gone about two hours.

It's a shame. Please excuse us. You can't imagine how sorry we are. I have an idea for a story that I wanted to give you. But that can wait.

We don't want you to go dinnerless. We fired the cook day before yesterday, and Miriam sat up till three o'clock this morning cooking the goose and sweet potatoes, and oh, lots of good things which you will find all nice and hot in the fireless cooker in the kitchen. Miriam made the soup, you'll find it in the thermos bottle in the dining-room.

You will find the key to the front door under the door-mat at your feet, on the left hand side.

Now go right in and make yourselves at home; help yourselves to anything you find.

Hastily,

BILL AND MIRIAM.

Well, we were completely flabbergasted.

"Cook fired; I told you so," was the first remark that broke the sad, sickly silence.

"Bill is cordial enough, though," I rejoined. "He has given us a royal welcome, and we will surely go in and help ourselves to anything we find, including a dollar twenty, if we are lucky."

"Anyway, we eat," said my wife, who had located the key under the door-mat and handed it to me.

I unlocked the door easily and ushered my family in, remarking for Bill, "Welcome to our humble home. I hope the cat hasn't got the goose."

"Wait till you see the goose before you set your hopes too high," my practical sister cautioned.

We made a bee-line for the kitchen. Bill was a man of his word. There was everything he had mentioned, nestling in the bosom of the hay in the fireless cooker; the mock turtle soup in the thermos bottle tasted bully; we passed the bottle around and had a drink apiece, so as not to soil any too many plates.

One drink apiece was plenty. I found it a little too salty for my palate. My wife said it was burned, and my sister said she wished they'd let the turtle run through it just once more before they called it complete.

There was the goose. Fine! I never saw a better *looking* goose. In the ice-box, sure enough, we found the lettuce sandwiches and tomato salad with nasturtium-leaf garnishing.

We took Bill's word for it and made ourselves at home. I tilted back in a kitchen chair, put my feet on the stove, and worried a goose-leg.

I had better pass over this part. The recollection of that meal is not pleasant. Suffice it to say that, hard as we worked, not one of us succeeded in getting even the equivalent of a twenty-five cent meal.

The goose was not burned, but it was made of gutta-percha. The more you chewed it the less you liked it, and you couldn't swallow anything but the thinnest juice. It was clearly and beyond doubt a stage-property goose.

But we were all very polite and respectful, saying: "Isn't the bread nice? Did you make it yourself, Mrs. Harper, or have you a private baker?" We addressed her picture on the wall in the dining-room.

While we were sitting over our coffee, which was good, because my wife made it, I pulled out Bill's note and read it through again.

"By George!" I cried, "I'd forgotten this part. He says he has a story idea for me, and then calmly goes on to state, 'but that can wait.' I would have considered

myself repaid for all my trouble if I had been able to get an idea out of the thing. This suggestion of Bill's adds another load to my losses."

After we had washed up our dishes and tidied the kitchen, I got down to business.

"Now, ladies," I began impressively, "we are face to face with a situation. How shall we get back home? We need exactly a dollar and seven cents. Now, if we have any particular conscientious scruples, we can stay right here for a week, eat this goose, and be merry until Bill returns. But my typewriter is calling, and I needs must go. Come, little ones, we must form a ways and means committee. Bill was kind enough to suggest that we help ourselves to anything we found. I move we take him at his word and—"

"Pawn some of the silver?" cried my wife in a timorous tone.

"Not on Sunday," I objected severely; adding: "Those places aren't open to-day."

"Let us try the bureau drawers and the vases on the piano for small, stray waifs of coin," suggested my practical sister.

"That's the ticket I indorse," I agreed heartily. "I can pay it back to Bill when I see him in town. He'll understand. We'll pinch his wife's pin-money and look around everywhere for souvenir nickels or dollar bills. Don't turn up your noses, little ones, at anything in the shape of money."

"It seems awful to go through people's private possessions," objected my wife.

"We will consider the ethics of it afterward," I remarked firmly. "At the present time we will pursue the tactics of the petty thief."

"But what if some passing person should look through the window and see us in the very act of—"

"My dear," I cut my wife off, "in this forlorn spot, can you imagine anybody passing?"

"I can more easily imagine some one passing than stopping in," said my sister.

"Now to work," I gave the order.

We took a room apiece, and made a thorough search. I went through everything in the parlor, turned vases upside down, dumped out the cigar-ashes and scraps of paper, looked behind the books, and turned up the edges of the rugs. Nothing doing!

My wife and sister joined me. They hadn't found a thing, either.

"We'll have to go through the rooms, upstairs," I said firmly.

"Oh, I don't think that's right, Jim," my wife replied.

"But you, my dear, have never known the urgent need of money," I silenced her; for I pay the bills and she bows to my superiority in financial matters.

There was only a room apiece up-stairs. I took Bill's, my wife searched Miriam's, and my sister examined the spare room critically.

I was just going through a group of old trousers hanging in Bill's closet, when my wife rushed in with a shout of triumph and held up six two-cent stamps.

"See what I've found!" she screamed happily.

"All donations thankfully received. We may yet stick the conductor with these—I placed my thirteen cents in small change on Bill's dresser and added the stamps. "A pile of money," I observed.

"Yes. Twenty-five cents," my wife replied.

"Ninety-five cents to go."

A muffled cry of surprise came from my sister in the spare room. From the sound it seemed that her head was buried in the bed or the wardrobe. We rushed toward the room. She came running to the door, shaking a little tin pig in her hand.

"Hooray!" I cried. "Where'd you find it?"

"On a closet shelf."

I took the toy bank and rattled it. I never heard a more welcome jingle in my life.

"Coin of the realm!" I exclaimed with greedy eyes, clutching the thing like a money-mad millionaire. "Come! To the kitchen. We'll get an ax and carve this pretty pig."

I leaped down the back steps three at a time, followed by a swishing of petticoats.

I found the ax, and was about to crash a blow on the pig's innocent head when my wife struck a Barbara Fritchie attitude, and cried: "Woodsman, spare that pig!"

She pointed to a row of water-bottles under the kitchen sink. I went over and looked at one of the labels. It read:

> G. Schenk, Dealer in Bottled Goods. Five cents paid for the return of this bottle.

"There are only six of them," I said sadly. "I wouldn't give thirty cents for the lot."

"Besides," my practical sister put in,

"those came from some wine-shop, and the place would be closed on Sunday."

"Of course," I sighed, returning to the slaughter of the pig.

With one fell swoop I severed his little tin head and the money gushed out, rolled out, pennies flipping everywhere. We scurried around picking up the "chicken-feed" greedily, like starving hens pecking at stray kernels of corn.

We pooled the proceeds and counted them. My heart sank again. The total amount was exactly twenty-one—pennies.

"I think young married people like your friend and his wife should be more thrifty," remarked my sister.

The wife and I agreed.

"Come," I said wearily; "back to the gold-mine."

We trudged up the steps heavy-hearted, and added the twenty-one pennies to the twenty-five in stamps and chicken-feed I had placed on Bill's dresser.

"Not enough for one of us to ride back to town on," I sighed.

My wife was fumbling with the cover on the dresser.

"What's this?" she cried, reaching under it. I heard the crackle of paper.

"A dollar bill?" I cried.

She drew the thing out. It was white. No. It wasn't money; only a slip of folded paper, written on in pencil. I recognized Bill's handwriting, and caught the top line on the paper. It read:

"A GOOD STORY."

My wife jerked the note away, reproving me for reading other people's notes.

"Wait!" I cried, taking the slip of paper away from her. "It's the idea. The plot! The plot that Bill told me he had for me."

I read it through hurriedly. Sure enough! It was a nice little story plot. I saw the possibilities in a moment.

"Let me read it," said my wife.

"Later," I told her. "It'll make a good story. Let's find some more money and get back to town. I see great possibilities in this story of Bill's. We were lucky after all. I'll write it to-night, as soon as we get home. Bill is a trump!"

I pushed the piece of paper into my vest-pocket and turned again to ransacking the rooms.

Though we searched for an hour, we found nothing more.

Then we held a council of war. It was getting along in the afternoon, and I was chafing to be back at my typewriter and put down in my own breezy style that story Bill had been good enough to dope out for me.

"If we don't get started soon," my sister remarked, "one of us will drown in a mudhole on the way to the station."

"Well, if worst comes to worst, one of you girls can go back home on the one ticket we have left and come back with enough money to take us out of pawn in the little station. We'll still have the price for pie and coffee, and we can hold the fort to midnight."

So we splashed back to the depot. I didn't mind the mud much now, because I had a story idea I could turn into money. I felt like a prosperous plumber who had just received a donation of a rod or two of good lead pipe.

It was a good idea. I would have lots of fun writing that story, and I would get lots of money for it.

As we arrived at the station, a train going in the opposite direction to the one we wanted to take came rushing through. It didn't deign to stop at the humble little town.

I was standing near the track when it whizzed by, and an eddy of wind whisked off my nice derby hat, and the suction drew it under the wheels, where I had the pleasure of seeing it ground to pulp.

When the train had passed I rushed out on to the track to view the ruins. The rim was riddled, the crown cut in half, and the sweat-band torn to pieces.

There was a little slip of cardboard clinging to the inside of the leather band. I picked it up.

It is the greatest wonder in the world I didn't drop dead on the spot.

There was my complete round-trip ticket the conductor had accused me of removing from the crevice in the seat ahead.

We were saved.

I saw it all in a flash. When the conductor had knocked off my hat, he already had the three tickets in his hand. He had picked up my derby with that hand, and one of the tickets had dropped into the crown. When he had put the hat back, right side up, the ticket had somehow slipped down into the inside band.

I realized how simply that could have happened when I remembered that sometimes I had seen men carry their commu-

tation tickets inside their hatbands, instead of in a pocket.

It was providential that my derby blew off and was ground beneath the wheels. It was a mild spring day, and I didn't mind the loss of the hat since I had the ticket.

We explained to the conductor on the train going home. He was very nice about it, and accepted the tickets readily.

On the train I reconsidered the happenings of the day, and considered myself rather fortunate, after all. Probably, if I had stayed at home, I would have idled around, read the Sunday papers, and never doped out any kind of a story idea.

In my enthusiasm I related the plot to my wife, who sat in the same seat with me. She liked Bill's idea. I had elaborated a little on the bare skeleton of it. It seemed a little old-fashioned, and I put in a few clever quirks that made quite a plot out of it.

My sister leaned forward from the seat behind us and listened to the idea. She liked it, too, but didn't say much. It was just a sweet little love-story about an old woman with a daughter-in-law who sacrificed for that daughter, cared for her through the Arizona desert, and finally got a fine husband for her. I was quite taken with it, and when we got home I sat right down at my typewriter and worked up a nice little scene to start off with.

My wife came in; she seemed a little puzzled and worried.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "Doesn't the goose agree with you?"

"It isn't that," she said thoughtfully; "only I've been thinking of that plot your friend Jim left for you. I seem vaguely to remember it. Are you sure it isn't an old plot that he has unconsciously come to consider his own creation?"

"Absurd!" I laughed, but I was a little uneasy about it, too.

Just then my sister came into the room with a book in her hand and stepped over to my desk. She laid the book down open before me and pointed to a page.

I was surprised to find that the volume was our old family Bible.

I looked at the head of the chapter. It was "The Book of Ruth."

My wife gave a little cry of excitement.

"The story of Naomi and Ruth! Of course!" she cried.

"I recognized it the minute he began to tell you the plot. It is one of the oldest and best stories in the world, Jim," my sister said impressively, "but it will hardly do to modernize it into a short story. Everybody would recognize it."

I flushed. Since going into business for myself I hadn't read the Bible as much as I should, and I had utterly forgotten the story of Naomi and Ruth.

I compared the Bible narrative with Bill's version of it. They were almost identical, only Bill had used no names and condensed the thing.

"How on earth could he have ever considered that story his?" I cried. "He wouldn't play a joke on me."

I was disgusted. My idea had gone up in smoke, and here I had already started writing on the story, not knowing it was one of the oldest in the world.

"You ought to read your Bible more," my sister suggested.

"I won't have time to read anything for a week now," I cried, "not until I get a new idea to take the place of the old one. I don't understand how it could have happened."

The thing remained a complete mystery for several days, until Bill returned with the good news that his brother had recovered. I asked him at once about the idea he said he had for me. He began and related a trite little tale of something that had happened to him.

It was the usual kind of an idea that a writer's friends give him. It wasn't worth a cent. I discarded it gruffly, and produced the notes I had found under his bureau-cover.

"How about this," I asked. "You wrote at the top here that it was a good story. I thought, of course, it was the idea you spoke of in the note, and it did have the essentials of a good story in it, until I found you had cribbed it from the Bible."

He took the slip of paper in his hand and laughed.

"That!" he cried. "Why, my wife was hurrying around that Sunday morning you came to dinner, getting ready for you people. That was before the telegram came. She asked me to write this off for her, as she didn't have time."

"But what for? What did she intend to do with this old story of Naomi and Ruth that everybody knows?"

"Why, you see, Jim," he explained, "she has a little Sunday-school class of youngsters at our church, and she has to feed

them on predigested Bible stories. She makes just a simple skeleton plan of all the good old stories in the Bible, and tells them to her class as though they could happen nowadays. It's quite a successful plan. This was the story she had promised to tell them that Sunday, and I was writing it out for her when the bell rang and the telegram came that we must go out to my brother's. I just pushed it under the cover on the dresser, because I knew my wife couldn't have her class that day, and it would be safe there till we came back. That's the solution."

"And it's set me back about a week's work!" I groaned.

I went home and told my wife how it happened, cursing my luck that I didn't have a single idea in my head, and blaming myself for being taken in on such an old yarn.

She laughed, and said: "Why, you goose!"

"Don't ever call me a goose again after that dinner out at Bill's," I warned her.

"But you are so blind!"

"How? What do you mean?"

"Why, you've got a fine idea for a story."

"There may be a story idea around here somewhere, but I'm near-sighted and can't see it," I answered.

"Why, it's as plain as the nose on your face!" she cried. "Write up the whole experience of our going out to Bill's and your being fooled on the Bible story. There's your idea!"

I saw it then and rushed to my typewriter.

That was just six hours ago.

The story is finished now. This is it. I got sixty dollars for it, and I have Bill Harper and his wife's Bible story to thank. The idea cost me three-sixty for car fare, three dollars for a new hat, and ten cents for a new tin pig bank for Bill. Subtracting twenty cents a plate for the Sunday dinner, leaves a balance of six dollars and ten cents. My net profit is fifty-three dollars and ninety cents, not counting the cost of the postage.

