

EVERY WEEK

OCT. 3, 1925

Western Story Magazine

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15
Cents

**BIG, CLEAN STORIES
OF OUTDOOR LIFE**

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TRADING CO.
2328 K ST.



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L.
Hastings
Cody

Electrical Experts are in Big Demand!

—L.L. Cooke!

Look What These Cooke Trained Men are Earning



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"Thanks to your interesting Course I made over \$700 in 24 days in Radio. Of course, this is a little above the average but I run from \$10 to \$40 clear profit every day; you can see what your training has done for me."

FRANCIS G. McNABIL,
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\$70 to \$80 a Week for Jacquot

"Now I am specializing in auto-electricity and battery work and make from \$70 to \$80 a week and I am just getting started. I don't believe there is another school in the world like yours. Your lessons are a real joy to study."

ROBERT JACQUOT,
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\$20 a Day for Schreck

"Use my name as a reference and depend on me as a booster. The biggest thing I ever did was answer your advertisement. I am averaging better than \$500 a month from my own business now. I used to make \$18 a week."

A. SCHRECK,
Phoenix, Ariz.

Plant Engineer — Pay Raised 150%

"I was a dumbbell in electricity until I got in touch with you, Mr. Cooke, but now I have charge of a big plant including 600 motors and direct a force of 34 men—electricians, helpers, etc. My salary has gone up more than 160%."

GEORGE ILLINGWORTH,
63 Calumet Road,
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5 big outfits given to you — no extra charge

The "Cooke" Trained Man is the "Big Pay" Man

I Will Train You at Home to fill a Big-Pay Job!



L. L. COOKE
Chief Engineer

It's a shame for you to earn \$15 or \$20 or \$30 a week, when in the same six days as an Electrical Expert you could make \$70 to \$200—and do it easier—not work half so hard. Why then remain in the small-pay game, in a line of work that offers no chance, no big promotion, no big income? Fit yourself for a real job in the great electrical industry. I'll show you how.

Be an Electrical Expert Earn \$3,500 to \$10,000 a Year

Your Satisfaction Guaranteed

So sure am I that you can learn Electricity—so sure am I that after studying with me, you, too, can get into the "big money" class in Electrical work, that I will guarantee under bond to return every single penny paid me in tuition, if, when you have finished my Course, you are not satisfied it was the best investment you ever made. And back of me in my guarantee, stands the Chicago Engineering Works, Inc., a two million dollar institution, thus assuring to every student enrolled, not only a wonderful training in Electricity, but an unsurpassed Student Service as well.

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I want to send you my Electrical Book and Proof Lessons, both Free. These cost you nothing, and you'll enjoy them. Make the start today for a bright future in Electricity. Send in Coupon—NOW.

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Chicago Engineering
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L. L. COOKE, The Man Who Makes "Big-Pay" Men

Send me at once without obligation your big illustrated book and complete details of your Home Study Course in Electricity, including your outfit and employment service offers.

Name

Address

Occupation

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FOR MY
FREE
BOOK

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J. E. GREENSLADE

JACK WARD
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ChicagoE. WYN N
PortlandCHARLES V.
CHAMPION,
Illinois

"I didn't want to work for small pay. Easily proved Mr. Greenslade was right—over \$1,000 every month last year."

"After 10 years in the railway mail service I decided to make a change. Earned more than \$1,000 the first 30 days."

"Last week my earnings amounted to \$354.37; this week will go over \$100. Thanks to the N. S. T. A."

"I'm now President, and my earnings for 1925 will easily exceed the five figure mark, thanks to your training."

You're Fooling Yourself

If You Think These Big Pay Records Are Due to LUCK!

But don't take my word for it! When I tell you that you can quickly increase your earning power; I'LL PROVE IT! FREE! I'll show you hundreds of men like yourself who have done it. And I'll show you how you can do it, too.

I'LL come directly to the point. First you'll say, "I could never do it! These men were lucky." But remember the men whose pictures are shown above are only four out of thousands and if you think it's luck that has suddenly raised thousands of men into the big pay class you're fooling yourself!

Easy to Increase Pay

But let's get down to your own case. You want more money. You want the good things in life, a comfortable home of your own where you can entertain, a snappy car, membership in a good club, good clothes, advantages for your loved ones, travel and a place of importance in your community. All this can be yours. And I'll prove it to you, Free.

First of all get this one thing right: such achievement is not luck—it's KNOWING HOW! And KNOWING HOW in a field in which your opportunities and rewards are ten times greater than in other work. In short, I'll prove that I can make you a Master Salesman—and you know the incomes good salesmen make.

Every one of the four men shown above was sure that he could never SELL! They thought Salesmen were "born" and not "made"!

When I said, "Enter the Selling Field where chances in your favor are ten to one," they said it couldn't be done. But I proved to them that this Association could take any man of average intelligence, regardless of his lack of selling experience—and in a short time make a MASTER SALESMAN of him—make him capable of earning anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year. And, that's what I'm willing to prove to you, FREE.

Simple as A. B. C.

You may think my promise remarkable. Yet there is nothing remarkable about it. Salesmanship is governed by rules and laws. There are certain ways of saying and doing things, certain ways of approaching a prospect to get his undivided attention, certain ways to overcome objections, batter down prejudice and outwit competition.

Just as you learned the alphabet, so you can learn salesmanship. And through the NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION METHOD—an exclusive feature of the N. S. T. A. System of Salesmanship Training—you gain the equivalent of actual experience while studying.

The N. S. T. A. System of Salesmanship Training and Employment Service will enable you to quickly step into the ranks of successful salesmen—will give you a big advantage over those who lack this training. It will enable you to jump from small pay to a real man's income.

Remarkable Book, "Modern Salesmanship" Sent Free

With my compliments I want to send you a most remarkable book, "Modern Salesmanship."

It will show you how you can easily become a Master Salesman—a big money-maker—how the N. S. T. A. System of Salesmanship Training will give you years of selling experience in a few weeks; how our FREE Employment Service will help select and secure a good selling position when you are qualified and ready. And it will give you success stories of former routine workers who are now earning amazing salaries as salesmen. Mail the attached coupon at once and you will have made the first long stride toward success.

National Salesmen's Training Ass'n

Dept. R-4

N. S. T. A. Buildings, 1139 N. Dearborn, Chicago, Ill.

National Salesmen's Training Association, N. S. T. A. Buildings, Dept. R-4 1139 N. Dearborn, Chicago, Ill.

Send me free your book, "Modern Salesmanship," and Proof that I can become a MASTER SALESMAN.

Name

Address

City State

Age Occupation

Western Story Magazine

EVERY WEEK

Vol. LV

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THAT morning one of the visitors at the Music Trades Convention was playing roll music on the Gulbransen Registering Piano with all the expression of a brilliant pianist—yet this man could not tell one note from another on a piece of sheet music!

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Four Upright Models—Community, \$450, Suburban, \$530, Country Seat, \$615, White House, \$700; Straight Grand, \$785; Registering Grand, \$1275.

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In all the little towns of French Morocco, that war-torn country where Riffian tribesmen are making so valiant a battle against the power of the French, it is the custom of the natives to come together in great numbers and listen to professional story-tellers.

Before crowds of appreciative natives, the story-tellers weave their yarns of love, romance, and adventure and are well paid for their efforts. These story-tellers have a profound influence upon the communities and help mold public opinion.

In America the development of large-circulation fiction magazines has long made it possible for dwellers even in the most remote hamlets to satisfy the universal love for fiction that girdles the world. Everywhere men and women find escape from the harassments and worries of life by listening at the feet of story-tellers.

And now a great American publishing concern has taken another forward step in the providing of good fiction. Chelsea House at Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street, New York City, the "Story-teller's Headquarters," is providing for a constantly growing and ever-appreciative audience the best of modern fiction in attractively printed and bound books at a cost that fits every pocket.

These seventy-five-cent popular copyrights that bear the "CH" brand on their

(Continued on 2nd page following.)

jackets make it possible for every one to get together a library of good books that will bear the test of time and bring joy into many a life.

Here are thumb-nail reviews of some of the latest "CH" offerings, but get the complete list for yourself to learn what a treasure-trove is at your command.



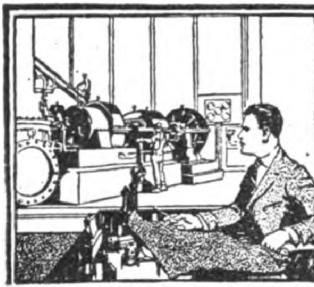
THE GOLDEN BOWL, by Harrison Conrard, published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, Price 75c.

Into a land where mountain ranges flatten out into hummocks on the tawny sands, the great desert country of the West, go two men in search of the treasure of the Golden Bowl. Adventures await them on every hand. There is a fight ahead for the treasure, a beautiful girl, and for honor as well. Mr. Conrard makes you feel the terrible sufferings of the men as they stagger along in search of the Bowl, makes you share with them their disappointments and final triumphs. No lover of real Western stories can afford not to have this book in his library.



THE SPIDER'S DEX, by Johnston McCulley, published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, Price 75c.

When good-looking John Warwick, popular young society man and athlete, saw the girl drop her gold mesh bag and beckon him to follow her, he hesitated to fall for so obvious a ruse. But something compelled him to accept that challenge, and soon he was in the midst of the most thrilling adventures of all his colorful career. How he got into

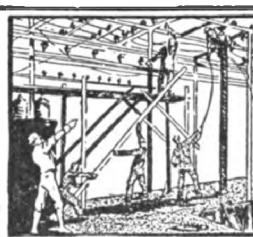


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Chief Engineer DUNLAP

Electrical Division

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15. University of Kansas
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St. No.

City State

the Spider's Den—and out—what befiel him there, makes as baffling a detective story as we have read this year. See if you do not agree with us when you are more than a quarter way through the book.



HER DESERT LOVER, by Louisa Carter Lee, published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, Price 75c.

She came stumbling through the storm into that quiet home of refinement. She could not gasp out her name. She was unknown, a woman of mystery. And what her coming did to change the life of that home! The fast-moving adventures that ensued are put down in wonderfully compelling style by the talented author of this love story. There's a glamour and romance about the book that hold your interest to the very end.



WHOSE MILLIONS? by Joseph Montague, published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, Price 75c.

Millions gone begging! No heir to the Heathcote fortune of \$20,000,000! With such an unusual situation, Mr. Montague opens his book with a rush and go that carries the reader on through the search for the missing heir, the struggle with a daring band of thieves, the final victory. You'll not forget this book in a hurry. It is an outstanding example of the story-teller's art.



OBJECT: ADVENTURE, by Ray Courtney, published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, Price 75c.

Kent McGregor was frankly out for the

thrills of Western life and his advertisement was headed with the title of this book. We are here to say that Kent's craving was more than satisfied and that he had adventures galore. He found that the O. B. Davis, his new employer on whose ranch he was to work, was a very good-looking young woman, and he found a number of other things in and about that ranch not quite so attractive, but all giving him his fill of adventure.



WHILE the books reviewed above are all popular, 75-cent copyright novels bearing the famous "CH" brand on their jackets, the lover of fiction must not forget that Chelsea House publishes attractive two-dollar books as well. For example—

FRONTIER OF THE DEEP, by Will Beale, published by Chelsea House, Price \$2.

A veteran editor, who has the best of modern fiction at his competent finger tips told me that he had rarely read so fine a book as this, and his enthusiasm had genuine warmth in it. I understand, now that I have read the book, why he praised it so highly.

Mr. Beale has taken a land of epic grandeur for his background, the Great Canadian Northeast, and with the sound of surf thundering all through his pages he has painted an unforgettable picture of the lives of the simple fisher folk. These fine French-Canadians come alive in this book. We read with sympathy and understanding about their adventures and romances and wild loves. Mr. Beale has done a masterpiece, a book that is bound to live.



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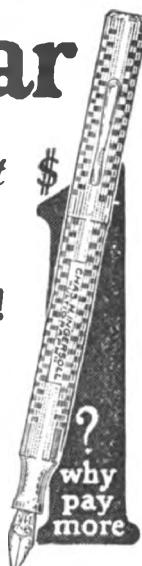
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"I'M GLAD you asked that question, Tom, because at your age I know you ought to be earning more money. But frankly, you aren't worth any more than I am paying you now.

"You're just like a dozen other fellows in your department. Fair routine workers, but that's all. Honestly, I'd be afraid to trust you with a bigger job. I don't think you could handle it.

"What you need, Tom, is special training that will broaden your knowledge of this business. Why don't you take up an I. C. S. course as Bill Warren did? It's been the making of him and I know it will help you too."

Isn't that good advice for you too?

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	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics

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Occupation

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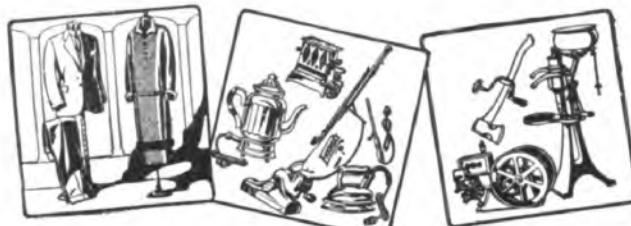
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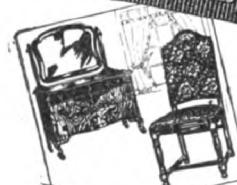
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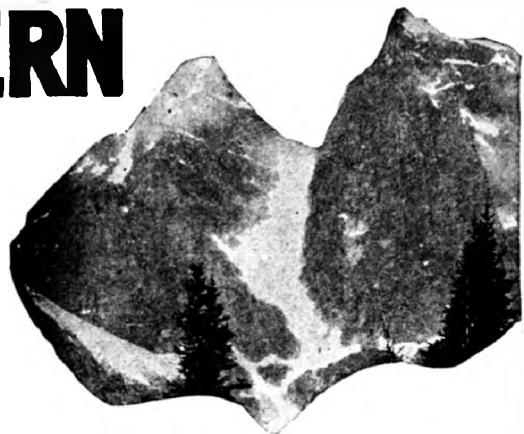
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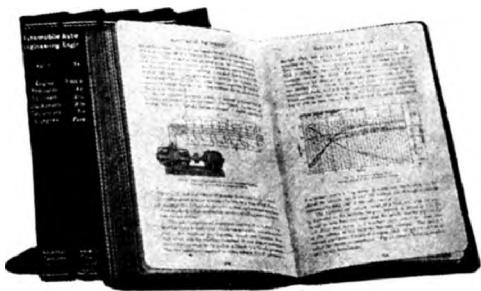
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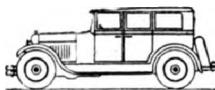
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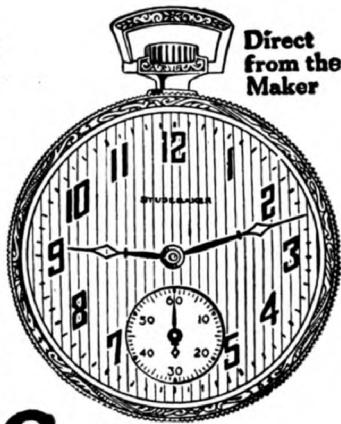
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EVERY WEEK

Vol. LV

OCTOBER 3, 1925

No. 3

Sammy Gregg's Mustang Herd



By

Max Brand

Author of "On the Trail of Four," etc.

CHAPTER I.

A MADMAN'S UNDERTAKING.



OME one who knew what he was talking about said that no man should go into the West—the real frontier West, that is—unless he was capable of inspiring some measure of awe. Perhaps by his personal dignity, which is, after all, the best way of keeping a man out of trouble. Or through physical strength or mere size, or by dauntless power of eye, or through fighting skill—any or all of these attributes would be most serviceable. But Sammy Gregg did not have any of them.

He wasn't a whit more than eight inches above five feet, and he did not stand straight enough to take advantage

of all of those meager inches, even. He walked with a slight stoop, as a rule, leaning over like a man about to start from a walk to a run. He looked as though he were always in a hurry, and as a matter of fact, he usually was. His weight was about a hundred and thirty pounds, or a trifle more in winter, and a little less when the hot weather of the summer began to set in. It was not tough, well-seasoned muscle, either. It was quite flabby. And he had small bones, and little, narrow, nervous hands.

His eyes were pale, and rather near-sighted, so that he had a half frightened look, when it wasn't simply wistfully inquiring. His pale forehead was constantly contorted with a frown—which was not a frown of bad temper, but of eagerness.

The only truly remarkable thing about

Sammy, indeed, was that same eagerness. Like the eagerness of a hunting ferret—if you can imagine a ferret without teeth! But one felt about Sammy a vast earnestness, rooted as deep as the roots of his soul, a singular intentness in which he was absorbed.

That was the secret of the bigness that was in Sammy; for some bigness there was. The trouble was, the West and the people of the West, were not fitted for understanding this small man.

I suppose, for that matter, that he was a rarity in almost any climate. He had the simplicity of a child mixed oddly with some of the guile of a serpent, I am afraid. It was always very hard to understand Sammy. I, for one, never could pretend to hold the key to his complex nature. I can only describe him as he was.

In the first place, he did not come West to raise cattle nor horses, nor to ride herd on the cow range, nor to dig gold for himself nor any other, nor to start up as a storekeeper in one of the new towns.

He came West with five thousand dollars in his pockets and a desire to invest it! Choice he had none. He was ready for anything out of which he might make money.

You will think that he would have been wiser to sink that sum of money in a bank rather than expose it naked to the air of that climate where gold turned so quickly to bloody rust! But I must add one more thing to my character of Sammy Gregg. He was not afraid. There was no fear in him. Fear did not interest Sammy, but dollars did!

Not from a blind love of coin, either. The impelling motive was love for a girl who kept house for an uncle in a Brooklyn flat and waited for word from Sammy from the wilderness.

Sammy had found the lady of his heart long before he ever got on the train which brought him to Munson. Oh, unromantic Sammy! He had fallen

in love with her not suddenly, and not from any exciting meeting, but simply because this fair-haired girl had been known to him during his entire life. She had grown up in the back yard next to his. He had made faces at her when he was five years old, peering at her through a hole in the board fence; and that day she ran crying into her house for fear of him. Afterward, he walked to school with her at his side, regardless of the other boys who pointed their fingers at him.

Sammy had no time for the opinions of outsiders. If you consider it from the most logical point of view, you will see that we indulge ourselves in a luxury when we spend energy to conciliate the good will of our neighbors. And Sammy never had any extra strength to spend. He was not, in short, interested in public opinion; and that was why he was such an oddity as I, for one, have never seen the like of.

For instance, he was known as a coward in the school yard for years, simply because he did not think that it was worth while to fight back and have his face smashed up by the fists of another. But when the legend of his cowardice made the school yard tyranny too uncomfortable—when his school fellows could not let him alone at any recess but had to pluck at him like sparrows at a strange bird, then he changed his mind. He decided that the time had come to end the persecution. He deliberately selected the largest boy in the yard, picked a fight, and had the satisfaction beyond his fondest hopes of planting the first two blows upon the other—one hard little fist on either eye of the tall youth. Afterward he received a tremendous thrashing from the capable fists of that same boy, but thereafter he was left in peace. If it cost the best fighter in the school two black eyes to handle Sammy, the others decided that they wanted none of his medicine! So he was allowed to go his

way unpointed at, even when he wheeled out his infant brother in the baby carriage, or when he packed the books of the girl next door to school and walked beside her going home. It was taken for granted even thus early that Sammy was to marry Susie Mitchell. Their own parents pointed out that there was even something in the names which fitted them for one another. Sammy and Susie! Like two names picked out of a book and linked together in fiction!

I should not say that Sammy loved Susie with a devouring passion as he grew up. But she was a part of his life. He cared for her as he cared for himself, I might say. He had admitted her into his life and she had grown into it like a graft into the trunk of a tree. He thought of her as often as he thought of himself. And if he were not passionately unhappy when he was away from her, he was certainly worried and irritated and confused and ill at ease. When he was at her side, he did not want to kiss her or fondle her or say foolish things to her, or even hold her hand. But he was satisfied—as a cow is satisfied when it is in its own pasture, near its own red barn.

I do not want to cheapen Sammy. But I want to point out that his steadfastness in his love was not the result of overwhelming passion. It was rather the result of weakness. He had not room for many hearts of others in his life. There was no strength or space in him for that. For his own mother or father, or brother or sisters, he felt not the slightest emotion. And when brother Charlie died, Sammy went to sleep at the funeral. More than that, he was not ashamed of his sleep!

"Why not!" said he to his outraged mother. "The room was so hot and stuffy with the smell of all those flowers."

After that, the members of his family scorned him. Their own hearts were so tender, so true, and their own sentiments

were so noble and so pure. But Sammy simply went on busily with his affairs, doing the things which counted most practically for his own ultimate happiness. And, among others, he worked as often as he could and he saved every penny of his earnings.

Because he knew his weaknesses. He knew that he was not brilliant nor wise nor studious nor profound, nor physically powerful nor nervously dynamic. He was simply a little bit weaker than every one he knew—except the cripple on the corner, and he realized that the only manner in which he could make any progress would be to attempt to do only a few things, but to do those few things very well. And, to increase his own strength, he must have some other allied power working for him as soon as possible—the power of money.

So he saved and scraped and lived cheap and labored earnestly at his jobs. He was out of school at fifteen and he was constantly contributing to the savings bank on the first of every month until one day in his twenty-fifth year when he had a little talk with Susie Mitchell.

"When are we to be married?" asked Susie.

"Oh, some day," said Sammy. "When I get enough money to live on right—"

"I'm twenty-five, the same as you," said Susie. "That's not so young!"

He looked askance at her in wonder. But her pretty face was very grave and her blue eyes—as pale and gentle as his own—were fixed firmly upon his face.

"Besides," said Susie, "I don't go in for style. You know that. I don't mind working. I don't mind a small house to live in. I don't aim much higher than what my mother got when she married. But I think that it's time we married, and had some children—and things like that. Jiminy, Sammy, you've got a lot more than *most* young fellows have! And look what a swell salary

you get—fifteen a week. A regular position, I call it, down there at the paper mill—where you'll be raised, too, after four or five years more. The manager certainly told you about that himself!"

Mind you, this was long before the day when carpenters got as much a day as Sammy worked for in a week. In the time of which I write, sixty dollars a month was enough for an "office" man, with many other men under him, assistants, and all that. Those were the days when the boys pointed out the man who lived in the big corner house, because it was said that he got a hundred and a quarter a month!

So sixty dollars was quite a bit, but it was not enough for Sammy. He said: "Let me have a chance to think this over." Then he went away and re-reviewed his position.

In the first place, he had to marry Susie, there was no doubt about that. And he had to marry her quick. He would as soon dream of going on through life without her as he would dream of going on through life without a leg—or without two legs! Susie was simply a part of his spirit and of his flesh, too. But he was afraid of marriage. He had seen other youths attempt marriage and he had seen children and accompanying doctor bills and ill health break down their savings, ruin their nerves, keep them awake with worry, and fill their lives with gloom. Sammy would not stand the chance of such a disaster, because he knew his own strength and he knew that it could not endure through sleepless nights. He felt that he could never marry unless he could marry comfortably. And he had established as a goal a sum of fifteen thousand dollars. With that amount working for him at interest, he would be safe. Even if he lost his health, he could support his family on that same interest until he was well again. Fifteen thousand dollars—a goal still ten thou-

sand dollars away—and Susie wanted to get married.

He came back to Susie. He said: "I am going away for six months. Will you wait that long?"

"Going away!" cried Susie.

"To make ten thousand dollars!"

Susie laughed, at first. But when she saw that he was in earnest, she was filled with a sort of religious awe. It seemed hardly moral and decent for a young fellow to speak of hoping to make ten thousand dollars in a mere half year! It had never been done in her family. It made her almost think of enchantment—certainly it made her think very strongly of crime!

She could almost see her little Sammy Gregg with a black mask tied across the bridge of his nose and a stub-nosed revolver clutched in his hand stealing up behind the back of some florid banker! She could almost see it, and the thing gave her a shock of horror.

"Don't go, Sammy!" she breathed to him. "Don't go, Sammy!"

He did not listen to her. He hardly heard her voice. He was filled with his own thoughts, which were already in a far-away country where dollars grew more readily than they grew in Brooklyn. He was thinking of the accounts which flooded newspapers and magazines from time to time of great fortunes scooped up by a single gesture of the wise men.

In crises we are apt to stop thinking and fall back upon superstitions, religion, fairy tales. So did young Sammy Gregg. He decided to follow his new vision. It was a "hunch," and for the first time in his life he was about to do a risky thing. I had to explain all of this because without understanding a little of the background of Sammy, it would be quite impossible to make head or tail of him as he was when he appeared before the grinning populace of Munson, that rude little city in the Western hills. But if Sammy per-

formed at times feats which seemed well beyond his strength, you must remember that there was a spur driven constantly into his soul—the loss of Susie. He was in a constant misery. For he was away from her! He could not hurry home from his work and wave out of his window and see her waving back from hers. He could not walk through the little park with her in the evening. Her flesh was three thousand miles away. Her spirit was three thousand miles away. And Sammy was maddened by the sense of loss.

CHAPTER II.

IN MUNSON.

I HAVE called Munson rude, and it was still something more than rude and rough. It was self-conscious!

The worst and the toughest town that ever existed on the cattle trails or in the mining districts in the very early days, when murders punctuated every day of a community's existence, could never equal for concentrated viciousness the towns of the later periods of the Western frontier—the periods of which I am writing now.

In the early times, when a man committed a murder it was, nine chances out of ten, because he had been blinded and poisoned and maddened with bad whisky. Or else, he was simply a brute and a bully, and as such he did not last long to murder others. A noose was fetched around his neck and he was yanked up to the limb of a tree and left to wriggle there.

But in the later days the real bad men began to crop up. They were bad with a capital B. The reason was that the Easterners and the foreigners and the bad actors of the cities—the crooks and the gamblers and the yeggs and the safe crackers and the gunmen decided to move two thousand miles West and start life over again wearing two guns openly instead of one gun

hidden! And they went West with a rush and right away they started in being "open and spacious" and "free and easy" and "silent" and "noble." Oh, yes, there were hundreds of men out there being dignified and noble as fast as they could load their guns, you might say. And they were the ones who made all of the worst trouble, I can tell you.

Were they tenderfeet? No, they weren't. No man who has done his "stretch" or his "fiver" is a tenderfoot. Any man who has done his bit of time up the river has acquired a skin thick enough for all ordinary purposes of wear in any part of this globe! Those fellows went West with their guns. And they started right in begging for attention.

They were the boys who began to kill not because they were drunk, nor because they were stupid bullies. No, they were intelligent, cunning, cruel men, and they killed because they wanted fame—or that article which will do for fame on the rough frontier—notoriety.

Think of it from a point of view of advertising. A man who could shoot straight might buy himself a dozen headlines for the price of one loading of his six-gun!

That's what you might call something for nothing! And so, when you trace it back to the beginning, it was the wonder and the shuddering and the worship of the coddled, comfortable East which created the real Western bad man who would as soon kill as light a cigarette. So, after a little time, you began to have your real outlaw—your fellow with a list of twenty deaths, say, established on his record and as many more not proved. And still the bad men lived!

Not so in the old days of the first frontiers. No, the bad boys were taken out under a tree and their necks were stretched like the very deuce, and they were left hanging there to stretch all the crimps out of their souls. Amazing

what a lot of good one hanging like that would do in a whole big county the size of the State of Maine!

Well, the fashion changed. It became admirable to shoot straight—at other human beings. There was always the plea of "self-defense." What a ghastly lot of crimes were attached to that pair of words!

Well, I have gone on at some length to give you an idea of just the sort of place Munson was—Munson, to which our thin-skinned Sammy was being swiftly whirled by the train. And that is why I say that Munson at this era was tougher than tough—because it was self-conscious!

The train stopped, and Sammy swung down from the steps and reached for a platform, but unfortunately he found none.

The sight of that swinging, pawing foot of his, and his skinny leg, was enough to catch half a dozen wicked eyes. He was already being laughed at before he dropped down to the ground and presented all of himself for the first time to the eye of Munson.

Before he had well landed, Lawson himself was in charge. The first thing he did was to let out a yell which so startled young Sammy that he almost leaped backward under the wheels of the slowly moving train.

Sammy, however, was perfectly lacking in the very thing of which Munson was full—self-consciousness. He did not dream, after a moment of reflection, that that yell had been meant for him. So he simply picked up his heavy grip and stepped forward toward the crooked little dusty street where the sign said "hotel." He stepped forward, and as he walked he settled his hat more firmly on his head.

Alas it was a derby hat!

I cannot tell what made an "iron" hat a mortal offense in the West, but it was. It required an almost presidential reputation to enable a man to keep one on

his head. And what reputation had poor Sammy Gregg?

Before he knew it, Lawson had loosed off a couple of bullets that struck the ground in front of Sammy and covered him with a stinging shower of dust and flying gravel. He jumped, of course, straight up into the air.

It brought a shout of willing laughter from every one. Because Lawson never appeared without his "gang." I wish I could give a thorough picture of Lawson, but I can't. Words become weak, speaking of the poisonous evil of such natures as his. He was that most gruesome combination—weakness and wickedness combined. He was a coward, a bully, a tyrant, a sneak, a moral wreck of a man; but he was a hero, in Munson, because he could shoot straight. And the consciousness that he could shoot straight always made him brave.

Cowards always make the most horrible tyrants simply because they are so familiar with the emotion which they wish to inspire—fear.

Now the weak mouth of Lawson stretched in a grin. And his little, close-set eyes gleamed under the shadow of his sombrero. He put another bullet neatly in the ground just where the feet of Sammy were about to land and when they did land, Sammy naturally bounded into the air again.

"Dance, confound you!" yelled Lawson.

But Sammy stood still. He said nothing for a moment, but when another bullet struck the ground at his feet, he said calmly: "I don't think I'll dance."

Munson was staggered, for suddenly he saw that this little man was not afraid. Then Lawson broke out in a savage roar:

"When you speak to a man, take off your hat, tenderfoot!"

He did not wait for Sammy to obey. His gun spoke, and the bullet tore the hat from the head of Sammy. It was very close shooting, no one could deny

that. It brought another roar of applause and laughter when the crowd saw Sammy instinctively duck. But then he leaned and picked up his hat and settled it, dusty as it was, upon his head once more.

"You'll come and liquor with me, kid," said Lawson. "I'm going to see how your insides act when you get some of Mortimer's poison inside of you. And bring the other dude along with you, boys!"

Sammy could not keep the center of the stage very long. Not with such a counter attraction as had dismounted from the same train. It was a tall man, a tall, wide-shouldered, handsome man of thirty, perhaps, dressed in a fashion which Munson could not tolerate for an instant, in those days. He wore riding boots, to be sure, but the boots were not *under* his trousers, and that was a sin, of course. And above the boots rose neat whipcord riding breeches. And there was a well-fitted gray coat, and a gray shirt with a shining white stiff collar and a natty little bow tie, and this gentleman was finished off with a small gray felt hat on his head. And he carried a suit case of large dimensions with "C. O. F." stamped in big letters on the side of it.

He made the counter attraction. He looked just as much of a tenderfoot as Sammy did, and there was more of him. The crowd surrounded him in an instant, and he and Sammy were huddled off toward Mortimer's saloon in a trice.

Huddled off with this difference, that whereas many hands were laid upon Sammy, urging him along, beating his derby hat down over his eyes, cuffing and pawing him, there was not so much as the tip of a finger laid upon the tall man. I cannot tell why. Perhaps it was the calmness of his face and eye. Perhaps it was the wrinkle of his coat between the shoulder blades, telling of ample muscles there. At any rate, though they milled about him, yelling

and cursing and laughing, no one touched him and so the procession burst into Mortimer's.

He was the headquarters for such affairs, was Mortimer. He was also the gambling partner and the partner in secret murders who worked with my friend Lawson. And he was only just a trifle less savory than Mr. Lawson. He greeted the new victims with a veritable yell of delight and instantly the glasses were set chiming upon the bar. And the big black bottles were spun out.

Lawson stood at one end of the bar and gave directions.

"To the top, kid. To the top, both of you. Fill up them glasses to the top, I tell you!"

Sammy set his teeth and obeyed. He didn't like it, but neither did he throw away his life for such a small affair as this. And so he filled as he was ordered.

But, after that, a deadly hush fell over the barroom, for it was seen that the tall man, in spite of the order from Lawson, had not touched the waiting bottle to pour his drink.

He spoke before the wrath of Lawson could descend upon him.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I shall be charmed to drink with you, but first I'd like to give you my name, if you don't mind."

CHAPTER III.

MUNSON MEETS MR. FURNESS.

HE spoke so mildly that they could hardly help but misunderstand him, and the snarl of mockery awoke instantly. However, Lawson appeared to scent an opportunity for further mischief than usual, and he raised his voice to control the murmur.

"All right," said he. "Let's hear your name, and darned if I don't think that it ought to begin with Percy!"

A poor jest, but Lawson did not have to invent very witty remarks in order to win the applause of his fellows. While

the laughter was still ringing, however, the big stranger sauntered to the stove. It was a raw spring day with a whistling wind from the snow-tipped mountains of the north, prying through the cracks and sending long chill fingers of draft waving through the rickety saloon. The stove was packed with wood; the stove itself was red hot, and the door was open to throw out a greater draft. And in that open door the poker lay, just as it had been dropped when the wood was last stirred and replenished. To this stepped the tall man and drew forth the poker and with it in his hand he approached the bar.

He raised it, and with the white point he began to write upon the wood. He had half completed the first word of his writing before Mortimer intervened, for this audacity had paralyzed our saloonkeeper with rage and wonder. When his voice returned to him, it was like the challenging bellow of a bull. He clapped the muzzle of his revolver on the edge of the bar. Then from the ample throat of Mortimer throbbed a stream of cursing that filled the room with storming echoes.

The tall man calmly laid down the poker—where it burned a deep gouge in the wood. His left hand glided out unhurrying, but swift as the flick of a whiplash. It laid hold upon the barrel of Mortimer's gun, so that the bullet of that gentleman hummed idly under the arm of the tenderfoot. And, at the same time, with his right hand he drew forth a hidden Colt revolver, long and heavy and black, and placed the muzzle against the breast of Mortimer, and fired.

Mortimer, dead before he struck the floor, collapsed in a pool of crimson behind the bar.

The silence which followed was so intense that the crowd could hear the ticking of a clock in the back room—and the hissing of the wood beneath the hot end of the poker as the tall man wrote the rest of his name upon the bar.

"Chester Ormonde Furness," he wrote, and stood back and dropped the poker to the floor while his name still smoked upon the bar.

"That is my name, gentlemen," said he. "I trust that you are glad to see me. Gladder, at least, than I am to see you. Because I have been over a considerable section of this little world and not even in Singapore, where the scum of the world is dropped after it has been skimmed from the pot—not even in Singapore, or in Shanghai, nor in the New York slums—from which I think a good many of you have come—have I seen such a worthless lot of cowardly, sneaking riffraff—fakers—sham giants—cur dogs wearing lion skins. And about the worst in this very bad lot seems to be Mr. Lawson. Will you step out, Mr. Lawson?"

Mr. Lawson had not turned white. His complexion did not permit that color. But he turned a very pale greenish-yellow. He did not step forward. He whirled, instead, toward the door, and tried to spring through it. But, just at that moment, a gun crack behind him, and a forty-five caliber Colt's bullet cracked the door from top to bottom.

Mr. Lawson did not make the mistake of imagining that it was a missed shot. He stopped in his tracks and turned slowly back to face Chester Ormonde Furness.

"Do you know my name?" said the stranger.

"Yes, Mr. Furness," said Lawson.

"Why I don't finish you," said Furness, "I hardly know. I suppose it's because there is a sporting instinct in me and I like to have a little *fun* with my shooting. I like to give the game a start. So I am going to give *you* a start, Lawson. Go through that door and start up the street. I'll follow you—with my gun!"

Lawson did not wait for a second invitation. He sprang back through the

door and Furness glided after him. And then the rest of awe-stricken Munson had sight of the terrible Lawson sprinting with all his might down the street while a tall "dude" stood in the road behind him and emptied a Colt—missing him by neatly calculated distances which the crowd could appreciate, for every time Furness fired, Lawson leaped to one side or the other with a wild howl until he found a corner to dodge around into safety.

When Mr. Furness finished his shooting he put away his gun, swiftly and neatly, so that no lump showed where it rested. Then he turned upon the gaping crowd—a tamed, humbled crowd, now grinning sheepishly in anticipation at him.

"I detest trouble," said Mr. Furness. "I always strive to avoid it. And I want you to remember what I say. I want you to remember it and repeat it to your cronies wherever you may meet them. Tell them that I expect to stay for a considerable time in this town. I expect to become well acquainted with Munson and the neighborhood around it. And I expect to live here in peace. When I say 'peace,' I mean it. I intend to rent a house and to live quietly in it on the edge of town. I do not wish to have my sleep disturbed at night. And, if there is a noisy riot, I shall come out and put an end to the good time if I can. If a stray bullet from a brawl happens to find its way through my window, you may trust that I shall find the man who fired it. Beyond this, I wish to say that I desire to have my name handled gently. If there is any vicious talk, I want you to know that I possess an exceedingly sensitive nature, and I shall find the vicious talkers, gentlemen, and I shall kill those vicious talkers, gentlemen, if I am able. I am well aware that there is no law in Munson, at the present moment. And I hereby give notice that my own laws I shall enforce with a gun. And now,

gentlemen, I want you to understand, finally, that I quite sympathize with the error into which you have fallen concerning me. To you, I looked rather soft. If you have found that I am not soft, and if you desire to be my friends, come back with me into the saloon and have a drink at my expense."

Not a man held back. They were afraid to, perhaps. Or perhaps there were so many of them that they were not ashamed. Because crowds are usually devoid of all noble feeling—even of shame. They went back with the tall man, and he himself went behind the bar and served them, stepping over the body of the dead man that lay on the floor, while he passed out glasses and bottles. He drank with them most cheerfully, and they noted that he put down the "redeye" without blinking an eye and without a chaser. They noticed, too, that he paid punctually for the drinks, leaving a bright new gold piece shining upon the bar as he passed out.

The crowd remained behind to chat about this new wonder, to lift the body of Mortimer and give him a dog's burial just as he had died a dog's death.

In the street the tall man met the little tenderfoot. He smiled down at little Sammy Gregg and he found the steady, unshaken, pale-blue eye of Sammy Gregg surveying him gravely.

"Does a man have to be like you to get on in this part of the country?" asked Sammy.

"Not a bit," said Furness, "but it's a good thing to be able to take care of yourself. Have you a gun?"

"I never fired a gun in my life."

"There's a store. You'd better go buy one, the first thing you do."

Sammy Gregg shook his head. "I'm no good at a bluff," he said. "If I wear a gun, it's a sign that I pretend that I can use it. But I can't. And I never could afford the time to learn. I'm pressed for time, you see."

The tall man did not smile. He be-

gan to regard the little man more seriously.

"May I ask what your business is?" he said.

"I have no business," said Sammy, "except to make ten thousand dollars in six months out here. Do you think it can be done?"

"That depends," said Furness.

"Honestly, I mean."

"Ah," said Furness, "that is another story! No—frankly, I'm afraid that you can't."

The ferret gleam of eagerness came into the eyes of little Sammy Gregg. "I think that I will, though," said he.

"Finding a gold mine, then?"

"No, I don't know what I'll find. All I want is an opportunity—not a gold mine. And fellows like those"—and he gestured toward the bullet-cracked door of the saloon—"are liable to leave a whole lot of opportunities lying around loose without anybody really claiming them."

He added: "I ought to thank you, though, for getting me out of that mess."

"Don't say a word about it," said the big man genially. "I was fighting my own battle, and not yours. Affairs have come to such a horrible point around here that a man has to take a killing on his hands whenever he enters a new town—or very nearly that!"

He said this in rather a jesting tone, but still there was something in his manner that made little Sammy open his eyes, and he thought he knew now what he had only guessed in the barroom—that Mr. Furness was the veteran of a hundred hand-to-hand encounters. And awe and dread filled Sammy, and with it, a certain instinctive dislike.

Others were to feel that same dislike for Furness later on, but Sammy was the first man to sense the danger and the evil in the big fellow. He said good-by rather briskly and swung away down the street.

Opportunity! To really and truly turn five thousand dollars into fifteen in six months!

But one could not examine such country as this on foot. And there must be horse and saddle procured at once. He went to the store for the saddle and got a secondhand one, a badly worn and tattered one.

"It won't give you none too comfortable a seat," the storekeeper advised him frankly.

"I'm not looking for comfort," said Sammy Gregg. "Now, where can I get a horse and what do I have to pay for it? I hear they have ten-dollar horses out West?"

"Texas is what you mean," said the storekeeper. "But around here they gobble up everything in the shape of a hoss for fifty dollars. And up at the Crumback Mines they'll pay seventy-five!"

CHAPTER IV.

SAMMY'S BIG IDEA.

THAT was enough for young Sammy Gregg. He was looking for an opportunity and here, it seemed, was one shoved under his very nose.

Horses cost ten dollars in Texas—in Crumback they cost seventy-five. Ten from seventy-five left sixty-five dollars for clear profit. Allow fifteen dollars a head for transportation, and the profit was still fifty dollars a head. Very well. For the sake of caution, suppose that he invested only half of his available capital and turned twenty-five hundred dollars into horses. That would give him two hundred and fifty head at ten dollars a head. But fifty times two hundred and fifty was twelve thousand five hundred dollars!

Twenty-five hundred more than the profit he needed and already at hand! Fire began to burn in Sammy Gregg, but he masked it carefully from his face.

"I should think," said he, "that a lot of people would be in the business of

buying Texas horses and selling them in the Crumstock mining region."

"You *would* think that," nodded the storekeeper, "unless you *knowed*."

"Knew what?"

"Knew what Texas mustangs is like, for one thing."

"Well?"

The storekeeper closed his eyes in strained thought, as he reached for a superlative. "Keeping hold of a herd of mustangs," he said at last, "is like trying to keep hold of a handful of quicksilver. The harder you try to hold it the farther it spouts away."

"They're wild, I suppose."

"You suppose, son, but I know. I've rode 'em, I've broke 'em; and then they broke me!"

"Really?"

"I got a hip smashed as flat as a pancake. That's one thing. My ribs is mixed up worse'n a mess of eggs scrambled in a frying pan. And my head is set on crooked. All from mixing too long with them mustangs."

"But if one just herd them along—"

"Hherded the devil!" said the storekeeper with a weary sigh. "I herded six of them twenty miles, once. It took me a month!"

"A month!"

"And then I only delivered seven of the twenty."

"Good heavens!" cried Sammy Gregg. "Did you lose the way?"

The storekeeper stared at him. "Lose my way traveling twenty miles? Son, I ain't that kind of a gazoop. Not me! I pack a sort of a compass in the back of my head. But lemme tell you about a mustang—that everything that you want to do is just what the mustang ain't got any idea of doing."

Sammy was amazed.

"They stampede," said the storekeeper, "from hell to breakfast and back ag'in. That's their nature. Promiscuous and free and easy. Where they

want to be is always just over the edge of the sky away from where you want 'em to be. You can write that down. Besides, even if a herd was drove up here by good hoss hands—like some of them Mexicans are—still what chance would there be of it getting safe to Crumstock."

"I can't see why not?"

"You're young, son, but I'll make you a little older in a minute. Lemme tell you that this ain't no open level plain around here."

"I can see that," said Sammy seriously.

"It's all gouged up and crisscrossed by gullies and cañons every which way, ain't it?"

"It is."

"And them gullies and ravines is all slithering with hoss thieves, old son!"

"You don't mean it!" cried Sammy.

"Don't I, though?"

"But why doesn't the law—"

"The law is a thousand miles away, son! Didn't I lose eight head of good hosses six weeks back?"

"And never could get a trace of 'em?"

"Trace of 'em? Sure I did! I bought four of 'em back!"

"Good heavens!" cried Sammy. "You knew the men who stole them and didn't—"

"Didn't what? Try to chase them?"

"Perhaps—with help."

"Where would you get the help? Besides, you chase these crooks away into the hills and they're plumb gone. You could hide twenty thousand head in any square miles of them bad lands. And then, after you've got back home, somebody all unbeknownst sneaks up to your window and puts a bullet into the small of your back."

"Murder by men or man unknown," says the jury.

"Poor old Bill!" says my friends. "He wouldn't let well enough alone!"

"No, sir, the best way is to keep hands

off of them thieves. They's too many of them, and they got this advantage: That they hang together and work together, and the honest folks don't!"

"But suppose that one hired a strong guard to herd the mustangs across the hill country——"

"Herd it across a hundred miles of mountains? A guard for a few hundred mustangs? Son, you're talkin' mad! You'd need a whole company of soldiers to watch every mustang, and even then you'd come in with only the tail of your hoss in your hands. Them thieves are that slick that they would steal your hoss right out from under your saddle and leave you ridin' along on a one-eyed maverick that you never seen before!"

By this time Sammy began to wonder not that the price of horses in Crumbback was seventy-five dollars a head, but that it was not a hundred and seventy-five.

He went off by himself and sat down for a cigarette and a think.

"The first idea is as good as the last!" said Sammy to himself. "As good as the last, most of the time! So lemme see what I can make out of the horse idea!"

He turned it back and forth.

In the first place, it was plain that Mr. Storekeeper had exaggerated somewhat. According to him, a man was a fool who tried to drive horses to Crumbback, and yet horses were certainly there—great numbers of them. Some people, then, were making money by sending live stock there. How did they manage it? Simply by doing what his friend the storekeeper swore could not be done—guarding their horses through the mountains, and herding them successfully across the great Texas plains.

And what others could do, Sammy could do—if he only knew where to hire the right men—the right Mexicans, if they were the best!

The thought of large profits will lead

on like the thought of a promised land. And so it was that they led Sammy. For two long hours, with the map in his hands, he made his calculations.

Ten thousand dollars is a great deal of money to make. And six months is a short time to make it in—and the penalty of failure, as he saw it, was the loss of the hand of pretty Susie Mitchell. It was, indeed, a great deal! And when he thought of Susie, he vowed to himself that somehow he would find the inspiration to carry him through—the inspiration to handle even such devilish brutes as Texas mustangs.

Besides, he was beginning to feel lucky. He had never played even in thought for such stakes as these. To win or lose all was a great thing; a fever was beginning to burn in Sammy and how could he tell that it was the gambler's world-old fever?

Before that day ended, he was on board a train away from Munson, and the next morning he had changed trains and was shooting in a roundabout way toward the southland of cheap horses.

Six months to go when he left New York City. Five months and three weeks when he left Munson. Could he make it? Yes, confidence arose in Sammy as he computed the distance. A month, say, to gather the herd. That left four months and a half. Then an eight-hundred-mile drive. Suppose they journeyed only twenty miles a day. Still, at the end of forty days they would be at their destination.

It seemed simple. Allow a month for mistakes. Allow another month for unknown bad luck. Still he would have time to get back in Brooklyn under the wire of the six months with some twenty thousand dollars weighing down his pocket!

He was in San Antone, now. He spent five desperate days trying to interview Mexican cow-punchers and getting no further than:

"*Si señor. Mañana!*"

Always, they would meet him to-morrow, but to-morrow, they did not appear. What was wrong with him?"

Finally, in a San Antone hotel, he confided his troubles to a sharp-eyed man with a fighting face. A man too stern to be trivial.

He said to Sammy: "You're bound for a losing game if you're bound to drive horses to Crumback. But if you want a man to handle your herd—there's one now!" He pointed to a dark-faced man in a corner of the room.

"He!" gasped Sammy. "He looks like the king of Mexico more than like a cow puncher."

"You go talk to him," said the stern-faced man. "And tell him that I sent you. He's a crook and a scoundrel. He'll either rob you or else he'll see that you don't get robbed. It's six of one and a half a dozen of the other. If you can trust Manuel, you can put your life in his hands with perfect safety. But if he decides to trick you—well, as good be done by him as by a dozen others."

So thought Sammy, and, sitting beside the handsome young Mexican he poured forth his plans and his desires, while Manuel, stiff with gold-laced jacket and collar, listened smiling, and dreamed over the idea, through a thin-blue-brown cloud of smoke.

He said at last in good English: "I hire the right men—men who can ride and who know horses. I buy the right horses for you. I drive those horses to Crumback. You pay me five hundred dollars. But if I can't drive those horses to Crumback, you don't pay me a cent. Do you like this idea, señor?"

The thought of five hundred dollars in wages to a single man was a staggering thought to Sammy Gregg. And yet, the more he pondered, the more it seemed to him that this was his only solution for the problem.

So he closed with Manuel on the moment, and went up to his room and

wrote out a careful contract and offered it to Manuel.

"Ah, no," said Manuel, still smiling through a mist of smoke. "I do not wish it in written words. If I fail—so! But if I succeed, then I shall trust myself to get the money—not a piece of paper!"

CHAPTER V.

MANUEL AND THE HERD.

THREE was only one fault which Sammy was inclined to find with Manuel. He was everything but swift in his motions and in his appearance, but nevertheless he accomplished a great deal. He spent three days sorting over his acquaintances until he picked out a pair of villainous-looking rascals—in the eye of Sammy Gregg—of the roughest peon class. However, they could ride anything and anywhere. They could shoot well, and they were willing to obey orders from the mouth of Manuel. Also, they knew horses.

After the assistants had been chosen, a central corral was picked out and toward this, presently, Manuel and his men began to drift horses by the score and by the fifty. It was all Manuel. Very soon Sammy Gregg found that he might as well stop worrying and simply submit to the thorough management of Manuel, who went straight ahead doing what he wanted to do, and if Sammy made suggestions, Manuel received them, always, with a beautiful smile that showed his flashing white teeth. That smile might have meant anything, but before Sammy was through with his Mexican, he knew that it meant: "You are a fool and all of your ideas are worthy of a child only!"

This did not trouble Sammy. He was not interested in the scorn of Manuel. He was only interested in the speed with which he gathered horses.

And what horses they were! At first, when he saw a section of the brutes driven in, Sammy threw up his hands in

despair and asked Manuel if it were not a joke. Manuel assured him that these were selected animals. Selected from what?

Lump-headed, roach-backed, thick-legged, pot-bellied creatures were these, with Roman noses and little wicked eyes that glared tigerishly out from beneath a shag of forelock. One could believe nothing about them, at first glance, except tales of evil temper. But when Manuel saw that his boss had no opinion at all of the purchase, he simply had the most tractable of the lot saddled and gave it to his boss to ride. Although Sammy had already learned to ride, he spent three days struggling with this "well broken" animal; but after that his eyes were opened. He discovered that the ugly little monster could rock along all day at an easy canter which ate up mileage as swiftly as the gallop of a wolf. The broncho could stop in his own length while going at full speed, turn his body faster than a man could turn his head, and be off in a new direction. He found that the body of the mustang was like his temper—as tough as rawhide, than which there is nothing tougher. He discovered, too, that there was no gentling these creatures. They remained to the end enslaved barbarians always hungering for the moment when they could plant their heels in the stomach of the master and then kneed his body soft and small with their sharp hoofs while he lay on the ground.

These were the animals which Manuel and his two assistants collected, but not at ten dollars a head. The price had risen. It was almost a twelve-dollar average which Sammy had to pay, so he contented himself with a herd of two hundred, and with these he started out with the three cow-punchers on the long trek north toward the mountains.

They had luck enough across the great Texas plains. For mishaps they had half a dozen stampedes which lost thirty horses and cost them altogether a good

additional three hundred miles of going. But by the time they got to the hills, the herd was in fairly good shape for traveling. The running edge had been taken out of their temper and they had learned to troop along obediently enough. Manuel had turned out to be the king of herdsmen, and his two assistants were masters of the same work—delicate, delicate work indeed. Whoever has ridden herd on a bunch of wild mustangs knows that above the mind of the brute there is the mind of the whole mass of animals, blind and deaf and enormous, and sensitive. Ready to stampede straight over the face of a cliff at a moment's notice; or just as ready to trample down a town.

Sammy had come to be of a little use before the trail was ended. And he was even trusted with the dangerous work of riding night herd on the horses, which is that portion of the work which requires the most skill.

By this time they were looking forward to the end of their trail. Munson was a scant march of thirty miles away. Beyond Munson was another hundred miles of mountains, and then the end of their labors! So that Sammy, from time to time during the day, could not help letting his thoughts run ahead of him. A hundred and seventy horses at seventy-five dollars a head made twelve thousand, seven hundred and fifty dollars.

Just enough, just enough. And so to return to his Susie Mitchell not in six months, but in two. He would appear before her startled eyes like a hero indeed. He would be invested with a veil of glory; yes, even in his own eyes!

They had bedded down the herd in a sort of natural corral. It was though some great hand scooped a basin among the hills. There was a broad, flat-bottomed meadow in the midst, and around the sides, half a dozen throats of cañons yawned black upon the little amphitheater. They could not have found

a more ideal location, and to make perfection a gilded wonder, there was a little shallow stream of water, glimmering in the starlight as it trickled musically along over a bed of hard gravel. No danger of broken legs on steep banks—no danger of horses bogged down in quicksands here!"

"We won't even need to ride herd to-night," suggested Sammy Gregg. "This place is so made to order!"

"Ah, señor," murmured Manuel, "you are full of trust. Perhaps it is well in some places, but not here. Here—even the mountains are watching you and hating you, señor!"

That was a sentence which young Sammy Gregg did not forget. And, that night, he himself prepared for riding herd as a token that he was willing to take advice. But Manuel was also in the saddle.

"Why?" asked Sammy Gregg. "Surely at the worst, one man is enough here!"

"If they should shoot off up one of those cañons——"

"They are not as restless now as they used to be——"

"They are always restless—in their hearts—no matter how tired and how quiet their bodies may be!"

Before that night was over, Sammy had to agree with this hired man. A nervous devil seemed to have possessed the herd. Once, at the hoot of an owl, every one of the beasts started to their feet. There they stood poised, as you might say, and ready for everything. But the voices of the men soothed them.

They rode clockwise and counter clockwise around the edges of the herd, and their voices were never still, talking, talking, or singing softly all night long—a weary work. And, at length, the herd sank down again on the ground, as though at another signal.

When Sammy reached Manuel at the next circle of the herd, he paused to ask:

"What could have made them jump up at the same minute?"

"There is something in the air, to-night," said Manuel. "You and I cannot tell, but the bronchos certainly can tell."

For his part, Sammy was willing to believe. He had seen enough of these wild little animals to begin to have an uncanny respect for them. In a way, they seemed to be as full of wisdom as they were filled with meanness. So he rode on in his work, still singing—it did not matter what, so long as the song was soft. As he passed, the pricked ears of the prone horses would flatten in recognition of the human voice which they hated, but which nevertheless reassured them.

Give a horse something to occupy his mind and you can do anything with him. If it is only a bit to chew on and champ and worry while you are giving a colt his lesson. But don't try to occupy the whole attention of a dumb beast with your teaching. Sammy was beginning to understand this, too.

After all, there was something charming about this scene. He had a vague wish that Susie Mitchell might be riding by his side, here, looking at the black, gaunt, treeless hills; or watching the faint shine of the running water, with the lumpy forms of prone horses dimly silhouetted against it here and there—and always the broad, bright beauty of the stars overhead. The alkali scents and sharpness was taken from the air, now that it was night. The wind was cool, almost cold. It touched the hands and flowed across the face like running water. It brought peace to the heart of Sammy Gregg.

Day was not far off, now. There was no coming of light, but there was a change in the air, which Sammy was beginning to know as the forerunner of the sunrise. And just when he told himself, with relief, that there would be only another hour of darkness to watch

through, the two hundred leaped suddenly to their feet again.

There had not been a sound this time—not even the hoot of an owl, and yet here were the horses bolt upright, heads raised, and all turned toward the west where the black mouth of one of the cañons yawned wide upon the meadowland. Out of that cañon, at last, Sammy heard a noise like a far-off clapping of hands. Then he heard a thin sound of a horse neighing, and after that, five horses shot out of the blackness into the light of the stars—five horses with a man on every back—and the crashing of the flying hoofbeats rang and echoed in the ears of Sammy.

The thieves—the horse thieves of whom Manuel had spoken so often—of whom the storekeeper had warned him!

There was a shrill, universal squealing that broke from the herd. Then they whirled and fled at lightning speed from this sudden horror which had leaped out of the heart of the dark night. They ran with heads stretched forward, ears flattened, tails streaming straight out behind them—they ran blind with speed. And, in an instant the meadow was swept as bare as the palm of Sammy's hand. And, on the heels of his disappearing herd, five riders were spurring along—not mounted on bronchos, but upon tall, long-legged blood horses which sprang across the ground with a tigerish grace and swiftness.

Sammy himself spurred wildly in pursuit. Up to his lips rose a harsh cry—such a sound as he had never uttered before. Here was Manuel close beside him, his teeth glinting, but not in a smile. Sammy reached across and tore a Colt from the saddle holster nearest to him. Another weapon gleamed and spoke from the hand of Manuel.

For answer, there was a blasting volley from the scurrying shadows far up in the ravine—first the brief, wicked humming of bullets, wasplike, in the air

about the ears of Sammy, and, after that, a rattling of long echo above the thunder of the flying herd.

But what was that to Sammy?

They had missed him. He felt that he had a charmed life—that it would be given him to ride through a steady rain of bullets until he came up with these villains, these robbers. He raised his Colt and with the heavy weapon wobbling in his weak, untrained hand, he fired, and again and again.

There was no more shooting from the riders before him. No, they were drawing farther away at every moment, and now they rushed around a corner of the ravine and were beyond his sight. But what was this beside him? A riderless horse—the horse of Manuel!

The madness was brushed from the mind of Sammy Gregg, and suddenly he saw himself as he was—a foolish child riding down on a band of five practiced warriors of the frontier—warriors as cunning and as merciless as Indians, if indeed they were not Indians. Here in this fight in which poor Manuel had fallen already, how could he, a tenderfoot, hope to succeed? He drew rein.

And Manuel?

He galloped back as fast as he could and he found that Manuel's two Mexican friends were already at the spot. It occurred to the bitter heart of poor Sammy that these fellows might have been riding on the trail of the thieves rather than waste their time here. But no, they squatted beside Manuel, not in any agony of grief, but calmly smoking their cigarettes. Manuel himself had his head pillow'd upon a rock, and he was trying to smoke, but his fingers were thick with numbness, and the cigarette kept falling from his hand.

He greeted his employer with a flash of his eyes.

"Why do they try to do nothing for you, Manuel?" gasped Sammy. "Where is the wound?"

There was so little breath in Manuel that he had to collect it through a long and deadly pause before he could answer: "I am shot through beneath the heart. I have not long to live, señor." "A bandage—"

There was a slight motion of the hand of Manuel. It denied all aid. It mocked at the possibility of assistance.

"Nothing can be done, señor. Only, to make me sleep more easily, if one of them can be found—and sent where I am going—it would be a great comfort to me, señor. It is a place where one needs company, eh?"

He began to laugh, but the laughter died off into a weirdly bubbling noise, and Manuel stiffened himself, and died.

CHAPTER VI.

STOLEN HORSES.

WHEN Sammy Gregg had seen to the burial of poor Manuel and then suggested to the two remaining Mexicans to begin a pursuit of the thieves, the latter merely shrugged their shoulders and held out their hands for their pay. They declared that one dead man was enough and that the two of them were not prepared to fight with five who were as well armed and shot as straight as did these thieves.

After all, they had a good deal of reason on their side, particularly since Sammy himself would not be of much use in a battle. So he paid them in haste and then mounted and rode as hard as he could pelt for the town of Munson.

He was glad of one thing, and that was that the flight of the thieves with their stolen horses had been in the same direction. They had driven on toward the very spot from which he would receive his succor!

Indeed, they kept on that straight way until they were a scant ten miles from the town, and then the track of the herd diverged and turned to the left

up a branching cañon. And Sammy Gregg pushed on and on. And by the mid-morning his foaming, staggering horse came into Munson town, with Sammy shouting from the saddle the news of his loss.

When they heard him, people ran out of shops and houses and listened, but when they understood the news that he brought, they shrugged their shoulders and turned back. Sammy began to see more backs than faces, and those who did turn toward him were, most of them, plainly laughing at him in his distress.

And suddenly Sammy understood. They smiled at him because they simply did not care, these hard-hearted fellows. They did not care for the hundred and seventy mustangs which he had bought at such an expense and which he had driven with labor and money, both, into the mountains so near to his market place. What was it to them that the savings of ten years were represented in this holocaust? They merely shrugged their shoulders and were glad that the loss had not fallen upon them.

He went into Rendell's store and sat down on top of a barrel of dried apples and dropped his chin on his fist and stared at the dust cloud that trailed down the street behind a passing horseman, and wondered at the brilliancy of the sun as it flashed and burned and turned that fine dust into powdered diamonds. Rendell, even, did not offer sympathy. However, neither did he say: "I told you so!"

He merely said: "Are you down-hearted, kid?"

"No," said Sammy truthfully. "But I'm surprised. That's all. They don't seem to care, you see—these people don't seem to care!"

"Not their horses that were stole," Rendell pointed out.

"Yes," explained Sammy, "but if they let these things happen, their horses will be stolen next, you see. And they'll suffer because I've suffered. Don't

they see that the only thing is to stand together and fight the "thieves off?"

Rendell shook his head. "Maybe about half of them would sort of like to be thieves themselves," he said.

That afforded a ray of dazzling light to Sammy, and he gaped at the genial storekeeper.

"Sure," expanded Rendell, "you can't trust nobody. Nobody that likes a quiet life is up here, and you can depend upon that! Everybody you meet might be a crook. *I* might be a crook. You never can tell!"

He added: "Some is made to understand these here things and prosper pretty good around here in the West. And some ain't made to understand these things and then they'd better go back to where they got a cop on every corner to watch out that the law is obeyed."

The hint was very pointed. But Sammy was really not frightened. He simply said: "I know what you mean. But they haven't taken the heart out of me yet. I got something left. Only—I didn't know how they played the game. That's all! Now I'm beginning to understand, and maybe I'll finda way to fit in with this sort of thing."

He went out into the street and the first thing he heard was the sharp whistling of a flute around the corner. He turned that corner and found a slender youth sitting on a broken apple box, with his back against the wall of the saloon that had once been run by Mortimer. He had the flute at his lips, and with eyes half closed either from laziness or from love of the music which he was making, he blew forth sweet showers of sound.

"Have a drink, kid!" said a burly cow-puncher lounging past and pausing a moment to listen to the tunes.

The musician shook his head with a smile and continued his work. He merely nodded at his hat, which lay on the ground at his feet.

"Bah!" said the puncher. "He's a half-wit, I suppose! Rather eat than drink?" And the puncher strode on with a snort and disappeared within the door of the saloon.

Others seemed to be of the same opinion. Perhaps they could not understand why a white man who was sound of body had to sit and beg on the streets in that land of golden wages for either industry or rascality. So Sammy, feeling that he must more and more pause to study every strange feature of this strange land, stood near by and watched the youth.

He was dressed in what might have been called splendid rags. For his shirt was silk and so was his bandanna, and his boots were adorned with beautifully long-arched spurs, and the boots themselves, battered and tattered as they were, had evidently once been shopmade goods. The sombrero itself, which lay upon the ground to receive any random coins which the passers-by chose to drop into it, was now merely a relic of a former glory, for around the crown young Sammy Gregg could see a shadowy network which had once, no doubt, been left as an impression there by interlacing metalwork—silver or gold.

He was a brown-eyed boy, this player of the flute—a handsome, lazy-looking, sleek-looking fellow; and the more Sammy looked upon him, the more he seemed worth beholding. For it seemed to Sammy, as he stared, that for the first time in his life he was looking upon a man who had never felt the sting of the universal curse of Adam. He had never worked!

Ay, that accounted for the girlish smoothness of that cheek, the brow as clear and as placid as standing water, the eye so calmly open that one could look a thousand fathoms deep into it, as into the eye of a very young and simple child.

Yet he was not simple, either, this

player of the flute. And indeed, the more Sammy looked upon him, the more he felt that he was beholding a unique.

Not so the others in Munson. They were too filled with their own affairs. Besides, the music was not to their taste. It consisted chiefly of wild improvisations, swift and light and eerie playings of the fancy; and there were none of the downright jigging tunes which the rough fellows of the mountains were apt to like, swelling the beat of the rhythm by the heavy beating of their heels. They shook their heads at the more refined music which the young stranger made. It annoyed them, more than anything else. And the only money which the labors of the stranger had gained were a few coppers and a few small silver coins. It seemed to Sammy that there was enough to this young man to be worth a more liberal reward, and so he stepped closer and dropped the broad bright face of a ten-dollar gold piece into the hat.

The flute player picked the coin from his hat, rose to his feet, bowed slowly and with much grace to Sammy, placed the hat on his hand, the flute under his arm, and sauntered deliberately off down the street with the laziest step that Sammy had ever remarked in a human being—a stride in which he rested with every step!

And that was all that Sammy's ten dollars had bought him—in place of the interesting conversation which, he was sure, might be made to flow from the lips of the boy as readily as the music had come.

Sammy had lunch at the hotel, and he was wandering back down the street to the door of Rendell's store, in fact, when he saw a thing which made his heart leap. Straight down the street toward him came half a dozen tired mustangs driven along by a tall, wild-appearing fellow with long, sandy mustaches.

He, however, was not the chief ob-

ject of interest to Sammy. His horses were what held Sammy's attention; the instant he glanced at them he knew them. They were a fragment of his newly stolen herd!

He could not be mistaken. At first, each of the hundred and seventy had looked very much like one another. But afterward he had begun to see the distinctions as he rode with them day and night. And now he knew them all. He knew that Roman-nosed roan. He knew very well that blaze-faced brown and the chestnut with the broken ear. He knew all six of them—he could swear to them! And the papers of sale were in his pocket!

He started into the store and called to Rendell: "Here come six of them with one of the thieves behind!"

Rendell ran to the door.

"No," said he, "that's not one of the thieves, any more than I am. That's one of the oldest ranchmen around these parts. It's Cumnor, son; and he's no thief. Look yonder—they got new brands burned into their shoulders. No, sir, you can depend upon it that Cumnor bought those horses honest."

"What bills of sale did he get with them?" asked Sammy.

"Bills of sale?" asked the storekeeper, opening his eyes as though at some strange new star that had swum into the heavens. "Bills of sale?" Then he added with a rather wicked grin: "Maybe you'll ask him what bills of sale he's got, and he'll show 'em to you!"