It's a fair return for the time I put in on it; but even at that, plumbers get better paid for their trouble.

WELL FIXED.

BY FRED V. GREENE, Jr.

If You Ever Bet on a Horse Race After Reading This Story—Well, You Won't Be Going It Blind at Any Rate.

"COME in!"

In obedience to the gruff invitation, Macklin pushed open the door and entered the room.

"I thought you weren't coming," the occupant said, as he jerked a thumb toward the vacant chair.

"Guess I am a little late, Levy," the other smiled. "But, you see, I was down at the track, making sure the mare is getting the best of care. With three races at this meet to the credit of Lady Rose, I'm taking no chances."

The bookmaker eyed the young jockey-owner keenly a minute before speaking, then remarked: "I don't suppose you've any idea why I asked you to come to this hotel, have you?"

Macklin smiled, then replied sagely, "I don't need three guesses."

Even Levy was forced to chuckle at the retort. "No, I guess you don't," he said, then added, as he swung his chair about to face the other more directly: "Look here, Charlie, in the fourth race to-morrow there are only three horses."

"I get you," the jockey put in.

"Now, one of those three is going to win. Of course, your Lady Rose will be the favorite, and will be backed heavily, with Corker the next choice. As far as Kankakee is concerned, he hasn't a chance, so the race is between your mare and Corker."

Macklin nodded.

"Of course Lady Rose will beat him in a walk," the bookmaker continued, "unless—unless—"

Macklin finished the sentence for him.

"Unless I pull her," he said.

"Exactly!" Levy agreed. "Now, here's

the game, Charlie. I've been hit pretty hard of late, and I'm awfully short. But the odds will be big on your horse, and every one'll play her to win. But if you'll agree to pull her and let Corker come in first, as fast as any bets are made with me on Lady Rose, I'll turn the money right over to some other bookmaker, betting on Corker. In this way we ought to clear up a couple of thousand dollars, and then we'll divide."

The jockey was lost in thought for a minute.

"What do you say?" the bookmaker wanted to know.

"It's a go," Macklin answered. "As you say, Kankakee hasn't a chance, but I'll make it doubly sure by pocketing him if he gets dangerously near to Corker."

"I know you're a wise kid," Levy chuckled. "It's pretty easy money, I can tell you," and he gazed almost lovingly at the nineteen-year-old slip of a boy as the latter rose to go.

Charlie Macklin had been drawn to the track at the age of fourteen by a natural fondness for horses, and his size soon secured him a chance to ride in one of the smaller races. Successful in this one, he rapidly became a well-known jockey, and after four years was able to purchase a horse of his own, which he was now racing on the Canadian northwest circuit.

The next day a gala crowd had already assembled at the track when Macklin crossed the field to the jockeys' quarters, and put on his riding costume, to emerge again as the first race started.

He went out on the field where the other jockeys were assembled, and after nodding to Bill Lockdale, Corker's rider, turned toward the track.

Suddenly he felt a tap on his shoulder, and faced about to see Lockdale behind him.

"Well, the fourth race looks like yours, Charlie," remarked Lockdale.

Macklin looked straight into the other's eyes in an endeavor to read some unspoken words, but none were there.

"No, I don't think I'll win," he answered slowly. "My mare isn't in the best of condition to-day, so I guess you'll get it."

"Look here, Charlie," Lockdale exclaimed in a burst of confidence. "Bet all you can on your own horse." Then his voice dropped as he added: "I'm going to pull Corker."

As these words struck Macklin's ears, and he realized just what it would mean to Levy, he was too taken aback to speak. But after staring at the other jockey an instant, he managed to stammer: "Is—is that so?"

"Yes, so get some money down."

By this time Macklin had recovered from his consternation, and said: "I guess I will." With that he started toward the betting-ring.

"Levy," Macklin burst out in suppressed excitement when he reached that individual, "how much have you bet on Corker?"

"Every cent that's come to me on Lady Rose," the other replied with a knowing laugh. "She's the only horse any one's betting on, so you see that with Corker to win—"

"But he *can't* win!" the jockey blurted out.

"He *what?*" the bookmaker fairly shouted.

"Lockdale just told me he's got orders to pull him!"

Levy's face turned pale, and the words he tried to speak choked in his throat.

"Can't you hedge on your bets?" Macklin queried. "Isn't there—"

"How can I?" the other wailed. "I've only got a quarter in the cash-box. *Every cent* is on Corker, and if he doesn't win—"

He finished the sentence with a despairing shake of his head.

"But isn't there something we can do?"

"Yes, there is!" Levy declared emphatically. "Something *you* can do. *Make* Corker win! Pocket Kankakee—throw your mare and him, too, if necessary. Then Corker'll *have* to win. For Heaven's sake, do something, but *don't* win. If you do, they'll lynch me. I haven't a cent to pay the bets I've taken."

Macklin assured him that he would do his best, and hurried back to where the jockeys were gathered. And as he neared the group, Harry Williams, Kankakee's rider, stepped toward him.

"Well, Charlie," he began, "it looks as if you'd win the fourth race."

"No, I don't think so," Macklin contended. "My mare's not well, and—"

"That won't matter," the other interrupted. "You see, I've got my orders to pull Kankakee, and—"

"You're going to *what?*" Macklin cried in amazement.

"Pull my horse," Williams repeated. "And as Lockdale tells me he's ordered to do the same with Corker, you'd better lay every cent you've got on Lady Rose."

Macklin was too amazed to speak—he only stared at the other jockey in helpless bewilderment. To him it was such a brand-new situation—every jockey in the race doing his best *not* to win it—that it robbed him of his power of speech.

"Get to it," Williams advised.

Macklin forced a weak smile and nodded his head, then hurried to the betting-ring again, to reach it as a man was in the act of trying to place a two-hundred-dollar bet on Lady Rose. But Levy was refusing to accept it at any odds, as he had done with several others since Macklin had explained the crookedness of Corker's jockey, claiming that he had taken altogether too much on that horse as it was.

As he caught sight of Macklin he stepped to his side.

"It's worse than ever!" the jockey whispered excitedly. "Kankakee's going to be pulled, too."

The bookmaker fell back in genuine fright.

"Then they — they'll try to make you win it! If they do—"

"Trying isn't succeeding," Macklin announced, and he smiled reassuringly in an effort to calm the other's agitation.

"Don't let 'em, Charlie! Don't let 'em!" the bookmaker pleaded. "If they do, I'll be mobbed."

"They shall be taught a lesson," Macklin asserted with mock gravity. "The honesty of horse-racing must be upheld, no matter at what cost."

Levy stared at him quizzically, not certain just how to take his words, and the jockey continued:

"There must be no crookedness on the tracks." Then he smiled as he added significantly: "With others."

The bookmaker seized Macklin's arm excitedly.

"Do you think you can make Corker win?" he asked.

"I've got a plan," the other told him.

"*Make* him win! Throw Kankakee, and break the skate's legs, even if you have to do the same with Lady Rose."

"Not to-day," Macklin laughed. "It won't be necessary."

The horses in the third race were already on the track, and Macklin hurried for his own mount.

Then the signal came, and the animals started down the track, nearly abreast, but each jockey closely watching the others.

The start was a good one, and a loud cry of excitement reached them. But it stopped abruptly as Lady Rose suddenly began to prance, and wheeling about, galloped down the track for some feet, in the opposite direction, with Macklin apparently making frantic efforts to regain his management of her.

It was all done so quickly, and on the jockey's part so artistically, that a wave of sympathy spread over the onlookers, who detected nothing wrong in what they took to be a most unfortunate occurrence. They broke into a loud cheer as he suddenly became the master again, and started after the other two with a wonderful burst of speed.

Macklin knew his business, and a glance toward the two horses ahead of him proved that even by urging Lady Rose to the fastest she had ever galloped he could not overtake them. Then a new fear gripped him that caused him to apply the whip harder.

"Suppose Kankakee should win!" He winced at the thought.

Lady Rose was now running as she had never run before, and rapidly gaining on the other two horses. But Macklin's one idea now was to head off Kankakee, and *make* Corker win, no matter how much his jockey pulled him.

It was a half-mile track, and as the shouts of encouragement from the grand stand reached him when he dashed by it his lips curled a trifle in scorn as he thought how little these spectators realized why he was urging his mare to her utmost speed. But Levy did, as he stood on his stool, his face pale and drawn, his nails pressing into his palms until they cut into the flesh.

On the three horses galloped, with Corker slightly in the lead, Kankakee just a length behind, and bringing up the rear about three lengths from the second one, Lady Rose

"Suppose Corker should stumble?" Macklin asked himself, and his teeth gritted the tighter in determination. "Lockdale wouldn't dare pull him too much now, for fear of being caught at it, and rather than win, he might throw his

horse. If he does we'll all go down together."

The three-quarter bell clanged gratingly, with Lady Rose's nose abreast of Kankakee's flank, and Corker still a length ahead.

Macklin knew only too well that neither of the jockeys was forcing his mount. In fact, he realized they were holding them back, and as he passed Kankakee easily he crowded him against the rail, and in this way pocketed him well, causing his jockey to bring him up suddenly. To the onlookers it appeared to be a desperate attempt to prevent a collision, but Williams smiled to himself as he realized that in this way he was able to carry out his employer's orders without running any chance of being detected.

But the "pocketing" was so flagrant a violation of horse-racing etiquette that it did not escape the spectators or the judges, whose looks proved they would not countenance such a proceeding.

Macklin now had Lady Rose's nose almost touching Corker's flank, with both horses crowding the rail. There was a look of disappointment and rage on Lockdale's face.

They were too close to the finish line to put into practise that which had been planned.

So a few seconds later Corker galloped in, a winner by a length!

A hush fell over the grand stand, then one faint cry of success that was very lonely—it came from the throat of a Corker better—broke the silence.

But the faces of the onlookers proved plainly the horse upon which they had put up their money. The favorite had lost, and all because of her unruliness at the start.

As Macklin brought Lady Rose down to a walk, and headed her toward the groom, who was coming to meet them, he cast one quick glance toward the betting-ring, and saw Levy still standing on his stool, waving joyfully toward him. But he was forced to contain his pleasure at the outcome—any such demonstration on his part might cause suspicion to gather against him.

He was hurrying toward his quarters, totally unaware that at that moment an excited man was informing the judges that he had overheard Lockdale tell Williams he had orders to pull his horse, and that on the strength of this he had bet every cent he had on Lady Rose, only to lose it all.

The fact that he had lost carried no weight or sympathy, but his other statement caused a hurried consultation in the judges' stand, and a consequent delay of the posting of the result, while the three jockeys were summoned to appear before them.

Levy's joy at the result was suddenly changed to apprehension as he saw that something was wrong, and the suspense was a frightful ordeal for him.

The consultation was quickly over, as Lockdale's stammered and evasive replies to the officials' questions were sufficient proof to them that there had been some prearrangement of the race.

"And not being absolutely certain as to just what it is, we'll fine you and Williams fifty dollars each," was the prompt decision.

Then the speaker turned to Lady Rose's rider.

"We don't know whether you're in it or not, but we'll fine you for pocketing Kankakee."

To Macklin this was a very cheap way out, considering the fact that he and Levy had won a thousand dollars apiece on the result.

But his joy was short-lived!

Before he had time to congratulate himself, the announcement was made that the race and all bets on it were off, and Macklin faced the two jockeys beside him, his face white with anger.

"Isn't that the limit?" he snapped. "I lost the race, and have to pay fifty dollars for doing it!"

"And after each of us had the race fixed before it was started," Lockdale remarked bitterly.

"It was *too* well fixed—that was the whole trouble," Macklin sneered. "And believe me, it's the last crooked race *I* ride in. Well fixed!" he added, throwing into the words all the sarcasm at his command. "That was the whole trouble—it was too *darned* well fixed. If it hadn't been, I'd have made four hundred, because the race was easily mine. As it is, I lost that, and fifty more."

Macklin turned abruptly, and started toward the jockeys' quarters, murmuring under his breath: "Never again for mine! Never again!"

AN ALPINE HOLD-UP.

BY LOUIS GORHAM.

The Mystery of the Comic Opera Bandits That Barred the Way for an American's Passage from Italy into Switzerland.

AT last Dick Grimm was to have his desire, and his whole being thrilled with delight and suppressed excitement.

He was making his first mountain tramp, climbing up toward the snow-peaks.

At Airolo, the railway station just before the train enters the long tunnel, Dick got out for lunch, and from the platform had a good look at the mountains.

He at once determined to make the journey across the St. Gotthard Pass on foot.

So he checked his luggage through to the next station, just on the other side of the tunnel, where he had already engaged accommodation.

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning of a beautiful mild day in September.

The snow-peaks towered above him, glistening in their wonderful white robes. They were rather ragged robes, it must be admitted, for the summer had been warm and unusually long, so the snow had melted and slid down into the crevices, leaving great, bare streaks, like naked bones of some gigantic, crouching monster.

Dick Grimm had a zest for adventure, but he little dreamed of what awaited him up there in the pass between the walls of rock.

He began climbing with a light heart. The grass was green and dotted with wild flowers, and the sky blue. But as he mounted steadily upward along the hard, white road that wound and twisted like a snake, he left both grass and flowers behind.

After a little the sky became clouded, and as the grayness settled down on the surroundings, a certain vague presentiment of danger stole into the traveler's heart.

The country was wild, and as far as the eye could see there was no human creature. Indeed, now that he began to think about it, Dick remembered that he had passed no one on the road.

He became alarmed lest he had taken the wrong route. He was following a map in his guide-book, which had seemed perfectly plain and simple when he first looked at it, but now he began to note several places where he might have gone wrong.

Suppose he was lost? He spoke no language but his good old American. He had funds to the amount of more than two hundred dollars on him. He might be— But he would not think of it.

As soon as he found himself growing nervous and uneasy, he quickened his pace; and though the climb was steep, and he puffed considerably, he kept up a rapid gait. But, instead of getting away from his dread, he felt that he was getting deeper into it.

The ascent was easier now, but it had grown suddenly cold. There was a strange expectancy in the air, as though nature held its breath.

Dick Grimm was rather startled when he saw a few flakes of snow begin to fall.

He had read tales of travelers lost in the Alps in heavy snow-storms; and although this was only a flurry, and a blizzard was far from probable in September, this reflection did not quiet his premonitions of evil.

If only he could see another traveler or hear some sound that would break this awful silence!

He began to whistle, and then sang a little; but his tones awakened such eery reverberation that he ceased with a shudder.

It was as though the voices of all those that had been lost in this dreary place were mocking him from the awful walls of solid rock that hemmed him in.

He was nearing a great boulder, when a man suddenly emerged from behind it and made a rush toward him.