The troop of horses was already opposite the doors of the store. And Cumnor was waving a buckskin-shod hand in greeting to Rendell, when Sammy ran down the steps. And, in another moment, Sammy was standing at the head of Cumnor's pony.

"Mr. Cumnor," he said abruptly, "these six horses were stolen from me this morning!"

"Son," said Mr. Cumnor, "dog-gone me if that ain't interesting to me!"

There seemed to be a touch of dry humor about this, but Sammy Gregg was not in a humor to enjoy such wit. He said: "I have the bills of sale, with the register of the brands, and all!"

"You have?" echoed Mr. Cumnor, frowning a little.

"I'm sorry," said Sammy, "but the thief must have taken you in!"

"You're sorry?" echoed Cumnor.

"Sorry that you've lost your money!"

"Look here," said Cumnor. "I paid fifty dollars spot cash for each of them six, and I had all the trouble, too, of picking 'em out of a big herd. Now what do you think I'm gonna do about it?"

Sammy shrugged his shoulders as he had seen others do that day. "I'm sorry," he repeated, "but if you want to see my documents, here—"

He reached for an inside pocket, but before his hand got to it, a long Colt was in the hand of Mr. Cumnor and the muzzle yawned terribly just before the face of Sammy Gregg. It seemed, indeed, that Mr. Cumnor had gravely mistaken the gesture of Sammy Gregg!

"Now, look here," said Cumnor, "I ain't aiming to have any more trouble with you than I can help. But I ain't got any care to see your papers. The papers that I'm interested in is the gold coins that I paid for the six horses that stand here. And, outside of that, I bought them six hosses from a gentleman that I would trust pretty complete."

"Will you tell me his name?" asked Sammy.

"His name is one that's pretty well known around here in the past few months. Maybe even *you* have heard of Chester O. Furness, young stranger?"

Sammy gasped and then he shouted: "But I tell you, if that's his name and he sold you those horses, then Chester Ormonde Furness is one of the five thieves who ran off my horses this morning!"

Mr. Cumnor lowered his revolver just

a trifle. "I'm sort of busy to-day," said he.

"Ride on," said Sammy. "I'll herd the horses away—"

"You'll what?" said Cumnor. "Keep off of them six, son!"

"Cumnor," said Sammy Gregg, facing the big man without fear, though he saw that danger was before him, "I offer to prove my right to them, one by one!"

"I ain't got time to listen. You find Furness and talk to him, first of all! Now stand out of my way."

Oaths were rare upon the lips of Sammy, but now he cried out: "I'll see you damned before I stand away!"

"Then take it, you fool!" snapped Cumnor, and fired his pistol full in the face of Sammy Gregg.

CHAPTER VII.

NO LAW IN MUNSON.

RENDELL heard the shot fired and saw Sammy fall; and the big store-keeper came hobbling down the steps in haste, moving himself sidewise on account of his stiffened, ruined hip. And yet he had agility and strength enough left in his body to lean and lift poor Sammy in his arms. He carried him to the porch of the store and laid him out in the shade. All one side of Sammy's head was running blood, and big Rendell made no effort to bind the wound or examine it. Death seemed only too certain.

But he busied himself fumbling through the pockets of Gregg and at length he stood up with an oath and turned upon Cumnor, who sat his saddle sullenly near by, keeping one gloomy eye upon the disappearing mustangs down the street as though he wanted very much to ride after them, and yet not daring for shame to ride away from his victim so soon. Such a hasty flight might well turn "self-defense" into "murder," even in the lenient eye of the

public opinion of Munson. "D'you know that he didn't carry no gun—d'you know that, Cumnor?" asked Rendell.

"How should I know that?" growled Cumnor.

"By the look of him, for one thing, I should say," said the storekeeper. "The devil, man, you ain't blind!"

"I ain't no mind reader, though," said Cumnor.

"D'you need to read minds to see that he ain't a wild fighting type?"

"He was talking pretty big," rumbled Cumnor.

"He was talking for his rights," said Rendell. "And nothing more'n his rights."

"Look here," said Cumnor. "Who made you the judge and the sheriff in this here county?"

"Why," cried Rendell, "if it comes right down to that, I'm due to prove that I can handle myself as well as though I *was* a judge and a jury. I may of busted up my ribs and my hip, Cumnor, but darned if my gun fingers and my gun wrist ain't about as supple as they ever was!"

But Mr. Rendell had built up a not inconsiderable reputation in the days before he retired to the quiet of his store, and Cumnor was in no haste to see the storekeeper make his threat good. So the rancher was extremely pleased to see an opportunity to make a change of conversation, and pointing past the other he said: "What's all the shoutin' for, Rendell? Are you talkin' about a dead man or one that's only been scratched a mite and taught a lesson?"

Rendell whirled about and saw Sammy Gregg, with a hand laid against the side of his head, propping himself up on the other arm.

Instantly the big fellow was at work examining and dressing the head wound, and Cumnor, glad to be away from this place, spurred off to look after his mustangs so recently purchased. And he had barely veered around the corner at

the farther end of the street when who should he see before him but the tall form and the handsome face of Chester Ormonde Furness, mounted upon a magnificent, dappled-gray horse—a gelding with a stallion's wild eye and crested neck. The heat of the recent scene was still in Cumnor, or perhaps he would not have ventured as much as he did, for the men of that region had not forgotten and were not likely ever to forget how Mr. Furness had burned his name in the bar at Mortimer's saloon. Cumnor, however, was in the humor for a hasty action at this instant, and he reined his horse abruptly in front of Furness.

"Furness," he sang out, "when you sold me those six horses an hour ago, did you know that I was buying trouble with them, too?"

"My dear fellow," said Furness, "I have no idea what you're talking about, I'm sure. Except that I know you got the pick of the herd. You paid fifty dollars a head for horses that might have brought sixty-five in any market about here."

"Ay, and suppose that I was to ask you for a bill of sale—and the records of the transfers of those hosses, Furness—"

"Records?" echoed Furness, frowning like one in pain. "Why, Cumnor, the word of the man from whom I bought those animals wholesale was enough for me, I'm sure."

"What man?" snapped Cumnor. "What man did you buy them from, I'd like to know?"

Mr. Furness grew exceedingly cold. And he straightened himself in the saddle. And upon his hip he rested his ungloved right hand. A very odd thing about Mr. Furness was that though he never rode forth without his gloves, yet he was rarely or never seen to wear leather upon that supple right hand. Indeed, constant exposure had covered it with a very handsome bronze that made

his well-kept finger nails look almost snowy white in contrast.

And he said to the rancher: "I trust that I don't understand you, Cumnor."

"The devil," said Cumnor. "I'm talking English, ain't I?"

Then Cumnor saw that the deadly right hand of Furness *was* resting on his right hip—resting there lightly, as though poised for further movement.

And Mr. Cumnor regretted with all his heart that he had been so extremely hasty in making remarks upon the financial principles of Furness. The latter was saying, coldly: "Really, Cumnor, this is extraordinary. I don't know that I can tolerate this even from you, my dear Cumnor!"

Mr. Cumnor saw that he had come to a point in which it was far better to walk backwards than to continue straight ahead, and he remarked gravely: "I think that if you ride down the street, you'll find a man at the store of Rendell with a bullet wound in his head. I wish that you'd ride down there and hear that fellow talk!"

And he said no more about sale records and deeds of transfer, but he reined his horse to the side again, and spurred away in the pursuit of the six mustangs. Mr. Furness cantered his big gray gelding down the street to the store of Rendell and dismounted there and looked into the store.

What he saw was young Sammy Gregg leaning against the counter with a very white face—a face almost as white as the bandage which was tied around his head. And the color of face and bandage was set off by a spreading spot of crimson that was soaking through the cloth.

"And how are you now, kid?" Rendell was asking.

"I'll do fine," said Sammy Gregg. "Ah, there's a man that I want to talk to." He started up and confronted big Furness.

"Furness," he said, "I had nearly two

hundred head of horses stolen from me this morning. Five men did the trick. They killed my chief helper and they scared two more of them nearly to death. I've seen six of those horses that were stolen. No doubt about them. I know them as well as I know my own hand. On account of those horses I've just been shot down. Well, Cumnor did the shooting, and Cumnor says that he bought those horses from you!"

Mr. Furness bit his lip and then drew in his breath with a sound which was very much like the moan of wind through thin branches. He sat down upon a stool and he removed his hat and he mopped his forehead.

"Stolen horses! Good Lord!" said Mr. Furness. "No wonder the scoundrels were willing to sell those horses to me for twenty-five dollars apiece!"

"Was that what they asked?"

"That's it. Twenty-five dollars. And of course I knew that almost anything decent in the line of a horse will sell for fifty dollars a head! I saw a quick profit. Heavens, youngster, it never came into my head that the horses might be stolen. You see, I'm almost as much of a greenhorn around here as you are! I paid cash for the horses and landed the whole lot of them."

"I suppose that I ought to be sorry for you, then," said Sammy. "Because I'm afraid that I'll have to claim the entire lot of them!"

"I wish you luck," said Furness. "I wish you luck, upon my soul of honor. But I'm afraid that you'll have to do a tall bit of scrambling for them! Not thirty minutes ago three horse traders who were bound north came up with me and looked the lot over and they offered me forty dollars a head spot cash. The profit was too good to be true. A quick turnover better than a long deal, you know. I took that money and they split the herd into three chunks and rattled them off through the cañons to the north."

Mr. Gregg clutched his hands together. "North! Ay, north!" he said. "They're bound for Crumback and seventy-five dollars a head!"

"Eighty dollars, my friend," put in the gentle voice of Mr. Furness. "The price is going up and up at Crumback."

Mr. Gregg groaned. "Will you tell me what the five thieves looked like?"

"There were only two that I saw anything of."

"Well?"

"They were very well mounted, for one thing."

"Not on mustangs?"

"No, there was a lot of hot blood in the horses they were riding. Long-legged steppers, they were!"

"I saw them and I watched them move," sighed Sammy. "Yes, they're fast! But what of the two men?"

"I could pick them out from any crowd for you, Gregg," said the big fellow, "and I should be delighted to do so. Delighted! One was rather young; the other middle-aged. Both Mexicans. The older fellow has a pair of scars that look like knife-work on his right cheek. He must have had a passage with some left-handed man! And the younger chap is distinguished for a very long chin and an overshot lower jaw. Unmistakable, both of them! We'll get up some posters to spot them—you might offer a reward. Yes, by Jove, I'll put myself down for a hundred on that same reward! I want to help you out, Gregg. I sympathize with you, my friend!"

And he stood up and clapped a kindly hand upon the shoulder of the smaller man and then turned to leave the store. He had reached the door before Sammy had the courage to cry out: "Just one minute, Mr. Furness."

The big man turned with a pleasant smile.

"You see," said Sammy, "a man can't keep the proceeds from the sale of stolen goods."

"I don't understand," said Furness.

"I mean, Furness," insisted Sammy, "that the money that was paid to you for those horses really belongs in my pocket!"

Mr. Furness laughed, but without much conviction. "I see that you're a wit," said he. "But after all, that's rather a queer joke!"

And he stepped away from the door of the store and his whistle came blithely back to them. Sammy, with an exclamation, started to run in pursuit, but the quick hand of the storekeeper caught him and held him back.

CHAPTER VIII.

RENDELL GIVES ADVICE.

IT seemed to Sammy, for a blinding instant of wrath, that even big, good-natured Rendell had joined in the conspiracy to drive him mad with persecution. But one glance at the frowning, unhappy face of the cripple convinced him.

"Don't you see, kid?" said Rendell. "It's no good! No good at all! It's Furness—that's all there is to it."

"Furness? But Furness simply doesn't understand the law on that point, and he doesn't see that the law will really restore to me—"

"Furness understands everything," said Mr. Rendell. "I always knew that from the minute I laid eyes on him. I knew that he understood everything. But I never quite got onto his dodge. I didn't see what side of the fence he was on. But to-day I see, and I see it mighty plain!"

"What, Rendell?"

"Look here, kid. If you run after Furness and stop him with your talk, d'you know that you'll only collect another chunk of lead? Except that Cumnor missed, but Furness ain't the kind that misses!"

"You mean he's *crooked*?"

"He is. But smooth. Crooked as

a snake—and softer and smoother than a snake. That's all the difference there is between 'em."

"Furness? Why, Rendell, I've seen him—"

"Kill Mortimer and run that cur Lawson out of town. Yes, but a crook can be a brave man, you know! I say, Gregg, that you'll never get a penny out of Mr. Furness."

"I remember, now," said Sammy gloomily, "that when he tried to laugh, there was no ring to it, at all. No ring at all! But—it don't seem possible that he's a crook! Nobody could suspect it!"

"Not until I begin to let the news of this drift around the country. Then there'll be a little change in the feeling about Mr. Furness. But you, kid—what are you gonna do?"

"I'm going back," said Sammy gravely.

"Back to Brooklyn? You're wise, at that. This sort of a country ain't made for your kind!"

"Back to Brooklyn? No, sir, I'm going south and buy me another herd."

"Not again!"

"I've got a shade more than two thousand left. And that's enough to get what I need. I got within a hundred miles of Crumbock last time, nearly. This time I may win all the way through!"

Mr. Rendell was more than impressed. He was frankly amazed and admiring, and he said so at once. Because it was no more his nature to disguise admiration than it was to disguise disapproval.

"Why," said he, "you're a bulldog, son! With twenty more pounds of beef on you, you'd be at the throat of this here Furness, I got an idea! Going south for more hosses! Why, dog-gone me, kid, you'll be taking them wet, I suppose, this trip!"

"What does that mean?" asked the innocent Sammy.

"Taking them with no papers *at all*.

Taking them just the way they're drove up out of the Rio Grande. Wet! That's all!"

Sammy was interested. He wanted more information and he got it.

"I'm the fountainhead for all the talk you want about the border crooks," said Rendell. "I used to work and run hosses in them ranges. And that's where I was used up. Up here, maybe you think that some of the boys is a mite rough. But they ain't rough enough to be called men, even, down in *my* home country. They'd use these here bloomin' heroes for roustabouts, and don't you forget it. Why, when I come up here I found that they figured on me for a man, even when I was only no more than a cripple. Well, down yonder on the border they didn't think shucks of me. Not a bit! They used me up so bad that I had to move out.

"Well, sir, down yonder they're all fire eaters. But right along the river itself is the worst land of all. That's the place where the boys go that ain't got any home. The boys that need more freedom than they can get in this here free country. There's districts down there where they draw a dead line that no sheriff is allowed to pass. And the minute a deputy or a sheriff shows up, anybody is free to pull guns and start blazing away.

"And down in them parts they go in for the hoss business pretty frequent. Mostly it ain't Texas mustangs that they're after, but Mexican devils dressed up in the hides of hosses. Them boys just ride out in a party twenty strong and they spot a place that's famous in north Mexico for having a good set of ponies, and they kill the greasers that are riding herd, and round up the hossflesh and slide it off toward the river.

"Them that want to buy hosses, and good hosses, and buy 'em cheap, goes down to the bad lands, there, and buys 'em up mighty reasonable. I've knowed three-dollar hosses from them parts that

looked a pile better than any of them fifty-dollar hosses that Cumnor got today.

"But when you buy *them* hosses, you buy 'em pretty cheap, but you don't get no papers, I don't have to tell you. You take your chances. And the first gent that comes along and takes a fancy to your herd, he can cotton onto them hosses of yours, if he's able to lick you. And you can't complain to no sheriff because you can't prove that them hosses really belonged to you by rights."

"Besides, after you've drove them hosses five hundred miles into the country, they're liable to stampede and run all the way back to their own pasture lands on the south side of the river, and then you got a thousand miles extra to ride and considerable hunting to do after you arrive."

Such was the story of "wet" horses and cheap ones which Rendell told to Sammy Gregg, but Gregg listened with the fire in his eyes once more. The morals of the matter did not trouble him. If it were wrong to buy stolen horses, Sammy did not pause to so much as consider the subject. He had had a herd of horses stolen from him. Therefore the world owed him another supply. And it made very little difference where he got them so long as *he* was not the actual thief.

Five dollar horses!

He went to sleep to dream of them that night, and the next morning he was on the train once more and headed for the southland. Poor Sammy Gregg, bound for the land where men were "really bad!" But perhaps you begin to feel that Sammy deserved something more than pity. And I think he did. The storekeeper was right. There was a great deal of the bulldog in Gregg; and there was fire, too—fire that would not burn out!

After he arrived, he spent a week or more learning what he could of the best district which he could head toward on

the river. He learned that. He found a bank to which he could entrust his money, and then he set out to see the sights of that frontier town. He saw enough, too, but the thing that filled him with the greatest marvel was the second glimpse he had of his flute player of Munson.

But oh, how changed! The difference between a dying, tattered moth and a young, brilliant butterfly. He fairly shimmered with goldwork and with silks. He sat at a table gambling with chips stacked high before him, and with every gesture he seemed to sweep fresh oceans of money toward himself.

There was little else that stirred in that room, filled with drifting smoke oceans from cigars and cigarettes. No other games were in progress. Men stood about in banks and shoals watching the progress of the campaign of the flute player, studying his calmly smiling face and the desperate eyes of the other four who sat at the table with him. There was a mortal silence while the game was in active progress. It was only during the shuffling and the dealing that any talk was allowed, and in the first of these intervals Sammy spoke to his nearest neighbor: "Who are they?"

The other did not turn his head. He answered softly: "Look at 'em hard, tenderfoot! The chap with the long white face is 'Boston' Charlie. And him with the pair of blond-looking eyes is Don McGillicuddie. The big gent with the cigar stuck in the side of his face is Holcum. I guess you've heard of him, all right. And there's Billy Champion, him that made the gold strike in the Creek last year. And the one with the chips in front of him is the king of 'em all, poor kid. He's Jeremy Major!"

"Why do you call him 'poor kid,' then," asked Sammy.

"You see him now. He's got them eating out of his hand. They're all crooks, and he knows it. They're rich, and he knows that. And he'll trim

them out of every cent they got. Because he's a slicker and a cooler gambler than the best of 'em."

"Is that why you pity him?"

"No, but after he has a million in his poke, he'll let it drift out again like water running through his fingers. They's a curse on poor Jeremy Major. He's the only man in the world who can't say: 'No!' And when he's flush, he hands out the stuff with both mits! Listen to me, kid! I've seen a gent step up and touch him for ten thousand in cold cash—and get it! And him one that Major never knew before that day! Ay, them same four skunks that are getting busted now—they know that they can go around to him to-morrow morning and beg back most of what they've lost!"

"But if he's so sure of what he does with the cards, why do they play with him?"

"Because they *are* gamblers, even if they're crooked. And they figger, every time, that they sure got some new tricks that'll beat Jeremy Major. And so they come and try their luck with him—why, look at Holcum, there! He's been away in the East, and they say that he cleaned up more'n a quarter of a million there. Besides, he got some new ideas, and he come all the way back West to see if he couldn't be the first man that could say that he had busted Jeremy Major at a card table. And now look! Look at the chips in front of Major. And Holcum has got one pile left. That's all!"

Another new and dazzling side light had been thrown upon the men of the West for Sammy. He could not tell how deeply this gay young beggar-gambler-musician was to enter into his life. But he took one more long look at the youth, and then he turned out into the night to find his bed and go to sleep.

He did not like the way his pulse was racing. He did not like the lift and the giddy whirl of his spirits. For the first time in his existence, temptation

had deeply entered the heart of Sammy Gregg.

He, with the burden of an unmade ten thousand dollars, upon his soul—what had he to do with games of chance?

But he slept little that night, and when sleep *did* come, it was broken by evil dreams in which he saw a vision of a hill of gold toward which hungry thousands struggled. But they got nothing of it, except what coins were carelessly flung to them by a laughing youth who sat on the top of the golden hill with a richly laced sombrero pushed far back on his head.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECOND HERD.

ALL was arranged almost without the volition of Sammy, and certainly without any effort on his part. How the news was spread he could not, of course, guess. But a whisper seemed to have passed around, for the next morning a smiling fellow appeared before him—a brown-faced, good-natured looking chap who said:

"I hear that you're trying to find cheap horses, Mr. Gregg?"

"I'm looking for them. Cheap *good* ones," said Sammy Gregg.

"Which is exactly the kind that me and my friends handle," said the stranger. "But there's only one peculiarity about 'em."

"What's that?" asked Sammy.

"They got sort of sensitive natures. You see, they don't like to have questions asked about 'em."

Even so green a tenderfoot as Sammy could understand this innuendo. And he grinned with perfect comprehension and raised his hand to adjust the bandage which encircled his head.

"All right," said Sammy, "I don't intend to talk them to death. Their family affairs are their own business."

The other nodded. "How many, and what's your price?" he asked.

"I want about three or four hundred," said Sammy. "What sort of a price can you make me on that lot?"

"Three or four hundred!" said the other, and whistled. "Why, that's quite a handful! Suppose we say two thousand for four hundred head—all warranted sound?"

Sammy, who saw nearly his entire block of remaining capital involved, and who knew that he needed leeway for herding expenses, fought for a margin.

"Sixteen hundred dollars," said he. "And I'll take my chance on the sort of horses you give me."

The other frowned, but only for a moment. "Is that your top price?" he asked.

"Partner," said Sammy, "I've just lost two hundred head. And I've got to pay heavy for good hands to drive this lot."

"I'll send you three Mexicans—born in the saddle. They'll drive 'em north for you at thirty dollars a month. Does that sound?"

It sounded very loud to the ear of Sammy Gregg, and he closed with the proposition at once. The rest was arranged in a trice. He was simply to head for the river at once, and a week from that night, at a named point, a herd of horses would be driven across the Rio Grande with three Mexican punchers in their rear. After that, the rest was in the hands of fate and Sammy Gregg. He need not pay a cent until the horseflesh was every bit of it north of the river.

So Sammy made his preparations and on the appointed night he sat in the saddle on a long, lean, bay mare as ugly as a caricature and as fleet as the wind, under a little hill of sand beside the river, with a sack of gold tied to his saddle bow and a pair of heavy Colts weighting down the two saddle holsters.

It was well past midnight before anything stirred on the south side of the little stream, so muddy that it would not

take the glitter of the stars on its face to show them back to the sky. But when there was a stir it was a sudden upheaval out of the dark and then a noise like a great rushing wind, and after that a volley of shadowy forms that plunged into the water and dashed it to clouds of milky foam. Out of the river, squealing, snorting, neighing like a small pandemonium, the charge continued onto the northern bank and then past the amazed Sammy Gregg and thundering away into the darkness of the northern night. Behind them rode three cursing cavaliers, and without a word to him, spurred past on the trail of the mustangs.

But that was not all. For now out of the river arose half a dozen riders and swept around him. He recognized the voice of the good-natured man, not quite so good-natured now!

"Let's have a little look at your wallet, Gregg!"

There was no mistaking the summons. He tossed it across to the speaker and thanked the caution which had made him bring not a penny more than the stipulated price. He saw that money counted out by match light. And then, with a grunt of disgusted disappointment, the case was tossed back to him.

"Sixteen hundred even! It's plain that you ain't paying us for all the fun we're giving you, Gregg!"

"I didn't know," grinned Sammy, "that it would be such a show!"

"Well, old son," spoke up another, "all I got to say is: Ride them ponies north as hard as their legs will fetch 'em along, because there is folks on their trail that's mighty curious about where they're galloping to."

Sammy, glad to be gone on this hint, turned the head of his mare in the direction of the disappearing thunder across the plain.

"And keep them greasers on a tight rein, Gregg. Don't let 'em hold you up for more than thirty a month."

We all believe in good beginnings, no matter how philosophical we may be. And Sammy, when he contrasted this smooth opening of his campaign with the knotty work which Manuel had had to do the time before, was sure enough that his scheme was due to pan out, at last.

It took an hour of brisk riding before he caught up with the rear guard of the herd. And, when he came up to them, he found the bronchos pretty thoroughly subdued. They had had enough running to content them, and it would take a whole thunderstorm to rout them on a new stampede.

Here, there, and beyond, in the rear of the trailing herd, he could spot the Mexican punchers by little sparks of light. That meant that they considered that the worst of this night's labor was completed. They were smoking in content. And Sammy sighed with relief. Next day he would slip into town to get the few remaining dollars which belonged to him, pack up their grubstake for the trip, and swing out again to rejoin the herd. In the meantime, he watched hungrily, joyously, as they drifted through the night time. Four hundred mustangs, and by the manner in which they kept bunched without trailing laggards, he judged that there were no cripples in the lot. Four hundred! He counted them roughly and found that the number was actually exceeded by five!

What noble thieves were these frontiers men, more than living up to their contracts!

Four hundred ponies. Even suppose that a whole hundred of them were stampeded away on the trip, three hundred at fifty dollars a head, even, meant fifteen thousand in his pocket.

"I am going to be lucky!" said Sammy aloud, and fervently. "The bad luck can't hit me twice in the same place!"

And he went on in a dream about Susie Mitchell and the home which was

to be theirs. I think that Sammy had begun to idealize her at last. Perhaps she was ceasing to be so much of a habit with him, and becoming rather a passion. Distance and time is apt to work like that on the mind of a lover.

He reached the town by the dawn. He was back again at the herd by the falling of the night, and he found that all had gone well with them during the day. There had been no mishaps. There had been not so much as a single beginning of a stampede. Not a single horse had gone lame and fallen behind. In a word, the record of that glorious first day was not marred by a single scar.

And to see those horses in the daylight!

They were not like his other herd—those ugly little rascals from the sunburned deserts of Texas. These creatures had come off good grass and a lazy life. They were sleek and round. And they carried their heads and their shining eyes after the way of free, wild things.

"These hosses got sense pretty good!" said one of the Mexicans in tolerable English. "If we get a few good quiet days, they'll herd like sheep—just like sheep!"

And they had good days—three handsome ones hand-running. The work was easy. They reached water often enough to keep up the heart of the herd. There was enough grazing grass along the way. And now the herd had become deftly organized. There were certain known leaders which trotted in the van. And the whole procession moved in a great, scattered wedge.

They covered a huge amount of ground. Not during the marching hours, when they were urged along by the riders behind, but in the morning and in the evening when they scattered to feed. And Sammy, staring with delight, would see the rising and the setting sun flash over a whole landscape

which was flooded with horseflesh that belonged to him.

And then, on the evening when Sammy estimated a hundred and fifty miles lying behind them—just after they had made camp by a water hole and while the herd was ranging freely to find the best of the bunch grass—just at that quiet time trouble struck them again!

It reminded Sammy horribly of that other night in the mountains thirty miles from Munson, when Manuel had died. But this time the thieves came out of the rolling hills, waving their arms, screaming wildly, and gathering the herd in instant flight before them. Oh, cunning devils! For they turned the rushing mass of horseflesh straight upon the camp. With Sammy's own property they would destroy him and then make off in safety!

He made for the tall mare in a mad haste. No time for saddling. He had a revolver in one hand. And he wound his other hand into her mane and swung himself up with all his might. He just managed to hook a heel over the sharp ridge of the mare's back. Then he slumped into place, and, with a side glance, he saw where one of the herders—who had foolishly tried to saddle—was caught and overwhelmed by the sweeping wave of horses. Even the death shriek of the poor fellow was stifled and lost in the roar of the hoofs which beat him to a shapeless mass.

The forefront of that racing world of horses involved Sammy and then, in another moment, the mustangs were shooting ahead and he was in the rear—in the rear with the three thieves!

Where were the Mexicans? The last two of them sat their horses at a little distance and tucked their rifles into the hollows of their shoulders. A whirl of bullets began. One struck a mustang in the herd just before Sammy and made the poor creature leap with a squeal high into the air.

Ay, and there was another target. For the robber who was nearest to Sammy suddenly tossed up his arms and lunged from the saddle. Then the first fighting madness of his life came to Sammy. There were two thieves left, whirling in their saddles and dumping hasty bullets toward the two cool Mexicans. Ay, and they were fast rushing out of range—and four hundred stolen mustangs streaming before them!

All of this whirled through the brain of Sammy. And then he found himself belaboring the ribs of the mare with his heels and rushing her after the herd. He had no means of guiding her. But, in her panic, she naturally took the direction which the rest of her kin were fleeing; and it so happened that the particular route she selected carried her straight at a red-headed ruffian who bestrode a tall roan. One instant he was shouting and waving at the frightened herd. The next, he was wheeling in the saddle and shooting marvelously close at the Mexicans.

And then he saw Sammy and yelled at his companion: "Hey, Jerry, what's this comin'!"

"A joke, Tom!" shouted the other. "Throw a chunk of lead in the fool."

"I'll do that for us!"

And, turning in his seat, he snapped his Winchester to his shoulder again and fired point-blank at Sammy, not thirty yards behind.

He was a good shot, was Tom, and moreover, he fired this time in perfect surety and contempt of his enemy. But, when he looked back again, Sammy was still coming—coming with a wild yell of rage of fearless battle lust.

For Sammy was a man transformed. It is not the pleasure of the gods that the big men alone can go berserk. Little men can do it also. And Sammy was literally running amuck.

Ordinarily he could never have stayed on the back of that long-bounding mare for a single moment without saddle and

stirrups to help him and steady him. But he was thinking of something more than a fall to the ground, at this moment. And, riding without self-consciousness, he rode very well, balancing himself adroitly and gripping with his weak knees, and waving above his head one clenched fist and in his other hand the Colt.

He who had never shot off a firearm in his life!

He made a weird-enough picture, with that white bandage clasping his head, and his hair flying above the bandage, and his hat blown off, and his unbuttoned sleeves flying up around his shoulders and showing his skinny arms.

Have you seen a little spindling, nervous weakling of a boy fly into a passion in the schoolyard and make the bigger boys run in sheer terror at the devil which is in him? So it was with Sammy. And big Tom, the horse thief, who had been in many and many a fight, running and standing, before this day, looked back again to see if his odd enemy had not fallen to the ground. And behold, there he was, and now not more than fifteen yards away, and gaining at every leap of his horse! For the mare was a born sprinter.

And fear leaped into the strong heart of Tom.

"Help, Jerry!" he screamed, and jerked up the muzzle of his rifle again.

He saw Jerry fire; and he saw the little madman behind him merely laugh, and urge his mare on more swiftly. Even Jerry had missed! Something jammed in the rifle. Tom dropped it with a wild shout of pain and snatched out a revolver.

Time for speed, now. For here was Sammy Gregg rushing along not two lengths of a horse behind him. And as big Tom wheeled in the saddle again, Sammy shoved forth his own gun, and set his teeth, and closed his eyes, and fired.

His eyes were still closed when the

mare stumbled upon something soft, and went on. He looked forth before him, and there he saw that the big roan horse galloped riderless, before him. He glanced behind and there lay a figure sprawled on the ground.

And Sammy Gregg, the mild and the weak, had killed a man with his own hand and in his own right!

CHAPTER X.

HARD LUCK DOGS SAMMY'S HEELS.

IT would have been too much to expect any qualms of conscience from Sammy. Indeed, he was half mad with the joy of the fight. And he could see that his deed had worked an effect upon the two Mexicans, also. They had left off their useless, long-distance firing, which had only served, after the first death, to bring down two mustangs. Now they were running their ponies as fast as they could to get up to the scene of action.

There would be no time for that, Sammy vowed. He himself would settle the remaining thief. For, if a man can be shot with one's eyes closed, cannot another be disposed of still more effectually with eyes open? So thought Sammy. And he wanted blood!

He struck the mare a resounding thump on the side of the neck and caused her to swerve violently to the side and head, indeed, straight for the last of the trio.

He had not waited for the charge! He had seen two of his companions fall upon this luckless evening, and he was not the stuff which wishes to fight out stubborn campaigns along one line, even if it takes all summer. In fact, he had had enough, for his part, of firing at a lucky, gun-proofed fool of a man like this wild fellow who rode without saddle or bridle—and who waited to come within arm's reach before he fired his weapon.

The third thief, in short, wheeled

abruptly away and now was flying for his life.

Sammy would have followed, willingly. But when he hammered at the ribs of the mare, it just so happened that one of his heels struck a spot which had already been thumped very sore in that wild evening's ride. And the mare, at that instant, decided that she had done enough for one day. She set about unseating her rider, therefore, and though she was a clumsy and most ineffectual bucker, the first humping of her back and the very first stiff-legged jump snapped Sammy from her back and deposited him in the dust.

To Sammy it was like a drop into deep sleep from which he was awakened by the voice of a Mexican, a changed voice, no longer snarling and sullen, but filled with respect and gentlest solicitude. So Sammy sat up and blinked fearfully around him. What he saw was the herd, which had been headed by his two hired men, trooping back toward the spot which had been originally selected for that evening. Behind them rode one of the men; the other had come to assist the fallen "boss."

He had been a silent man, before this. But now Pedro was transformed. Words ran like water from his lips. He himself had guessed it, and he himself had told his companion, Gonzalez, he vowed, that Señor Gregg was probably a great fighting man. But to rush on bareback in this fashion straight upon a desperado--this was a thing which even he, Pedro, had not expected!

For his own part, he would have been on the heels of the villains, long before, had it not been that his scoundrel of a horse—which he hoped to see die in torments!—balked at the last instant and refused to carry his master toward the scene of danger!

All of this while he assisted the dizzy "boss" into the saddle on that same balky horse and led him back toward the site of the camp. On the way, they

paused to examine the three dead men. Their poor comrade they buried where he lay, but in a shallow grave. As for the other two, coyotes and buzzards could attend to their remains. What was of importance to the Mexicans was that they collected no less than a hundred and twenty-two dollars from the pockets of the two thieves who had died. And they took, also, excellent revolvers, and long rifles of the very latest and best model. They brought this considerable heap of plunder obediently to the chief.

It turned the blood of Sammy cold to see the gold and silver coins from which the body heat of the dead men had hardly yet departed.

"Keep the stuff!" said he to Pedro and Gonzales. "Keep the stuff and take the two new horses to ride—they're better and bigger and faster than the ponies you have now."

If his feats of war that evening had made him seem a new man in the eyes of those savage followers, this stroke of generosity raised him almost above the level of mere humanity. The wages of two months apiece—two precious horses—and revolvers and rifles fit for a king of the plains.

Tears stood in their eyes. They could not thank Sammy Gregg. They could only withdraw to a little distance and worship him mutely.

And Gonzales whispered softly to his companion: "Did I not guess it from the first? Did I not say, Pedro, that no man would do business with the river horses unless he were a fighting man with nerves of steel? Did I not say it? How he rode in on them! Like a devil—with no fear! As if he were riding a colt in my father's pasture!"

The trail from that day was a changed thing for Sammy Gregg. He was no longer allowed to rise and catch his mare and saddle her in the morning. It was done by swift, skillful, willing brown hands. Neither must he soil his fine

hands with cookery or with cleaning of pans in the evening. No, for here were abler and happier cooks, in the persons of his devoted servants, amigo Pedro and amigo Gonzalez. They would have rolled his cigarettes and sung him to sleep if he had wanted them to.

In a few brief minutes of one day he had revealed to them the two qualities which, alone, they esteemed—dauntless courage and almost boundless generosity!

Out across leagues and leagues of burning desert, now. Day by day, wearily, steadily. They had had weather of only one kind since the start. But on the afternoon of the very day in which the brown of the foothills began to be visible before them, they were treated to a change.

Gonzalez saw it first—a haze in the northwest, looking like a distant dust cloud. But, as it drew nearer, they could see that the faint mist extended from the earth to the heavens.

"It is going to storm!" said Gonzalez. "Let us get these horses down into that draw. Hurry, Pedro. Señor Gregg—with your help, it may be done. Ride, ride, Pedro, and head them into the draw. The storm will keep them there. But if they have no shelter, they may scatter like feathers in the wind. Spurs, Pedro!"

Pedro was already off like the wind itself.

The sharp eye of Gonzalez had noted a shadow across the surface of the desert to the right, and he knew that here was one of those hollows which might well serve almost like a barn to keep the herd from the edge of the storm.

But unluckily they had come into a region of good grass, and the result was that the younger and more eager among the mustangs had pressed far forward, trotting from bunch to bunch, nibbling here, and then rushing on, while the older geldings and mares lingered in the rear.

The result was that Pedro and Gonzalez had far to ride to get to the head of the column. And, in the meantime, the mist out of the horizon was growing and changing apace. It reached, indeed, to the very roof of the sky and now it was thickening and blackening. The rim of the storm reached the sun. Instantly the sun was reduced to a dim red ball which seemed to be falling swiftly and silently down the arch of the sky.

No, it was only the rush of the storm clouds as they shot across the heavens. They neared the herd.

A close race, surely, for here was Gonzalez ahead of Pedro and almost at the top of the column of horses at the very same moment that the manes and tails of the leaders of the procession began to fan out to the sides, blown by the first breath of the storm wind.

But right behind that wind came the rain itself. Already the sun's light had been curtained away to sunset colors. Now it was reduced to nothing more than a grisly green twilight. And the storm came head down, reaching level, white, blind arms of rain before it.

Flying hands of stinging mist cuffed against the eyes of the mustangs and made them whirl as though they had been struck with whips. They bunched their backs and cowered for a moment, head down.

Sammy Gregg, paralyzed by the violence of the stroke, and stunned by the uproar which crowded against his ears, could only grip the edge of his hat and lean his weight against the wind, and shade his eyes with his other hand to see what was happening with the other men and the horses.

He heard Gonzalez ride by a mere six feet away from him, yelling at the top of his lungs, but in the dreadful screaming of the wind the voice of the big Mexican sounded no louder than a far-off whisper.

"Señor—and Pedro! Now is the

time! Ride into them, for the love of Heaven, and start them across the wind a little. Start them across the wind only a little, and they will reach the draw. Courage—and help! Holla! Away with you!"

He rode at the huddled horses, firing his revolver, lashing at them with his loaded quirt. The animals blinked and shrank away, and then, one by one, they began to edge off across the wind, staggering as blasts of renewed and freshened violence cuffed at them broadside. Here was Sammy, understanding, now, what was to be done, and fighting desperately to save fifteen or twenty thousand dollars' worth of horseflesh which he could still call his own! And Pedro, too, had aroused himself and was laboring valiantly.

But here fortune struck directly against them. At the very moment when the whole herd was in a sort of blind, staggering motion across the wind, heads low down to the ground, ears flattened, spirits dejected—at that very moment, the heavens opened and a yellow torrent of lightning flowed down the gash. Then came thunder like the beating of giant horses on a wooden bridge just above their heads. Roaring, rolling, crashing thunder—as though the whole sky was crumbling and showering to earth in vast fragments about their ears.

The heads of the mustangs snapped up, and they stood alert with terror. What were the whips and the shouts of the men compared with this tremendous artillery?

The sky yawned again; again the quivering tongues of lightning licked the heart of the heavens and edges of the earth at the same instant. It was more than enough. The horse herd leaped wildly away. The scourges of the wind whipped them along the path. And they rushed back south and east, south and east, toward the land from which they had come.

CHAPTER XI.

SAMMY RIDES FOR HELP.

HERE are two ways to follow a stampeded herd of horses. One is to ride like mad and strive to head them. One is to let them run out of sight and follow at a walk, on the simple principle that a horse will stop running more quickly if he sees that there is no living thing behind him.

But when an eighty-mile wind is cutting the hind quarters of a mustang, he is apt to try to run as fast as the wind blows and keep right on as long as the storm and his strength last. So the three riders simply lashed their helms, to speak in naval parlance, and let their craft drift before the wind at its own free will.

They scudded along at a brisk enough rate all the rest of that day, and, when the early darkness came, the rain was no longer with them, but the wind was, and as far as they could peer across the storm-darkened desert there was not a sign of a horse to be seen ahead of them.

They made a silent and desolate camp, that night, wringing the wet out of their clothes before they lay down to try to sleep, without a fire to warm them.

When the sun rose, there was not a cloud in the sky. The wind had fallen away. Before the sun was an hour high, the day was burning hot.

The rain had left the earth in a condition to hold sign deep and well. And after a time they found traces enough of the herd. But what traces! Some had run here and some had run there. Like a fleet of merchantmen cruising here and there and everywhere at the sight of an enemy man of war, the bronchos each had followed its own will, and now, in flying clusters, they were breaking for the southland, all in that direction, but doubtless on a seventy-mile front!

There was not the slightest doubt as to what they should do. They bore off

to the right hand as far as they could go, and finally reached the outermost sign of the mustangs. Along that trail they followed. And for two days they rode before they found a wretched score of animals in a clump of cottonwoods.

Twenty out of four hundred!

But they were not done trying. They swung to the east, now, and, still bearing south, they drove the mustangs ahead of them as hard as they could.

In this fashion they began to pick up some of the rest. In clusters and flying knots here and there they found the remnants of that fine herd which had been so well in hand only a few short days before. But some were lost. And some had broken their legs by stepping in the holes of prairie dogs in the blind rush of the stampede, and some had ruined themselves on murderous barbed wire, and some had run into other men who wanted them almost as badly as Sammy Gregg did.

Still, day after day, eating closer and closer to the point at which they had begun their weary trek, they kept gathering in the mustangs. Until, in due time, they counted noses, considered their position, and decided that they had collected as many as they possibly could. Three long weeks had elapsed since the stampede. Three terribly vital weeks to Sammy, whose eye was on the six months limit, now. And they had raked together, finally, two hundred and ninety-odd mustangs. More than a quarter of the herd had returned to the desert out of which it had come.

But Sammy was not downhearted. He was daunted, but not beaten. And he said to the Mexicans: "Listen to me! My bad luck is used up, this time. The pan has been turned upside down and the last bit of that scrambled bad luck has been dumped over my head and shoulders. So the thing for me to do, now, is to push straight ahead. Because we'll have no more trouble with the horses!"

He spoke confidently, but Gonzalez sighed and shook his head in a covert despair. He knew horses, did Gonzalez. Not a book knowledge, and not because he loved them, but because he had lived with them more intimately than he had ever lived with men. He had been with them in the desert and in the corral. He had roped and thrown and branded and ridden herd and cared for orphaned colts and dragged fondering bronchos out of the mud of water holes.

He had been with them for many years, day and night, and he knew horses!

Therefore he knew that the trouble with this lot was *not* over. It was hardly begun! For horses have nerves as much as any pampered twentieth century women have nerves. There is a grain of madness in every horse, and the better the horse, one might almost say, the nearer that madness is to the surface. Have you seen the thoroughbred come rearing and dancing out of his stable in the morning?

Eagerness to go—feeling his oats, you say. A little natural spirit—who wants a dead thing under the saddle?

Yes, and just a little madness, too. A desire to turn himself into the wind and be blowing across the ridges of the hills—a wild passion for speed, more speed, yet more speed. Madness you must call it—madness or nerves.

And those mustangs had nerves, too. They had not led pampered lives, but they had nerves which were quickly developed. And lately they had seen the sky turned into hell of fire. Yes, and they had heard it, too—heard the crashing of the sky as it smashed down upon the earth.

In the face of this infernal hubbub the human beings had tried to guide them into the teeth of that huge destruction—the human beings who, perhaps, had caused all that wild destruction by their magic!

High-headed and meant for trouble that herd had been when it came across the river, but still good herdsmanhip had kept them in hand. But this was a different matter, now. They were transformed. They were as filled with quivering and dancing, as full of shying and snorting and prancing as any unbroken two-year-old thoroughbred. Terror was behind their eyes, and willfulness. They had run through the hands of these men before, and why might they not do it again?

A horse is the hardest animals in the world to head, next to a stubborn dog. And, like a dog, he pursues one system. He runs straight at you, head stretched out, tail whipped away in a line. He paralyzes you by driving straight at you, and then, when he is close, he swerves far out to one side and flaunts smoothly away.

Try to catch even one horse—even a tame old veteran of fifteen years service under the saddle. Try to catch him when he doesn't want to be caught some morning. Try to catch him in a half-acre lot and see how long it takes you—until he suddenly remembers some of the lessons of fifteen years and stands still, rigid, stiff, hating you out of the corner of an eye of fire.

Remember that, and then think of three hundred unbroken mustangs which have recently been frightened almost to death, and who have a hundred thousand square miles to play their tricks in. Then you will have an idea of the problems which lay before Sammy and his two men. Not that the Mexicans were unwilling to work. By the law of their race, having given their hearts to this gringo, they would not be in a hurry to recall their faith again. They would work until the flesh was worn from their hands. But mere work will not serve in the handling of three hundred horses shod with the wind and whipped by hysteria.

However, by pains, by slow herding,

giving the wild creatures time to find themselves, toying with them, never pressing them, the first three days of the return trip went off smoothly enough. And then, by the ill fortune of war, they came within the sight of a railroad track running glimmering across the desert. For an hour or so they rolled slowly toward that double line of living light. And then something else happened.

From the direction of a patch of shadow on the edge of the horizon—that was a town, no doubt—a streak of thunder began to roll out toward them. Thunder, but coming more swiftly than even the thunder of the storm had come! Here it flew—a long black body running without feet. No, for its feet were that thunder to which they listened. Ay, and it cast before it a murmur of dread down the living lines of light which marked the way that it would fly! And above its reeling, swaying, furious front, there was a great black plume, a mile in length, a glorious plume, forever vanishing at the end and forever renewed just above the head of the monster.

What nerves could stand such a sight? Not those nerves, surely, which had seen the heavens turned to fire so short a time before! The herd tossed up its universal head, and stood and stamped. And then eye flashed to eye. There was a shudder of dread. A sweat of horror started out, glistening upon their drawn flanks.

"Heaven help us—here they go!" sighed Gonzalez.

And, as he spoke, every body in that herd whirled about and with flaring manes and burning eyes they stormed away through the hands of Sammy and his men.

They did not pursue. They sat their horses, drawing quietly together. They did not speak to one another for so long that their saddle horses forgot the thrill of excitement which had run tingling

through their very souls the moment before. They were quiet again, stretching out their heads toward the blades of sun-cured grass which were near.

Then said Sammy: "It's a queer thing, Pedro. But why don't the devils ever take it into their heads to run north?"

"Ah, señor, because they know that the spur and the quirt and the saddle are waiting for them in the north! However, thank heaven that the heart of the señor is so brave that he can laugh!"

"I cannot laugh. Gonzalez, you know horses. Tell me—can we drive those horses north--the three of us?"

Tears of grief stood in the eyes of Gonzalez. "Ah, señor, we cannot take them! They are all like children, now. They are afraid! What can we do with them? They do not understand our language. And to explain one little thing to one horse—does it not take a week of months, señor?"

"We'll go for help, then," said Sammy sadly. And he thought of the few dollars in his pocket. "You cut south after them. Follow them up slowly, and I'll ride to the town and hire two more men. I've *got* to get them north. I'm facing a time limit, and that limit is almost up!"

He turned toward the little shadow out of which the train had rushed. Ay, he must get them north, and when he had them there he must sell them and collect the money. And then even a fast train East would require some priceless days in addition.

For the first time he thought of writing to Susie to give him a little extension of time. But he couldn't do it. His strength failed him at that point. Because it was a matter of pride with him. Ten thousand dollars in six months!

And here his hands were overflowing with the very prize he wanted, if he could only bring it to the market!

CHAPTER XII.

A TRAMPS' JUNGLE.

A SHARP-SIDED CANON ran past the town, a cañon filled with trees and a thin sound of running water from the creek which had cut out this little gorge. There was a gaunt skeleton of an iron railroad bridge spanning that gully, and there was an old wooden bridge, too. A buckboard rattled across it as Sammy approached, the planks flopping up and down, unnailed, under the rolling of the wheels. And a thin cloud of dust floated up.

Sammy waved and nodded dumbly to the man in the buckboard. A man of middle age—no more. But with what a face! And when Sammy looked after him, he thought that the bowed shoulders and the bent head made the silhouette of an octogenarian. Was this what this free western country did to the people who strove to settle in it and wring a living from it with hard toil?

The first doubt entered the soul of Sammy Gregg like cold iron. He began to feel that he had thrown the product of his life's labor into a barren ocean. He would never see any return of his money again. Ay, and while he was away, might not the two Mexicans simply slide away from him and start for the comforts of their familiar southland? There would be a reason behind them; they had his money, and horses and guns of his giving!

For the first time in his life, great, cruel doubts began to fill Sammy's mind. It came to him as a part of his thoughts, rather than as a shocking surprise, when a voice from the brush beside the road said: "Hands up, you bum, or I'll drill you!"

Through the shallow screen of greenery, he could see the steady glimmer of the steel barrel of the rifle. Ay, and another rifle beside it.

"All right!" said Sammy wearily, and raised his hands shoulder high.

One of them stepped to the edge of the brush, his rifle at the ready, his guilty eyes glancing up and down the road. After all, they *were* perilously near the town.

"Ride your hoss in here, kid, and ride it in quick, or we'll lead the hoss in and drag you!"

Sammy did not need threats to make him obedient. He was not afraid, either, but he had a foolish desire to laugh, greatly, and idly; he was only afraid to give way to the laughter for fear that tears would follow on the heels of it.

The brush switched together behind him. He found his arms clutched on either side; but as a strong pair of fingers gripped him he heard the fellow snort:

"Why, Steve, he ain't got no arm at all. Like a girl, darned if it ain't. Go easy with him!"

They guided Sammy and his horse down a steep slope to the bottom of the ravine. There they made him dismount. They stripped off his coat, first, and then, when they had mastered his wallet, they counted out the contents.

"Two hundred and eighty-five dollars! Kid, maybe we ain't in luck."

"And a suit of clothes, too—"

"The devil! What good would that do us? Am I a blackbird, maybe, that I could step into his togs? Not if I shrunk down to what I was at twelve years old! Look at the gats he packs, too. A regular soldier, this bo is! A regular hero, maybe! Hey, kid, did you ever *shoot* one of them guns?"

He dandled one of the Colts familiarly under the nose of Sammy. But Sammy replied nothing. He felt that he could see to the bottom of his future, now.

To return not with fifteen thousand—but with nothing! To go back there empty-handed. To say to Susie: "I've got to start all over again!"

And then she would say: "How long

did it take you to make the last five thousand, Sammy?"

Ten years! It had taken him ten years to make the money the last of which was now to be divided between these ruffians. They were conferring a little apart, only fixing him with grim side glances. But, as they talked, so great was their contempt for him that they allowed him to overhear them.

"Suppose we tie him up and leave him here?"

"Aw, even if we let him go, he won't have the nerve to come back and make no trouble. Not him! He's scared stiff."

"Take no chances, I say, bring him in and let the chief have a look at him."

"Why should the chief know about it at all? Why not skin out with this stuff? If the chief hears about it, he'll have to come in for his share."

"Why, you blockhead, do you think that not telling him would keep him from knowing?"

"Well, maybe not. He's got ways of finding out. But if we was stowed on the rods and bound East—"

"You *are* batty, Steve! Would you try to get away from him?"

"Aw, I dunno. He ain't a god!"

"He's his nephew, then. No. We take the swag in and show it to him. Come along. We take in the boob, too, and ask the chief what to do with him."

They led Sammy Gregg, accordingly, through a screen of shrubbery into a clearing and there he saw a thing which he had read of in books, before, but never seen. A tramps' jungle.

There are few of such jungles in the West, now. There was still fewer, then. Even for scoundrels, there were easier ways of making a living than to skulk from town to town, robbing hen-roosts and pilfering small articles. It was precarious, too, that life of petty thievery. Because one never could tell when one would be hunted down by swift horsemen and queried abruptly at the point

of a revolver. But there were always a few to whom exertion of any lawful kind was so mortally uncomfortable that they would risk death itself rather than do an hour's labor for a dollar. There will always be such men. They are the spice of the underworld. Men who would invite death by exhaustion and the tortures of hunger and thirst rather than work comfortably a few hours a day, for three meals, sound clothes, and extra money to spend at their leisure. But they, the floating scum of the world, who exist only because they love freedom, are the only people in the world who do not know what leisure means.

For the first time, Sammy looked upon a collection of tramps not large, but rare. A scant seven or eight were lolling about the clearing with their hands occupied in odd jobs of mending or laundry. They started up when Sammy entered.

Steve stopped their grinning queries at once. "Where's the chief?" he said. "Has he left, already?"

"No, he's asleep."

"Well, wake him up and tell him that we got a haul!"

One or two hurried into the shade of a tall, wide-spreading tree through which the sun fell and reached the ground in scattered spots and irregular patches of gold. Stretched there, half in sun and half in shadow, with a green heaven of branches above his head, and scatterings of the sweet blue beyond, the "chief" slept like a happy child, with his arms thrown out crosswise, on either side of him.

He was gradually dragged to a sitting posture, reluctant to yield to their hands.

"But Steve and Lew have brought in a bird and some coin on him, chief!" they argued. "And you've been wanting some money!"

"Stolen money? Who the devil told you that I want stolen money?" responded a voice which was oddly familiar in the ear of Sammy Gregg. "Take

that man away. I don't want to see him, and I don't want to see his money."

"Good!" grunted Steve. "You come with us, kid."

But the other tramps now stood about in a close circle. They did not like the idea of two of their compatriots getting away with such a haul, undivided.

"Look here, Lew," said one of them, "d'you think that we're simps enough to let you two get away with murder like this? Shell out, you tightwad. Lemme see the color of the coin that you got off him."

"He had twenty dollars," said Lew. "I'll give you ten and Steve and me'll take the other ten."

"Hark at him sing!" scoffed another. "Twenty dollars was all they got, and that's all that they're excited about! Twenty dollars! Look here, Steve, it ain't gonna do."

"Maybe you'll search *us*?" asked Steve harshly.

"Maybe we will."

"Maybe you'll be——"

"Lew, drop that gun!"

"Why, darn your heart——"

"Hello!" called the sleepy voice from beneath the tree. "Bring him back here. You can't whack up square. You have to snarl like a lot of starved dogs over one bone. Bring him back here!"

Sullenly, but submitting to an authority too great for them to resist, Lew and Steve led Sammy Gregg back before the chief, and Sammy saw stepping forth from the shadows of the tree a person no other than his quondam beggar and minstrel of Munson; his gambler par excellence—Jeremy Major.

And Jeremy Major recognized him! Ay, at the moment, that was the thing of importance. He did not hesitate an instant, but stepping forward, he caught the hand of Sammy and shook it heartily.

"Were you hunting for me?" he asked. "And so you ran into this crowd?"

"The devil!" muttered Steve. "He's a pal of the chief!"

The chief had not waited for any explanation. His voice had an edge like a rasp as he turned to the two captors.

"Everything!" he commanded sharply. "Tumble it all out and lay it in that coat of mine. And if he misses anything, I'll come after you and let you know about it!"

So, to the utter amazement of Sammy, nearly three hundred dollars in coin was scrupulously counted out before this odd leader, and on top of the other pile of loot, finally, the two long Colts were laid, one across the other.

"Is that all?" asked the chief.

"That's everything," said Sammy.

"Nothing else that you want?"

"A chance to go on my way for help—that's all," said Sammy.

"Sit down, then," pleaded Jeremy Major. "Sit down and let me hear about it. Because, old-timer, I owe you money, and just now I'm broke."

Broke!

And Sammy remembered the heaps and heaps of chips which had been stacked before the place of Jeremy Major not so many weeks before, and every chip had meant gold in that million-dollar game! Where had it gone? Suddenly it seemed to Sammy that his own affairs and his own losses were too small for even a pygmy to consider with interest.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BLACK HERDS THE MUSTANGS.

NOW, with his money gone, Jeremy Major was chief. But chief of what? If these were thieves, who spiced little household and back-yard pilferings with occasional adventures on the broad highway, and if they called Major "chief," nevertheless Sammy himself had heard the leader tell them that he would not touch stolen money!

A strange streak of virtue in one who thought nothing of cheating at cards.

But each man to his own gods and his own altars!

"Come," said Jeremy Major. "Sit down here with me, if you please, and let me hear the story. You were throwing away ten-dollar gold pieces when I last saw you, and now you seem rather down on your luck. What's happened?"

He had waved away the others. And the knaves retired grumbling and mumbling to sit in corners of the glade and glower savagely at their chief and his friend. Only the horse of Sammy was left standing near them, and the tall mare, glad of the good forage here, began to crop the shade-nourished grasses.

There Sammy told his story. He put in everything, because his companion seemed bent upon hearing every scruple of the tale. He told of the first adventure, and the loss of the horses at Munson, and the encounter with Mr. Cumnor, and what tall and handsome Mr. Furness had had to say.

He went on with the tale of the second disastrous expedition, the storm, and the regathering of the scattered herd, and the new stampede which had broken the spirit of himself and his two stanch allies.

Jeremy Major listened to this tale with a wandering eye which often roved above the head of his friend and rested on the branches of the great pine above them, as though he were more interested, by far, in the squirrel which scampered there than in the words of Sammy Gregg.

"So," said Sammy, "I have told you the whole story, because you asked for it. And now I'll ride on into the town to get another pair of punchers to help us out, if I can."

He stood up, and Jeremy shook his head.

"But look here," said Jeremy, "I don't see that five men will have a better chance to head that wild herd than three would have. It seems to me that what you need is a fast horse that can carry

a rider around the herd faster than they can run away from him."

Sammy Gregg smiled a wan smile. "That mare," said he, "is about as fast as any horse you could get. But she can't head the mustangs unless she's within a few yards of the head of them at the start of their run. And even when she *does* get in front of them, they simply try to run her down."

"Well," murmured Jeremy sympathetically, "I'll show you a horse that they won't run down. Hello, Clancy! Come here, you fat, worthless loafer, and let the gentleman see you. Hey, Clancy!"

In answer to this somewhat peevish call a glimmering black form slid out from the shadows and stood before Sammy Gregg with an inquisitive eye upon his master. And the sunlight scattering through the branches of the tree tossed a random pattern of brightest, deepest gold over the black satin of the stallion's coat. And Sammy Gregg, who was only beginning to know enough about horses to form a picture in his mind of an ideal—Sammy Gregg, staring at this black monster, with a new vision, understood why the stallion as he stood could be worth more than the value of all the four wild mustangs which had been driven to him across the Rio Grande—worth more than the four hundred could ever fetch if they were delivered even in far-off Crum-bock, where the labor of the mines used up horseflesh hungrily every day.

"I'm going to ride back with you," said Jeremy Major, "and try to help you to drive those mustangs north. Not that I'm much of a fellow when it comes to handling mustangs. But Clancy, here, is. He has a way of handling them that would surprise you."

"Partner," said Sammy, filled with awe, "I can't afford to pay you what you're worth!"

"Thirty a month," said Jeremy Major, "will do for me. You start on out of

the ravine and I'll catch up with you. I have to say a few words to the boys before I leave them!"

Sammy obeyed gladly enough, and with every step that the tall mare struggled up the side of the ravine, it seemed to Sammy that his heart was raised that much higher in hope. So he came to the level going above and let the mare canter briskly away. Back there toward the south, Gonzalez and Pedro were doing their best to come on traces of the herd. How long would it be before the rider of the black horse arrived?

A scant half hour, and here he was, swinging across the plain beside him. And how lazily the big black went! Now there is a peculiar vanity in every man which makes him think that the horse he is riding can run a little faster than any other horse in the world—at least for a little distance. And Sammy, who had felt the tall mare take wings under him more than once, could not help slackening the reins a little. She stretched away at close to full speed instantly.

"We might as well travel while we have a good surface—without prairie-dog holes, you know!" said Sammy by way of explanation, and he turned to look back at the rider of the stallion. No, here was the black horse at his side. Galloping how easily—no, simply floating along, wind-blown, above the ground. For each of those tremendous bounds advanced the big animal the length of a long room and yet he seemed merely to flick the ground with his toes in passing. There was no lurch of straining shoulders. There was no pounding of hoofs. But like a racing shadow the monster flew across the plain. Not freely, either, but with the hand of the master fixed on the reins, and keeping a stiff grip upon the stallion's head, lest he might rocket away toward the horizon and leave the poor mare hopelessly and foolishly behind him.

Sammy was in deep chagrin. But joy took the place of shame at once. How would this black giant round up the herd of the flying mustangs when they attempted to scatter away across the plains? Ay, there was not long to wait for that!

They reached Pedro and Gonzalez in another hour or so—the mare foaming with her effort—the black untouched by his gallop. And Sammy saw the cunning eyes of the Mexicans flash wide in a stare of wonder as they surveyed Clancy.

They had a hot trail, by this time, and by mid-afternoon, they sighted the herd—or at least a wing of it. Clancy was off at once. No fencing about to slip past them. He ran straight up on them, and while the three other riders pounded along far, far to the rear, vainly striving to keep up, they saw Jeremy Major go crashing through the herd.

"But now that he is in front of them, what will he do—one man!" suggested Gonzalez darkly. For Gonzalez knew horses, and particularly Gonzalez knew that herd.

He was answered quickly enough. They saw the mustangs bunch rapidly together, while the shining stallion glimmered back and forth before them like a waved sword. That whole section of the herd abruptly turned and headed north again, and it had been managed in a trice—all in a trice! And only one sound had come to the ears of the rearward three as, in wonder, they spurred to the side to clear the path for the truant ponies—and that sound was the high-pitched neigh of an angry stallion!

"Do you hear?" gasped Gonzalez. "He makes his horse talk to them! Who is this man?"

That was not all.

Through the rest of the afternoon the black horse and his rider ranged freely toward the south and east, and while Sammy and Pedro strove to steady the redeemed portion of the herd toward

the north, Gonzalez dropped to the rear to pick up the sections of tired ponies as Jeremy Major sent them flying in with the stormy neighing of the black horse ringing in their rear. The whole assembly was completed by the dusk. They counted heads, then, and found that the last stampede had cost them forty mustangs. Still there were two hundred and fifty ponies to take north, and at a good price all might still be well with Sammy Gregg.

Except that the time was pressing, and the end of the six months drew daily closer and closer!

But the daily drive became a different thing, after this. A thunderstorm caught them on the very next morning, but when the herd strove to race westward away from the flying rain, away from the ripping lightning, the black stallion was before them, ranging swiftly back and forth. And much as the herd might dread the wrath of the elements, they seemed to dread the wrath of Clancy even more. For presently their flight was checked, and they turned cringingly back to face the wind-driven rain.

"This thing," said Gonzalez somberly, "was never seen before! And I think that we shall never see it again. See how the black devil goes for them—hello! Has he taken the head off that one?"

This as a fine, cream-colored horse showed a nasty pair of heels at the head of Clancy. But only to have the black bound up with him, and take him by the arched crest of the neck in his teeth, and shake him as a cat shakes a rat. The frightened pony screamed with pain and terror, and his cry made the last of the rebels turn shuddering into the rain. They knew their master and his handiwork now!

"And yet," said Gonzalez, "I have seen the same thing. Now that I remember, I have seen a stallion turn his herd straight back into a sand storm—to get them away from the danger of

men that lay in front. But those were wild horses. And this—it is very strange!"

"But beautiful!" said Pedro. "He has saved us two hundred miles of riding, this morning with his work!"

Ay, and the next day they saw the black stallion drive two hundred and fifty terrified mustangs straight at the railroad track, even while a train of cars was thundering across the desert.

What time they made across the rest of the desert, and then over the foot-hills, while the mountains turned from blue to brown before them!

"If we pass Munson with no trouble," suggested Sammy. "But I think that that is the chief place of the horse thieves."

"We'll do our best," said Jeremy Major. "But they're not human if they don't attempt to run this herd away. A quarter of a thousand mustangs—and prime good ones, too!"

They did attempt it. But Sammy and the two Mexicans saw little of the effort. They only knew that it was made in full daylight by half a dozen masked men. They saw, from the rear, how the riders came storming down a ravine which they filled with their shouting. Only the black stallion was near enough to check them, and to the bewilderment of Sammy and his two Mexicans, Jeremy Major charged straight at the enemy, gun in hand—a bullet for every stride of the black horse. Then one of the strangers ducked sharply over his saddle horn. They saw another slide sidewise to the ground. And then the rest whirled and rushed away for safety toward the head of the mountains.

CHAPTER XIV.

SAMMY RETURNS TO BROOKLYN.

THE fallen man was not dead. But he had a broken shoulder from the fall and a bullet through the base of his neck, breaking the collar bone.

Altogether, it was a nasty mess. They could not take him forty-five miles to Munson. They could not remain with him, until the wounds were healed.

"We'll give you your choice," said Sammy Gregg to him sternly. "Tell me who was leading that gang and you go free, old son. And we leave you enough chuck, besides, to keep you going here until your pals come back for you. But if you won't tell, you can stay here and starve!"

The fellow had the assurance to laugh in their faces, as though he knew well enough that they could not be as good as their promises.

"I'll tell you what, though," said he. "The gent that leads the gang is man enough to make the lot of you sweat for what you've done to-day."

And Sammy Gregg snapped at him: "Is his name Chester O. Furness?"

The eyes of the wounded man widened. "Are you crazy?" he gasped. "But I've talked enough, and you get no more out of me!"

They left him enough provisions to see him through, of course, but they did it grudgingly, and then they started on for the last and most arduous part of the trail—the final hundred miles to the Crumback Mines.

They had two hundred and forty-five mustangs when they began that climb. They reached the mines with two hundred and twenty-eight.

But though they were gaunt of belly now, oh how they were needed at the mines!

All that walked upon four legs, indeed, was welcomed there at Crumback. There were even ox teams moiling and toiling slowly up toward the mines, grunting along the hard grades. And they had horses of every description. And somebody had brought in a troop of Spanish "jennies" to pack in provisions. For the Crumback lode opened in the sheer side of a mountain ridge, with a host of other ridges gathered around it

on either side. As some one had said, nature had put the gold here and then started building fences. And what fences they were!

The day was to come when graded roads, at a cost of many millions, would be driven through the heart of those mountains, but that day was far off and for the present the teamsters had to be content with "jumping" the fences. Up and down the steep-faced mountains, winding in and out among enormous boulders, the wagons wound their way. And the result was that almost one in three of the draft animals were lamed with every trip. The teamsters had to start out with extra spans hitched behind their wagons to splice into the teams to take the places of those who fell by the way.

Nothing but the iron leg and the iron hoof of a mule could stand that labor, and where were they to get mules? They were more rare than diamonds, and almost as precious. And, in the meantime, horseflesh was at a premium. The very news of the coming of the herd was enough to cause a welcome to pour out in advance. Half a dozen eager buyers found Sammy on the way down the hillside, and when they heard that the price was seventy-five dollars a head, he found his sales so swift that by the time he got to the bottom of the gulch, he was minus a hundred head of livestock and seventy-five hundred dollars in pocket!

"Buck up that price to eighty-five dollars a throw," advised Jeremy Major. And the thing was done.

But it made no difference. Teamsters were clearing enough in a single round trip to pay for horses and wagons and all, and leave a neat little wad of money over and above. What difference did ten dollars a head make to them?