The fellow looked like the bandits of grand opera. He was in his shirt-sleeves, with bare brown arms, red sash, and his head bound in a gorgeous handkerchief. A big, powerful man, he was also armed.

Dick Grimm was not armed, and beside this giant he seemed a child; but he held his ground.

The man grabbed him by the wrist and spoke a few words in some foreign language. They sounded like a command, and Dick imagined that they were spoken in Italian; but he was not sure.

The man let go his hold, and Dick thought he would try to bluff it out. So he started on again very slowly and deliberately, but instantly was caught in a grip of steel and fairly deluged with a stream of foreign talk.

"Oh!" Dick decided, "it is a matter of highway robbery, and I'm well caught."

Again he tried to bluff. With his free arm Dick managed to get out about ten dollars and, turning his pocket inside out to show this was all he had, offered the money to the man.

But instead of his snatching it as Dick had expected, the fellow ignored the thing and began more wild talk.

"So," thought Dick, "you are on. You know I have more, and you'll have it all."

The man sat down on a stone and pulled Dick down beside him. There seemed nothing else for it, so the American fumbled through his pockets, produced all the money he possessed, and laid it down on the stone in front of the bandit.

But the handsome, dark face smiled indulgently at him, the great black eyes sparkled, and the Italian burst into an awful laugh that turned Dick Grimm's blood to water.

It was then that the horrible truth dawned on Grimm that he was the prisoner of a madman. He repocketed his money and spoke with quiet gentleness to his captor; but, instead of this soothing the fellow, it caused a perfect eruption of the most violent language.

Dick was sure he was being damned to eternal fire and brimstone, though he could not understand one word. He made a little mental note to the effect that if ever he managed to get out of this scrape alive, he would learn the language of every country through which he decided to travel.

The man continued his wild discourse. He waved his arms. He yelled. He spoke as softly as a woman. He seemed to run the gamut of human emotion, and ended almost in tears with something that evidently demanded a response from his listener.

But Dick sought to ignore it. The man was insistent. Poor Dick wondered what was expected of him, a nod or a shake of the head. He started to nod; then he changed his mind, and slowly and sadly shook his head.

Evidently this was the correct thing. For the captor beamed upon him, and Dick, who was looking steadily at him, thought he had never seen a demented man with such intelligent eyes.

Then another fellow came rushing down the road. He was dressed very like the first, only his sash was yellow.

Dick's heart contracted with fear. Evidently they *were* bandits, and not madmen. Perhaps there was a whole gang of them. Since they did not want money, what was it they did want? Was it a case of kidnaping?

The second bandit began calling to the first long before he reached them. Dick's captor turned and spoke something to him, and left off holding his prisoner.

Instantly Dick Grimm was up and racing down the road. He had no definite plan except to get away. He had only taken a few dashes when his former captor gave a commanding cry. Dick did not turn, but continued his flight.

Immediately there was the report of a rifle, and a bullet whizzed by the astonished Dick, who turned just in time to see a second bullet strike the ground not three feet from him, raising a fleck of dust as it bit into the road.

It took no third shot to induce Grimm to return to his captors, for the second bandit had joined the first by now, and they both stood ready to fire again had he continued his dash for liberty.

As soon as Dick was beside them, they both began to talk at once, and if Dick had considered the gesticulations and speech of number one as "wild," he found it quiet and dignified in comparison to what was now going on.

Number one made a dive into his sash and produced a large nickel-plated watch, which he placed on the stone, and the three then sat down.

Of course it was very foolish, but the idea flashed into Dick Grimm's mind that they were timing the minutes he yet had to live.

This notion seemed to be borne out by the fact that every few minutes the bandits glanced at the watch, then at Dick, and spoke knowingly between themselves.

Grimm was so unnerved by this time that his teeth chattered and he clutched at the rock with his icy hands, in an attempt to sit still.

Suddenly one of the bandits rose to his feet, gripped Dick by the arm, and forced him up also.

"Now my time has come," thought poor Dick.

He stood still and listened attentively while the men told him something.

He thought it best to agree with them, and so made an affirmative motion with his head to all they said.

They ceased speaking and seemed waiting for him to do something, but as he remained motionless, number one grew impatient, and picking Dick up as though he were a sack of meal, flung him down on the ground, where the poor fellow lay, face down, expecting every moment to have his head chopped off or some equally terrible thing happen.

After about two seconds, which seemed like hours to the hapless Dick, he mustered courage enough to look out from under his outflung arms, and his astonishment knew no bounds.

The two bandits were stretched at full length on either side of him, their faces buried in their hands. It was as though they had fallen prostrate at the passing of some august deity.

The sight struck Dick Grimm's sense of humor, and he laughed, and just then something happened.

It was a terrible explosion. For a few seconds the ground seemed to shake, and then the mountains took up the sound and echoed and reechoed it endlessly.

He looked cautiously at his captors. They were on their feet. One of them came and assisted him to rise.

They made a gesture which said very plainly that Dick might proceed, but he was rather slow to leave. He had no desire to be played with as a cat handles a mouse. He had already had one experience of running away from these fellows.

But they seemed insistent, and finally Dick began moving slowly on his way.

He was too dumfounded to speak, even had there been any one to understand what he said.

What was it all about? Why had they captured him and then let him go in safety? Why had they taken none of his money? Who were they?

His mental questions would have filled a volume. He was walking steadily in the direction from which the second bandit had appeared. He was going slowly, so that if his captors decided to recall him they would realize that he would return without the inducement of a rifle-bullet.

But no sounds came from behind him. And when he turned to look back, he saw that the men were gone.

Dick Grimm had about decided that they were kidnapers, and had become frightened by something. But at what?

Then he turned a corner of the road and the reason for everything lay before him.

A big gang of Italian laborers, dressed similarly to his bandits, were working on the road. They had been doing some blasting. The smoke was just clearing away and the ground was thickly strewn with débris.

The "bandits" had been guards sent to prevent wayfarers from coming too near the mine. The watch business had been simply the timing of the fuse, so that in case there was no explosion within so many minutes, the detained parties would be allowed to pass, because the fuse had gone out.

It all came over Dick Grimm in one burst, and he was ashamed at his fears. But he put on a bold front and walked rapidly through the band of laborers without looking to right or left.

"After all," he told himself, "I'm rather glad it happened. It will make a capital after-dinner story."

WHEN TWO ARE OLD.

THEIR love-light still is shining,
A tranquil afterglow;
They scan the dim, sweet vista
Of joyous Long-Ago;
Where outlived griefs and gladness,
Past many a year and long,
Seem shadows of a shadow
And echoes of a song.

Grace Hodsdon Boutelle.

THE ARGOSY'S LOG-BOOK.

BY THE EDITOR.

Why Serials Fascinate—That Shortage in New Yorkers—A Great Country for Magazines—Our Patriotic Outburst—The Lure of the Advertising Section—More Letters from Argosy Readers—A Matter of Ethics—A Unique Story of the Civil War.

IN that matter of serial stories, I have another opinion to record, one that I was not obliged to go very far to seek, either—my own. While sorting out the flood of letters pouring in, expressing my readers' views on the subject, I suddenly realized that I myself was reading two serial stories, both quite aside from business—that is to say, not submitted in manuscript for publication in THE ARGOSY. These stories, I found, were more interesting to me than any others I read, and the fact that I had to wait for the next instalment of each only added to the zest with which I opened the new numbers of the periodicals containing them.

The realization of this fact sent my mind back to boyhood time, when a certain young people's paper made the day of its appearance the bright spot in the week for me. I could not tell you now the name of a single one of the short stories, but the titles of several of the serials still linger in memory. As an editor, then, I favor short stories, but as a reader I must admit that serials possess for me a powerful fascination from the fact that the extended time it takes to read them makes one better acquainted with the characters. It also gives one an opportunity to talk over the story with one's friends who may be reading it, too, and for each to hazard guesses as to the outcome.

* * * *

While discussing matters of a personal nature, I may add that, being a native-born New Yorker myself, and having often noted the infrequency with which one meets with others claiming Gotham as a birthplace, I was especially interested to see in the New York *Times* not long since an item headed "What Becomes of the Natives?" calling attention to this very fact. The editorial started off like this: "Surrogate Cohalan said at the dinner of the West Virginia Society statistics showed that people were born in New York, but the mystery was what became of them, they were so little in evidence."

Really, it seems almost a handicap to be born in so big a city and have no bigger one to go to, make one's mark, and later come home to be played up in the town paper as our clever fellow-citizen who has gone forth and reflected credit on his birthplace. New York City has had but one President of the United States, Roosevelt. But then no other big town can claim any except Cincinnati, to which we owe Taft. This fact opens up another pregnant field for discussion. Is it not true that very few of the men who become really great ever are born in cities? Here is a matter for those that have the time to pore over "Who's Who in America" to investigate.

* * * *

All of which sets me, figuratively speaking, to waving the American flag with special gusto. There is no country on earth with such an extent of inhabited territory as ours. From Maine to Florida, from New Orleans to Tacoma, from St. Paul to Galveston, from Duluth to San Francisco, take it up, down, across, any way you will, there are cities and towns, hamlets and villages, all under the one government, their citizens speaking the same language, and all with the same splendid opportunities of getting ahead in the world. Have you ever thought of this, readers, and realized what it means to be an American?

* * * *

And what links these Americans together with a more far-reaching grip than their common interest in some such magazine as THE ARGOSY?

Did it ever occur to you while you were

deep in an ARGOSY story, that at the very same moment, in all parts of this big country of ours, there were thousands of others as interested as yourself in the same adventures that were holding your own attention so closely? There is something like inspiration in such a thought, isn't there? But there is inspiration in a big circulation like THE ARGOSY'S, any way you choose to look at it.

As the editor, I know that this enormous mass of readers appeals powerfully to would-be contributors. It is a great thing to have what you write read by half a million people. Authors have told me that they have heard about their stories from the most unexpected quarters, clear off in foreign lands at times.

* * * *

A letter just received from Providence, Rhode Island, signed B. S., advises me that as soon as the writer finishes the stories, he starts in to read the "ads." This shows you that not only are these additional pages of THE ARGOSY very useful when you wish to purchase something, but impart real pleasure as well. Then there is the strong possibility in addition of running across a bargain, the announcement of a means to self-culture, or an evening's diversion you did not know existed. Just as the reading section of the magazine makes circulation so stupendous that it is an inspiration, so the diversified industries, opportunities, and household conveniences set forth in the advertising pages, reflect the prosperity of this amazing country of ours.

* * * *

Another communication from Correspondent No. 2, mentioned in the March Log-Book, states that he has acted on the suggestion I made in that place to the extent of taking on the whole Munsey line of magazines. He suggests, by the way, that "Log-Book wouldn't be a bad title for one of the Munsey family 'best-sellers.'"

Here is a reader in Berkeley, California (R. S.), who does not care so much for our short stories, is especially fond of hard-luck yarns, and thinks "Roy Burns's Handicap" splendid. He has guessed wrong, however, as to the outcome of "His Brother's Eclipse," of which serial he is enthusiastic in his praise. "The real charm of that story," he goes on to say, "is that it is so exceedingly true to nature. The author is obviously a New York reporter, and he is writing about a side of life which he understands perfectly."

Well, R. S., as an offset to your wrong guess as to the person who shot Morton Hillias, you are right with respect to the calling of the author.

* * * *

A contractor and builder in Illinois sends this, as frank as it is terse and explicit. Thank you very much, W. A. B.:

> Just wish to say that interesting as is the entire magazine, there is not a story that takes hold upon one more that THE ARGOSY'S Log-Book. It should have the first pages. Your selection of material as to quality and amount could hardly be improved upon, but once a month is often enough for busy people. We read serials when they are completed. You have brought this extra work upon yourself, so no apologies are offered.

* * * *

From McKeesport comes this plaint, sent in by a reader who singles out "In Treason's Track" and "Roy Burns's Handicap" for praise:

> Why are there never any stories about the Civil War, or, for instance, here in the Pittsburgh district, with its mammoth industries, there are lots of situations for a story. I am a wholesale lumber dealer, and I read your ARGOSY to change the trend of my thoughts monthly, but when I read anything, I like to profit by it and learn something.

In reply, W. H. M., I have recently purchased a serial on Pittsburgh industries, written by a man who has lived there. It will begin in the course of a few months. I am also having written a story about the Civil War, but so much pains must be taken with a subject of this order that it may be some time before it is finished. By the way, I have before me a letter from Oregon whose writer differs from you in his estimate of the serials running in March, as he says: "Come on with more stories like 'The Woman He Feared' and 'The Big Obstacle.' 'The Woman He Feared' is certainly perfection in story-writing."

Here is a Missourian who will have to show me what he means by his last sentence in the subjoined letter. Our publication day for THE ARGOSY is always the 15th of the month previous to date unless that date falls on Sunday or Monday, when the magazine comes out the day before. If his copy arrives late, the fault must lie somewhere beyond this office. He is cer-

tainly an enthusiastic reader, for listen to him, under date of February 15:

> You ask in THE ARGOSY Log-Book what kind of stories we like best. That is easily answered — ARGOSY stories. I am one that can't see how you could improve THE ARGOSY as it is. I was just thinking the other day and find that I will soon have been reading THE ARGOSY five years, and in that time I haven't missed a number, and can think of but one story that was dull, and this was a serial recently concluded. I will not name this one, because if you can do as well in the future five years, I will have no fault to find. You are getting out the very best magazine in this country regardless of price. But please try and get it out on time, as waiting for THE ARGOSY is like a hungry man waiting for his dinner.
>
> G. L. G.

Out of the Golden Gate city on the Pacific Coast comes the following from a reader, who has been taking the magazine twice the length of time of G. L. G. He says:

> I have been a reader of THE ARGOSY for about ten years. It's a first-rate magazine. I like the complete stories best, but I always read the serials and enjoy them, too. Whenever I finish THE ARGOSY before the 15th of the month, I get *The Munsey*, which is also a "crackerjack." I enjoyed THE ARGOSY Log-Book. Let's hear from you again. I always like to hear the editor talk. Another thing: Please don't publish any more stories like "The Clown's Mate." As for the short stories, one word will express my opinion of them: Fine. Get Edgar Franklin to get a move on. I like his stories very much.
>
> M. G.

I am wondering whether this reader objected to "The Clown's Mate" because it was a circus story or merely on general principles. If I remember aright, we had several expressions of praise for that particular complete novel. But that is invariably the rule. A story that is sufficiently striking to awaken enthusiastic comment, frequently receives one or two slaps into the bargain. In the case of "Roy Burns's Handicap," the slap came first, and was followed by a chorus of unbroken praise. Oh, editing a magazine brings one some rather amazing experiences, as our readers may judge by comparing the letters in the Log-Book from month to month.

* * * *

This reminds me to call attention to a story in this issue, "Putting It Through." I should be glad to receive opinions as to Miss Brown's conduct in the matter of acting on the letter that reached her by mistake. I told the author of the story—after asking that a change be made in the manuscript from the form in which it was originally submitted—that I would request THE ARGOSY readers to express their views on the ethics of the matter. I have my own, and know what I should have done under similar circumstances. I shall be curious to learn how many of my readers coincide.

Elizabeth Adams Banks, whose first story to reach print this is, fills a position in the advertising department of one of the largest department stores in New York, a position she did not obtain in the fashion she describes her heroine as employing.

* * * *

W. F. H., writing from Cambridge, Massachusetts, wants to know "what's the matter with Hawkins lately?" Well, only this week I have accepted still another narrative of the gruelling experiences to which he subjects poor Griggs. Meantime, you will find his "stunts" with a patent tack-driver recounted in this issue, and the record of one of the most thrilling adventures he has yet gone through will appear next month.

"Wish you could publish THE ARGOSY once a week instead of monthly," concludes our Cambridge friend, to which I reply: "What's the matter with filling in the gap with *The Cavalier, The All-Story*, and—well, there are three other of the Munsey publications to select from as reading matter for the remaining week of waiting—*The Railroad Man's Magazine, The Scrap Book*, or *The Munsey* itself.

* * * *

From Upland, California, C. A. H., a charter member of THE ARGOSY constituency, sends in the subjoined, which is much appreciated:

> In response to your invitation to readers of THE ARGOSY to let you know what kind of stories suit them best, I will say that I don't think the Hawkins stories have an equal. I also like stories of Western life, such as "In Savage Splendor." The Revolutionary stories are very interesting, as they illustrate the true American spirit. I have been a reader of THE ARGOSY for more than twenty-five years and distinctly remember the first edition published when I was only a kid away back in the eighties. No, I have not read every issue since that time, as I have often been in out-

of-the-way places where I could not get them, but when in civilization, I never miss it. I think *The All-Story* is a good second, but THE ARGOSY has them all skinned a mile.

* * * *

A "Bison City Reader," as he signs himself, writing from Buffalo, after commenting on the fact that ARGOSY readers appear to be divided as to the "relative merits of complete novels and serials," gives it as his opinion that "the three classes, *i. e.*, complete novels, serials, and short stories, are indispensable to the success of a magazine of THE ARGOSY'S character. My favorite serial writer," he adds, "is Albert Payson Terhune. You see, like your Pennsylvania friend, I like the 'military stuff.'" He then goes on to suggest that we print a story of Civil War times, "either serial or complete novel of the Grant, Lee, Phil Sheridan, and Stonewall Jackson times."

As it happens, a complete novel of this very nature is now being finished for me. It is of rather unique description, too, for although the hero is a Virginian and the characters all Southern, the story is by a Northern writer whose father fought in the war, and died later as the result of the wounds he received there. The son had a pension of two dollars a month from the government until he was sixteen years old. He is a recent accession to the list of ARGOSY contributors, but has thus far written only short stories. The name of his complete novel, which will appear in the course of the next few months, is "The Fighting Streak."

* * * *

Before parting with my Bison City friend I wish to quote one thing more from his letter, to wit:

The first number of THE ARGOSY I read, contained as the headliner a story called "When the Sun Stopped." I do not recall the author's name. Maybe he is still contributing to THE ARGOSY. If he isn't, you ought to get him. That story was a dandy. It was published several years ago, but I never forgot it.

The author in question was in the office only yesterday. He is a regular contributor to THE ARGOSY. I told him what my Buffalo correspondent said of his story, and he was much pleased.

J. M. D., of Kankakee, Illinois, is down on hard-luck stories, and wants us to give him tales about wealthy bachelors and the idle rich. He is a reader of ten years' standing, and should be particularly pleased with the fare I have provided for the coming months, as will also J. F., of Ottawa, Ontario, who prefers stories of adventure and mystery. A wealthy bachelor, by the way, is the hero in one of July complete novels.

* * * *

As her first letter to a publication, Mrs. A. L. C., of South Dakota, sends in the subjoined, which I may say is just the sort to cheer an editor's soul, giving, as it does, the reasons for the writer's preferences:

We appreciate THE ARGOSY in the middle West. The first story I ever read in it was "The Gold Gleaners." Picking up an ARGOSY one day about nine years ago, I read a chapter of "The Gold Gleaners," and I had to have the rest of that story; and, of course, I read the other stories too, and pronounced THE ARGOSY the best magazine I had ever seen, and I've never missed a number since. I have just finished reading "The Drum He Couldn't Beat." It is a fine story, because it is something new. I also like "The Woman He Feared," because I can't imagine how it will end, and it is out of the ordinary. I can't say what kind of stories I prefer, as it depends on my mood, but I usually read the serials first. I like the stories of Western life, and there is lots of material in this locality, but I can't write a story. No, no!

From Virginia another correspondent of the fair sex, Miss L. C., writes most enthusiastically, and we were very happy to act on her suggestion with regard to sample copies:

I have been a subscriber to THE ARGOSY for about seven months. I like it so well that I never intend to do without it. It is the best publication, regardless of price, I have ever read. I wish to subscribe for another of your all-fiction magazines, and am writing to ask you to please send me a sample copy of *The Cavalier*.

* * * *

A Georgia reader, F. G. W., writing from Atlanta, is extremely complimentary, in the following terms:

I am a great reader of THE ARGOSY. Its stories are not too short nor yet too long to bore you. I think that two of your best stories are "The Tail of the Oregonian Limited" and "In Treason's Track." I always look over your Log-Book first, and I soon found another one by Mr. Terhune, "In the Name of the King." I also read the — — and the — — but THE ARGOSY passes them as an experienced man would a greenhorn.

Vacation thoughts on heating

Don't have your vacation marred by the spectres of old-fashioned heating methods. Don't put it off longer, but settle *at once* and for all time this most important matter of home heating and hygiene. The savings in fuel, repairs, doctor bills, labor, etc., will pay for your annual vacation, and you will put balmy Summer warmth throughout the whole house on the most tempestuous of Winter days by using an outfit of

AMERICAN & IDEAL
RADIATORS BOILERS

By the use of IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators the fuel bills grow smaller; uneven heating and repair bills disappear; ashes, soot and coal-gases are unknown in the living rooms; carpets, hangings and furniture are thereby given longer life; housework is reduced one-half, and the whole house is made a far better, happier, healthier place to live in.

A No. A-241 IDEAL Boiler and 461 sq. ft. of 38-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing owner $215, were used to heat this cottage. At these prices the goods can be bought of any reputable, competent fitter. This did not include cost of labor, pipe, valves, freight, etc., which are extra and vary according to climatic and other conditions.

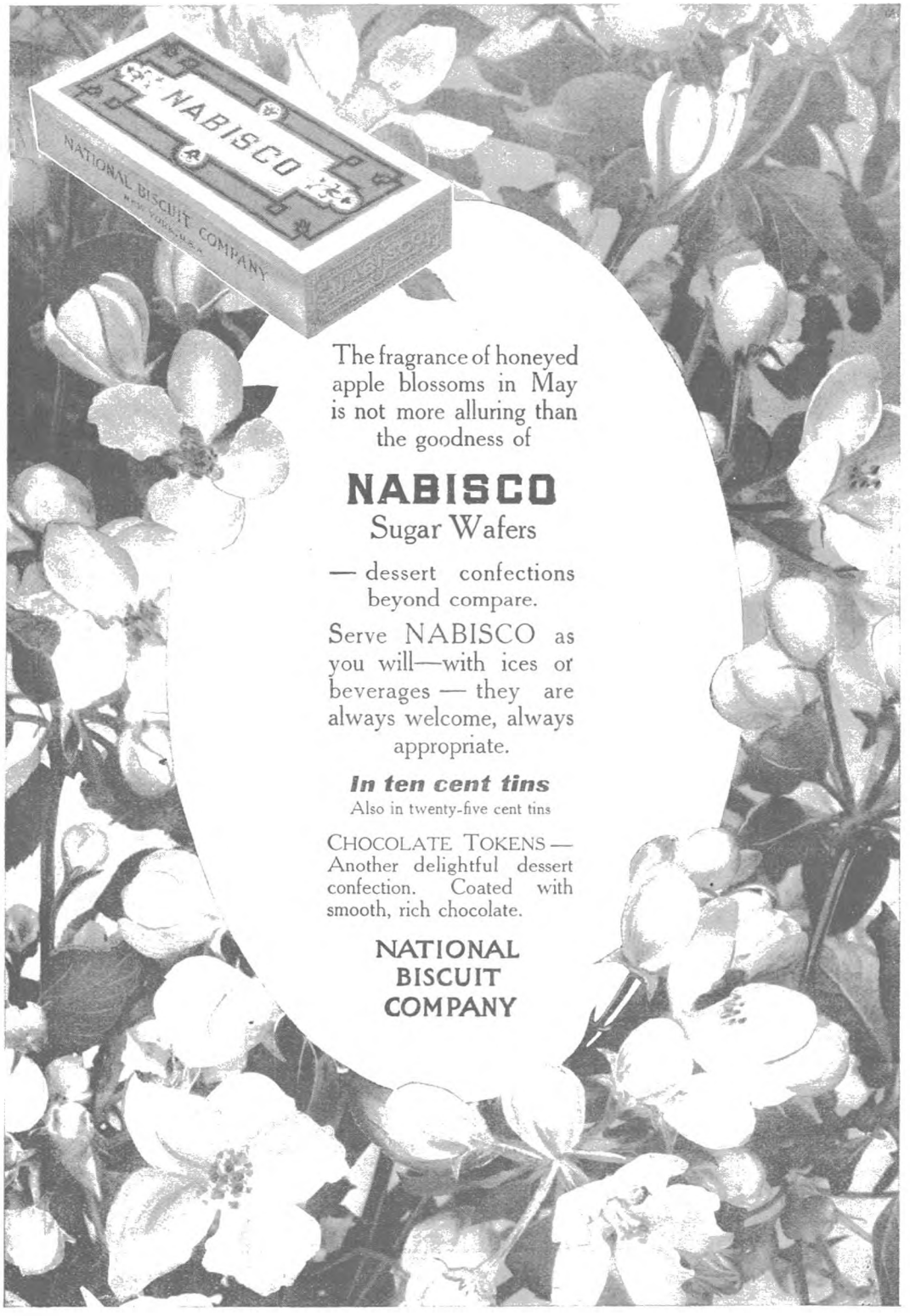
AMERICAN Radiators are made in a multitude of sizes and forms—to go alongside open stairs; to fit into corners, curves and circles; between windows and under window seats; with brackets to hang upon the walls—off the floor; with special feet to prevent cutting carpet; with smoothest surfaces for decorating in any color or shade to match woodwork, wall coverings, furniture, etc.; thin radiators for narrow halls and bathrooms; with plate-warming ovens for dining-rooms; big radiators for storm vestibules; with high legs for cleaning thereunder; with ventilation bases so air of room may be changed 1 to 4 times per hour—and other splendid features which it would pay you big to know. Our free book tells all about them (and all about IDEAL Boilers). You will need it to choose the models from.

Be ready at the turn of a valve to flood the house with invigorating, genial warmth for the vacation-returning family. Prices in Spring usually rule the lowest of the year. In these less-hurried months you are sure to get the best workmanship. Put your property into right heating condition now, ready for best living, renting or selling. Don't wait until you build, but investigate *today* this big-paying building investment. Ask for free book—puts you under no obligation to buy.

Public Showrooms in all large cities

AMERICAN RADIATOR COMPANY

Write to Dept. A 34 Chicago



The fragrance of honeyed apple blossoms in May is not more alluring than the goodness of

NABISCO
Sugar Wafers

— dessert confections beyond compare.

Serve NABISCO as you will—with ices or beverages — they are always welcome, always appropriate.

In ten cent tins
Also in twenty-five cent tins

CHOCOLATE TOKENS — Another delightful dessert confection. Coated with smooth, rich chocolate.

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

AN artist spends years in learning little touches that will improve his art. You can be a better artist with the camera at once if you will use better implements —if you will use the improved film, ANSCO FILM.

This film portrays nature so as to make truer photographs, more artistic pictures. It raises the standard of photography, opens new possibilities to the amateur.

It has chromatic balance, an ability to render color tones in their correct value not possessed by any other film.

Ansco Film is easy to work and handle, does not offset or curl, and is not liable to fog from light halation.

Try it in your camera and the negatives will surprise and delight you.

Before you buy photographic supplies again, get acquainted with the Ansco dealer in your town. Ask him for the film with chromatic balance and bearing the trademark,

"ANSCO" FILM

The Ansco dealer is an independent dealer who sells good goods and can give intelligent advice. He is worth knowing. Look for this sign above his door.

To demonstrate the superiority of Ansco Film and Cyko Paper we will develop one roll of film for you for 10 cents, to partly defray cost, and make one print on Cyko Paper *free*. Enclose your name and address and five 2 cent stamps with roll of film and mail, care Free Tuition Department.

Ansco PHOTO SUPPLIES FILMS, CHEMICALS CYKO PAPER

Ansco Catalog and valuable two-volume Photographic Manual free on request.

ANSCO COMPANY, Binghamton, N. Y.

Ten minutes' work with Jap-a-lac And you will have a new hall rack

DON'T *sell* it to the *second-hand* dealer. You can do what he will do by buying a can of Jap-a-lac (Oak, Black or Mahogany, according to the first *finish* of the wood) and in almost as *short* a time as it takes to *tell* about it, you will have a bright, *attractive* piece of furniture staring your visitors in the face, instead of a dingy, *unattractive* rack.

Anybody can use Jap-a-lac; all that is *necessary* is to *first* wash the wood *thoroughly* with *warm water* and *soap suds*, give it time to *dry* and then *apply*.

You can't keep house without

JAP-A-LAC

Made in 18 different colors and natural (Clear)

Renews Everything from Cellar to Garret

For hardwood floors; for restoring linoleum and oilcloth; for wainscoting rooms; for recoating worn-out tin and zinc bath tubs; for brightening woodwork of all sorts; for coating pantry shelves and kitchen tables; for varnishing pictures (when thinned with turpentine) and gilding picture frames; for restoring go-carts and wagons; for decorating flower pots and jardiniere stands; for repainting trunks; for restoring chairs, tables, iron beds, book cases, and for a thousand and one uses, all of which are described and explained in a little book which you can have for a little request on a post card.

For sale everywhere—it wears forever. Look for the name of Glidden as well as the name Jap-a-lac. There is no substitute.