Sammy drew back from the hustling and left the Mexicans to handle the deal. And sitting in the saddle beside Jeremy Major, he said: "I got to tell you what

that dust cloud and the things inside of it mean to me. It means that I'm going to be able to buy a home, and buy happiness inside of the home, too!"

The lazy brown eyes of Jeremy Major turned slowly toward him.

"Can you do that?" he asked mildly. "Can you *buy* happiness? I suppose you mean a wife, by that?"

When the idea was presented thus bluntly to Sammy, he hardly knew how to answer, and Jeremy Major seemed to feel his embarrassment, for he changed the subject abruptly.

"Tell me one thing," said he. "What made you ask if Furness were the leader of the horse thieves? Because of what happened to you in Munson?"

"Because," said Sammy, "I thought I saw a gray horse in the crowd that looked like the horse that Furness was riding when I saw him in Munson."

"Are you sure of that?"

"It was a fine, big, upstanding gray, with big dark dapples all over it. There might be others just like it, but one of the horses in that outfit looked mighty like it to me!"

Jeremy Major began to whistle a soft little tune. "We'll have to have another look at Munson!" said he, grinning. "Things seem to be looking up around there. There goes the last of your mustangs, Gregg."

There was counted into the hungry hand of Sammy, eighteen thousand two hundred and eighty dollars. It was a golden dream to Sammy—a golden dream edged with a crimson joy. He took sixteen thousand dollars. One thousand for "expenses" and fifteen thousand to redeem his promise to Susie Mitchell. He gave the remaining two thousand and the odd hundreds to Jeremy Major, to be divided as he saw fit, to himself and the two Mexicans. And he did not remain long enough to see Jeremy Major split the pot in two equal parts and present it to wonderstricken Gonzalez and the awed Pedro.

He did not wait to see these things, for south, south, south was the railroad which would carry him to the house of his bride!

He crossed the terrible mountains to Munson in three short days, but in doing so, he well-nigh ruined the tall mare. She was a staggering wreck when he rode her to the station. And when the station agent remarked on the leanness of the poor creature, he was astonished to receive the mare and saddle and bridle and two good Colts which occupied the holsters, as a present from Sammy. For, with a ticket in his pocket, what more could Sammy wish? There were twelve days to the end of his contract time. And in only ten days the train was due in New York. Only ten days!

There was one letter at the post office from Susie—a very brief and unhappy letter that said: "I haven't had a letter from you in a month. What has happened? Write at once!"

What had happened? He lay back in his seat in the railroad coach and laughed softly to himself. What had happened! If she could see the brown hand which was now holding her letter, she might understand. If she could remember as he did, the slender pipe-stem wrist with which he had come West—was it not nearly doubled in size now? What with the bigness of the tendons from pulling at the reins all day long, and the cordage of swollen veins which surrounded the flesh—was it not transformed? And the hand itself, all reddish brown on the back and gray with work on the palm and fingers. Who could know that hand as the hand of Sammy Gregg?

Ay, and the shirt which he wore was uncomfortably tight. It seemed a little short in the sleeves. It clasped his shoulders too tightly. And it nearly choked him at the neck, until he unbuttoned the top hole.

"These infernal cheap laundries in this wild country," growled Sammy

Gregg, "they've shrunk my shirts! I'll have to get a new lot of them when I land in Brooklyn."

But it was not the shirts which had changed size, if Sammy could only have guessed!

If she could only know what had happened to him! He was no artist to tell her how the gun in the hand of big Cumnor had looked him in the eye. In fact, the best that he could do would be to hint at a few things and let Susie guess the rest, and, after all, she was usually a pretty good hand at guessing close to the truth.

Trains of those days were not the trains of the twentieth century. But when Sammy walked the streets of New York again, there was still thirty-six hours between him and his time limit. He had not wired nor written from the West, because he felt that he might as well give himself the small extra reward of surprising Susie.

Horse and cab could not rattle him over the streets fast enough. And so he saw the cab turn down the familiar street. He dismissed it two blocks away. He wanted to walk to steady his nerves a little. He wanted to drink in the familiar sights. And ah, who but a returned wanderer could have guessed with what joy he would notice that the Murphy house on the corner had been recently painted. With what a sense of pain he observed that the tall elm trees in front of Mr. Holden's place had been cut down. They had long been ailing!

And there, poised on the top of the back fence of Mr. Jones, was the same brindled cat which, two years before, had made itself famous by biting and scratching a fat bulldog until the poor dog ran for help! It looked as lean and as formidable as ever as it turned its big yellow eyes upon Sammy.

All of these little details were mysteriously comforting, because each of them added a touch which helped to as-

sure him that he was indeed home at last! How far, far away the West was—and how barren, and how bold, and how filled with wicked, brazen men!

It was Saturday afternoon, and here the good citizens of the town of Brooklyn were out to mend their fences and mow their lawns and trim their hedges. And Sammy, as he listened to the whirring of the watering hose, felt sweet peace sink into his soul.

He turned up the steps of the Mitchell house. He was almost loath to arrive there so soon, for there had been such happiness in the stroll down the old street that he would willingly have extended it another mile in length.

However, here he was. The meal, prosaically speaking, was finished, and only the dessert remained to be eaten. Only Susie to take in his arms! And it filled him with wonder, now, when he recalled that he had never taken Susie in his arms before this day! Not in both arms, strongly, as he meant to do to-day.

The door opened, and Mrs. Mitchell loomed broad and low in the doorway, like an overloaded barge in a narrow canal.

"Heaven save us!" cried Mrs. Mitchell. "You ain't little Sammy Gregg!"

"Oh," said Sammy, "have I changed as much as that? But I am Sammy, just the same. I hope Sue is home?"

Mrs. Mitchell seemed totally overwhelmed. She merely backed down the hall, gaping at him.

"I'll send Mr. Mitchell to you!" said she, and whirled and fled.

CHAPTER XV.

BACK TO MUNSON.

SO Sammy walked into the front room and looked at himself with a grin in the gold-gilt mirror between the two front windows. Many a time, in his boyhood, he had seen his frightened face in that mirror when he had ventured

into that sanctum of sanctums with Susie Mitchell. And now he could sit here at ease, and admire his new, ruddy complexion. Ah, could this quiet household see the scenes in which that tan had been acquired!

The heavy step of Mr. Mitchell himself approached, and now he entered in the act of settling his spectacles upon the bridge of his nose and smiling with professional courtesy upon his visitor. For Mr. Mitchell was a grocer by trade, and his smile was a noted asset. Furthermore, he had a ruddy, healthy complexion. If he had said: "I use these groceries on my own table!" no one could have resisted the temptation to buy at once and on a large scale. How is it that so many grocers have complexions modeled after the shade of big red apples? Such was the hue of Mr. Mitchell. It was even a little redder than usual as he clasped the fingers of Sammy in a moist, fat oozing palm.

"Little 'Sammy Gregg!'" murmured Mr. Mitchell. "Turned into a wanderer—and then come home again! After such a steady life, too!"

Sammy was a little taken aback. He had hardly expected such a reception from his future father-in-law.

"However," went on Mr. Mitchell mildly, "I suppose that even the quietest of us have a small patch of wild oats that need sowing. Isn't that so? But I never thought it of you, Sammy! However, I was sorry to hear from the mill people that they have no place for you now."

"No place for me now?" cried Sammy, turning pale. "You mean to say that in spite of their promises—when I left—"

"It's a shame how people will make promises and never intend to live up to them, isn't it?" said Mitchell sympathetically. "But it seems that the manager had thought it all over. Good, conservative, close-headed business man, I have to call him! He says that when

a young man takes six months in which to turn five thousand dollars into fifteen thousand—why, it shows what the manager calls a little streak of foolishness—besides a desire to take a gambler's chance!"

Mr. Mitchell's own opinion was so apparently tucked into this same speech that Sammy was more amazed than ever. He was glad, at least, that Susie remained for him to give him comfort.

The paper mill, however, had closed him out! After ten years of faithful, most faithful service. Oh, all the nights when he had remained after hours, hoping against hope that his bulldog devotion to work would take the eye of one of the upper members of the firm! And now this ambition wiped away!

"It's a very hard blow to me," he confessed to Mitchell. "I didn't expect that of my employers. They know how I've slaved for them."

"It's always this way," said Mr. Mitchell. "Unfortunately the world is so made that one stroke of folly will erase a hundred strokes of good sense and industry. Only one match need be lighted, my boy, to ignite the greatest building in the world!"

In the far West, from which he had just come, Sammy was well aware that such talk would cause men to say: "Aw, cut out the Sunday-school stuff, partner!" And he had an almost irresistible temptation to say the same thing on his own behalf. However, he checked himself and remarked:

"It's a hard thing, Mr. Mitchell, if a young man is not to be allowed to step out and take a chance for himself now and then! Otherwise, how is he to get on?"

Mr. Mitchell leaned forward in his chair and pressed his fat hands upon his fat knees, until the palms squeezed out on the sides, white as the belly of a fish.

"Young man," said he, "slow and steady is the word—slow and steady is

the word that builds life in the way it ought to be built. Now tell me, frankly—out of the five thousand dollars in honest money that you took West, how much did you lose?"

Sammy closed his eyes to calculate. "Nearly three thousand," he said. For, up to the day of his arrival at the Crum-bock Lode he had, indeed, been that much cash out of pocket.

Mr. Mitchell writhed in his chair. "Three thousand," he groaned. "Three thousand honest dollars—thrown away! Why, with that money I could have built a new wing—oh, Sammy, this is a thing for which you will grieve, in years to come! Three thousand dollars at six per cent is a hundred and eighty dollars a year! Many a poor man in Europe is toiling fifteen hours a day for smaller pay than that!"

He closed his eyes and fairly groaned aloud in the pain which the thought of such waste gave him.

"Ah, well," said he, "it is a fortunate thing for Susie that I warned her and opened her eyes."

"Warned her?" murmured Sammy.

"That this would be the probable outcome—wild adventures in the West! Fifteen thousand out of five thousand! Stuff and nonsense! Why, young man, even I, at my time of life and with my experience in the business world, would not attempt to accomplish a thing of such a magnitude. It argues a wild brain on those young shoulders of yours, Sammy, my boy. A very wild brain, but I thank Heaven that poor Susie will never bear any of the painful results of such folly."

A terrible thought blasted its way into the mind of Sammy. "Where is Susie?"

"Not here," said Mr. Mitchell gravely.

"Not here!" echoed Sammy in a whisper. "But she's—out shopping—out calling—she's over at the Johnson house, maybe—"

"Oh, Sammy," said Mr. Mitchell,

shaking a fat, white finger at him, "how I hope that this will be a lesson to you never again to venture all and lose all!"

"My Lord," breathed Sammy, "you mean that she has left home?"

"Yes—but not alone!"

Sammy, perfectly white by this time, stood up from his chair. "Mr. Mitchell," he gasped.

"Sammy," said the grocer, "I grieve for you. Upon my soul, I grieve for you bitterly. But I trust that the lesson will not be wasted upon you."

A bright spot of color came back in either of Sammy's cheeks. There was in his eyes such a fire as Brooklyn had never seen there before. And when he spoke, his voice was suddenly rough and harsh.

"I hate to think it," said Sammy, "but it's forced on me that you—you fat sneak, may have advised your daughter to marry another man."

The grocer rose also, and stood big and towering and fat as butter above little Sammy. "Samuel Gregg," said he, "can I trust my ears?"

And those astonished ears drank in the following unholy words: "You can trust your ears, you blockhead! But tell me if I have guessed right? Have you really told Susie to marry another man?"

"Yes!" shouted Mr. Mitchell in a voice which Mrs. Mitchell, in the back yard, heard and knew and quailed beneath. "Yes! I have told her to marry another man."

"And the little fool!" said Sammy. "The little fool has taken your advice!"

Mr. Mitchell raised both fat hands. No, rage and bewilderment had paralyzed him. His thick arms fell with a wheeze to his sides again and left Sammy intact.

"My guess is a good guess, I think," said Sammy.

He stepped to the mantelpiece and lifted the picture which stood where his picture had once reposed. And out of

the frame he saw the chinless face of young Tom Hooker, the dentist's son—a pleasant, smiling, useless face.

"My Lord," said Sammy, "is this my substitute?"

"Young man," shouted Mr. Mitchell, "leave these premises! You are a worthless young reprobate. Never return to this place again, or with my own hands—"

"Stuff!" said Sammy. And he dropped his brown fists upon his hip. "Stuff, you fool!" said he. "I've killed men twice your size, Mitchell. And men twice as good as you. Why, in the country where I've been, we use fellows like you—for grease! Sit down, before I wring your stuffy neck for you. Sit down, while I talk to you."

Mr. Mitchell turned flabby, like a punctured balloon, and sank, almost lifeless, into a chair. His pale, fishy eyes beheld Sammy Gregg in the act of taking a wallet from his pocket. From that wallet Sammy counted forth, one by one, fifteen new, crisp, bank notes, of one thousand dollars—oh, magic word! —to the note.

Fifteen thousand dollars—a treasure.

And then a handful of smaller currency.

"And another thousand, just for luck—another thousand to paint the house, maybe," said Sammy Gregg, thrusting out his jaw. "Luck was with me. And to-morrow I'm going back to the free country. I'm through with you people back here. Why, you choke me. I can't talk, and I don't seem to be able to think."

"I'm glad that Susie has that pinhead. She'd look up to a wooden image, I suppose, and call it a man. And you can pay the bills for the party. I wish you luck!"

"As for me, I'm going back to the West, and roll this fifteen thousand into a couple of million, maybe. And when I get that, I'll have just about enough to marry one of those western girls."

And they're worth it. Mr. Mitchell, I hope you have luck!"

He settled his hat upon his head, he turned his back; and he swaggered deliberately out the front door, and only one sound pursued him—the faint whisper of the grocer, moaning: "Six-teen thou-sand dol-lars!"

Then Sammy found himself in the familiar street once more. But the joy had gone out of it. Only, in the first place, he felt a burning fierceness in his soul. And in the second place, he be-

gan to discover that what he had said to the grocer had not been altogether a bluff.

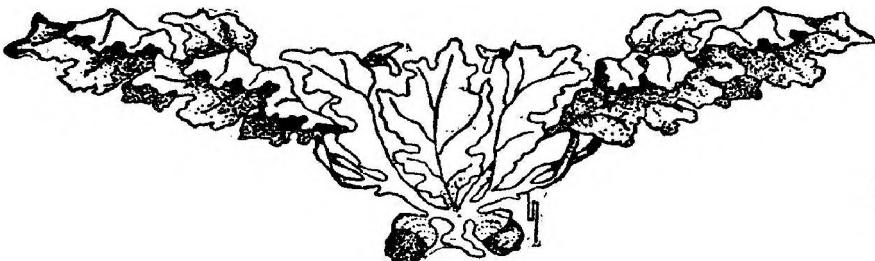
How small, after all, had been his hold upon the life in this street when one conversation of five minutes could suffice to root up all his interests here!

But out west—ay, that was different!

Gamblers, hobos, thieves, horse rustlers, miners, teamsters, villains—he felt suddenly that they were his brothers.

And that night the westbound train took Sammy with it from Manhattan!

**Another "Sammy Gregg" story will appear in an early issue of
WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE.**



NOOKSACK RIVER PLAYS PRANKS

ONE of the great problems that ranchers in Whatcom County, Washington, have to contend with is the capriciousness of the Nooksack River. A little while ago, it left its bed and returned to a former course. These vagaries of the river are destructive of the farm properties over which the waters must flow in the process of seeking a new bed, or rather returning to an old one. In order to keep the Nooksack settled down to a single course, a dam about one thousand feet long is planned. This dam will cost about five thousand dollars and it is hoped to have it erected in time to obviate any further shifting of the Nooksack when the fall rains set in.



STRICTER LAWS FOR CALIFORNIA FORESTS

VARIOUS measures for preserving and safeguarding California's forests are now under consideration by the legislators of that State. Among these is one which provides that every person building a camp fire on land other than his own, between May 15th and October 31st, without first securing a State permit, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. It will also be made a felony to willfully or maliciously set fire to forest or watershed lands. Another proposed piece of legislation would brand as a misdemeanor the throwing of burning tobacco or matches from a moving vehicle during the closed season for fires, which is from May 15th to October 31st.



The Stolen Sack

By
Reginald C. Barker

Author of "Red" Cassidy of the Triple A," etc.



URLY men with faces bearded against the fearful cold of the far North filled the big log cabin that was Couger City's courthouse; for court was in session; a "miners' court," from whose decisions there could be no appeal.

Before the crowd, a big round heating stove shone red through a murk of tobacco smoke; in front of it were two long, heavy benches upon which the twelve men who constituted the jury puffed at their pipes and listened to Judge "Blackie" Dawes as he addressed the prisoner, a tawny-bearded, blue-eyed man of about twenty-five years, who sat idly toying with a button on his double-breasted Mackinaw.

"Stand up," commanded the judge, "an' let's hear what you've got ta say for yourself. You are charged with breakin' into Mart Jason's store and stealin' a sack of flour; knowin' when you did so that that ain't hardly enough flour in camp to run the women and children until spring. Are you guilty or ain't you?"

Five inches over six feet in height, wide-shouldered, tawny-haired, and blue-eyed, Thor Bjornson was a worthy scion of his viking ancestors, but only by his name would one have known that he was of Norse descent. Born in the land that lies "north of fifty-three," he was

as much a native of it as one of its own glaciers.

"I didn't steal no flour," he said, his cold, blue eyes boring into those of the judge, "an' what's more, you know I didn't." Having said his say, he sat down.

"Mart Jason," called the judge.

The storekeeper arose to his feet and shuffled forward—a mean-looking man of middle age, with a grizzly beard and wandering, black eyes.

"Raise your hand," commanded the judge. "Do you swear to tell the truth and nothin' but the truth?"

"Sure, Blackie," replied Mart Jason, as he raised a hand from which he had lost a finger by freezing.

"Say, 'Yes, your honor,'" thundered the outraged court, "an' the rest of you fellers quit your snickering."

"Yes, your honor," repeated the storekeeper.

"All right," said the court. "Go ahead."

"When I opened up this morning," began the storekeeper, "I found that some time durin' the night, somebody had busted a window and crawled in and stole a sack of flour. An' right beside the window I found a knife—"

"Is this the knife?" The judge held up a long-bladed, horn-handled hunting knife of the bowie type.

"It is, Blackie—er—your honor."

"Do you recognize this knife, Mr. Jason?"

"Sure, it's Thor Bjornson's knife."

"Can you swear to that, Mr. Jason? Remember you are on your oath."

"I'd oughta, your honor. I sold him the knife two months ago."

"Hmm!" The judge coughed portentously. "Now, isn't it a fact that the prisoner has been making—er—love to your daughter, Rose?"

"He's been nosin' around a good deal, your honor."

"And isn't it a fact that you told him to stay away from your place?"

"I got other plans for my gal." The storekeeper's voice was very stubborn. "I don't aim for her to marry up here. I aim to send her outside."

"That'll be all." The judge raised a hand. "But just the same, we don't like to see Alaska send her girls away. We ain't got none too many of 'em up here."

A murmur of approval came from the crowd.

"Silence!" shouted the judge. "Is Sam' Collister here?"

Sam Collister, known to Cougar City as "Dude" Collister, stepped forward and took the oath. Tall, slim, and with a "pussy-willow" mustache as his only facial ornament, among that crowd he appeared utterly incongruous in a suit that had cost a hundred dollars in Seattle. During the two years he had dwelt in Cougar City, he had never stated what his business had been before he sought fortune in the far North.

"Now, Mr. Collister," said the judge, "tell the jury where you were last night."

"I was down to Jack Kelly's place playing poker until ten o'clock," related Dude Collister. "When I got back to the cabin, which Thor and I share, he wasn't there. So I went to bed. I don't know how long I slept, but after a while I awoke, and Thor was standing in the middle of the cabin—he had lit the

lamp—and he was looking rather foolishly at a sack of flour that was standing near the table. I saw that much before I dropped off to sleep again. Next morning when I awoke the flour was gone, so I asked him about it, but he said I must have been dreaming. So I let it go at that. The next thing I knew Thor was arrested."

"That'll be all," said the judge. Then he turned again to the prisoner.

"Where did you get the flour that was found under the floor of your cabin?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"Where were you last night when your partner arrived back at the cabin?"

"I was down at the store."

"What did you go to the store for?"

"I went to buy some tobacco."

"Did you buy any?"

"The store was locked an' I couldn't get in."

"Then what did you do?"

"I went around to the back window and looked in. I thought Mart Jason might be in there sitting by the heating stove. That's how the boys happened to find my tracks under the window."

"Then," said the judge, "how did that flour come into your possession?"

"I don't know, your honor."

"How do you account for your huntin' knife bein' found by the side of the opened window?"

"I'd been down to the store in the forenoon, your honor. While there, I loaned Mart Jason my hunting knife. He must have forgotten to return it."

"Hmm," said the judge. "That'll be all. Mr. Jason, please step forward."

"Did the prisoner lend you his knife as he stated?"

"Yes, your honor," said the storekeeper, "he did."

"Did you return it?"

"Yes, your honor. It was hot in the store, and Thor had taken off his Mackinaw, so I slipped the knife into a pocket and forgot to tell him about it."

"That'll be all."

Then Judge Blackie Dawes turned to the jury. "You've heard the evidence," he said. "Now it's up to you to render a fair and impartial verdict."

There was silence for a few minutes only; then the bearded foreman of the jury stepped forward.

"We find the prisoner guilty," he said, "of stealin' a sack of the last flour in camp, knowing when he did so that he was deprivin' the women and children of food."

"Stand up." Judge Blackie Dawes addressed Thor Bjornson.

Fearlessly the giant's blue eyes met those of the old judge as he pronounced the judgment of the North:

"You have been found guilty of stealing food that was needed by the women and children of this camp. And the sentence of the court is that you take the *Long Traverse*. That means that you are banished from Cougar City without firearms, knife, matches, or food. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul!"

Calmly and unafraid Thor Bjornson arose and faced his judge, and his eyes blazed with the cold-blue light that hovers over a glacier when the temperature is sixty below.

"I can take my mediicne with a smile," he said, "but I'm going to lick the North."

"Your honor." Dude Collister was on his feet now, and he laid a slim, white hand—a gambler's hand—on the Mackinaw sleeve of the giant. "I know the penalty for helping a man who has been sentenced to the *Long Traverse*, but a chunk of tobacco isn't going to delay his end much, your honor, and—Well, he's my partner."

"It's up to the jury." Judge Blackie Dawes' voice was cold; old sour dough that he was, he knew that he must uphold the code that was so feared by the evildoers of the North.

"A half pound of chewin'?" said the

foreman of the jury. "How about it, boys?"

"Let 'er go at that." The verdict was unanimous.

They searched him then; searched him until there wasn't so much as a match left hidden in the lining of his cap or his clothes. They even ran their hands through the thick mop of his tawny hair and the mat of his heavy beard to see that there was not a match by which he might foil the North.

Then four of them conducted him out of Cougar City, and on the ice of the river they left him facing the night and the cold.

For a moment the giant stood there, and the bitter cold blew upon him and covered his tawny beard with crystalline hoar frost, and with icy teeth tried to reach his lungs as he turned his face toward the lights of Cougar City and murmured into his beard two words:

"Ah, Rose; ah, Rose!"

Why hadn't she come to his defense? Rose must have known perfectly well that he was no thief; yet she had let him be sentenced to death—for that is what the *Long Traverse* meant. The nearest settlement was Karlac Mission. It stood at the mouth of the ice-covered river, two hundred miles away. Two hundred miles! Strong as was Thor Bjornson, he knew that he could never make it in a temperature of fifty degrees below zero, without food, or a gun; least of all, without the means of making a fire.

Not for a moment did he think of returning to Cougar City. For that meant that he would be shot by the first man who saw him. There was no appeal from the judgment of the North.

How easily Rose had fooled him. He remembered the last time they had met, and how she had promised that she would wait until he had made his pile, wait forever if need be. Well, it would be forever, all right. For even though he foiled the North and lived, he could never forgive her for what she'd done.

Why, his partner, Dude Collister, had treated him better than that. For even though Dude must have believed him guilty of stealing the flour, he had done his best. Had even succeeded in talking the jury into letting Thor have a half pound of chewing tobacco to help him forget what lay at the end of the *Long Traverse*. But then, of course, Dude was glad to get rid of him, too, for always there had been a rivalry between the partners for the heart and hand of pretty Rose Jason.

"Darn the tobacco anyway!" exclaimed Thor. "I'll throw the darned stuff away." As his fingers fumbled at his coat he chanced to look down. Then, with a sudden wrench, he snapped off a button, a button that was of the same size, but different to the rest of those that lined his double-breasted Mackinaw. As large as a fifty-cent piece, it was of mother of pearl that shimmered and gleamed beneath the subarctic starlight. Rose had sewed it on for him. To blazes with it now!

With a jerk of his wrist he sent it careening down the cold-blue ice of the river. Then, with head bowed in bitter thought, he turned his back on Cougar City.

Dawn found him twenty-five miles from Cougar City, and ever the blue ice of the river stretched ahead of him between its banks, forested with spruce and firs. Still the plug of chewing tobacco lay untouched in his pocket, for with death staring him in the face, he had not dared to throw it away.

"If I only had a fire to rest by once in a while," he muttered, "I reck'n I could make it all right. No fire, though, and I got to save the terbaccor as long as I can stand it without."

Suddenly he stopped and stood as though transfixed, for ahead of him slowly crossing the ice were three of the snow-white grouse or ptarmigan with which the woods of the far North abound.

Quickly Thor ran into the brush and broke a dead limb off a bushy spruce. Then as silently as an Indian he took the trail of the birds.

With the proverbial stupidity of their kind, they only fluttered up on to a low branch and eyed him as though they had seen him before.

Twenty feet, ten feet. Thor's huge arm went back; then a dry stick sang through the frosted air, and, decapitated by the whirling missile, a ptarmigan threshed out its life on the hard ground beneath the tree.

Thor ate it as it was. There was nothing else he could do.

"That's good for another twenty-five miles," he muttered. Then, taking the tobacco from his pocket, he looked at it longingly. "Guess I can take one chaw now," he muttered, "instead of coffee."

As his strong, white teeth sank into the thick plug, he gave a cry of surprise, for they had encountered some foreign substance that was very hard. Removing the plug from his lips, he examined it.

It had been slit in two, and between the two layers were more than a dozen matches!

"Good, old Dude! He didn't go back on me after all!"

Breaking frozen branches from the surrounding firs, he laid them on the ground until he had a layer six inches in thickness. Then in front of a huge, blazing fire, he lay down, and sleep came to him almost in an instant.

For three hours Thor Bjornson slept; then the fire died down and he awoke. Replenishing the fire, he lay down again and slept for three hours more.

Suddenly he sat up, wide awake in an instant, for from up the river came the sound of a man's voice urging a dog team to greater speed.

Son of the North that he was, Thor Bjornson was quick at making a decision.

Evidently it was some one from Cougar City, going down to Karlac Mission to get the mail. Thor knew that he could expect no assistance or sympathy from the newcomer, so he determined to *take* what he needed. Why not? They had not hesitated to send him to what seemed certain death. It was his life or theirs. The race was to the strong. That was the law of the North.

Beneath the brushy limbs of a huge spruce Thor stretched his mighty arms and stood waiting. Possessed of immense strength, he felt no doubt as to the outcome of the impending struggle; no, not even if there was more than one man, not even though there were three.

"Mush, darn you, mush!" Plainly the words came to the giant's ears. But his great arms went suddenly limp at the sight of the man who came running around a river bend behind a sled drawn by eight Huskies.

"It's Dude Collister!" The words were almost inaudible. "And he's taking her to the mission to be married!" For, seated on the sled, wrapped in furs from head to heel, was Thor Bjornson's sweetheart, Rose Jason.

"Just the same, here's where we have our reckoning." And Thor shouted the words aloud as he raced across the ice, and, extending both great arms, stood in the path of the oncoming dogs.

But instead of trying to swerve past him at full gallop as the giant had expected him to do, Dude Collister swung the team to a halt, and rushed forward with outstretched hand.

"Thank Heaven we found you before it was too late!" he exclaimed.

Springing from the sled, Rose Jason ran up to Thor and grasped his arm.

"You boy!" she exclaimed, hugging him in her excitement. "You knew all the time who stole the flour, yet you accepted the judgment of the North, to save the life of one you knew was dear to me."

For a few seconds Thor's love for the

girl struggled against an overwhelming jealousy of the man he thought had won her. Then the better part of his nature conquered, and slowly he put forth a huge hand.

"Congratulations, Dude," he said. "You win!"

But Dude Collister's hand lay limp in that of the giant, and Dude's voice was trembling as he swung the Huskies around and headed back to Cougar City.

"Do I, Thor?" he said. "Well, I'm not so sure about that."

Snuggled against Thor Bjornson, Rose kept up an incessant chatter as the dog team raced along, but not another word about the theft of the flour escaped her lips, and Thor sensed that she wanted to spare his feelings, knowing that already he had suffered enough. As for himself, he could not speak, he was having too hard a struggle to keep from throwing Dude Collister into the snow, and carrying off the girl he loved better than life itself.

A rush of bearded men met the sled as it swung up to the old log courthouse, and before Thor knew what was happening, he was seized and lifted bodily to the shoulders of two giants almost as big as himself. Thus he came again before the judge and jury who had dealt out the judgment of the North. Dazedly he listened to the roar of acclaim that went up as he was set down in front of Judge Blackie Dawes. Dazedly he stared at a sack of flour setting on top of an empty barrel by which stood a man with bowed head.

Dude Collister was the first witness to be sworn.

"Tell the jury what your business was before you came to Cougar City," ordered the old judge. And twelve bearded faces were aglow with interest as Dude Collister made answer. "Finger-print expert, your honor."

A gasp came from the accused man standing by the sack of flour, and in

the silence which followed, one could have heard a pin drop.

"Now, Mr. Collister, what reason had you to believe that the North had made a mistake in its judgment when it found Thor Bjornson guilty of stealing a sack of flour?"

"Thor was my partner," said Dude Collister simply, "and I knew he wouldn't steal."

"So you applied your knowledge of finger prints to those you found on the sack of flour which was left in your partner's cabin?"

"Yes, your honor. It suddenly dawned on me that there lay a possible solution of the mystery."

"Tell the jury what you found, Mr. Collister."

A deep breath was plainly audible in the courtroom, and everybody craned forward in his seat with eyes fixed on the witness.

"I found all the finger prints on the sack of flour," said Dude Collister, "to be those of Martin Jason, the store-keeper of Cougar City. I also found the same finger prints on the outside of the door of the cabin where Thor and myself live together."

A roar went up from the crowd at the statement, and Judge Blackie Dawes had to pound his table for silence. Standing by the side of Thor, Rose Jason twisted her fingers together and looked sorrowfully at her father, for too well she guessed what the judgment of the North would be.

"That will be all, Mr. Collister," said the judge. "You may step down." Then he turned to Thor.

"Will you please tell the jury how you managed to put that sack of flour beneath the floor of your cabin without leaving your finger prints on the sack?" he asked.

"When I came home and saw it standing there," explained Thor, "I thought Dude had stolen it, and it made me so mad that I raised the trapdoor above the

cellar—where we keep our vegetables when we have any—and just kicked the flour into the hole. I intended to speak to Dude about it and make him return it, but I was arrested before I had time to do so. Then afterward I decided not to say anything."

"Why?" asked the judge.

"I'd rather not say."

"I'll tell you, judge," cried Rose Jason. "Thor wouldn't speak because he thought, he thought—oh, don't you understand? I—I just can't love both Thor and Dude! And dad, he didn't want me to have the one I want. So he—he stole the sack of flour from his own store and tried to throw the blame on Thor. I knew Thor was strong, and given a chance, would reach the coast, so I put the matches in the tobacco and had Dude Collister give it to Thor. It would have meant death for dad on the *Long Traverse*, and I couldn't see my own father sentenced to die."

Judge Blackie Dawes tried in vain to still the roar that went up from the crowded room.

"Hang him—send him on the *Long Traverse*—feed him flour until he busts," were some of the sentences suggested by the angry men.

When at last silence came, Judge Blackie Dawes turned to the prisoner.

"Are you guilty or not guilty?"

The eyes of the accused man roved around like those of a trapped animal. "No use me sayin' anything," he growled. "You've got the evidence on me. Of course, I didn't want Rose to marry a roughneck like Thor Bjornson. I aimed to send her outside, where she'll have a chance to meet a real man."

The old judge raised a hand for him to cease speaking. "Boys," said Judge Blackie Dawes, "what I am about to say is perhaps irregular, but this is an exceptional case in an exceptional land. I suggest that we take up a collection for Thor Bjornson and Rose Jason and send them to Karlac Mission to be mar-

ried. Such is the judgment of the North."

A burly miner arose, hat in hand, and circulated among the crowd until the hat was half filled with gold. Then, diffidently, he came forward and put it in Rose Jason's hands.

"Regards from Cougar City," he said. "And good luck."

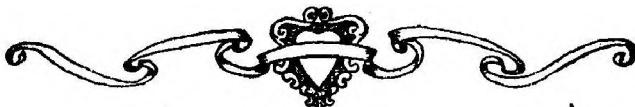
"Will you, sweetheart?" Thor whispered.

And every man in Cougar City heard her answering whisper: "From the judgment of the North, there can be no appeal."