THE GLIDDEN VARNISH COMPANY

Cleveland, O. Branches: New York, Chicago Toronto, Ont.

All sizes, 20c to $3.00

"17 Cents a Day" Offer Stirs the Nation!

The Whole Country Applauds the "Penny Purchase Plan"

From a thousand different directions comes a mighty chorus of approval, voicing the popularity of The Oliver Typewriter "17 Cents a Day" Purchase Plan.

The liberal terms of this offer bring the benefits of the best modern typewriter within easy reach of *all*. The simple, convenient "Penny Plan" has assumed national importance.

It opened the floodgates of *demand* and has almost engulfed us with *orders*.

Individuals, firms and corporations—*all classes of people*—are taking advantage of the attractive plan and endorsing the great idea which led us to take this radical step—

To make typewriting the universal medium of written communication!

Speeds Universal Typewriting

The trend of events is toward the general adoption of beautiful, legible, speedy *typewriting* in place of slow, laborious, illegible *handwriting*.

The great business interests are a *unit* in using *typewriters*.

It is just as important to the general public to substitute typewriting for "longhand." For every private citizen's personal affairs are *his business*.

Our popular "Penny Plan" speeds the day of *Universal Typewriting*.

The OLIVER Typewriter

The Standard Visible Writer

A Mechanical Marvel

The Oliver Typewriter is unlike all others.

With several hundred *less parts* than ordinary typewriters, its efficiency is proportionately *greater*.

Add to such basic advantages the many time-saving conveniences found only on The Oliver Typewriter, and you have an overwhelming total of *tangible reasons* for its wonderful success.

A Business Builder

The Oliver Typewriter is a powerful *creative force* in business—a veritable *wealth producer*. Its use *multiplies business opportunities, widens business influence, promotes business success*.

Thus the aggressive merchant or manufacturer can reach out for *more business* with trade-winning letters and price lists. By means of a "mailing list"—and The Oliver Typewriter—you can annex new trade territory.

Get this greatest of business aids—*for 17 Cents a Day*. Keep it *busy*. It will make your business *grow*.

Aids Professional Men

To the professional man the typewriter is an indispensable assistant.

Clergymen, Physicians, Journalists, Writers, Architects, Engineers, and Public Accountants have learned to depend on the *typewriter*.

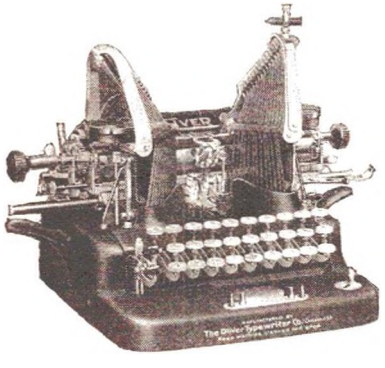
You can master The Oliver Typewriter in a few minutes' practice. It will pay big daily dividends of satisfaction on the small investment of *17 Cents a Day*.

A Stepping-Stone to Success

For young people, The Oliver Typewriter is a stepping-stone to good positions and an advancement in business life.

The ability to operate a typewriter counts for more than letters of recommendation.

Start *now*, when you can own The Oliver Typewriter for *pennies*.



Join the National Association of Penny Savers!

Every purchaser of The Oliver Typewriter for 17 Cents a Day is made an Honorary Member of the National Association of Penny Savers. A small first payment brings the magnificent new Oliver Typewriter, the regular $100 machine.

Then save 17 Cents a Day and pay monthly. The Oliver Typewriter Catalog and full details of "17 Cents a Day" Purchase Plan sent on request, by coupon or letter.

Address Sales Department

The Oliver Typewriter Co.
678 Oliver Typewriter Bldg.
(91) Chicago.

COUPON

THE OLIVER TYPEWRITER CO.
678 Oliver Typewriter Bldg., Chicago

Gentlemen: Please send your *Art Catalog* and details of *"17-Cents-a-Day"* offer on The Oliver Typewriter.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

The only TALKING MACHINE made by EDISON is the PHONOGRAPH

Just loud enough for the home

The Edison Phonograph has just the right volume of sound for the home—*your* home. It is not brassy or strident; not loud enough for a concert hall or a neighborhood. When you hear it demonstrated it will not echo throughout the store. The Edison reproduces *sound*—not noise.

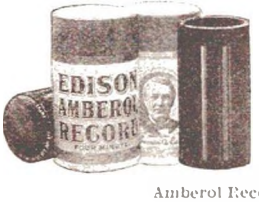
There is an Edison Phonograph at a price to suit everybody's means, from the Gem at $15 to the Amberola at $200.

The Sapphire Reproducing Point

This is the secret of the Edison Phonograph's lifelike purity of tone. The highly polished, button-shaped sapphire exactly fits the thread on the sensitive wax record in which it travels. It does not wear, does not scratch or wear the record and never needs to be changed.

The sapphire point is a feature of both Amberol and Standard Reproducers.

Amberol Records



These Records, playing more than twice as long as ordinary records, (4 to 4½ minutes), render *all* of every character of entertainment, *completely* as in the original, and have opened the way to a vast amount of the very best of music and other entertainment hitherto impossible to obtain in record form. The Edison also plays Edison Standard two-minute Records.

Amberol Records, 50 cents; Standard Records, 35 cents; Grand Opera Records, 75 cents to $2.

Making Records at home

On the Edison Phonograph you, *anyone*, can make records in your own home—talk, sing or play—and reproduce it immediately, just as clearly as the Records which you buy. With this great feature, the Edison gives more than double the entertainment of any other sound reproducing instrument.

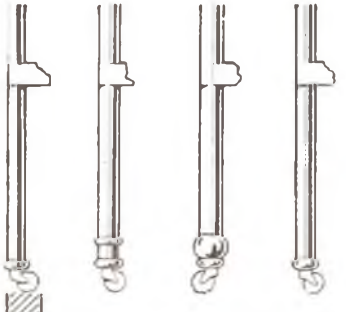
Ask the nearest Edison dealer to demonstrate this feature of the Edison Phonograph. Also ask your dealer for the latest catalogs of Edison Phonographs and Records, or write us.

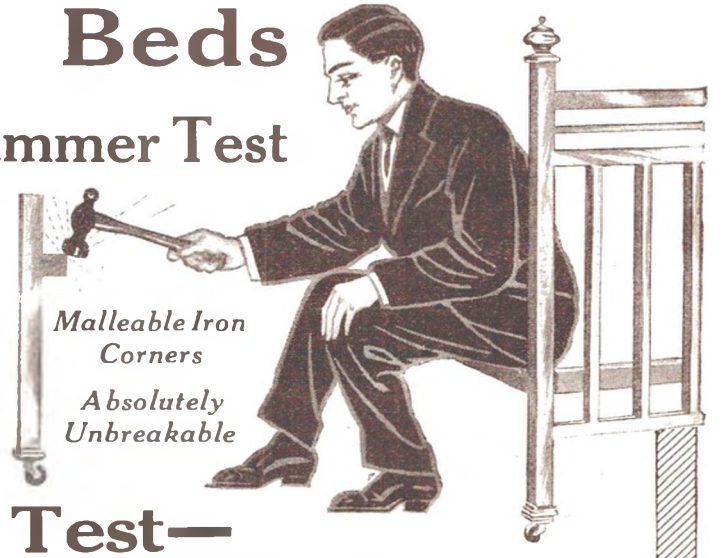
THOMAS A. EDISON, Inc., 35 Lakeside Avenue, Orange, N. J.

Thomas A. Edison, Inc., is the new corporate name by which the National Phonograph Co. will hereafter be known.

Barcalo Beds

Stand The Hammer Test





Malleable Iron Corners

Absolutely Unbreakable

See This Test—

And the Barcalo 35-Year Guarantee

BARCALO Brass and Iron Beds are unbreakable. The Hammer Test proves that the corner—the weakest point in ordinary beds—is the strongest part of the Barcalo Bed. The Barcalo 35-year Guarantee means that if your Barcalo breaks you get a new bed. A twelve-ply English lacquer finish makes Barcalo beauty permanent—fresh and glossy for years. See the comprehensive Barcalo line—so complete that you're sure to find the style and price you're looking for.

Choose springs as you do beds—inspection and test prove the quality of Barcalo Imperial Springs.

The trade-mark "Barcalo-Buffalo" is a positive identification of Barcalo Beds. Insist upon its being on the bed you buy. Send for the Barcalo Style Book. We'll send it free—also the name of your Barcalo dealer.

BARCALO GUARANTEED NOT TO BREAK MALLEABLE CORNERS

Barcalo Manufacturing Co. **Dept. E18, Buffalo, N. Y.**

Barcalo Buffalo

No Metal Touches the Skin

Brighton Garters

The New Form of the Old Favorite

Pioneer Suspender Co. Philadelphia

25¢ everywhere or by mail

The only Solution: # Get a better job

Are you "trying to make both ends meet" on a small, unsatisfactory salary? Are you one of the thousands of energetic, capable men whose days are spent in work not suited to their natural talents?

Then read this wonderful offer. We mean it and there is a fine chance for you if you improve it.

If you lack the time and the means to stop work and take a course of training, the American School will **lend you the cost of the training** you need and let you make your own terms for repaying us.

This is the greatest offer ever made to men who have "got it in them to rise," and we are prepared to help everyone who comes to us in earnest.

Check the coupon, mail it to us, and we will explain fully our **"Deferred Tuition"** plan, how we will lend you the cost of the tuition, and allow you to pay us back when the increase in your yearly income equals the amount of the loan.

No Promotion — No Pay — that's what our **"Deferred Tuition" Scholarship** means. Send the coupon today and prepare for a **better job.**

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CORRESPONDENCE
CHICAGO, U. S. A.

Opportunity Coupon

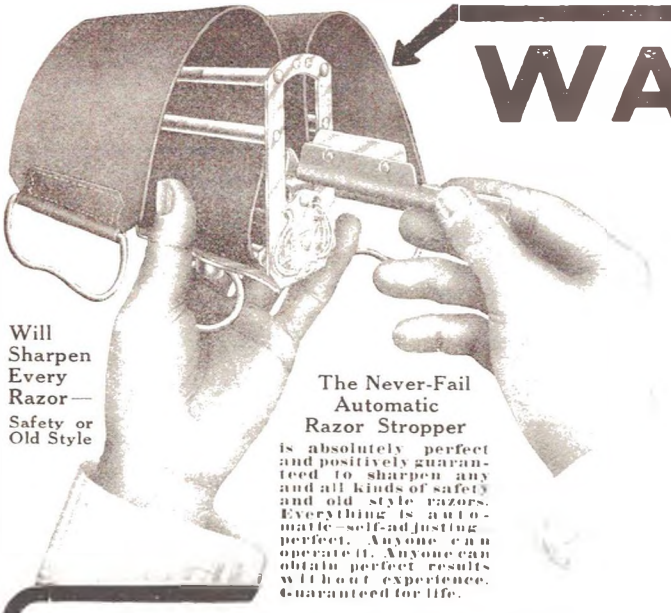
American School of Correspondence, Chicago, U. S. A.

Please send me your Bulletin and advise me how I can qualify for the position marked "X." Argosy—5-'11.

.....Book-keeper	.....Draftsman
.....Stenographer	.....Architect
.....Accountant	.....Civil Engineer
.....Cost Accountant	.....Automobile Operator
.....Systematizer	.....Electrical Engineer
.....Certified Public Acc'nt	.....Mechanical Engineer
.....Auditor	.....Moving Picture Op'r
.....Business Manager	.....Steam Engineer
.....Commercial Law	.....Fire Insurance Eng'r
.....Reclamation Engineer	.....College Preparatory

NAME .....

ADDRESS.....



Will Sharpen Every Razor—
Safety or Old Style

The Never-Fail Automatic Razor Stropper

is absolutely perfect and positively guaranteed to sharpen any and all kinds of safety and old style razors. Everything is automatic—self-adjusting—perfect. Anyone can operate it. Anyone can obtain perfect results without experience. Guaranteed for life.

WANTED

AGENTS SALESMEN MANAGERS

I want a good man in every territory of the United States—as local agent for one county, or as general agent for a number of counties. This is a new proposition, and offers an opportunity for you to make from $45 to $90 a week and on up to $8,000 or $10,000 a year. I am organizing my selling force now and I want you to begin at once. Write for information today.

$45.00 TO $90.00 A WEEK

This is the opportunity I offer to a good man in every territory in the United States. No experience is necessary. **The Never-Fail Stropper** sells on sight. I want agents, general agents and managers. Anyone can do the work. No charge for territory. Grand, free advertising special introductory plan for agents on the most sensational selling article of the day. Every man a buyer—quick, every call a sale. Send for reports of our men who are out in the field. Listen to their words of success. Learn of the money they are making. Get out of the rut. Young men, old men, farmers, teachers, carpenters, students, bank clerks—everybody makes money. *One man* (Hiram Purdy) *took 27 orders first day out* (sworn statement); *profit $40.50.* 26 orders the next day. Once our agent, always a money maker. A. M. Clark, of Kansas, wrote: "I was out of town the other day—did not go with the intention of doing any soliciting. Just got to talking and sold 6 before I knew it." Profit $9.00. Sales roll up every day.

400,000 IN FOUR MONTHS

I want general agents and managers to handle big territories, employ sub-agents, look after deliveries, advertise and distribute. I will offer you 100 per cent profit. I am organizing my selling force now, and I want you, if you want to make money honestly and rapidly. Exclusive territory given—no charge made. Protection against others running over your field. Co-operation, assistance, personal attention to each man. Complete information free. Investigate.

This is a new proposition. **A positive automatic razor stropper absolutely guaranteed.** A thing all men have dreamed about. Perfect in every detail, under every test. With it you can sharpen to a keen, smooth, velvety edge any razor, **safety or old style**—all the same. Handles any and every blade automatically. Just a few seconds with the Never-Fail Stropper puts a razor in better shape to give a soothing, cooling, satisfying shave, than can an expert operator, no matter how carefully he works. New idea. Men are excited over this little wonder machine—over its mysterious accuracy and perfection. They are eager to buy. Women buy for presents to men. Agents and salesmen coining money. Field untouched. Get territory at once. I want a thousand men—young or old—who are honest and willing to work, to start in this business at once. Act today. Exclusive territory.

One of our men started in selling in Louisiana. Became general agent, controlling extensive territory. At a single time he ordered 50 agents outfits. This man started without any experience as a salesman; but the Never-Fail Stropper caught on so tremendously that he made more money than he ever dreamed of making in his life. No talking is needed. Just show the machine to men and they want it immediately. No modern invention has received such open-armed welcome. Please remember the machine is absolutely guaranteed. It is positively successful under every test and trial. It answers the razor stropping problem of ages. It is a modern invention for modern times, modern perfection and modern men. A half-minute demonstration is all that is necessary.