Then the crowd surged around them both, hoisted them shoulder high, and carried them outside to where Dude Collister was waiting beside the loaded sled.

"Mush!" cried Dude Collister. "Mush on! The sooner we reach Karlac Mission, the sooner every one will be satisfied. Mush on!"

Came the snapping and snarling of the Huskies as the traces tautened, then, with the blue sky above, and the blue ice beneath, the sled sped on down the river, singing its hope that the judgment of the North might be fulfilled.



CAMERA MAN'S TRIP THROUGH FIREHOLE COUNTRY

A SUCCESSFUL trip was recently taken through the Firehole country, of Wyoming, by W. J. Stroud, otherwise known as "Rocky Mountain Bill," and his companion, William Hutton, Jr.

The pair started out about fifteen miles south of Green River City in their boat, *Going*. This country is accessible only by way of the river or by horseback. Two of the most remarkable rock formations in that part of the country are the Big Chimney and the Little Chimney. Mr. Stroud had made two previous trips into this region in order to get pictures of the Little Chimney, but had failed to do so, on account of adverse weather conditions. On the trip made this summer, the two explorers succeeded in getting what is said to be one of the best pictures of the Firehole country and the Big and Little Chimney that has ever been taken.



ARMOR FOR BATTLING A PORCUPINE

WHEN Hugh E. Williams, of Peats, Nebraska, summer expressman of the Rocky Mountain Parks Transportation Co., at Loveland, Colorado, was confronted recently with the problem of getting a fifty-pound porcupine down from the top of a twenty-five-foot pine tree, he was not long in devising a means of accomplishing the feat.

He donned gloves and a heavy pair of overalls. Then he placed a large tin funnel over his head and proceeded to ascend the tree, while a crowd of spectators cheered him on. As he reached for the porcupine, a shower of quills struck on his improvised tin helmet and lodged in his clothing, but Williams was persistent and grabbed the animal by the tail. Then he descended to the ground and released his captive.



Fire Brain

By

George Owen Baxter

Author of "His Fight
for a Pardon," etc.

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters

JOHN SHERBURN, who is known for the pugnacity of his nature and the gun fights that he incites, finally seeks peace and quiet in the little town of Amityville. He makes a mistake, however, the first day by abusing the negro barkeeper in the Gresham saloon and ends up by getting into a fight with one Tom Kenyon and being ordered out of town.

Out in the desert country, without water—for he discovers that his canteen has sprung a leak—he is on the point of succumbing to the heat and thirst when he is rescued by Peter Gresham, the big man of Amityville.

Sherburn confesses to Gresham that he cannot return to Amityville, and truthfully tells what took place between himself and the townsfolk in the Gresham saloon. And to his surprise Gresham offers to undertake to smooth the affair over so that Sherburn may return and take up his residence in Amityville.

When they arrive in town they go straight to Tom Kenyon and Sherburn offers an apology. Kenyon demands that Sherburn make the apology publicly, which Sherburn does, very much to his credit and very much to the discredit of the man who has demanded the apology. Sherburn, because of Gresham, is accepted by the whole town.

Gresham invites Sherburn to become his partner, intrusting the entire establishment to Sherburn's care, while Gresham goes on a hunt for Red Hawk, an Indian outlaw, and his band.

During Gresham's absence Sherburn succeeds in building a reputation for himself, and when an attempt is made by Red Hawk's gang to rescue Dan Juniper, one of their members who is in jail, Sherburn is called upon to guard the prisoner. Despite numerous precautions that are taken to safeguard the jail, however, Juniper and Kenyon are killed. But before the fatal shot is fired that kills Juniper, the latter confesses that Red Hawk is not an Indian.

Sherburn knows that it is up to him to "get" The Hawk, and although he has not a plan in his head, Sherburn announces that he'll "talk when the job is finished."

CHAPTER XXI.

TROUBLE AHEAD.



HAT should I say to young Mr. Oliver Clement when he arrived? Well, he was there soon enough, but not before some one else was with me in spirit.

I heard a tap outside my door. I shouted: "Doc, you old fool, is that you?" Because he had fled from the room when my book missed him.

His voice answered: "I ain't here no more than as a sort of an announcer."

"What the devil have you to announce?"

"There is a messenger here for you."

"What? Who from?"

"He ain't sayin'."

"Confound you, find out who it's from!"

"There ain't no way. I tried to make him tell me and he ran away and shied stones at me."

"Come in here!"

The door opened and Doc leaned against the door post and yawned, to show me that he was at ease and without fear of me. But his eyes, all the

time, were young and alert in his old face.

"Who is it?" I asked him.

"Toby McGuire."

"Who is he?"

"A boy."

The idea of a boy being a messenger appealed to me. "Show him in!" said I.

"Go on in, you young devil!" said the old man.

And Toby stepped lightly through the doorway. He was a tow-headed imp of perdition. There was more deviltry in the flare of his eyes than in the look of any Puck of romance; the very twist and outthrust of his unmanageable white hair showed his nature.

"Who sent you?" I said, scowling at him.

"I dunno," said Toby.

"You dunno!" I shouted in rage.

"I dunno nothin' while this old goat is a-blattin' beside me."

There was a swift reaching of the long arm of my friend from Louisiana, but the boy dodged with the speed of light and danced away in safety.

"Get out!" said I to old Doc, and Doc vanished, with a baleful last glance at Toby that betokened ill for that youth.

"Now let me have it," said I, "and talk soft, because Doc is waiting outside the door with his ear against the key-hole."

"You lie!" shouted the outraged Doc from beyond the door. And then I heard his retreating footsteps.

The boy grinned in acknowledgment of the skill of this battle maneuver. For he was at an age when nothing matters in this world except the shock tactics of actual strife.

"It ain't in talk. It's in writing," said he, and he gave me a letter.

"Where do you belong?" I asked.

"I'm out on the Langhorne Ranch," said he.

That was enough for me. I was so confused and shaky that I could hardly

get the letter out of the envelope. And it was from Jenny, right enough.

She didn't fence around. She started right in with what she had to say.

It opened with: "Dear John." I was glad of that. Because we had come to call each other by our front monikers without much delay.

DEAR JOHN: I am trying to cool off Oliver Clement, and it is a hard job. He thinks that his honor has been offended. And he is coming to see you. Now, I know what that means. I've lived among men who wear guns long enough for that.

Two things pop up in my head, now that dad is entertaining Oliver and I have a chance to send this word to you. One is that you're the older man, really; even if you did act like the younger boy to-day. And, being the older man, you may listen to reason and not fight at all.

The other is that if you do fight with Oliver you will use something other than guns. I mean, your fists. You two have each a good hard pair of them. Aren't they what men should fight with?

I looked down from the letter at my own hands. A few of the metacarpal bones on the back of my left hand had been broken by not knowing how to hold my hand in the days when I was a fighting pup. But my fists were in pretty good shape. Yes, and I had no doubt that they might be good enough to do for young Mr. Clement.

The letter went on:

I'm sending this note to you to beg you to do something gentle and considerate. Other people have told me that you are a rough man. But rough, brave men ought to be gentle, too. I hope that you'll be willing to think things over and try to do what is right for yourself and for Oliver, too. I'll never forgive myself if this turns into anything serious. Because it started out here on the ranch.

JENNY LANGHORNE.

That was all, and that was enough. I wrote on the back of that letter:

I give you my word that I'll do what I can to ease out of this mess without doing any harm. I'm sorry that I acted like a two-year-old to-day.

Then I sealed that letter in a fresh envelope and gave it to Toby with a half dollar. He was startled by the coin and almost blurted out a confession, but I said:

"It's all right, Toby. If you're paid at both ends of the line it's because you're worth it."

He gave me his broad, wrinkled grin. Then he was gone.

When I looked out of the window a moment later, I saw old Doc making a futile effort to put hands on him; like an old war horse trying to play tag with a racing colt. The boy scooted out of the way and around the next jagged corner of the street just as a cloud of dust dissolved and showed in its midst the galloping form of Oliver Clement. Even by the way he tossed himself out of the saddle and threw his reins I knew that he was bent on business, no matter what the girl had said to him.

He left his own dust cloud boiling behind him and settling in gray sheets on the sweating horse and then he disappeared into the hotel.

After a moment there was another knock on my door and Doc said that Oliver Clement was there. I had him brought in at once. And I sent Doc out. Clement stood for a moment near the door, rubbing dust off his trousers and looking me in the eye. I saw that I was going to have a hard time keeping my promise to the girl.

"Well?" said Oliver Clement.

"Well?" said I, and I advanced and held out my hand with a smile.

It was about as much as any one could have asked of me. I selfishly wished with all my heart that pretty Jenny Langhorne could have looked in and seen me try to be knightly and gentle for her sake. But there was no Jenny there. Her wise and understanding bright eyes were far away and just before me there was a faint, contemptuous smile on the lips of Oliver Clement.

I dropped my hand. And I was so

mad that I nearly raised it again and arched it at his jaw.

"I've got a little talking to do to you," said he.

"Sit down," said I.

"I ain't sitting," said he. "I'm standing till I know where I am."

"Blaze away, young feller."

"Out there to-day——" He choked.

"Go on," said I, as gently as I could.

"At the Langhorne place, it seemed to me that you was trying to make me seem pretty cheap in front of Jenny."

"Well?"

"I've come in to ask you what you meant by it."

I was so hot that I could hardly hold myself. I couldn't be easy-going and friendly any more. I had to let go in some way, and the next best thing to getting into a rage was to laugh at him. And so I laughed and watched him turn crimson.

"I seem to sort of amuse you," said he.

"You do, kid," said I. "It ain't every day that a four-flusher like you turns up around here."

"Am I a four-flusher?"

"Why, you young fool," says I, "you ain't hardly dry behind the ears, and you try to handle talk like a man! You've come down here hungry to get a reputation out of me. But I say: Go get a reputation by yourself and then come back to me, if you want trouble!"

He bit his lip and then he shook his head. "It ain't gunna do," said he. "I ain't that kind. You can't laugh me out of it. Sherburn, you tried to shame me!"

"I wish I may be damned," said I, "but I never seen such a one-legged thinker as you are! Why should I wish to shame you? Do I go around the countryside slapping the faces of the babies in the cradles? No, kid, I try my hand with the growed-up men that have done something besides talk big!"

You'll say that that was stinging

enough to have brought a rise out of him, and it did just that. He didn't wait to get his gun out of its holster. He just threw his fist in the shortest way toward the point of my jaw.

It was a good, honest, healthy punch, with plenty of muscle behind it and all the weight of his body. But, to an old-timer like me, it was a pretty easy punch to see telegraphed. I simply pulled my chin out of the way and that fist went by like a baseball headed for the plate.

Young Oliver Clement came lurching in with his punch and as his arm flew over my shoulder I did the thing that was easiest and quickest to do. I brought up a right uppercut with all my strength behind it. I lifted that punch as though I were tearing out a new board from the floor. I was coming onto my toes when that fist spatted fairly under the chin of Oliver.

It did what it was supposed to do, of course. It snapped his head back so hard and so fast and so far that I thought for a minute that I had knocked his head right off his shoulders. It lifted the whole weight of his body for a good bit. And then he turned into a wet rag and started for the floor. I reached for him, but he was so limp that he went through my arms like water through a sieve.

Well, I stood back and looked him over. I had hit that young fellow so hard that my wrist ached. And I knew it would be a long time before he came to.

I had a cigarette lighted before he opened his eyes. That cigarette was half smoked before he sat up and stared at me.

CHAPTER XXII.

A BARGAIN IS MADE.

PERHAPS you will think that it was a pretty calloused thing to do—I mean, to sit by like that and watch a poor fellow get his wits back. But I was in rather a callous frame of mind.

It was almost the only time in my life that I had attempted to avoid a fight, and this young hot-head had forced my hand.

What I was thinking of as I sat there was not young Mr. Clement, but Jenny Langhorne. What Clement thought was a very small matter to me, indeed. But what she thought meant nearly everything in the world. And she would feel that I had paid no attention at all to her letter, when she heard about this affair.

I had no doubt that she would hear about it. It is only boys who believe that secrets can be kept. But grown men understand that the truth will out in the end.

So I sat in my chair and hated young Oliver Clement with all my heart and really wished only that the blow which had knocked him down had broken his neck as well.

But his neck was not broken. He sat up and rubbed the back of his head, where it had struck the floor such a resounding thump. And he blinked his eyes until the light and the life slowly flooded back in them. When he could recognize me, he seemed to come back to full consciousness with a snap, and struggled to his feet.

Still he was far from himself, for he stood there swaying, and staggering—completely out of his balance. And yet he had enough sense—or lack of sense—to sneer loosely at me.

"Why—why don't you finish the job—you—you crook—Sherburn!" he said to me.

I wanted to break him into a thousand bits; I wanted to knock his head against the wall so hard that it would crack like a nut under my heel. But there is no fun in beating a man you know you can lick. I simply set my teeth a little harder and glared at him and said nothing.

Besides, I was surprised. Because I could see that there was a lot of fight

left in this fellow—and there would be still more fight after his head cleared. Perhaps he would even want to come at me with his hands again! But that wasn't very likely. However, I was curious. And so I rolled me another cigarette and watched him in silence.

Presently he braced his back against the wall and looked at me, steadily, and for a long time, and before he got through staring at me, I could see that he was sound again. The weakness was out of his knees and the ringing was out of his ears. His nerves were strung strong again. In short, he was ready to go at me, and I knew by his look that he intended to have it out again. In what way?

Well, he didn't leave me much room to doubt. He gave his eyes a last rub and then he stood up, lightly, and on his toes.

"You knocked me cold," said Clement.

"Yes," said I. "You were pretty well out. I couldn't talk sense into your head. I had to try to knock some sense into you!"

That wasn't a very diplomatic speech to make. But then, I could never pretend that I am a diplomat.

"Fists," said he, "are only one way of fighting."

"A good enough way, I guess," said I.

"For you, maybe!" said Oliver Clement. "But speakin' personal, I don't wear a gun for a decoration!"

It was hard to believe that he meant it. Not after lying flat on his back only the moment before.

"You wear a gun to put spice in life, maybe?" I asked him.

"Salt and pepper," said Clement, as cool and as calm as you please. "I use it on yeggs and gunmen—like you, Sherburn. You understand?"

Of course I understood. That young devil had a natural talent for making me mad. If there had been any audience, I should have had to unlimber my own

gat then and there. But there was no audience and I was thinking of the girl harder than I had ever thought of any other thing. I was thinking of her and swearing that nothing should make me go any further in this quarrel.

"I understand one thing," said I, because I decided that I should have to try the effect of one last bluff. "I understand that I have to finish up what I started, young fellow, unless you slide out of this room!"

He only smiled at me, and I saw that my bluff was not worth a cent with him. He smiled, and he grew positively white with hate and the wish to fight.

"Stand up," said he. "They say that you're a fast man with a gun, Sherburn. Well, I'm fast myself. And I want you to have every chance. I'm going to give you an even break before I turn you into dog meat!"

"That's a fine, peaceful way to carry on," said I. "But why should I pull a gun on you, Clement? What does it mean to me?"

He stared.

"If I drop you, I spoil the rug on the floor and get all the folks to thinking that I prey on children."

Then he seemed to understand. "Oh, you'll fight," said he. "You'll fight, well enough, or else I'll go down and plaster your name all over the town as a yaller-livered bluffer!"

"They'd laugh at you," said I. But just the same, his point went home, and he knew that it had.

"Besides," I argued with him, "is there any good reason why you should want to commit suicide this way? Just because your old man give you the run, why should you come around and get me to pay your funeral expenses?"

"You talk slick enough to be in politics," said the boy. "But it don't go down with me. I want action, old son. And I'm gunna have action and plenty of it. If you want a good cause for fighting, I'll give you one."

He had sauntered forward as he spoke, and now he reached across and slapped me across the face! It was just a flick from the tips of his fingers, but it was enough. That had never happened to me before. The people I had fought with were the kind that slapped with five hard knuckles and not with five soft finger tips.

The boy seemed to know, because just as he struck me, he was leaping back and there he stood crouched, with his right hand glued to the butt of his revolver.

I knew then that he wasn't any ordinary fighter. Because he was so sure of himself that he didn't make a false draw, and wouldn't pull his gun until he had seen my hand go back for mine.

But my hand didn't stir. I was fighting the big battle of my life, and this was one of my winning spots. It took all the nerve in my body to keep me out of what I told myself would be a murder. Because, no matter how practiced that boy might be, there wasn't much likelihood that he had my training behind him.

So I didn't stir a hand. I merely stood up from my chair, feeling that unless I did something desperate I would *have* to fight, after all. And knowing, too, that if I killed this youngster, Jenny Langhorne would be through with me.

Because he wasn't a bad kid. He was as game as they come, and the real fighting stuff was in him. I hope I was something like him, at that age—but never with his looks, of course. I could understand him and sympathize with him. He had me angry a little while before. But now I had cooled off. I didn't want to fight for all of these reasons. But I began to see that I had to fight.

And then I thought of two things. The first was that I *would* shoot this youngster down, but I'd trim him through a leg—and he'd be on his feet

again in three weeks. The second thing I thought of was a cause for the fight that would make it worth while.

I said: "Clement, you want to finish your job with me right now, I suppose?"

"I've slapped your face," said he. "Do you want me to step on your toes, too?"

"That'll never be enough to suit me. But I'll tell you what I'll do. We'll make a bargain for what the loser in this scrap shall do."

"He'll take a short cut for hell," said the boy.

I only smiled at him.

"No, kid," said I. "I'm not going to put the bullet through your head. I'm going to drop you where it's soft. And after I'm done with you, you'll be able to ride out on the little job that I have in mind."

"You ain't a bit satisfied with yourself, I see," said Oliver Clement. "But I tell you, old war horse, that what I aim to do is to slide a chunk of lead between your ribs, so's to get myself remembered on your tombstone. Shoot straight, I advise you, if you get a chance to shoot at all!"

"Will you listen to my dicker?" said I.

"I'll listen," said he.

"No one bullet could ever tag the life out of me. I'm too tough for that, kid! If I was sprawled against the wall with my arms spread out, you couldn't finish me off with one bullet. But if you knock me down with your slug, or put me out of the game, then I'm the loser, and the loser has this job to do:

"As soon as he's able to ride, he sashays up Cricket Valley and he waits for one of those buzzards up yonder to speak to him from the cliff. And then he joins the Red Hawk gang, if he can. And when he has joined up with them, he learns what he can about the things that they do and the way that they do them, and if he has a chance, he

plans how he can bring Red Hawk's head inside the noose. You savvy?"

Mr. Oliver Clement turned a shade pinker. There was no doubt that he was seeing at a glance all of the terrible possibilities of that bit of work. It even made *me* shiver, when I thought of how the boy would have to live among thugs and crooks and play his one chance in a thousand of nailing Red Hawk.

I was sorry for Clement, just then. I was *mighty* sorry for him. But, just the same, I felt that I had to go through with the deal. And, after all, no matter what happened, it would be better for him to have my bullet through his leg than through his head!

"I'll take that bet!" said he at last.

"Will you shake on it?"

"Yes."

We shook hands and then it was easy for me to grip his gun hand so that he could not budge it, and catch his left wrist tight.

"Now," I snarled close to his face, as he tried to writhe away from me, "I could bust you in two, you soft, young fool. If I play square with you and let you have a fighting chance for your life, will you keep the bargain you've made with me?"

"Yes," breathed Clement, and I let him go.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TO BEAT A FULL HOUSE.

SOME one in the street was singing La Paloma. Do you know La Paloma? Everybody in the Southwest does, of course. Perhaps some people only hear the tune drumming through their ears when they think of the name. But it means a good deal more to me. I can see serapes and smell Mexican cigarettes as though they were fuming in the same room with me. So when some one in the street started singing La Paloma, and when I heard the jangling of a mandolin, it meant a good deal. It put me south of the Rio Grande

and into an excellent frame of mind for fighting. Because I had seen a good deal of trouble in that country. And I *knew* that poor young Clement was in the hollow of my hand.

We stood on opposite sides of that room and eyed each other. I was smiling. I couldn't help it. He was pale and tight. I saw in his face that he was beaten already and that he was only praying that he could go down like a man. Yes, he was game!

"When he comes to the end of that song," I said, "we grab our guns, eh?"

He nodded, moistened his lips—and the wait began.

A pair of riders came down the street and the rush of their hoofs almost drowned the song for a moment. Then, as they stopped the horses suddenly, the song floated through the window—and a wisp of alkali dust from the street. A fine fragrance to me, because the desert is my country!

My finger tips were itching for the feel of my gun. I picked my target. The thigh of his left leg, where the big driving muscles bulged out. And I hoped that the bullet would not hit the bone. If I shot a fraction to the side of center, I would probably miss the bone, and I planned to shoot to the side. That was cutting it rather fine, you'll say. But I knew myself and I knew my gun, at that distance. And when a man practices two hours a day he *ought* to be able to try a trick now and again.

The song was dragging toward the close. I saw young Clement glance aside, nervously, toward the window through which the music was pouring, and by the look in his eyes I knew that his nerves were as rattling as the sound of the mandolin.

I wonder who invented the mandolin and then had the crust to call it a musical instrument?

That thought had just popped into my mind when the last word of the song came and the hand of Clement flashed

back for his gun. He was fast, very fast, but I was a fifth of a second faster. And split seconds are what kill in a gun fight if men know their weapons. In a sprinting race a fifth of a second means six feet between the winner and the second man. And it means a lot more in a gun fight, because the hand can travel three times as fast as a runner's feet.

Well, I flicked my finger tips under the butt of my gun and plucked it out of the holster.

No, I mean that I caught it in the old flying grip that I had used ten thousand times in practice and in real fighting. And ten thousand times that gun had jumped out of the leather and buried its handles against the palm of my hand while I shot from the hip. But this ten thousand and first time something went wrong. I don't know what it was. But big Gresham always had said that he thought I wore a rather tight-fitting holster. At any rate, that Colt jammed tight in the leather, and under the extra pressure, my flying fingers slipped from the butt of the gun and my hand jerked up into the air—empty!

There I stood, half bowed, looking bullets at young Clement, but firing none—and there was he with his own gun at the hip! No, as he saw what had happened, he jerked his arm out at full length and covered me through the sights of his Colt!

Through the sights! Yes, this boy was so green a hand that he had not filed the sights away as any old-timer in the gun-fighting trade is sure to do. And yet *mine* was the gun that had stuck and his had come free!

Other people can talk about luck; but in view of all that was to happen, I call it fate.

But he did not pull the trigger. He merely gasped: "You're beat, Sherburn!"

I didn't say a word. I still half expected him to fire. The men I had

fought with in the past were never distinguished for generosity, and I could name a hundred who would send a chunk of lead through me to-morrow if they had a chance to catch me helpless. Yes, and do it with a smile!

But not this boy! All at once I knew why Jenny thought so much of him. For he lowered that revolver and dropped it into the holster.

He stared for a minute. "We'll try over again," he said huskily. "Your—your hand slipped, I guess!"

Can you come over that? No, I don't think that you can, because whatever he had thought when he came into the room, he knew by this time that I was a better hand with a Colt than he would ever be. And he was inviting sure death, I suppose. But he didn't flinch!

By ten sizes, it was the biggest temptation that I ever looked in the face, but something came up in me, just then, and gave me the strength to play fair. And I shook my head at him.

"You're a square shooter, Clement," I told him, and I meant it. "But you beat me, just as surely as though you drove a slug through me. You've won the game—and the prize that goes with it. I have to ride up Cricket Valley!"

He seemed a little dazed. As a matter of fact, things *had* been happening a little fast between him and me. He ground his knuckles across his forehead and then he said: "Sherburn, I think you could have blown my head off, if the luck hadn't been against you."

I would like to say that I made some courteous rejoinder to him, but my heart was a little too full for that, and I merely turned my back on him and looked out the window.

"You go to the devil with your fine talk," said I.

There was a moment's pause. I hoped, savagely, that he would take up that last insult, but in another minute I heard the door shut softly and I knew that he had gone.

After all, he had done about all that any one could ask in defense of his honor of this day. And I was left with the prospect of Cricket Valley in front of me!

I sat down to think the thing over, because it required a whole lot of thinking, as you'll agree. I had to plan out a way in which I could break off my relations with Gresham. I had to plan a lot of other things.

What I first decided was that I would tell the truth to Gresham and to Jenny Langhorne. But the affair with poor dead Tom Kenyon taught me that it would be foolish to talk too much. The few words that had been spread by gossip in that case had brought the news to the ears of the omnipresent Red Hawk; and that had brought death to Tom.

I could see, as I pondered this tangle from the beginning, that if I really wished to do any good work, the best way to go about it was to make myself into a deaf mute, so far as any other person was concerned. There was already one man who knew what I intended doing, and I decided on the spot that this was one person too many.

I sat down and wrote to Oliver Clement. I said:

DEAR CLEMENT: I've been thinking over what happened this afternoon, and I can see that the only way for me to do anything worth while with the job we arranged, is to take nobody into my confidence. I plan to break away as soon as I can see Gresham. You can't ask me to leave before I've done that.

When I leave, I'll tell nobody where I'm going or what I intend to do, and I forgot to caution *you* not to breathe a syllable to any one. Not to your best friend. This job that I have on hand is going to be bad enough, but if the news leaks out, Red Hawk will have another party at my expense—the same as he had with Leicester Gresham. I suppose you know what I mean!

If I keep my mouth shut and if you don't talk, I may have one chance in ten to do something. But if a word is said, Red Hawk will hear. There's no doubt in my mind about that!

I sent that letter to Clement at once, and the next morning, while I was still asleep—because I had been up late that night watching the operations in the game rooms—the door opened and old Doc brought in a reply from Clement.

It was just the sort of a reply that you would want to write to a friend of yours. He said that the bargain had been my proposal, in the beginning, that he had never intended to insist on it, and that he would have spoken about the matter the day before, when he left, except that I didn't seem in a mood very receptive to suggestions. All he wanted me to do was to forget that we had ever disagreed; and he would have come over himself to shake hands with me, if I were willing to shake hands. But, unfortunately, he had turned his ankle and he now had to sit still and cuss his luck.

It was pretty good letter, any way you looked at it. And it did just one thing for me. It showed me that I had made my bargain with a real white man and convinced me that I absolutely had to go through with it. It would have been not so bad to let the matter drop if young Clement had turned out a small-time fellow. But he was so big that I had to play big, too. Nothing but four of a kind could beat a full house in this game which I was playing with Oliver Clement.

I folded the letter and then I reached for a match, and I had just touched the match to the letter when there was a quick, strong knock at the door, the knock of Gresham, and then he entered before I had time to tell him to come in.

It's a rather foolish position to be caught in—lying in bed and burning a letter over an ash tray. Somehow, I was surprised into a blush. And though Gresham said nothing just then, he gave me a side glance that ripped through my armor and went straight to the quick.

He merely said: "How's things?"

I said: "Fair enough. What brought you back so soon?"

"Trouble—trouble with Red Hawk! He's raised so much of it this time that I suppose the United States troops will take a hand in it. And the job begins to look so big to me—so much like government work—that I've about decided to wash my hands of the whole thing and buckle down to my job here in Amityville. I've even almost decided to sell out the place and quit the West—if I can find a purchaser!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE "BIG BOY" TALKS.

THAT was exactly the style of Gresham. What he had in his mind he was apt to come out with in one big rush. I suppose that that's a quality with men who don't care who sees the inside linings of their brains—or with men so big and bold that they don't care a rap for the opinions of others.

But it takes a big man to do it; the sort of bigness that I can't pretend to.

I simply lay there flabbergasted and turned the business over and over in my head.

I began to repeat: "Leave Amityville—give up the trail of Red Hawk!"

"Give up the trail of the red devil! It's as much use to chase the chief as it is to chase a lightning flash. I've fooled away my time for five years. I've worked all the time on that one thing. And what has it brought me?"

He went on after that, pouring out a tide, I can tell you! I began to see what life would mean when life had for a main object the chase of a criminal like that wild Indian—constant riding, constant hunting—constant dread of the knife that may be buried in the center of your back at any minute. When even big Gresham declared that he was through with the game, I could begin to believe him!

And still I lay there and babbled fool-

ish questions at him until he interrupted me with: "Cut that out and ask me to tell you about what that red fiend has done this time! Or is Amityville full of the news and so used to it that it can afford to sleep through the news! Dead nerves—that's what this town has!"

Dead nerves! I suppose that was the first time that any sane man ever thought of giving such a name to Amityville. But Gresham was a giant—a giant in body and in soul and in nerve, also. And when *his* strength began to crumple I suppose he *would* think it queer if other people managed to keep pulled together!

I asked about the news of the latest escapade of that terrible Red Hawk. And he told me the whole story. He sat on the broad sill of the window and talked with his head fallen wearily back and his gaze turned out toward the heat waves that went shimmering up from the roofs of the buildings across the street.

He looked more than tired. He looked fagged out—and when a man like Peter Gresham was fagged out it meant a good deal, I can tell you.

"A daylight job this time," said Gresham. "The chief and five men in masks swooped right down on Ludlow and swarmed into the Ludlow Bank."

"How did they get through the streets without being shot to bits?" I gasped.

For Ludlow, in those days, even, was a booming town with about twelve hundred people in it; and it was as tough and as rough as most of the Western towns which lived then on the border between law and outlawry. Everybody in that place, I suppose, carried a gun, and two thirds of them must have been good shots. A good gun and the skill to use it was a much bigger necessity than the ability to read and write. Even bankers and clerks in stores, for instance, used to get out in the back yard and practice at a mark with a big Colt.

Gresham answered my question with

a groan. "I'll tell you how they got through the streets without being blown to bits. It was because men aren't around when there's trouble in the air. If it had been a poor dog that had turned mad, then a hundred rifles would have been pumping lead at it. But so long as it was Red Hawk and five of his butchers, nobody was on deck except the women and the children. They saw the thugs go by in a whirl of dust and they ran to call their heroes. Of course, by the time the heroes showed up, the whirl of dust was gone by, and by the time the heroes got their horses saddled and started in pursuit, the job was over.

"There was only an old German keeping a fruit stand. He saw the mischief coming and picked out two rusty old guns out of a drawer and began to throw lead at them.

"And by the heavens, he was the only man in town who did them any harm. He put a bullet through the head of a young half-breed Mexican who turned out to be Diego Calderon—you know that sleepy boy who lived at the west end of the town?"

"The one with the cock-eyed look?" I gasped.

"The same one!" said Gresham. "Would you believe it?"

"Not I!" I answered. "There was that kid, young Juniper, too. Red Hawk must be a fool to trust to youngsters like those!"

"Do you think so? I don't know. Perhaps he has sense enough to see that they're the only ones that he *can* trust in. It's a rare thing to find a mature man who will put any faith in another mature man, after all, Sherburn. The older we grow, the more we trust in the children. But the grown people—well, they've been in the world long enough to be tainted by it, and there's no doubt of that! Give me a boy to put through a hard job! The boys are the ones who fight the wars, while the grown men

stand about and shake their heads and speak the pretty sentiments!"

"Go on," said I. "It was a boy, then, that the old chap killed? And what happened to *him*?"

"Oh, they salted him away with a bushel of lead slugs, of course. He went down nearly blown to pieces and that crew went on and turned in at the bank. They tumbled off their horses and they slung through the doors of the bank and shoved guns under the noses of the men there."

"How many were in the bank?"

"Twenty men, nearly. There were a dozen men waiting for the cashier's window to open."

"A dozen men!"

"But what would they do? They had the picture of Red Hawk in front of them, and that was enough. That man has charmed the fancies of the people in this part of the world. When they see him, they're convinced that they're lost before he so much as makes a gesture at them! And when they had a glimpse of a few Colts swinging at them, they crowded into a corner and stuck their hands over their heads as high as they could shove them!"

"The rest was easy. They simply made the cashier open the safe of the bank and they went through it in a few sweeps. What they got amounted to—no, it makes me sick to think of it!"

"Go on!" said I, breathless with interest by this time.

"Think of it, Sherburn! A quarter of a million went into the hands of a copper-skinned dog of an Indian!"

"Good heavens, Gresham!" I cried. "A quarter of a million?"

Because money in those days was a different matter from money now. A dollar then could buy what three dollars now can buy. And besides, a dollar was five times as rare as a dollar now. And a quarter of a million!

"Two hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars," said Gresham. "They

could burn Amityville and rebuild it again for that amount of money. And in the hands of an Indian thief!" He closed his eyes and groaned.

I could only repeat the sum total dumbly: "Two hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars!"

"There was a flat two hundred and fifty thousand in paper money. And then fifteen thousand in ten and twenty-dollar gold pieces. They took the entire lot of swag and they dropped it into cheap gunny sacks and they galloped away out of town again."

"What? Untouched?"

"Certainly! Oh, there was plenty of shooting at them. But if men have a fever when they shoot at a deer, what do they have when they shoot at a man? Six of the boys came in last summer and said that they'd put at least a dozen bullets into a big yellow grizzly up there in the hills. Well, a week later old John Andrews killed that bear and found exactly one wound—where a bullet had grazed the skin of his back. But there were six men, all pretty level headed, who swore that they had certainly put at least two shots apiece into a bear at point-blank range. Well, what happens when they have Red Hawk in their sights? They simply have shaking hands. They burned a hundred or two hundred rounds at the Indian this time, but he and all his men got away and left no blood on the trail. It sickened me, Sherburn. And that's why I'm back here!" Gresham said.

"Have you given up the job?" I asked.

"I think so," said he. "I suppose the military will take the job in hand now. I'm tired to death of the game!"

I told him frankly that I could hardly believe it.

"And no one else will believe that you've admitted you're beaten, Gresham," I said. "No one else will admit that you've quit and turned back!" Then I added: "Is that really all that has brought you back?"

"No," he said suddenly, "it isn't all." And he looked at me in such a queer way that I was filled with wonder.

"What do you mean, Gresham?"

"I mean you!" he said, and he came and sat down on the side of the bed, looking me in the eyes all the while. And he had a hard eye to meet, as I think that I've said before. He looked straight through and through a man.

"All right," and I grinned at him. "Tell me what I've done to you."

"Shall I tell you?"

"Of course. Come out with it."

"Sherburn, we haven't known one another very long. But I have a feeling that we're pretty good friends."

"I hope so," said I, with a jump of the heart as he said it.

"And for a friend I'll do a good many things and let him take a lot of liberties."

"You're as open-minded as any one I've ever known," said I in all honesty.

Mind you, all the time, he was watching me with that drilling look of his.

"Never mind all of that," said he. "Because I'm coming to an ugly thing now. I say I'm willing to take a good deal from a friend, but there's one subject on which I'll take nothing. There's one subject where I'm a blind bull—and perfectly unreasonable. Do you guess what I'm driving at?"

I blinked at him; I was really awed, because I could see that he was quivering with emotion.

"Come out with it!" I begged him.

"It's the girl," said he in a whisper. "It's Jenny Langhorne, Sherburn, that I'm talking about."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FOUR THAT DIED.

THE news of a two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar robbery was nothing compared with the shock of that last remark. I blinked at big Gresham and told myself that it could not be true!

And then I hunted through my mind for an answer. There was no answer—only amazement that this glorious, handsome, strong man could fear any rival when it came to affairs of the heart. Above all, that he could be jealous of my ugly face simply made my brain numb, and I lay there in the bed vaguely trying to right myself.

At last I said: "Gresham, you sound serious enough. Are you?"

"As serious as the very devil!" said he.

"Do you think," I asked him, "that I've been slandering you to the girl?"

He had bowed his head a moment before, thoughtfully, and now he lifted his eyes without raising his head and gave me through the shadows of his brows a piercing glance. There was a suggestion of cold malice in that look of his that unsettled me more than anything else during that strange visit of his. If it had been from any other man, I should have said that that look was filled with evil. But one could not very well associate big Gresham and actual evil, as you will have guessed.

He started up from the bed and began to walk back and forth across the room. "I don't accuse you of that at all," he said.

"And what *do* you accuse me of?"

"Of being in love with Jenny Langhorne," he said sullenly. Yes, like a dogged schoolboy, knowing that he is wrong, but persisting stubbornly in his error.

"Suppose that I am," said I. "How the devil can a man keep himself from loving or not loving a girl?"

"I'm not reasonable," said Gresham, flushing heavily. "And I know that I'm not reasonable!"

"Why man," said I, "the whole town and the whole country and nine out of every ten men who have seen Jenny have been in love with her. Isn't that true?"

He nodded.

"And did you talk to each of them as you're talking to me?"

He said after a thoughtful pause: "Since I was first in Amityville—and that's five years ago—I've had four out-and-out gun fights, aside from a few brawls in which I had to use a gun."

"Only four?"

"Only four. And they were all on account of one reason—Jenny! The first was when she was only sixteen years old. That made no difference. You might say that I was old enough to be her father. But that did not bother me. When I saw her the first time, I knew that this was the woman that I wanted to have for my wife. And I have never changed my mind. And all through these latter years, my friend Sherburn, I've kept my eye on her. I tell you these things because I don't want to lose you. You understand? I open my heart to you and let you read what is inside it!"

Certainly it was very frank talk. Only a strong man has the courage to let others see what he is made of in this manner.

I nodded at him. I was listening with all my mind. I was trying to read and to digest this new Peter Gresham as fast as he was revealed to me.

"The first fellow," said Gresham, "was a flashy-looking boy of twenty-two or three. He had made a name for himself. Down in Mexico he had sat down on a ledge of silver ore—sat down on it without knowing what it was, you see. He stood up again with a loose chunk of the ore in his hand; and when he brought it into town he found that he had a fortune. Well, he scooped in the fortune and started spending it. He got into so much trouble south of the border that he came north, shooting over his shoulder, as you might say; and it was told about Amityville that that boy had dropped three men on the same evening that he swam his horse across the Rio Grande. I tell you this to give you an idea about him. Well, he was a hand-

some blade of the supple sort—he talked well and smiled well and danced well. He could look fashionable and well-turned-out in a pair of overalls and a bandanna with an old felt hat to top him off. And he turned the head of Jenny—or at least, I thought that he was turning her head.

"We met in the hollow outside of town and there we passed words back and forth. The next time I left Amityville I carried a gun and I needed it. That young buckaroo—Duds Cochrane was his name—shot as straight as a string and as fast as a rattler striking for dinner. He put a bullet through the crown of my old felt hat just as I sank a bullet through his midriff. And we buried poor Duds that night.

"Jenny didn't grieve for him, so far as I could make out. But then, you never can tell about that girl. She's so open and so free and easy that you never know whether her frankness is pretense or real. She's deep—oh, very deep! Deep enough to drown horse and man, I tell you!"

It was a bit too much for me, that very big description of a not very big girl. I was willing enough to call Jenny the finest person in the world, and all that, but I thought that big Gresham was piling it on a little. Not consciously piling it on, though; I could see that he was hypnotized. There was a quaver in his voice. There was a bit of wildness in his eye. And he had a longer, lighter, silent step as he ranged up and down through the room.

I tell you what—as I lay there watching him, and turning my eyes back and forth in pursuit of him, I decided that he was right: he would be dangerous as the very devil if he decided that I was encroaching too much on the time and the attention of Jenny Langhorne. I began to see the one flaw in the perfect man—the fly in the ointment, you might say—the crack in the mirror!

"The second fellow didn't come along

for about a year and a half. Jenny was bothered by a regular whirl of young blades in the meantime, because, of course, at that age she was a flower full of fragrance and the scent of her filled this hollow and poured over the mountains and blew through all the wild gulches over yonder, and men came down to look at Jenny and wonder at her. But most it was a whirl of the boys. Bill and Jerry and Joe and John, they each danced with her in turn. And I kept my eye on them and saw that there was no harm in it.

"But presently there was a bird of another color in the field. Sam Darnley came to town. He was as stately as Duds was graceful. He was the strong, silent, older type. Close to forty. Crooked as a snake, hypocritical as the devil. I followed his back trail and found out a lot about him. But Jenny took him seriously. There's a time like that that's apt to come in the life of a very young girl. She likes men older than her father! Well, it was that way with Jenny. She was upside down about this fellow.

"So I took old Samuel Darnley out and told him part of his history. He put up his right hand, swearing that what I heard was not true, but as he brought his right hand past his throat, he hooked the thumb under a little horse-hair lariat that girdled his neck beneath the loose-fitting collar of his shirt. And he whipped out a little derringer and gave me a barrel of it before I could move more than a hand. However, he fired so fast and with his hand so high that he didn't have very good direction. The bullet brought a drop of blood at the edge of my left ear. And then I planted a bullet in the pit of his stomach and watched him fold up like a dead frog.

"That was the end of Sam Darnley. And, after that, a little whisper went around that the fellows who paid a lot of attention to pretty young Jenny

Langhorne, died after a while. People even connected me with the killings.

"And Jenny wasn't bothered by much special attention for another ten or twelve months until the Montana gun buster and horse breaker, Chet Ormond, came piling down here to make himself famous. He came into the saloon, here, and stated what he had come for. He intended to take the prettiest girl in the valley back under his arm, and he intended to lick the nearest thing to a man that he could find in Texas, where he had heard there were nothing but poor imitations of real men!"

"I was in the barroom and listened to everything he said, but I let him go on his way while he looked over the girls and settled on Dolores Onate, at first; but when he changed to Jenny, that was different."

"Would she have anything to do with a rough like that?" I asked him.

"She's willing to look at any man. She never makes up her mind on appearances. And what she likes most of all is strength—strength—strength! She still has a little regard for me because she knows that I *am* strong. And that was why she liked Ormond. Simply because his voice was so loud and his manners so rough. She thought that there might be some really corresponding strength in the heart of that man.

"When I saw that things were coming to that pass, I took Ormond aside and told him that he hadn't yet found a man to his liking but that I would like to apply for the examination.

"He had a very high way about him; and he was a cruel devil, too. He told me how he was going to kill me and drag me by one leg back into Amityville. I listened to that for a time and then slapped him. Book stuff, you know. It brought his gun out of his holster, but I was a little too hot to enjoy gun fighting.

"So I closed with Mr. Ormond and took his gun away from him—and—and I'm ashamed to tell you the rest of it!"

"You didn't kill him while he was a disarmed man—not with his own gun?"

"Not with his own gun. No. I didn't kill him with any gun at all—or even with a knife, you see! And that was the horrible part of it!"

I looked at his big hands and shuddered. I could understand, of course. There was strength enough in those fingers of his to have done Homeric things.

"The last one was Lewis Marcand," said big Gresham. "He was a Canadian, I think. He had a queer, pleasant dialect, and a laugh that was good to hear. He was well educated. He spoke three other languages better than he did English. He had money behind him, too. That man was a good deal of a gentleman. He met Jenny—went mad about her, and then it seemed to me that she was not altogether level-headed about him.

"So I met up with poor Marcand. He understood at once. He told me that he was not familiar with guns. But he would be very happy to finish this argument with anything that had an edge. So we did our talking with knives. And I buried Marcand with my own hands among the rocks.

"And this, Sherburn, brings us down to you!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

ADVENTURE AHEAD.

HE was so excited that I almost expected him to take me by the throat and bash out my brains with a stroke of his other hand. Not noisily excited, but his eyes were burning in a way that made my flesh crawl.

"I've seen her twice, I think," said I.

Yes, I was almost tempted to crawl out of the thing, if there was a loophole for me—that is how frightened I was!

"And after the second time she knew you well enough to write letters to you?" answered big Gresham sneeringly.

How the devil could he have known

that? But I tell you, I was not thinking of logic then—I was thinking of my life. Peter Gresham, so cool and debonair in other places—was really more than half unbalanced as he stopped his pacing and stood over me. And he fixed his eyes on the little pile of gray ashes on the saucer beside the bed, where I had burned the letter.

Of course I knew, then, what he meant by that glance. He connected the burning of the letter with the girl, and he was raging inside ever since he had come into the room—raging and burning with jealousy though he had controlled himself all of this time! You can imagine that this did not make me any more at ease. But I knew that it was going to be a complete waste of time if I attempted to explain myself to him. I did *not* attempt an explanation.

"She wrote me a letter," I told him.

"And about what, if you please?" asked Gresham.

I could hardly believe my ears. Here was my fine gentleman actually demanding of me what a girl had said in a letter to me! He saw the change in my expression.

"You don't like that, Sherburn. I see that you don't like that! And why not?"

I leaned back on the pillow and closed my eyes, trying to think. And when I opened them, to my unspeakable horror, Gresham was leaning above me with a livid face and with his fingers mere inches from my throat.

"You lying dog—you sneaking dog!" said Gresham.

I was in a pure panic, of course. Imagine your brother or your father going insane and threatening your life. No, it was worse than that, because my belief in Gresham was founded as deep as the roots of the mountains, upon living rock.

If I stirred a hand, to escape, I was certain that his big hand would make

my windpipe crackle like dead grass. I simply looked him in the eye with an effort that drained most of my strength and I said to him:

"Gresham, you are talking like a coward and a cur!"

You know how it is—fire to fight fire? Well, that was what I had tried on him, and as a matter of fact when I snapped out that insult it brought him back to himself like a dash of cold water in the face.

He stiffened and stood straight and then he began to go back across the room with heavy steps—very much like the baffled villain in the melodrama. Frightened as I was, I remember being a little bit amused by that comparison.

He kept saying: "Curse it all, I've played the fool! I've slipped away again!"

He brought up back by the window presently. He said: "I've been giving you a rough time, Sherburn, old fellow."

They say that one should never antagonize a madman. And I certainly looked upon Gresham as temporarily insane, to say the least, but nevertheless when he gave me a little clearance, I made one reach and brought up a Colt in each hand.

Gresham smiled in a sort of sick way at me.

"There's no use doing that," he said. "I've recovered. The poison is out of my head, partner."

"Good!" said I. "But the poison is still in mine! And if you try to get those big hands of yours as near me as that again—I'll let the light through you, Gresham. On my honor I shall!"

Will you believe that in spite of two big guns looking him in the eye he could have the nerve to turn away and begin to pace up and down the room again with his swinging step?

He was talking about her again. She obsessed him. I've never seen anything like it. It wasn't like mere love. It was rather an appetite sharpened by

famine. He had dreamed about her for so long that the mere thought of her threw him into a mental fever. So I threw into his way this idea, as a sort of cake to Cerberus, as they say:

"Gresham, before you turn yourself into a complete fool, will you kindly look the facts in the face? In the first place, you're a madman on that subject. Otherwise you would never have murdered four men on account of that girl!"

His face was even more sad than excited now, as he turned back toward me.

"Do you know the only reason that she really puts a value on me?" he said.

"I know," said I. "Because she sees a big, good-looking, husky fellow, with a clean reputation, a good income, and so forth. That's why she puts a value on you."

"You talk like a perfect child, poor Sherburn!" said he. "Let me tell you that the only reason she values me is because she knows in her heart of hearts that I *did* kill those four lovers of hers. She knows it, and she likes me because I was strong enough to do that little thing."

"Peter, you *are* mad—on this subject, completely mad."

"Do you think so?"

"Don't smile at me. It's not a smile that you need, but a doctor to listen to you rave."

"I don't know why I'm telling you the truth about her," he said, "but you may as well know! Why, man, do you think that I haven't dodged this truth about her? But the facts have been drifting in on me steadily, and I can't avoid them any longer. I know and you may as well know, also. What she worships is sheer power. And because I have power, she'll think fondly of me."

"In the first place," I came back at him, "she *can't* have known that you got rid of those four men!"

"Ask the whole town. Everybody knows it. They were fair fights.

Amityville knows all about the four fights!"

"Man, she'd have nothing but horror for you."

"Does she seem to?" he asked me with a curious sharpness.

"We haven't talked about you," I told him truthfully.

And his brows lifted. No matter what I had to say, so long as that girl was the theme of it, he was bound to be suspicious still.

"Very well!" said Gresham. "Very well!"

But it was not very well. It was very bad. I wanted exceedingly to get out of that room or anywhere away from him. I was afraid. For the first time in my life I was afraid of a single man—even with a gun in my hand and with none in his!

"It's true," he began to mutter to himself, nodding.

Then he added, as much to himself as to me: "It's because you're her own kind. That's the reason!"

"Gresham," said I, "you're not only a little crazy, but you're mighty foolish. If I had any ideas about her, you're giving them the first encouragement that they've had."

"Have I put the ideas in your head for the first time?" he mocked me, smiling without mirth. "Oh, well, I think not!"

"And as for me being the same kind that she is—have you really gone stone blind?"

"What are looks?" said he. "Nothing! The inside of you is a good deal the same and that's what counts most. She has no frills. Neither have you. She's rough and ready. So are you. She's honest. And I think that you're honest, too! And I? What am I?"

He threw up his hands and looked at me in a sort of agony.

It was mighty unpleasant. It was almost worse than having him threaten me. He—the Big Boy—Peter Gresham

—the king of Amityville—the man who didn't need to wear a gun—not honest?

It started me sweating, because I didn't dare think what he meant. And the grisly conclusion was forced on me that my first guess had been horribly right, after all. He *was* a little off in the brain on that day.

Then he paused in his pacing, and, glowering down at me, said: "Will you tell me the truth, Sherburn. Do you want her?"

"I'll tell you the truth," I said. "I'm not blind. I can see that she's worth having. Yes—I want her!"

He blinked and then heaved a sigh. "Good!" said he. "It's better for us to be out in the open. And I'm glad to know that I've been guessing right."

"Guessing?" said I with an ironical smile.

"You're right," he confessed with a queer frankness. "I had you watched, because I knew from the moment of our first meeting that you were worth watching."

"Was it old Doc?" I asked savagely.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I won't answer that question, of course. If you have any suspicions, you'll have to work them out for yourself. But good heavens, man, did you think that I could leave a stranger in charge of the hotel without keeping some sort of a guard on him?"

It was a hard blow to me. Here I had gone along telling myself that this hero of mine, this demi-god, this big Peter Gresham, had had the sense to see that in spite of all the evil in me

there was the core of an honest man to my soul. I had felt better toward the whole world, human nature, and myself included, because I had that idea of Gresham. And now it seemed that he had only *seemed* to leave me in freedom. In reality, his hand was on the rope all the time, and I was simply staked out, though I hadn't yet felt the end of my tether.

"I'm sorry to hear it," I confessed. "It makes me sort of sick, Gresham. And I think that we'd better call this a day's talk. I've had enough. Do you want me to pack my belongings and leave now?"

He turned his back on me and leaned at the window, and I saw that he was breathing hard.

"She might think that I've sent you away," said he. "She might think that I've taken advantage of you."

"Man," I yelled at him, "you talk as if I were engaged to her."

He merely shook his head. "Stay on here and work it out with me," he said. "I think that we may be able to come to the right conclusion without any real trouble. Will you stay on?"

I saw here, at least, that I had an excellent chance to break away from him with a good pretense—and excellent chance to leave him and ride—Cricket Valley—to Red Hawk, and to devil knows what else!

"I'll think it over to-day," I told him. "But I suppose that the best thing would be for me to get out and stay out!"

"With her behind you?" said Gresham. "You'd never stay away!"

To be continued in the next issue of WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE.



PASSING OF PIONEER STAGE DRIVER

J. M. BENTON, eighty-eight years old, pioneer stage driver and stage-line owner, of California and Nevada, died during the month of April at his home in Carson City, Nevada. Mr. Benton was born in Steuben County, New York, and crossed the plains in 1860, settling in Carson City in 1864.



Not for Sale

By

Frank Richardson Pierce

Author of "Spring Madness," etc.



HEN Joe Hardy reached the railroad he planned to shoot every dog on his team except Tip, his Malemute lead dog. That is, he planned to shoot them unless—— But some said that Joe was a little off, anyway. He had missed a lot of boats in his day, which was the Alaskan way of saying he had stayed in the country too long for the good of his mind. Not exactly crazy, you understand, but—not just right.

By buying out the claims of others he had gained control of a big valley. There was gold in the sands of the streams, but Joe was keeping that quiet. He wanted people to come to his valley, work the veins of coal in the bordering mountains, and till the soil in the bottoms. And a man with such dreams plainly had spent too much time alone.

Word traveled as it usually does. Some one took the short cut and said that the meanest man in Alaska was heading for the railroad and eventually Outside to interest capital.

"He's going to kill his dogs instead of selling them," the "Some One" added.

"Kill dogs?" It seemed incredible in a land where a man's dogs are often his sole companions for many weary months in the year—in a land where the

huskies are beloved as pals by the old-timers.

Joe pulled into the first road house late one evening and looked about. It had been two years since he had encountered more than a passing trapper or prospector. It had been twenty-five years since he had been Outside. "Howdy!" he said briefly.

The road-house keeper glanced at Joe and took a long look at the team. "Fine team you got there!"

"Yep!" Joe was a man of few words. Perhaps after he had been among men a few weeks he would not be so silent. "None finer!"

"Heading Outside?" The road-house keeper knew the answer, but he laid the foundation for another and more important question.

"Yep!"

"What you going to do with your dogs?"

This was followed by a long period of silence. "I'll take 'em to some quiet place, I guess, and—shoot 'em, unless I——"

"Yeah?"

"Yes, I'll shoot 'em, except Tip. I guess I'll keep him. He's only a dog of course, but—maybe you know how dogs are?"

"I've raised a few and driven more.

Well, drive around to the kennels and put 'em up. You'll find a fifty-pound bale of dried salmon in the storeroom; help yourself." Then the man entered his establishment and made his way to the kitchen. "That's him all right enough," he informed his wife, "and he's going to kill 'em. One of the finest teams I ever laid eyes on, too."

His wife glared. "I'd like to whip him, or spill this kettle of hot water down his neck. The beast! They say he's the meanest man in Alaska. Why, he's the meanest in the world. The low-down skunk." She slammed down a spoon. "I'm not going to cook for him."

"I don't blame you, but we're running an open road house and we've got to take 'em in."

In the meantime Joe Hardy had unharnessed his dogs and opened the bale of dried salmon. Each fish had been split down the backbone to the tail, hung across a rack, and dried after the head had been removed. Each dog was given his daily ration of one fish and a chunk of tallow. Then Joe made his way into the road house, shed his parka, hung his mitts over the stove to dry, then washed his face and hands. During this process he was unconscious of the glares the woman frequently directed at him. He ate in silence, glanced at some old newspapers, and retired.

Each night it was the same. Men and women eyed his team with approval, asked him if he intended to go Outside, then inquired as to the fate of the team. Each time he hesitated before answering, and each time his reply was the same.

When Joe mentioned the railroad, the road-house keeper commented: "Hear you are taking the train for Seward and the Outside. What do you want for the team?"

Joe Hardy considered a moment. "They are not for sale," he said gravely.

"Taking 'em Outside with you? Better not, it's pretty tough on Northern

dogs down there where it gets hot. Now if you'll sell 'em to me——"

"They are not for sale!"

"Is it true that you plan to shoot 'em? There is a report going around that sounds like it."

"They are my dogs, to do as I choose with," declared Joe sullenly.

The other blazed. "Those dogs would lay down their lives for you. Probably they've saved yours——"

"They have, twice. Old Tip has saved my life three times." He nodded toward the leader. Since coming into civilization the big Malamute leader had been fitted with a strong muzzle, though apparently he was harmless enough.

"And you are going to shoot 'em?" The other repeated the query. "Shoot 'em after saving your life?"

"It's none of your business, anyway. I don't care to talk about it." The way Joe Hardy said it indicated that the matter was closed.

He walked over to the telegraph station and sent a telegram to Seward. Two days after he arrived at the salt-water port, the Yukon would sail. It was important that he catch the steamer. He had taken too much time in coming out as it was.

The ticket agent wired that a berth was available, and Joe felt easier. For the first time he realized that he was being pointed out. Men lowered their voices as he passed. He caught more than a hint of unfriendliness, and this changed his satisfaction to uneasiness, but he was as grim as ever. He would shoot his dogs at Seward, unless——

At Seward he was again offered good prices for his dogs, but he firmly refused. "They are not for sale, at any price. Not for fifty dollars each or five thousand dollars each."

Word spread rapidly. If there had been a society for the protection of animals, action might have been taken.

The steamer was to sail at noon. Joe

Hardy sent his things aboard, dragging them down on the sled to the dock. The dogs from leader to wheelers were frisky, tails over their backs, ears erect, eyes alert.

On the dock Joe met an old sour dough. They talked a brief period, and then Hardy drove back, standing on the sled runners. They saw him go through town and into the outskirts. Presently they expected to see him return, with but one dog, and board the steamer. Well, men had shot their dogs before, prompted by a reason difficult to understand; yet not so difficult when one considers Alaska and what long hours, days, and years alone with dogs does to a man's mental processes.

Seward watched for his return. What sort of a man was this and what would the effect be when the show-down came? Time passed. The steamer whistled, and presently cast off her lines, heading for Harding Gateway through a snowstorm.

"Well, there's one satisfaction," announced Mel Horner, "he missed his steamer and the important business he had Outside. The steamship agent told me he had to catch the *Yukon* at all costs. He didn't catch her."

It was two weeks before Seward saw Joe Hardy. Then he returned alone, except for the lead dog, Tip. As usual, the dog was wearing a muzzle. People were saying that Hardy could whip the dog muzzled with less danger to himself.

He made his way direct to the ticket office and inquired about steamers.

"One just left this morning. Won't be another for ten days except a steam schooner taking ore at Cordova. She'll leave here empty, stop at Cordova, then go south, taking the Outside passage," was the answer.

"I'll go, then." Joe had decided. Joe Hardy seemed worried.

But by the time he boarded the steam schooner, the skipper, crew, and handful of passengers knew all about him. He walked up the gang plank leading

Tip, descended to a lower deck, and unmuzzled and fastened the dog, according to directions given him by a steward. Then, with a bunch of papers under his arm, he retired to his room.

Joe appeared regularly at meals, stepped ashore several times during the loading at Cordova, and then retired to his bunk when the vessel shoved her nose into a storm in the Alaskan Gulf. For seventy-two hours the craft wallowed in the sea, or shuddered from the impact of the waves that swept her incessantly.

The fourth night the ship labored through the wet blackness of the storm. The sea and the weeping clouds met. Water was in the very air they breathed. At times the flying spray cut like a knife.

A keen-eared lookout caught the boom of surf. "Breakers dead ahead, sir!" he bawled out, and the cry died in his throat as the vessel crashed on an uncharted reef.

White-faced men rushed from below with the grime of the engine room on their bodies. The skipper shouted his orders and calm men hastened to obey.

"With this ore she'll go down like a rock," a steward shouted to the cook.

The cook nodded as he made his way to his station. A headland seemed to be protecting them, but it was invisible. It was possible that a boat or raft might live, even in such a sea.

The chief steward approached. "I've aroused the passengers, sir. They are wearing life belts. I've herded them into one room."

"All of them?"

"Yes. Even Hardy, sir. The cur!" The steward spoke plainly.

The skipper ordered them on deck. He might get a boat over the side. In any event, they would all be in the water soon. A quartermaster was sending up rockets; the radio operator was sending a call into the night.

The passengers, all men, were huddled close to the beats on the lee side.

The skipper counted them, ten in all. The storm paused, as if to listen for cries of fear. From the depths of the ship came the fear cry of a chained dog. The men glanced at each other. The water must have reached Tip by this time. It would soon reach them. Men were cutting the boat lashings. Again the howl came from below.

"Old Tip!" It was Joe Hardy who spoke. He started for the stairway leading below as the others climbed into the boat.

"Lively, men!" the mate shouted. "We've got to get clear while we can."

They piled in, knowing that minutes were precious.

"Here, Hardy, where are you going?" The mate caught him by the shoulder and swung him about. "Into that boat!"

"I'm going to release my dog. He'll drown like a rat!"

The mate gripped him tighter. "Don't be a fool. Get into that boat!"

Again came the pleading howl. Hardy hurled the restraining hand aside. "That's Tip down there," he shouted. "Old Tip!" And before the mate could stop him he was running down the stairs.

"Shove off!" the captain ordered. "You can't wait. I'll stay. The fool!"

The uproar from the depths was terrible. Her bottom and tons of copper ore must have gone, leaving the frame grinding on the reef. Things that would float began bobbing from the deep.

In the darkness Joe Hardy fought his way, guided by the dog's cries. Then he heard a new note, one of gratitude. He found Tip and unfastened the chain. The dog was almost swimming, the man was floundering about.

"Quick, boy, she's going." Joe Hardy thought he fell onto his face, but it was only the vessel rolling onto her beam ends. He stumbled, crawled, and fought. Some mighty force hurled him upward. He wondered if it was the boilers exploding. Then he found himself clear. There was an overturned

boat near by, and many heads bobbing about. He looked for Tip. Perhaps he was over there in the dark.

"Good old Tip, who pulled me out of the overflow that time I broke through. They say drowning is easy for man and dog. The cold!"

The chill of the water was biting deep. He could sense his very life ebbing away, relentlessly pursued by the cold. A sea smothered him, then another, and another. Once he hit bottom violently, and his nails clawed into the sand; then he was swept away once more. He shouted when his face was above water: "Tip! Tip! Here, Tip! Here, old boy!"

Then Joe Hardy experienced a feeling of approaching death. His struggles grew weaker, as his voice grew weaker, and a sense of being detached from things earthly came over him. Then he was dimly conscious of the gleaming eyes, the fangs, and wet head of a dog —then something clashing his neck. Fangs—perhaps of some hidden reef, or possibly a swimming dog!

Joe Hardy regained consciousness some time later. His face was burning from too close contact with a driftwood fire. His sodden clothing was steaming. Men were moving about, or huddled close to the blaze; others were patrolling the beach. Several forms lay silent.

"He may be the meanest man in Alaska," a voice was saying, "but I don't see how they figure it. What if he did shoot his dogs? You know how it is; you can learn to love dog teams so much that you'd rather kill them with your own hands than to sell or give them away. It takes courage to kill your own dogs—more courage than it does to go into the depths of a sinking vessel and release a drowning dog; and that was the finest thing I've seen in forty years at sea."

Joe Hardy looked at the speaker and saw the gray hair and four gold cuff

stripes of the captain. He had gone down with his ship with Hardy and Tip because a skipper does not leave until the last soul is safely over the side. Like Hardy and Tip, he had come to the surface, and fate had decreed that he live.

The radio operator was saying something about a rescue ship that would arrive the next day. Hardy could feel strength returning rapidly. Long years in the open had given him a fine body that age found difficult to break down.

"I saw him go under," a quartermaster was saying, "and the dog got him by the shoulder and neck. Gave him a mean gash, too. I thought they never would come up, but they did. The dog fought bravely until the next sea washed 'em ashore. Then he couldn't stand, so he crawled to Hardy's face and licked him. Here he comes now!"

Hardy felt suddenly strong, yet when he saw the dog and tried to speak, something choked him. "Tip!" he whispered. Then he took the dog into his arms.

The fire blazed up and Joe Hardy swallowed the lump in his throat. "It's better to kill 'em than to have 'em abused. It's been done. It's right, but a lot of us who make up our minds can't do it when the show-down comes. I had to catch the *Yukon* and meet some rich promoters Outside. I took the dogs out of Seward, steeled myself, and leveled the automatic I'd brought along. Somehow I couldn't do it with the old .44 I've carried so many years. It didn't seem right to make the old gat do it. And there they stood, looking up at me, a-wagging their tails, ready to die for me if I asked 'em. The steamer whistled, and all I had was fifteen minutes. Five for the work and ten to get back to the dock. Well——"

"Go ahead!" said the captain. "It was hard, but we understand!"

"Well, I did like some others I know. I mushed two hundred miles to a fellow I heard was good to dogs, and left 'em with him, except old Tip. He always goes with me."



CALAVERAS COUNTY LOSES WOMAN PIONEER

THREE recently passed away at Valley Springs, California, one of the pioneer women of historic Calaveras County, Mrs. Catherine de Martini. Born in Versico, Switzerland, on May 17th, 1846, she came to California at the age of twenty, arriving in Stockton in 1866, having traveled by the Isthmus of Panama route. Two years after her arrival, she married John de Martini in Calaveras County. Seven children, all of whom survive, were born to the couple. There are also eight grandchildren.



FAMOUS GOLD SOURCE DISCOVERED

REPORTS from the Cariboo district of British Columbia state that eight prospectors from Victoria have discovered the source of gold which enriched the bed of the Horsefly River and was responsible for the famous rush to Harper's Camp in the sixties. One of the party of eight was John S. Edmonds, a former Klondyke miner. The source of the gold is said to have been located at Horsefly Falls, at the forks. The gravel is stated to run from ten to seventeen dollars a yard in gold.



Your Dog

By David Post

Author of "The Bloodhound," etc.

THE SCOTTISH DEERHOUND



OME people hold to the belief that the Scottish deerhound's remote ancestors were greyhounds, while others think that the Irish wolfhound was at one time the dominant strain in this sturdy breed. In general conformation the Scottish deerhound resembles the greyhound, although larger and heavier in bone, but its coat is harsh and wiry like the Irish wolfhound's. No one knows the ancestry of the Scottish deerhound, but we do know that the breed is of considerable antiquity. It is recorded that early Scottish tribes sometimes quarreled over the ownership of deerhounds, and in one such struggle over a hundred men were killed.

Indeed, in early days, a good Scottish deerhound was a valuable asset to a tribe, whose food supply depended to a large extent upon the success of its hunters. This dog can overtake coyotes, wolves, deer and elk and pull them down. With speed and endurance he has powerful strength and courage. Moreover, he is affectionate, intelligent, and faithful. While he will not seek quarrels with other dogs, he proves a very dangerous opponent when attacked. In defense of his master, he will tackle even a grizzly bear. The Scottish deer-

hound is an outdoor dog, popular in Scotland, but not seen often in the United States. We do not use dogs to chase and kill deer or elk, and that is the special purpose to which Scottish deerhounds are put. It is doubtful whether this breed will ever win great popularity in our country in competition with the many useful breeds already in high favor; nevertheless, the big Scottish deerhound is a splendid dog for the great outdoors.

The following is the standard for the breed:

Head—Should be long, with a rather flat skull, widest between the ears. From the ears to the eyes the skull should taper slightly. The muzzle should become narrow rapidly and end in a pointed nose. There should be no stop between the eyes, but a slight fullness over them. Nose should be slightly aquiline and black. Some blue-fawn deerhounds, however, have blue noses. The teeth should be strong and level. The dog should have a mustache of rather silky hair, and a fair beard.

Ears—The smaller, the better. They should be soft and glossy, black or dark-colored. Set on high, they should be folded back like the greyhound's when in repose. When the dog is excited, they may be raised above the

head without, however, losing the fold, or they may be semierect.