SEND NO MONEY Just your name and address upon a postal card and I will mail you complete information, details, description of the business, sworn-to proof from men out in the field. I want you to know what this advertisement means to you. I want you to take a territory and make 1911 the biggest year you have ever lived. All that I require is that you stay on the job, keep things moving, and that you keep your promise to me and to your customers. The possibilities are unlimited. Millions will be sold this year. We teach you what to say, and how, when, where to say it. **INVESTIGATE.** It costs you absolutely nothing to learn about this opportunity. Don't delay. Territory is going fast. Write today, and give the name of your county.

ADDRESS SECRETARY

THE NEVER FAIL COMPANY, 996 Colton Bldg., TOLEDO, O.

Two Million Dollars' Worth

of Housefurnishings—3,021 Lines—Sacrificed by the Makers. Sold for CASH or CREDIT at an Equal Price.

The year 1910 was a dull year in furniture. Hundreds of makers at the end of the year were loaded with surplus stocks. They welcomed any offer—even much below cost—to turn warehouse stock into money.

We went to those makers with unlimited money. And we bought up bargain stocks from 180 factories. We bought so low that on hundreds of these articles we can quote half usual prices by selling direct.

All these furnishings—over 3,000—are shown in our Bargain Book No. 24. It makes a mammoth book, but we want to mail it—and mail it free—to everyone who has a home. You may never again see an opportunity to get things for the home so cheap.

Pay As Convenient

If you see something you want here there is no need to pay cash. Our cash and credit prices are exactly identical. Open a charge account, if you wish. Over 600,000 people have such accounts here now.

On the average credit account we allow a year to pay. There is no interest, no security, no red tape. Our customers are all buying things for the home, and we gladly give such people credit. You'll find it convenient to buy on open account.

Bargains In

Furniture	Silverware
Carpets	Chinaware
Rugs	Graphophones
Draperies	Washing Machines
Stoves	Sewing Machines
Ranges	Baby Cabs
Pianos	Lamps and Clocks

Cash or Credit

30 Days to Decide

Nothing we send you is considered a sale until you have it a month. Everything is sent on approval. If you wish to return it for any reason we will pay freight both ways.

Before you buy anything you see the article right in your home. You compare it with others—compare prices with others. You take no risk whatever in letting us send you whatever you want to see.

Bargain Book Free

This mammoth book—size 10½ x 17 inches—picturing 3,021 things for the home, is mailed free for the asking. It will show you how low beautiful things can be sold when the makers must have money. You'll find a hundred things you want and at amazing prices.

Cut out this coupon—now, before you forget it. Send it to us and we will mail the book.

Cut Out This Coupon

SPIEGEL, MAY, STERN CO.
1486 35th Street, Chicago

☐ Mail me the Bargain Book.
☐ Mail me the Stove Catalog.

Name .....

Post Office .....

State .....

I am particularly interested in

.....

High grade 9x12 rug bargains, bought at auction from largest manufacturer in United States. A saving of 30% is guaranteed on every rug. All patterns and colors. Bargain prices as follows:

Tapestry Brussels Rugs, 9x12 ft. ..... $11.95 up
Velvet Rugs, 9x12 ft. .... 13.95 up
Axminster Rugs, 9x12 ft. . 17.50 up

Cash or Credit

No. LX485—English Folding Go-Cart Bargain. Newest 1911 design. We take the factory output at a specially low price. Has steel frame, fabricord leather upholstering and large rubber tires. The best collapsible go-cart on the market.

Factory bargain price **$4.85**

Cash or Credit

No. 50X435—Tufted Back, Upholstered Rocker Bargain. We bought 9,200 at actual factory cost price for spot cash from a manufacturer who required immediate money. This is a beautiful rocker, upholstered in guaranteed fabricord leather. The American quarter-sawed oak frame is finely finished and handsomely carved. A great bargain. Factory bargain price . . **$4.35**

Cash or Credit

No. 30X1820—Steel Range Bargain. Made in our famous Empire factory. One of the grandest ranges ever built. We guarantee a saving of at least one-third on all stoves sold by us. This style, bargain price from . . **$18.20** up, according to size.

Cash or Credit

SPIEGEL, MAY, STERN CO., 1486 35th Street, CHICAGO, ILL.

(117)

On Which Side of the Desk Are You?

The man before the desk works with his hands and is paid for his *labor*.

The man behind the desk works with his head and is paid for his *knowledge*. It is merely a question of KNOWING HOW.

The first step in "knowing how" is simply a matter of cutting out, filling in and mailing us the coupon shown below.

In return we show you how to improve your position or to secure a more congenial occupation and better salary, without loss of time, without neglecting your present work or obligating yourself to pay more than you can comfortably afford.

No text-books to buy — no requirements beyond the ability to read and write, and the ambition to succeed.

Thousands of men, and women, too, in nearly every trade and profession date the beginning of their *success* to the day they *filled in this coupon*. Why not you?

It costs nothing to find out. Take your first step in *your own* advancement.

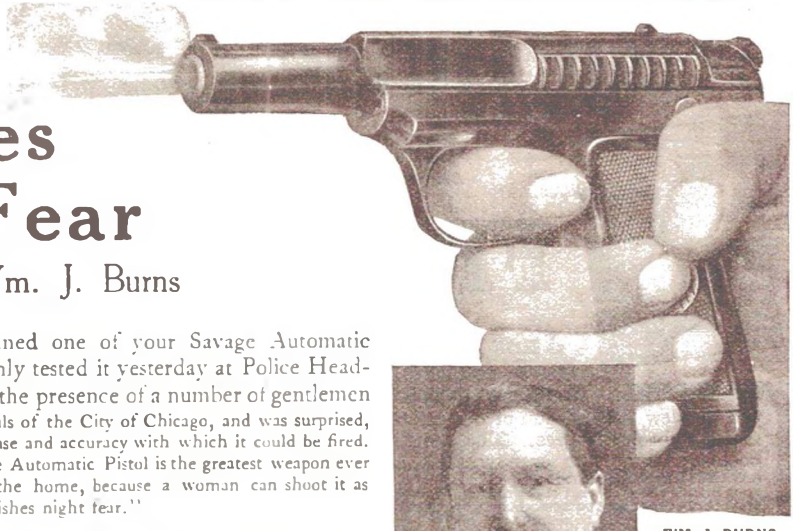
Mark This Coupon To-day

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS,
Box 800, SCRANTON, PA.

Please explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position, trade or profession before which I have marked X

Automobile Running	Civil Service	
Mine Superintendent	Architect	Spanish
Mine Foreman	Chemist	French
Plumbing, Steam Fitting	Gas Engines	German
Concrete Construction	Banking	Italian
Civil Engineer	Building Contractor	
Textile Manufacturing	Architectural Draftsman	
Stationary Engineer	Industrial Designing	
Telephone Expert	Commercial Illustrating	
Mechanical Engineer	Window Trimming	
Mechanical Draftsman	Show Card Writing	
Electrical Engineer	Advertising Man	
Electric Lighting Supt.	Stenographer	
Electric Wireman	Bookkeeper	

Name _____
Present Occupation _____
Street and No. _____
City _____ State _____



Banishes Night Fear

Says Detective Wm. J. Burns

"RECENTLY I obtained one of your Savage Automatic Pistols and thoroughly tested it yesterday at Police Headquarters Target Practice, in the presence of a number of gentlemen among whom were police officials of the City of Chicago, and was surprised, as were those present, with the ease and accuracy with which it could be fired.

"In my opinion the Savage Automatic Pistol is the greatest weapon ever invented for the protection of the home, because a woman can shoot it as expertly as a crack shot. It banishes night fear."

Many great gun men have made similar comments on the new Savage Automatic including such as Col. W. F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill," Dr. Carver, W. A. Pinkerton, Walter Duncan, Major Sylvester; and Bat Masterson has even written a book about it, entitled "The Tenderfoot's Turn." Sent free.

If you want to do the best thing you ever did for your home, you'll get a Savage Automatic before tonight.

Savage Arms Co., 865 Savage Avenue, Utica, N. Y.

WM. J. BURNS
was famous in the San Francisco graft investigation, noted Montoe counterfeiting case, etc. Wm. J. Burns National Detective Agency protects Am. Bankers' Assn.,—over 11,000 banks.

THE NEW SAVAGE AUTOMATIC

Cycling—A Returning Fashion

The proved perfection in design of these famous bicycles contains many distinctive features of great merit found only in

POPE

QUALITY
Bicycles

CAUTION

Thousands of very low grade wheels with fancy paint and deceptive names are being sold *at high grade prices.*

If you see a name-plate that you do not know, *beware.*

Everyone knows Pope quality. Pope wheels are *safe to buy and ride.* $25 to $100.

The bicycle is the most widely used vehicle, because it serves for utility, pleasure, exercise, health, economy and business. Over 300,000 new bicycles were made and sold last year.

This trade mark is on the frame of every genuine Columbia, Rambler, Cleveland and Tribune Bicycle.

THE POPE DAILY SERVICE BICYCLE

A new proposition. Send for full particulars of this magnificent wheel and our convenient method of selling it.

The Pope Manufacturing Co., 466 Capitol Ave., Hartford, Conn.
There is a catalogue for each make. Dealers wanted everywhere.

Camp Guide Sent FREE!

Just your name and address on the Coupon below brings you the new 1911 edition of our famous Camp Guide, absolutely free. The most practical book on camp life ever written. Gives you **practical** information written by experienced men who have spent years in camps in every part of the country. **This camp guide tells you everything you need to know about camping**—It tells you how to camp successfully and enjoyably—gives you the information that you could not **possibly** secure otherwise except by actual and often disagreeable experience.

Get Ready NOW for Your VACATION!

The time for planning is growing short. **Go camping.** You cannot find a more healthful or enjoyable way of using the time at your disposal. **But when you do go—go right!** Send for our new Camp Guide and Catalog the first thing you do. You will find listed and described the largest line of Tents, Camper's Supplies, Sails and Canvas Specialties carried by any manufacturer in the United States. **We sell direct from our huge factories to you.** You are sure of getting the **very highest qualities** it is possible to obtain **at less** than you would have to pay at retail for decidedly inferior goods.

Look at these Wonderful Values

This 7x7 ft. Wall Tent, made of the very best quality 8-oz. Single Filling Duck, cut and made with the most extreme care.

A simply astounding bargain at only $5.45

Family Compartment Tent, 9x16½ ft. Made of the best selected quality of 10-oz. Double Filling Duck. May be divided into rooms for eating and sleeping to suit convenience. Insures absolute privacy. The ideal tent for family or small party. **Specially priced at only $22.50**

Now Write for our FREE Camp Guide and Catalog

—don't bother with a letter—just your name and address on the attached coupon will bring you this great book by return mail. Whether you intend going camping this year or not, you should be sure to get this free book at once. You should certainly get our lowest prices, our bed-rock factory prices, on the very finest line of canvas specialties and camper's goods that it is possible to produce.

H. Channon Company.
Department 1075
Market and Randolph Streets
Chicago, Ill.
Don't Bother with a Letter
Send the coupon for this FREE book today

TEAR ALONG THIS LINE

H. Channon Company.
32 Market Street
Dept. 1075 Chicago

Gentlemen:—Kindly forward me free, postpaid, your new 1911 Catalogue and Camp Guide

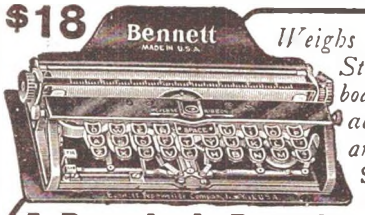
Name .....

Address .....

.....

No letter necessary; just send the coupon

$18 Bennett MADE IN U.S.A.



Weighs but 4½ lbs. Standard Keyboard 84 characters. Guaranteed fully.

Sent on 10 Days FREE Trial.

A Practical, Portable Typewriter, only $18

No excuse to *ever* be unbusiness-like in your correspondence, when you can *always* have the **Bennett Typewriter** with you. No larger, case and all, than a book. Takes a space only 2x5x11 in. Writes letters or orders neatly and swiftly, and provides an extra copy. 84 characters same as big machines, with only a tenth as many parts—hence, its low price. Quality guaranteed. Made in the Elliott-Fisher Billing Machine Factory.

10 Days FREE Trial

You need the Bennett for use on the train, at hotels, home or business—every time you have 100 pages typed, you spend the price of a Bennett. Own a **Bennett,** be business-like and save money. Write us today that you are ready to let the **Bennett** prove to you in person its practicability, neatness and speed. We will send you our catalog, samples of Bennett work, and explain fully our 10 day trial offer.

Slips into grip or pocket like a book

B. R. Bennett Typewriter Co.
366 Broadway, New York City

Too Much Florida Land Has Been Sold

to people who have never seen it. Write Brooksville Board of Trade for BOOK OF FACTS, describing different kinds of Florida soil. We have no land to sell, but want settlers and investors to develop richest district in Florida, according to the State Dept. of Agriculture; not pine land, not sand, but high and rolling with rich dark top soil and clay subsoil. No fertilizer, irrigation or drainage necessary. Raises 80 bu. of corn per acre. Best for citrus fruits, truck and staple crops. An industrious man with $500 to $1,000 capital can be independent here. 300 ft. above sea, no swamps or marshes. Ideal climate, schools, churches, towns, good roads, all conveniences. Homeseekers and investors please investigate. We need you and will help you.

Board of Trade

Box 273 Brooksville, Florida

Ask the Salesman to Explain

the meaning of the two most important words in the whole history of shoe making—

GOODYEAR WELT

Shoes made on Goodyear Welt Machines are marked by comfort, durability and style.

They are *Smooth Inside*, because no thread penetrates the insole to tantalize the foot.

They are equal to shoes sewed by hand in the essential qualities you require, and can be bought at one-third the price.

Only good material can be used in shoes made on the rapid machines of the Goodyear Welt System.

Write Today for the following Booklets which will be Sent You Without Cost:

1. Contains an alphabetical list of over five hundred shoes sold under a special name or trade-mark, made by the Goodyear Welt process.

2. Describes the Goodyear Welt process in detail and pictures the sixty marvelous machines employed.

3. "The Secret of the Shoe—An Industry Transformed." The true story of a great American achievement.

4. "An Industrial City." Illustrated—descriptive of the great model factory of the United Shoe Machinery Company at Beverly, Massachusetts.

UNITED SHOE MACHINERY COMPANY
BOSTON, MASS.

Six Months to Pay

You will be surprised and delighted when you receive your copy of the latest edition of Woolf's Encyclopædia of Bargains—now fresh from the presses. This book will **prove** to you that **you** may be a style leader among your friends—wear clothes of absolutely proper perfection—and pay for them in little sums just as is most convenient to you. We allow you six full months in which to pay for anything you buy of us, and as we are one of the

Largest Establishments of This Kind in the World

we absolutely guarantee perfect satisfaction or your money back.

Ladies' Suits, Skirts, Waists, Petticoats, Hair Goods, Coats, Dresses, Corsets, Underwear, Millinery, etc., etc.

Men's Suits, Raincoats, Overcoats, Top Coats, Hats, Trousers, Vests, Coats, etc., etc.

We Ship on Approval

We were the first concern to offer wearing apparel on credit by mail. We have thousands of satisfied customers all over the country. **Our transactions are absolutely confidential.**

This beautiful two-piece, all worsted, Oxford gray, self-striped, fashionably tailored Spring Suit **$10.95** Cash with order **$2.75.** Monthly Payments..**$1.40**

Send Your Name at Once

for this beautiful Encyclopædia of bargains.

Ask for your free copy of Book No. 26. Address

WOOLF'S INCORPORATED
Dept. 941 Douglas Park Station, Chicago

Rémoh Gems

Not Imitations

A marvelously reconstructed gem—the greatest triumph of the electric furnace. ***Looks*** like a ***diamond—wears*** like a ***diamond—will cut glass***—stands filing, fire and acid tests like a diamond—guaranteed to contain no glass. Remoh Gems have no paste, foil or artificial backing—their brilliancy is guaranteed forever. One thirtieth the cost of a diamond. These remarkable gems are set only in 14 Karat Solid Gold Mountings. Sent on approval—your money cheerfully refunded if not perfectly satisfactory. It will be well worth your while to get our De-Luxe Jewel Book—yours for the asking. Cut out and mail the coupon below—or write a postal. Address

Remoh Jewelry Co.,
415 N. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.

Remoh Jewelry Co.,
415N. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.
Send your De-Luxe Jewel Book.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

State.....

Sign And Mail This Coupon Today

In answering any advertisement on this page it is desirable that you mention THE ARGOSY.

Send a postal for our big new Style Book—FREE

It Tells You How to Save Half Your Clothes' Money

That's interesting—isn't it? And it is as **true** as it is interesting. We have established here, the **largest** custom tailoring business in this country—and it has taken us twelve years to do it. During all those twelve years, our motto has been—"Make better clothes and save every penny of your customer's money that you possibly can." Adherence to this principle has been rewarded—and we are now able, because of increased buying and tailoring facilities, to offer even a greater saving than ever before. We tailor clothes **only** to your individual measure at

SUIT TO ORDER $12.50 to $30.00 We Pay the Express

We have never had a stock garment in our establishment. We guarantee to fit you as well, or better than the highest priced metropolitan tailor. Our woolens are selected both here and abroad by the best judges known to the trade. They are ultra stylish and exclusive. Our self-measuring system is extremely simple and absolutely accurate, and we guarantee not only to fit you, but to entirely please you. Money back without a murmur if you ask for it.

New Edition of the Style Book is Ready—It's Free

In it you will find cloth samples of the very latest weaves for spring and Summer—also fashion plates showing the latest London and New York Styles—and a volume of commendatory letters from men who **know** our clothes and know how satisfactory they are. **The First National Bank of Milwaukee** (our bankers—Resources, $22,000,000.00) will tell you of our responsibility. Write at once for detailed information and Style Book, which is **Free.** Let us be your tailors. You will be surprised at the real beauty of our offerings—delighted at the money you will save. Send a postal now.

KING TAILORING COMPANY
406 W. Water St., Milwaukee, Wis.

Magnificent Steel Launch $96

Complete With Engine, Ready to Run

18-20-23 and 27 ft. boats at proportionate prices. All launches tested and fitted with Detroit two-cycle reversible engines with speed controlling lever—simplest engine made—starts without cranking—has only 3 moving parts—anyone can run it. **The Safe Launch**—absolutely non-sinkable—needs no boathouse. All boats fitted with air-tight compartments—cannot sink, leak or rust. We are sole owners of the patents for the manufacture of rolled steel, lock-seamed steel boats. Orders filled the day they are received. Boats shipped to every part of the world. **Free Catalog. Steel Rowboats, $20.** (83)

MICHIGAN STEEL BOAT CO., 1200 Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, Mich., U. S. A.

HAY'S HAIR HEALTH

RESTORES COLOR

To Gray or Faded Hair

Removes dandruff, invigorates the scalp, and stimulates a healthy growth of hair. Is not a dye. Satisfaction promised or money refunded.

$1.00 and 50c at drug and department stores or direct upon receipt of price and dealer's name. Send 10c for sample bottle.

Philo Hay Specialties Company, Newark, N. J., U. S. A.

REFUSE ALL SUBSTITUTES

HAY'S HARFINA SOAP

is unequalled for the complexion, toilet, bath, red, rough, chapped hands and face. Preserves and beautifies and keeps the skin soft and healthy. 25c drug and department stores.

Daggett & Ramsdell's Perfect Cold Cream

FOR SUNBURN AND ROUGH SKIN

TO prevent sunburn, rough skin and other summer complexion blemishes rub Daggett & Ramsdell's Perfect Cold Cream into the pores of the exposed skin before going out, and protect it from injury from hot sun, roughening winds and flying particles of dust. After returning, apply Daggett & Ramsdell's Perfect Cold Cream liberally, with a hot wet cloth. It is the easiest and most satisfactory method of removing dust and grime, both from the surface and from the pores of the skin. It instantly relieves burning and that drawn feeling. Tubes 10c, 25c, 50c; Jars, 35c, 50c, 85c and $1.50. Write for

FREE SAMPLE

This sample will be your good friend and win your friendship.

Address Dept. G

DAGGETT & RAMSDELL
D. & R. Building. New York

GET $1200

OF THIS

$500,000.00

NEXT MONTH

$500,000.00 to change hands

One cent starts you. Any honest, industrious man or woman can enter.

HURRY! HURRY! HURRY!

Thousands of dollars already distributed—going on daily. Listen!

10 people receive over **$40,000**

$2,212 in two weeks went to Kurstad (a farmer)
$1,200 one month, **$1,100** another to Stoneman (an artist)
$13,245 in 110 days credited to Zimmerman (a farmer)
$3,000 in 30 days to Wilson (a banker)
$1,685 in 75 days received by Rasputan agent)
$800 in 11 days and **$1,000** to date, received by Oviatt (a minister)
$2,800 to Rogers (a surveyor)
$10,800 to Juell (a clerk)
$2,200 to Hoard (a doctor)
$5,000 to Hart (a farmer)

These are just a few—hundreds sharing similar prosperity. Reads like fiction, yet it's the gospel truth. **Proven by sworn statements—addresses—investigation—any proof you want.**

M. Juell

R. T. Zimmerman

M. Stoneman

Don't envy these people—join hands—Win a fortune.

Do as they are doing. Let us give you the same high grade opportunity, supplying a out of 10 homes with **Allen's Wonderful Bath Apparatus.**

New, Different, Grand.

Wonderful but true—**gives every home a bath room for only $6.50**; excels others costing $200. Abolishes tubs, bowls, buckets, wash rags and sponges. **Turns any room into a bath room with hot or cold running water.** Think of it! So energizes water—one gallon simple; cleanses almost automatically; **no plumbing—no water works**; self heating. **Gives cleansing, friction, massage and shower baths.** Makes bathing **5 minute operation.** Operates wherever water is obtainable. Easily carried from room to room or packed in grip when traveling. So simple a child can operate. **Truly marvelous!** A modern home-bathing without the drudgery, inconvenience, annoyance, mess of lugging water, filling tubs, emptying, cleaning, putting away. Could anything be more popular, easier to sell? Agents, it's simply irresistible. Think of millions who want bath rooms. Unquestionably best thing ever happened for agents. **What a winner**—at sight people exclaim—"There, there, that's what I've been longing for." **No competition.** Patent new—field unworked—demand enormous—price insignificant—fascinating, dignified, exciting work—**everything just right for an overwhelming business.** A demonstrated, gigantic Success. You see what others are making—why not yourself? **Used by U. S. Government.** No wonder Beem writes: "I averaged **$164.25 WEEKLY FOR 3 MONTHS,** Wilson sold **102 in 11 days**; Hart **16 in 3 hours**; Langley **$115 worth the first day**; Reese solicited **60 people—sold 55.** Why shouldn't Cashman say: "Men who couldn't sell your goods couldn't sell bread in a famine," and Lodewick, "Lucky I answered ad: it's great: **money coming fast; 17 orders to-day.**"

$500,000.00

worth will be sold easily this season. 75 per cent. profit to you. **Experience unnecessary.**

Sectional View

FREE SAMPLE AND CREDIT TO ACTIVE AGENTS

Be first—get exclusive rights—own a rip-roaring business. Show the world that all you need is a real opportunity. Investigate for your own use anyhow.

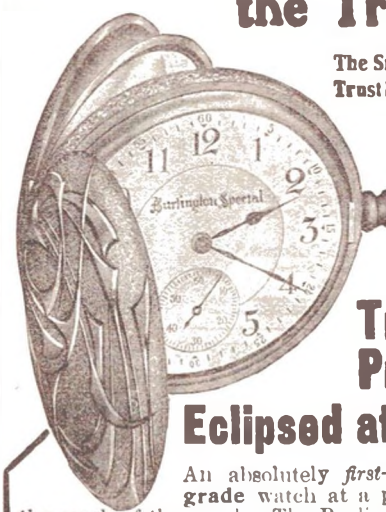
Make $8,000 this year.

Spare time means $10 daily. **One cent starts you—a mere postal**, containing your name and address—that's all. Send no money—investigate first. Send to-day for amazing offer—**it's free.** You will forever associate this act with abundant prosperity.

ALLEN MFG. CO., 3314 Allen Bldg., Toledo, Ohio

Fighting the Trust!!

The Smashing Anti-Trust Fight Now On!



Trust Prices Eclipsed at Last!

An absolutely *first-class* **high-grade** watch at a price within the reach of the people—The Burlington Special Anti-Trust Watch.

The World's Masterpiece of watch manufacture—the Burlington Special—now sold direct to the public at its *rock-bottom, anti-trust* price (and besides without middlemen's profits.

We do not care what it costs—we *will* uphold our independent line and so we are making the most sweeping, baffling offer ever made on watches.

Some trusts are legal and some are not. **We do not say that the watch trust is illegal; but we do say that the methods** of the giant factories in making "contracts" with dealers **to uphold double prices** on watches is very **unfair—unfair to us and unfair to you. Hence our direct** offer on the Burlington at the **very same price the Wholesale Jeweler must pay.**

This is *your* opportunity—**NOW**—while this great Anti-trust offer lasts—get the best watch made anywhere at one-third the price of other high-grade watches. Furthermore, in order to fight the Trust most effectually, we even allow terms of **$2.50 a month** on our finest watch—easiest possible payments at the rock-bottom price, the identical price the **Wholesale** jeweler must pay.

Watch Book on request

Now do not miss this opportunity. At least we want you to know about WATCHES and WATCH PRICES. Write Today.

Be posted

Send a postal or letter or simply mail coupon without sending a letter and get the free book.

BURLINGTON WATCH CO.
Dept. 1075
19th and Marshall Blvd. CHICAGO

Burlington Watch Co., Dept. 1075, 19th and Marshall Blvd., CHICAGO

Please send me *without obligation* and prepaid your free book on watches and explanations of your $1,000.00 challenge—with full explanations of your cash or $2.50 a month offer on the Burlington Watch.

Name.....

Address.....

No Letter Necessary Coupon will do

LABLACHE
FACE POWDER

AS SPRING APPROACHES

You cannot depend on the weather—but you can on LABLACHE, that greatest of beautifiers. It is Nature's protection and keeps the skin smooth and velvety. Invisible, adherent and delicately fragrant. Used and endorsed the world over by women who know.

Refuse substitutes.

They may be dangerous. Flesh, White, Pink or Cream, 50 cents a box, of druggists or by mail. *Send 10 cents for a sample box.*

BEN LEVY CO., French Perfumers,
Dept 41, 125 Kingston Street,
BOSTON, MASS.

$39.00 BUYS THIS Dining Room Suite

Rich, artistic and durable furniture at half retail price. Similar suites in stores cost $75 and up. Our price, shipped K. D. finished complete, **only $39.** By doing the assembling and finishing you make this big saving. It's easy and simple. No furniture equals Grand Rapids quality in style or value. Decide now to possess this suite. It will delight you—brighten and freshen your dining-room—make meal time more enjoyable. Chairs to match if you want them. Satisfaction guaranteed. Send for free catalog No. 43, full of bargains—handsomely pictured. Discover how reasonably you can furnish your home with "Home-Built" furniture.

Grand Rapids Furniture Mfg. Co.
43 Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich.

"DON'T SHOUT"

"I hear you. I can hear now as well as anybody. 'How?' Oh, something new—THE MORLEY PHONE. 've a pair in my ears now, but they are invisible. I would not know I had them in, myself, only that I hear all right."

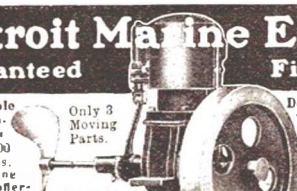
The **Morley Phone** for the

DEAF

makes low sounds and whispers plainly heard. Invisible, comfortable, weightless and harmless. Anyone can adjust it. Over one hundred thousand sold. Write for booklet and testimonials

THE MORLEY CO., Dept. 752, Perry Bldg., Phila.

Detroit Marine Engine
Guaranteed **Five Years**



You are the sole judge of the engine and its merits. 25,000 satisfied users. **Greatest Engine Bargain ever offered.** Nothing complicated or liable to get out of order. Waterproof ignition system. **Money refunded if you are not satisfied.**

Only 3 Moving Parts.

Starts without cranking. Reverses while in motion.

Demonstrator Agents wanted in every boating community. Special wholesale price on the first outfit sold. Single cyl., 2-4 h. p.; double cyl., 8-20 h. p.; 4 cyl., 20-60 h. p. Suitable for any boat, canoe to cruiser. Also railroad track car. All engines complete with boat fittings. Free Catalog.

Detroit Engine Works, 1200 **Jefferson Ave., Detroit, Mich.**

LYON & HEALY
30-84 ADAMS STREET, CHICAGO

will mail, free, their newly enlarged Catalog of Band Instruments, Uniforms and Equipments. Hundreds of Fine Illustrations describing every article required by Bands or Drum Corps, including Uniforms, Trimmings, etc. Contains Instructions for Amateur Bands, Exercises and Scales, Drum Major's Tactics, By-Laws, Selected List of Band Music

---

NO-SMELL FRYING PAN ATTACHMENT

By attaching to any frying pan it does away with all smell—smoke—smut. One of the greatest little inventions of the century. A simple attachment that revolutionizes the cooking art. Send 25 cents for one to day. Agents wanted everywhere.

ARNAN MFG. CO.
No. 27, City National Bank Building, Utica, N. Y.

Want Men
Like YOU, Who Want to Make $3,000 A Year or More

We need a good live man right now in your territory to handle real estate deals for us. No experience or capital necessary. I will teach you the Real Estate Business, the Commercial, Law and Business Methods, then appoint you representative in your locality. Easy work; large profits. Write for free book.

MORDEN LAND & LOAN CO.,
402 Palace Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn.

Sent On Approval. Send No Money
WE WILL TRUST YOU TEN DAYS
Choice of natural wavy or straight hair

$2.00 Hair Switch

Send a lock of your hair, and we will mail a 22-inch short stem fine human hair switch to match. If you find it a big bargain, remit $2.00 in ten days, or sell 3 and GET YOUR SWITCH FREE. Extra shades a little more. Inclose 5c postage. Free beauty book showing latest style of hair dressing—also high grade switches, pompadours, wigs, puffs, etc.

ANNA AYERS,
Dept. A 1
119 Quincy St.,
Chicago.

Wear Diamonds

Gratify your love for Diamonds at small cost. The taste for precious stones is a mark of refinement. Mexican Diamonds look and wear as well as the finest South African diamonds yet cost 1/30 the price. Experts seldom can distinguish between the two. Mexican Diamonds stand acid tests, are perfectly diamond cut and polished, and their wonderful, dazzling, blue-white brilliancy is **Guaranteed Permanently Brilliant. Write Today for Free Illustrated Catalogue and Our Free Examination Approval Offer.**

THE MEXICAN DIAMOND IMPORTING COMPANY
Dept. EP 5, Las Cruces, New Mexico

WHEEL CHAIRS

A Wheel Chair is often an invalid's greatest comfort. We offer over 75 styles of these easy, self-propelling and Invalid's Rolling Chairs, with latest improvements. **Ship direct from factory to you, freight prepaid,** and sell on

THIRTY DAYS' TRIAL.

Liberal Discounts to all sending for free Catalogue NOW.

CORDON MFG. CO., 473 MADISON AVE., TOLEDO, O.

WHITE VALLEY GEMS

IMPORTED from FRANCE

SEE THEM BEFORE PAYING!

These Gems are chemical white sapphires. Can't be told from diamonds except by an expert. Stand acid and fire diamond tests. So hard they can't be filed and **will cut glass.** Brilliancy guaranteed 25 years. All mounted in 14K solid gold diamond mountings. Will send you any style ring, pin or stud on approval—all charges prepaid—**no money in advance.**

☞ **Write for Free Illustrated booklet, special prices and ring measure.**

WHITE VALLEY GEM CO., 702 Saks Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind.

$27.00 PROFIT In One Day

Machine a sure money-getter—better than a mint. That's what Mr. J. R. Gray, of Pickens, Miss., writes.

The Wonder Cannon Camera

will do the same for you. It is the biggest **outdoor money-maker** to-day. Makes photo buttons at the rate of 8 a minute. **No experience needed.** Write at once for

Free Catalog

Be your own boss. Be independent on only a $25.00 investment. This buys a complete outfit—**Wonder Cannon Camera,** Tripod and Supplies to make 400 finished photo buttons. Will ship outfit upon receipt of $5.00 deposit—balance C. O. D.

Don't waste valuable time getting started in this Big Money - Getting Business. Fairs, street corners and all outdoor attractions offer big opportunities to hustlers.

Chicago Ferrotype Co.
Dept. A 9 Chicago, Ill.

Get Our Book Free

"Photography—Pleasure and Profit"

IT'S full of vitally valuable facts for amateur or professional; suggestions how to get greater pleasure and profit from your camera. Portraits of 52 leading American photographers. Reproductions of photographs that have brought $10 to $500 each. Many illustrations and sample pages from and detailed information about

The Complete Self-Instructing LIBRARY OF PRACTICAL PHOTOGRAPHY

the greatest and only complete system of photographic training. Enables you to do more and better work, cuts out waste of material. The training covers every branch of photography and actually *more than pays for itself.* Send postal at once for book and special offer.

American Photo Text Book Co., 305 Adams Av., Scranton, Pa.

Better Pictures — Less Cost

Be a Motion Picture Playwright

Make your ideas work for you. We teach you how to develop them into plots, or scenarios for which film manufacturers pay $15 to $100—then cry for more. Previous literary experience unnecessary. Descriptive booklet **FREE.**

Associated Motion Picture Schools
923 Chicago Opera House Block Chicago, Illinois

If you like "The Argosy"

why not bridge the gap till the next one comes out by reading the current issue of

THE CAVALIER

The May number, now ready, contains a splendid line of brisk stories, including Two Complete Novels,

"Trouble With the Lid Off"

By R. K. Thompson

and

"The Fake Doctor"

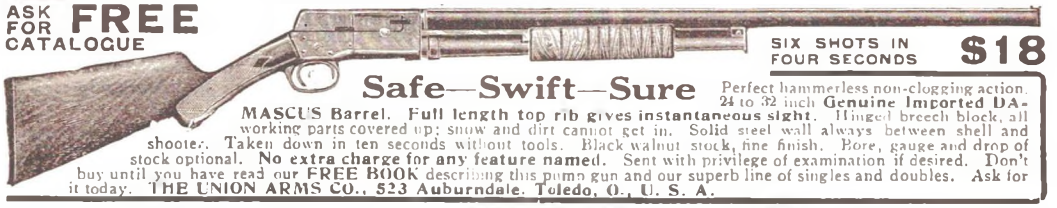
By Joseph Ivers Lawrence

A New Serial, "A Flight from a Throne," by Lillian Bennet-Thompson, begins; and there is a wide variety of stirring Short Stories, including a capital humorous yarn by C. Langton Clarke, "Mr. Scales Scores at Last."

192 pages for 10 cents. One dollar by the year.
Ask your newsdealer for The Cavalier.

The Frank A. Munsey Company
175 Fifth Avenue, New York

ASK FOR **FREE** CATALOGUE



SIX SHOTS IN FOUR SECONDS **$18**

Safe—Swift—Sure

Perfect hammerless non-clogging action. 24 to 32 inch **Genuine Imported DA-MASCUS Barrel. Full length top rib gives instantaneous sight.** Hinged breech block, all working parts covered up; snow and dirt cannot get in. Solid steel wall always between shell and shooter. Taken down in ten seconds without tools. Black walnut stock, fine finish. Bore, gauge and drop of stock optional. **No extra charge for any feature named.** Sent with privilege of examination if desired. Don't buy until you have read our **FREE BOOK** describing this pump gun and our superb line of singles and doubles. Ask for it today. **THE UNION ARMS CO., 523 Auburndale, Toledo, O., U. S. A.**

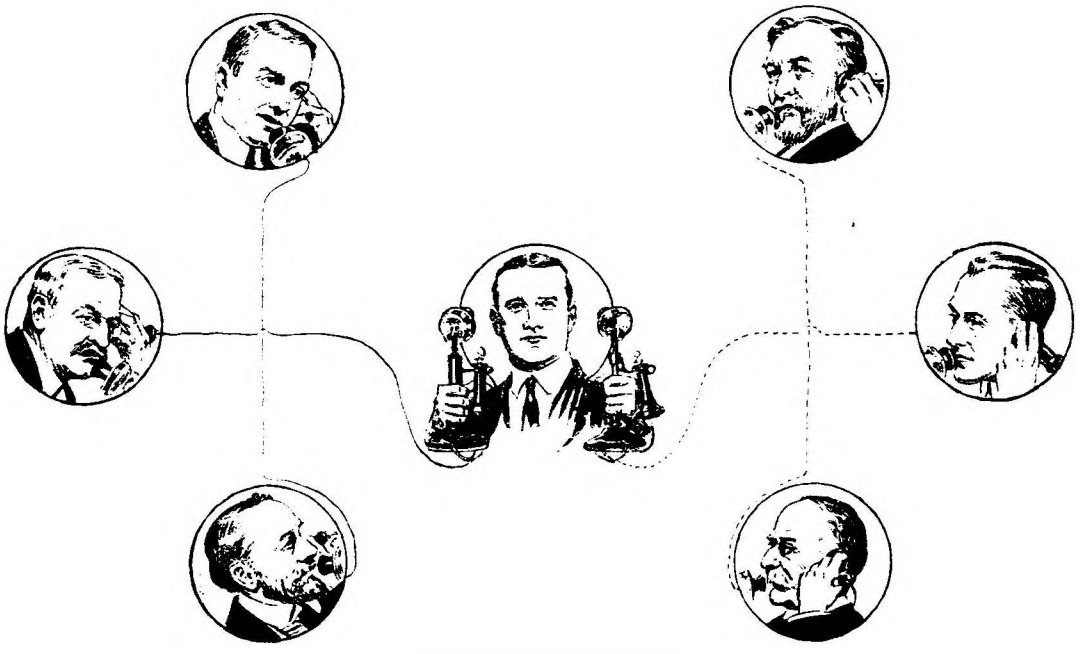
Low Prices to Kill the Boat Trust!

This Handsome, Graceful, Seaworthy, Speedy Runabout Complete, Only $94.50

16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30 and 35 Footers at Proportionate Prices

We have the largest power-boat factory in the world. We build and sell more pleasure crafts than all the concerns in the Authorized Thirteen-Million-Dollar Boat Trust combined. No one has such facilities. That's why we build Detroit Boats and Engines so good that no one in the Trust can ever imitate them. Our great business enables us to sell at the smallest profits. That's why we are able to sell Detroit Boats and Engines **at the smallest profits,** so the Boat Trust has declared war on us—but our low prices will kill the Trust. We ship you a Detroit Boat immediately on order. All sizes in stock. **Send today for our large, handsome, Illustrated Catalog, mailed free,** which describes 64 different models in all sizes, ready to ship, equipped with the most reliable and efficient marine motor ever produced, **guaranteed for five years.** Get our **new** confidential proposition and special prices to demonstrating agents. (114)

DETROIT BOAT COMPANY, 1105 Jefferson Ave., Detroit, Mich.



Half Service Or Double Expense

TWO telephone systems in one town mean a divided community or a forced duplication of apparatus and expense.

Some of the people are connected with one system, some are connected with the other system; and each group receives partial service.

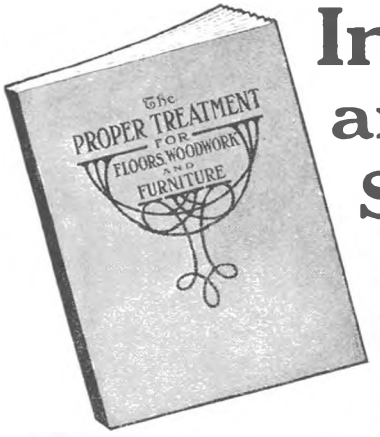
Only those receive full service who subscribe for the telephones of both systems.

Neither system can fully meet the needs of the public, any more than a single system could meet the needs of the public if cut in two and half the telephones discontinued.

What is true of a single community is true of the country at large.

The Bell System is established on the principle of one system and one policy, to meet the demands for universal service, a whole service for all the people.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES



Instruction Book and Wood Finishing Samples FREE

HERE'S the best book ever published on artistic wood finishing, the work of famous experts, illustrated in five colors. For a limited time, we will mail it FREE, postage paid, together with samples of

Johnson's Wood Finishes

Yes! You — yourself — can beautifully finish or refinish all furniture, woodwork or floors in the latest and most artistic shades — in little time — at small expense — with

Johnson's Wood Dye and Prepared Wax

If you are interested in craftsmanship—if you want the correct finish on a new piece of furniture — if you are *building or remodeling* — if you want to brighten up or change the color of any piece of furniture or of woodwork or floors—either hard or soft wood—if interested in basketry—get this expert Instruction Book and FREE SAMPLES AT YOUR LEADING PAINT DEALERS.

Johnson's Wood Dye is made in many beautiful greens, browns, reds, etc. It is not a mere stain but a penetrating dye which colors the wood so deeply that if it becomes scratched or marred the natural color is not disclosed. It brings out the beauty of the grain without raising it, giving a soft, rich, permanent color. A coat of Johnson's Prepared Wax over the dye gives that beautiful, dull, artistic finish so much admired today. If you prefer a higher gloss than the wax gives apply a coat of UNDER-LAC over the dye and then one coat of Prepared Wax.

Under-Lac is a thin, elastic spirit finish very much superior to shellac or varnish. It dries hard in less than an hour. Under-Lac is just what you want for your linoleum and oil-cloth; it brings out the pattern, making it bright and glossy like new, protects it from wear and makes cleaning easy. It dries so the floors may be walked on in an hour.

Go to your leading paint dealer for Free Instruction Book and Free Samples of Johnson's Wood Finishes, which we supply to him for his customers' use. If your dealer hasn't samples of our Wood Dye, Under-Lac and Prepared Wax, and the Books, we'll send them to you postpaid for the name of your dealer in paint. In writing mention shade of Dye wanted and Instruction Book, Edition No. AR 5.

S. C. Johnson & Son, *"The Wood Finishing Authorities,"* **Racine, Wis.**

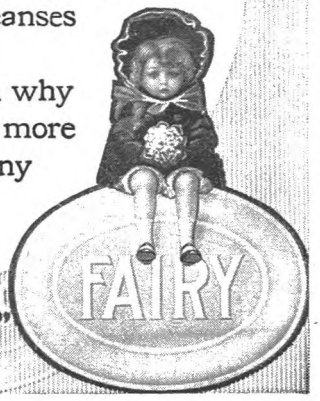
Children Like Fairy Soap

Its whiteness suggests its purity — and appeals to them. It floats always within easy reach — the youngster doesn't have to dive for it. The shape of the cake is oval — it fits the hand to a nicety.

Being made from edible products, Fairy Soap agrees with even the tender skin of a babe, and cleanses thoroughly without irritating.

Try Fairy Soap in your nursery and learn why — though its price is but 5c — it possesses more soap virtues than any other soap at any price.

THE N. K. FAIRBANK COMPANY
CHICAGO



"Have You a little 'Fairy' in Your Home?"

THE MUNSEY PRESS, NEW YORK