Eyes—Dark and rather full. Dark brown and hazel are the colors most frequently present. When in repose, the deerhound's eye has a gentle look, but when the dog is excited, its eyes take on a keen and, at the same time, a far-away look.

Neck and Shoulders—The neck should be long and very strong; the nape of the neck, very prominent where the head is set on; in profile the throat should be clean-cut and prominent. The shoulders, placed obliquely, should be broad and deep.

Body—The chest should be deep and of moderate width. Well arched and then drooping to the tail, the loins should be very strong.

Legs and Feet—Legs should be broad and flat. The forelegs should be as straight as possible; the hind legs, well bent at the stifle, should be very long from the hip to the hock; the hocks, broad and flat and well let down. The feet should be close and compact and well knuckled up.

Tail—Long, tapering, and well covered with hair, it should reach within one and a half inches of the ground and one and a half inches below the

hocks. When the dog is standing still, the tail may hang straight down or it may be curved. When the dog is moving, the tail should be curved, but it should never be raised above the line of the back.

Coat—On body, neck and quarters the hair should be harsh and wiry and between three and four inches long; on the breast, head and belly it is much softer. The inside of the fore and hind legs should have a hairy fringe. Some deerhounds have a mixture of silk coat with the hard; this is preferable to a woolly coat, which is bad. The proper coat is thick, close-lying, shaggy, and harsh or crisp to the touch.

Color—A dark blue-gray is accounted the best, though darker and lighter grays, brindles, fawns, and reddish fawns are also in high favor. The less white in the coat the better; a white blaze or collar should disqualify a dog.

Height—Dogs, from 28 to 32 inches; bitches, from 26 inches upward.

Weight—Dogs, from 85 to 105 pounds; bitches, from 65 to 80 pounds.

The largest of all dogs, the Irish wolfhound, will be brought to your attention in next week's issue of WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE.

THE NORTHERNMOST QUARTZ MILL

THE quartz mill recently put into operation at Keno, Yukon Territory, on the property of the Treadwell-Yukon Company, has the distinction of being situated farthest north of all quartz mills on the American continent. Sufficient ore has been mined to keep the mill working to its full capacity for more than a year, crushing one hundred tons of ore a day.

HOP FIELDS TURNED INTO VINEYARDS

IN the vicinity of Wheatland, California, the large hop fields owned by the E. Clements Horst Company are about to be converted into vineyards. The work of removing the roots of the hop plants is to be completed during the winter. Then vines will be planted during the planting season. It is planned to have grapes of the following varieties to replace the hops—Alicante, Missions, Zinfandel and Carrignan.

M I S S I N G P A G E S 8 1 - 9 6

M I S S I N G P A G E S 8 1 - 9 6

tend a slight disappointment at the sheriff's answer.

"Then you think there is a chance of some one else capturing the prize?"

Stacey smiled whimsically.

"There's always a chance, of course, Miss Anita! But I ain't really afraid of any of 'em—without it is 'The Silver Kid'!"

"The Silver Kid?" she echoed. "What a poetic name! Who is he, Bob?"

"Well, his real name is Hal Gunder-
son," the sheriff explained. "We called
him The Silver Kid account o' the trap-
pin's he wore—silver spurs, silver chap
buttons, silver hatband, an' all that.
Take him by an' large, he was about the
best definition of a he-man I ever saw.
Ride anything on four legs, snake a
rope like a Mex, an' chained lightning
on the draw! I thought everybody
along the border knew The Kid."

Anita's eyes betrayed her interest.

"I never heard of him before, Bob!
What a romantic figure he must be!
Where is he now?"

Stacey reflected a moment.

"Why, I figger he's hangin' out some-
where around Tia Juana. He wasn't
what we'd call a desirable citizen, even
in the old days, Miss Anita—gunman,
gambler an' all that—an' while we
couldn't hang enough on to him to send
him up, we figgered Chochilla would be
better off without him, so we banished
him from the county."

The girl sighed her disappointment,
and the conversation ended as they drew
rein before the door of her father's
real-estate office. Though Chochilla's
Chamber of Commerce boasted an office
of its own, most of its meetings were
being held in Hagerman's place of business
during the present week. This was
because there were many points to be
discussed about the forthcoming rodeo
and Hagerman's work demanded his
presence at his desk. For this reason
Stacey and the girl were not surprised

to find such a meeting in progress as they entered. At sight of his daughter, however, Hagerman arose and beamed upon her fondly.

"The returns are in at last, honey," he chuckled, his large, florid face aglow, "and you've been elected queen of the rodeo without a dissenting vote! I guess that won't put the big show over!"

To the eager congratulations of the others, Anita merely blushed prettily and shrugged her shoulders.

"Our out-of-town visitors may not be so easily suited," she said, smiling. "I'm afraid you will have to find a bigger drawing card than I am, daddy."

There was an interval of silence while Big Bill Hagerman and his associates exchanged glances.

"Maybe I have, at that, Anita," he said, grinning, with a sly, questioning glance at the sheriff. "I figured that, since we are giving a rodeo, our chief attraction should be our riders. So I decided to get the best rider of them all—The Silver Kid!"

For an instant there was a poignant silence as all eyes turned upon Sheriff Stacey. The face of that officer had paled visibly. He met the stares of the others with a frown of open indignation.

"Mr. Hagerman," he declared tensely, "The Silver Kid may be some rider, but I reckon Chochilla ain't so hard up for buckaroos that they have to call on such as him! I ain't callin' a man names behind his back, but I'll leave it to these gentlemen here if they consider him the proper sort o' person to uphold the dignity an' reputation o' this community!"

Among those present there was scarcely one who had not known The Silver Kid through repute; at least half their number had known him personally; and under the sheriff's stare their eyes dropped uncomfortably. Hagerman was not slow to notice the change, and his own face flushed with a show of resentment.

"But can't you see what a wonderful advertisement such a notorious person will be to us," he cried. "Most of the Easterners who come out West don't know that Chochilla is on the map. We've got to have something spectacular to attract them. Give them a chance to meet one of the old-time gunmen like The Silver Kid, and you couldn't keep them away! What if his character is a little bit shady? I guess Chochilla's pride can stand for that, when it means money in her pocket!"

Since most of those present were business men, that argument was a clincher. In vain the now thoroughly aroused Stacey protested, warning them of their folly in establishing such a precedent. The Silver Kid, he pointed out, was not the only gunman in banishment. If he were once given his freedom it would embolden the others to venture forth and the county would soon be overridden again. But they merely laughed at his fears. And Hagerman's thrust carried an even deeper sting.

"You're getting to be an old fogey, Bob," he declared mockingly. "I half believe you're afraid to ride against The Silver Kid! I thought you were a better sport than that!"

No full-blooded man could withstand such a taunt, coming from the father of the girl he loved, and Stacey's face flushed scarlet.

"Sign him on, if yuh like, gentlemen," he declared recklessly, "but don't hold me responsible if trouble follows! Yuh can't expect to make a goat out of a wolf an' get away with it!"

It was not a difficult matter to locate one so well known as The Silver Kid, and the next afternoon Hagerman received an answer to his wire, stating that he, The Kid, was very grateful for the favor extended him and would arrive in Chochilla on Friday evening. Immediately Hagerman proceeded to broadcast the great news throughout the county, and the hearty enthusiasm with

which it was received removed any uneasiness he might have entertained over the sheriff's warning. In general, the public patted themselves on the back with the reflection that they were doing the right thing in permitting The Silver Kid to return. His fangs had long ago been drawn, and he was now penitent and helpless. As such, it was no more than fair that he should be given a chance to win his way back to respectability.

If such an impulse guided the general public, however, it played no part in the considerations of Big Bill Hagerman. To him, The Silver Kid was merely an asset which could be turned into silver dollars. He had not underestimated the ex-bandit's advertising value, and as the visitors swarmed into Chochilla he collared them, displayed his wonderful opportunities for investment and did a landslide business. "Get 'em while the getting is good," was his only religion, and he lived up to it.

The cheapness of such a trick caused Stacey to lose much of his former esteem for the boss of Chochilla; but his contempt changed to open resentment when Friday evening came around, and he noted the elaborate preparations which Hagerman had made for The Silver Kid's reception. Not content with permitting him the run of the town, Big Bill met him at the train and escorted him to the hotel with all the pomp of a returning hero. He was a striking figure with his clean-cut features, his alert, black eyes, and his air of careless confidence, and the Easterners who thronged the sidewalks cheered him openly.

Stacey might have overlooked this attitude of the Easterners, but he could not overlook the attitude of The Silver Kid, himself. No sooner had the latter caught sight of Anita than he began to strut and preen himself before her like a peacock. No girl, especially of Anita's romantic strain, could fail to be

impressed by such a handsome, dashing young character, and though she never encouraged his advances, and though he never spoke to her save in the presence of her father, Stacey resented his presumption in taking her interest for granted. Observing that Big Bill, himself, took no note of the matter, he followed The Kid to his room that night and unburdened his mind.

"I ain't aimin' to throw any obstacles in yuhr way, Kid, now that yuh're here," he stated bluntly. "But it strikes me that yuh're workin' a little too fast for a gent that's tryin' to make good!"

The Silver Kid rolled a cigarette and lighted it with admirable composure.

"Thanks for bein' so frank, Stacey," he smiled mockingly. "I gets yuhr meanin' plain. But I reckon Miss Hagerman is the best judge o' that."

For a long moment the young men glared at each other, and never, perhaps, had two wills opposed each other which were so nearly equal. In the end Stacey nodded grimly.

"I reckon she is, too, Kid. But I got a heap o' faith in Miss Anita's judgment, an' I'm advisin' yuh not to build any air castles."

The next noon the last of the visitors drifted in, swelling the population of Chochilla to such a figure that adequate accommodations were out of the question. When the ticket office finally opened three special officers were needed to keep the crowd in line. Watching the mad scramble that ensued, Hagerman turned to The Silver Kid, who sat beside him and the sheriff and Anita, and chuckled triumphantly.

"A five-thousand-dollar house, if it brings a cent," he said, glowing. "Here's hoping you and Stacey give them their money's worth! I'd certainly hate to disappoint a mob like that!"

The Silver Kid's eyes glowed with a golden light as they rested upon the girl.

"For the applause of the crowd I care nothin'"—he shrugged indifferently—

"but if it will please you and Miss Anita that I ride the outlaw, El Diablo——"

There was a simultaneous gasp from the three of them; the girl's face paled, and even the sheriff could not repress a visible start. El Diablo was all that his name implied, the most vicious-tempered brute that ever masqueraded under the title of horseflesh. In the three short years of his life he had been saddled many times but ridden, never. Two of the men who had essayed such an attempt had been trampled to death. There was a growing conviction that El Diablo never would be ridden, for few, indeed, were the men who now cared to try.

Yet The Silver Kid was going to try! And for no other reason, apparently, than to win appreciation in the dark eyes of Anita Hagerman. Had it not been for that, Stacey might have admitted his admiration for such high courage. As matters stood, however, he knew only a feeling of keenest resentment. The Kid, obviously, was attempting to show him up, to prove to Anita that he was the better man. Stacey's blood ran riot at the thought. Where he could ordinarily be relied upon to keep his head, he now let his emotions get the better of him.

"Yuh mean, yuh're goin' to try to ride El Diablo," he flung back recklessly. "Which don't get yuh any more than the rest of us! For there's others figgerin' on takin' that same chance!"

The girl drew in her breath quickly, and the eyes that looked into Stacey's were bright with concern.

"Not you, Bob," she gasped out, her hand upon his arm. "It would be suicide, and we—the county needs you! Any horse but El Diablo."

That touch set Stacey's blood on fire. He arose and met The Silver Kid's sneer with dancing eyes.

"Reckon we'd better go down an' sign on, Kid," he declared briskly.

With a flare of music and the shouts

of thousands the great rodeo got under way. There came first the grand march in which all the contestants joined. Following this, in the order of their interest, came trick riding, roping, and bulldogging. In none of these events, however, did Stacey or The Silver Kid participate. They had signed only for the riding of El Diablo, the greatest event of all, and each realized the advisability of conserving his strength against that struggle. When the great moment arrived the manager made his announcement and permitted the contestant to toss up for turns. Luck was against Stacey here, for the coin decided that he was to ride first. He merely drew in his belt a little tighter, however, and with unhurried steps strode over to where the outlaw horse, blindfolded, was held waiting.

From the moment that he was free, El Diablo proceeded to live up to his name. There was no preliminary pawing or side-stepping. Experience had taught him the futility of such simple maneuvering. He was into the air on the instant, coming down upon all four feet with the shock of a pile driver, his back arched, his head between his legs. Four times in succession he executed that bone-breaking performance. Then he sunfished, rearing himself up to the perpendicular and twisting his body like a corkscrew, his eyes and nostrils flaring his hate. Again he bent his nose to the ground and kicked out to his full length, each kick coming like the blow of a trip hammer. And when Stacey still kept his seat, the crowd realized that they were seeing some real riding.

"Atta boy, Bob!" they howled. "Yuh got his goat! Ride him, cowboy, ride him!"

Stunned and bruised as he was, Stacey heard that cry, and his soul filled with a fierce triumph. It was only a momentary triumph, however, for the next instant, as if maddened by that taunt, El Diablo roused himself to a supreme

effort. He shot into the air as if released from a spring, and as he came down he executed a counter-plunge, rearing himself first upon his haunches, then dropping forward like a rocking-horse. Prepared only for the shock of the descent, Stacey had no time to brace himself against that counter-plunge. The next instant he left the saddle, shot through the air like a cannon ball, and landed in a grotesque heap twenty feet ahead!

But the cheer that burst from the throats of the crowd held no trace of derision. Although Stacey had been thrown, he had stayed with El Diablo longer than any other man on record. He picked himself up with a cheery smile and, while the wranglers busied themselves recapturing the outlaw horse, made his way back to the foot of the grand stand. For just an instant his eyes lifted to those of Anita, and again he thrilled to a sense of triumph. She was fairly beaming upon him now, her eyes aglow with mingled relief and admiration. Some of his old-time assurance returned to Stacey after that glance. He was actually whistling as he brought his gaze back to his rival.

But he was no more cheerful than The Silver Kid. The latter was whistling, too, as he sauntered leisurely up to his waiting mount. He rolled a cigarette and waited a moment for the commotion to subside before he put a foot into the stirrup. Then he glanced directly up at Miss Hagerman, swept her an elaborate bow, and vaulted into the saddle. And from that moment the attention of every man and woman in the crowd was his. Stacey's riding had been good, but it lacked the spectacular interest of The Silver Kid's. Where the sheriff had been content to keep his seat and let El Diablo do all the fighting, The Kid forced the fight from the start, slapping the frenzied animal with his hat and yelling like a wild Comanche.

Here was entertainment de luxe, and the crowd, who had come only to be entertained, were not slow to show their appreciation. As El Diablo did his worst and The Silver Kid continued to keep his seat and to goad him on to further efforts, they applauded him with a vigor that shook the foundation of the grand stand. To them it was no longer a contest between Stacey and The Silver Kid, for Stacey had been forgotten. It was a contest between The Silver Kid and El Diablo, with the participants so evenly matched that there were no odds offered on either. And then, when it seemed as if that deadlock would never be broken, it was all over. The outlaw horse stood stock still for a moment, as if dumfounded at his inability to shake off that hateful burden. The next instant, with a scream of panic, he stretched out his long neck and bolted—swept like a flash out of the inclosure.

Stacey paid no heed to the pandemonium that followed. His interest was centered only upon one face, that of Anita. The girl was not even looking at him—appeared to have forgotten that he was present. She was standing on tiptoe in her excitement, shouting and clapping her hands, her gaze bent fascinatingly upon the disappearing horseman. That was enough for Stacey. He did not stop to consider what emotion might have prompted her applause, nor did he wait for The Silver Kid's return to learn. Heedless of the excited throngs who now poured down into the inclosure, he elbowed his way tempestuously toward the entrance where he had tethered Skeesicks. As he passed by the little ticket booth outside, the cashier paused in his occupation of counting over the day's receipts to fling an eager question at him. In the grip of the emotion which swayed him then, however, the sheriff was in no mood for conversation. Without a word of reply he vaulted into the saddle and set off toward town at a gallop.

Not until he was once more in the seclusion of his office did that flood of shame and remorse leave him. And when it was gone it left behind only a feeling of bitterness. Strength cannot endure without pride, and the pride of the sheriff had been trampled in the dust. It was not altogether a feeling of jealousy. Even should he not lose the respect of Anita, he had lost his prestige among his fellow citizens, and a sheriff without prestige is without value in the West. Under the circumstances, he could think of but one thing to do—resign from his office and leave Chochilla forever!

That took no great courage now. He had suffered the worst of the blow when he had last looked upon Anita's face in the grand stand. Without a change of expression he removed from his vest the star he had worn there for three years and laid it upon the desk. Then he drew toward him an antique typewriter, inserted a sheet of paper and with steady but awkward fingers, typed out his resignation as sheriff. He read the message over once, signed his name, then arose. He intended to go to his hotel, pack his things and leave at once—for what parts he knew not nor cared. But as he reached the threshold he paused, his startled gaze bent in the direction of the rodeo grounds.

Down the street which a few moments before had been deserted, came a crowd of men on horseback, with Big Bill himself in the lead. Instinctively Stacey's heartbeats quickened, his former lethargy vanishing. This was no triumphant return of the victor, for neither The Silver Kid nor Anita was visible. Then what was the cause of the excitement? Before he could find an answer to that question, Hagerman pulled his horse up before the office. The next instant Big Bill, himself, dismounted, hatless, breathless, and purple with emotion.

"Thunderation, sheriff!" he bellowed out. "A fine place for you to be at this

time—you, the man who warned us so much against him! If you'd been on the job, 'stead of loafing here in your office it wouldn't have happened!"

Stacey's astonishment changed to resentment. Several of the others had now come up, and their attitudes were as accusing as Hagerman's. He met Big Bill's charge with a frown.

"Cut out the bouquets, Hagerman," he retorted sharply. "If yuh've got anything to say, say it quick! Only let me inform yuh that I ain't sheriff any more! I resigned from that office about five minutes ago!"

If anything was needed to cap the climax of the town boss' wrath that dramatic disclosure supplied it. For an instant he seemed threatened with apoplexy. His pudgy fingers went out and bit into Stacey's shoulder.

"You resigned—as sheriff? Are you plumb crazy, Stacey? What are you resigning for?"

Under that battery of eyes Stacey flushed uncomfortably.

"Well," he retorted bitterly, "I figgered I was gettin' to be a sort o' back number, seein' as how The Silver Kid proved hisself so much the better man! Figgered yuh'd kind o' want to run him in my place!"

There was a simultaneous growl from the group about them and Hagerman gave an inarticulate gasp.

"The Silver Kid? That scoundrel? If we ever catch him, the only thing we'll run him for is the calaboose! He's the very man we came to tell you about, Stacey! He just ran off with El Diablo, my thoroughbred, Ginger, five thousand dollars of the gate receipts, and—and Anita!"

If Big Bill had suddenly swung back and struck him, Stacey could not have been more conscious of the blow. Dazedly he swept the faces about him, seeking to confirm the evidence of his ears. That one glance convinced him beyond any doubt, and for an instant a

strange thrill gripped him. So The Silver Kid had shown his true colors after all! From a public idol he had reverted to the despicable scoundrel that Stacey knew him to be! Had the loss of the money been the only thing involved Stacey could not have refrained from a few caustic comments. But the abduction of Anita rendered the affair far too serious for that.

When he turned back to Hagerman there was a dancing light in his gray eyes.

"He did all that—in front o' five thousand people?" he exclaimed. "How did he get away with it?"

Hagerman was scarcely coherent in his excitement.

"It all happened so sudden! He rode El Diablo back into the grounds laughing and swinging his hat, and, when he came up to where Anita was standing, he caught her up behind him and kept straight on toward the entrance. We thought it was all a joke at first and that he would ride back with her in a minute or two. It wasn't till we heard the sound of a shot at the ticket booth that we started out to investigate. Then we found the cashier lying there with a bullet in his shoulder, the sack of money gone, Ginger stolen, and The Silver Kid and Anita streaking it toward the hills!"

Stacey nodded, his lips tightening.

"Just like The Kid's work," he commented. "Quick an' flashy! He was always like that!"

But Hagerman was no longer interested in how The Silver Kid's work had been performed.

"Suppose you show a little speed yourself," he snapped out. "If you have any regard for Anita at all, you'll tear up that fool resignation of yours and get a posse on the trail at once! He's got less than half an hour's start of you and—"

Stacey interrupted him with a mirthless laugh.

"This is one time where haste won't

get us anywhere, Hagerman," he retorted grimly. "Nor a sheriff's posse, either! The Silver Kid is headin' back for the Mexican line an' if he's ridin' El Diablo, and has Anita on your Ginger, there ain't nothin' short of an airplane could catch him before he reaches it! So I ain't organizin' any posse, an' my resignation stands!"

One and all, they stared at him, and this time it was they who seemed unable to believe their ears.

"You mean—you mean you're going to quit us cold?" roared Big Bill.

Stacey's eyes narrowed to mere pin points of light as his hand strayed back to his holster.

"I mean I'm goin' to follow him alone," he uttered harshly. "An' I ain't never goin' to quit! I'll follow him across Mexico an' into South America if I have to, an' when I meet him it'll be as man to man! One of us is goin' to go down, an' if I don't show up again yuh'll know which one it was! I reckon that'll be all, gents. So long!"

And without concern as to how that announcement was received, he left the group and strode grimly away toward his hotel.

Though Stacey had declared that there was no need for haste, he allowed no grass to grow under his feet before setting out upon The Silver Kid's trail. Beyond securing some food and a fresh supply of ammunition he had no preparations to make, and, half an hour after he had left Big Bill Hagerman, he was riding Skeesicks out of the south end of town. Never before, perhaps, had he ridden forth with a heart so full and a mind so free. No longer was he hampered by the dictates of the law. He was as irresponsible and lawless now as the man he was after. The thought of the task that lay before him made his blood sing in his veins like wine.

It was possibly twenty miles as the crow flies from Chochilla to the Mexican line. Stacey covered the distance

easily by nightfall, and an hour later he turned into the nondescript town of Tia Juana. He had no idea that The Silver Kid would stop here, since he must have expected pursuit of some sort, but he realized that Skeesicks was no match for El Diablo and Ginger in point of endurance, and if he hoped to overtake his man he must secure a fresh mount. This he did at the first livery stable he came to, leaving Skeesicks there to be called for later. Then, tarrying only long enough to snatch a bite to eat, he started southward again by moonlight.

All night he rode, his strength fed by the strange fires within him, following no definite trail yet informed by some uncanny instinct that he was close upon The Silver Kid's heels. Just how close he was, however, he did not realize until dawn was graying the east. He had left Tia Juana some thirty-odd miles behind him by then and was traversing a stretch of open country broken by occasional arroyos and covered with chaparral. As he came to the brink of one of these arroyos he stopped suddenly, his heart leaping into his throat. In the clear air of the morning he beheld a horse racing toward him, half a mile away. It needed only one glance at that superb animal to convince him that it was Hagerman's thoroughbred. And what caused his heartbeats to quicken was the fact that Anita was on its back.

In another moment the girl had dashed up beside him, and, leaning dexterously forward, he caught the animal's rein and held him.

"What's happened? Where's The Silver Kid?" he demanded tensely.

The girl caught his hand and held to it in a frenzy of relief and gratitude.

"I knew you would come, Bob! I knew you wouldn't fail me," she sobbed hysterically. "But everything is all right now, and we can go back again!"

If he had ever doubted this girl's love,

Stacey doubted it no longer, and his own heart swelled with thanksgiving.

"But The Silver Kid," he repeated grimly. "What's become of him?"

The girl roused herself with a shudder.

"We had just stopped to camp this morning. I had been tied on dad's horse up to that time. Then we ran into his gang. There were seven of them, all drunk, and when they saw me they were insulting and threatening. The Silver Kid drew out his gun, held them at bay, and told me to jump on dad's horse and ride as fast as I could toward the line. He was so excited he didn't even think of the money which he had put on my horse after El Diablo had nearly thrown him. I have it with me now, under the saddle. But we had better hurry, dear! They are only a little over a mile behind us and they might overcome him at almost any moment!"

But Stacey did not seem to notice that impatient tug at his hand. His eyes left Anita and turned in the direction from which she had come. Somewhere ahead among those ridges and gullies The Silver Kid was making his last stand, offering his life for the sake of this girl who had never given him anything but admiration. What had he, Stacey, ever offered her that could compare with this? His love had been great, but it had been a selfish love, all for himself. Could he enjoy that love at the sacrifice of another? A dark crimson suffused his cheeks; when he turned to the girl again his eyes were glowing strangely.

"Do yuh reckon yuh could find yuhr way back to Chochilla alone, Miss Anita?" he demanded.

There was a moment of silence as the girl gazed at him.

"I do, Bob! But why do you ask that?" she countered.

"I'm wantin' yuh to take that money back in case I shouldn't be in condition to do it myself," he explained tensely.

"I'm goin' on ahead to help The Silver Kid. So long!"

Before the astonished girl could venture further question or protest, he had dug his heels into the pony's flanks and was racing ahead over the mesa. Hardly had he covered a mile when he lifted his head suddenly, his hand reaching automatically for his gun. He had seen nothing, heard nothing, but in the crisp morning air his nostrils had caught the acrid scent of smoke. A hundred yards farther on he came to the brink of another arroyo, and glancing down it in the direction of the wind he made out the smoldering brush of a camp fire, about a quarter of a mile away. And ranged about that fire were eight human forms, the members, he guessed, of The Silver Kid's gang!

For a moment he stood there, waiting for the sound of a shot. Hearing none, he frowned in a puzzled manner, dismounted, drew out his gun, and led his horse cautiously forward along the edge of the embankment. When he came abreast of the fire, he wondered no longer why these men had not fired a shot. The Silver Kid himself lay back against a rock, his head upon his breast, his gun hand trailing limply in the sand. His seven companions lay sprawled about him in various attitudes of death. An expression of horror, mingled with one of poignant regret, swept over Stacey's face. The next moment he had sheathed his gun and started down the bank of the arroyo toward the fire. Reaching The Silver Kid's side, he laid a hand on his shoulder and shook him gently.

"Kid," he called hoarsely.

The Silver Kid raised his head and stared up at him vacantly.

"Quick work, sheriff," he said with a grimace. "But yuh're too late, at that! They're all gone—all seven of 'em! An' me—I'll cash in before yuh get me to the line! Yuh'd better go back an'—an' take care of Anita."

One glance at those dulling eyes and Stacey knew that the outlaw was speaking the truth.

"Listen, Kid," he stated quietly. "I ain't sheriff any more! When I come down here it was to shoot it out with yuh as man to man! But when I run across Miss Anita an' she told me what yuh'd done for her, I come ahead to help yuh. I'm too late for that, but there's

one thing I can do! I'm goin' to stay with yuh to the end that's what I'm goin' to do!"

For an instant the eyes of The Silver Kid brightened; he raised his hand and made an attempt to speak. Stacey caught his hand and held to it expectantly. But the next moment The Kid's figure sagged, his fingers relaxed, and he went to join his companions.



LION HUNTING IN SAN JACINTO MOUNTAINS

ONE of the most dangerous mountain lions of the San Jacinto Mountain country in California has fallen victim within the past few weeks to the prowess of J. C. Bruce, State mountain-lion hunter. Bruce spent several weeks in that region and killed a number of mountain lions that had been preying on the animals of the forest as well as on the cattle of the neighboring ranches. His biggest achievement was the tracking down and killing of one of the worst marauders of the region. Bruce finally got this lion near Lake Hemet, after a week's hunt.

This mountain lion was an old warrior. It had its left leg broken some years ago, probably through attacking a larger animal and having the latter fall on it.

One of the most valuable dogs in Bruce's pack is Bunty, a fox hound, which he has trained to hunt lions from puppyhood. Bunty was lost for a time on this trip through the San Jacinto Mountains, but finally was found by a game warden and returned to his owner. Bruce is employed by the State fish and game commission of California to hunt lions in that State.



TO SURVEY ALASKA BY AIRPLANE

ARRANGEMENTS have been made for the surveying of certain portions of Alaska by airplanes, which will be furnished to the United States geological survey by the secretary of the navy.

Coöperation between the two departments will be made in connection with investigations of the mineral resources of Alaska by the geological survey. The area to be covered by airplane photographs is approximately eighteen thousand square miles. The project presents many technical difficulties, as storms and low-lying clouds are frequent in southeastern Alaska, and many of the islands along the coast rise abruptly to heights of more than four thousand feet.

It is expected that the experience in aerial surveys derived from the mapping of this tract may furnish valuable information that will be of service in solving some of the difficulties that prevent the examination of certain coast regions in other parts of Alaska. Many of these coastal tracts are traversable on foot only with great difficulty and at so high a cost that their survey is not warranted under present conditions.



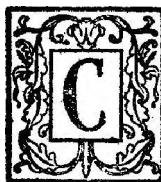
Pioneer Towns of the West

Cheyenne

By

Erle Wilson

Author of "Milwaukee," etc.



HEYENNE was settled in the days when the plains of Wyoming were an open range roamed by the longhorn steer. Throughout the West it was known as a "cow town." This pioneer outpost of the cattle country was laid out jointly by the Union Pacific Railroad engineers and the officers of the United States army in 1867. Nor was the undertaking without danger, for several attacks were made by the hostile Indians upon the parties surveying and constructing the new railroad. In fact the first burials in the graveyard of the future city were those of two members of a Mormon grading outfit who were killed by the redskins. The frontier settlement was named by General Dodge for the troublesome Cheyennes, one of the most warlike of the Western tribes of Indians.

When the settlement was half a year old it had a population of six thousand. During the trying period of its early existence life in the crude cow town was a rough-and-tumble affair. Saloons and gambling dens did a flourishing business, while robberies and fatal shooting matches were daily occurrences. However, there was also an element of law-abiding citizens in the community, the patience of whom at length became exhausted. Then it was

that the Vigilantes were called into existence and the notorious bad men of the vicinity met their well-merited fate at the hands of this self-appointed committee of justice. In 1869 Cheyenne was incorporated as a city, and at this time it was also chosen as the capital of the territory.

Since its birth as the terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad this Western town has never ceased to progress. It is now the chief city and capital of Wyoming, and has a population of 16,500. Situated on Crow Creek near the southern boundary of the State, it is about one hundred and six miles north of Denver, Colorado. It lies on the high plains near the east foot of the Laramie Range at an altitude of 6088 feet and has a healthful and invigorating climate with a record of more than three hundred clear and sunny days in each year.

Surrounding Cheyenne is a rich cattle country, where stock-raising is carried on in scientifically managed ranches, stocked with high-grade, registered cattle. This Wyoming city is the home and headquarters for many of the largest cattle companies in the region. Dairying and the sheep industry are rapidly becoming important enterprises in this section. Progress is also being made along agricultural lines, the government and State maintaining an experimental

farm near Cheyenne for the benefit and education of the ranchers in the locality. Many oil companies have headquarters in this city, and a considerable amount of manufacturing is carried on.

Cheyenne has the distinction of being the first city in the United States to be lighted by electricity. It is modern in every respect, with a number of notable buildings, chief among which are the State Capitol, modeled after the Capitol at Washington, the Federal Building and post office, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, and a City and County Building. It has excellent hotels, a country club, a number of handsome churches, an efficient hospital, and three public libraries. This Western city possesses a splendid school system, and an up-to-date business college. It is the home of the Convent of the Holy Child Jesus and a Conservatory of Music.

Five beautiful parks furnish recreational facilities to the citizens of Cheyenne. Adjoining these municipal playgrounds are a number of lakes which give opportunities in the proper seasons for swimming, fishing, boating, and skating. This city also possesses a well-conducted camping ground, situated on a lake stocked with black bass and equipped with beach and boating facilities. This camp, which is under police protection, is fully fitted up with electric lights, hot and cold water, a community house, stores, ovens and fireplaces. It is the site of an airplane landing field.

During the last week in July of each year the famous Frontier Days Celebrations are held in Frontier Park, at which time many of the thrilling and picturesque features of Cheyenne's early history are produced. Horse racing, broncho busting, steer bulldogging, roping and all the dexterous feats of horsemanship of which the cowboy is master, together with the native dances of the Indians, make up the exciting pro-

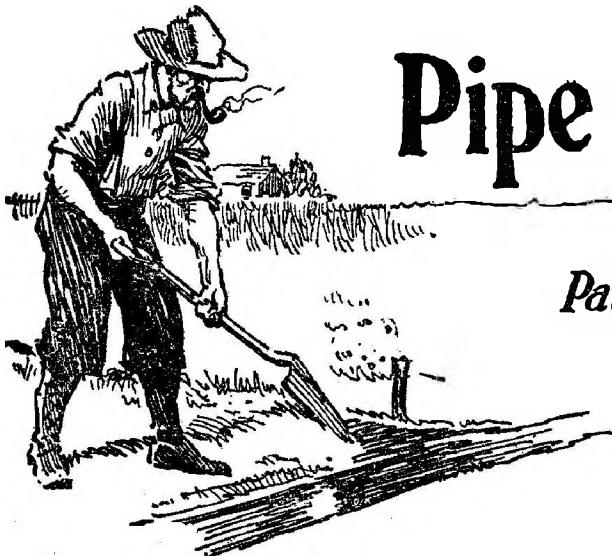
gram. The spectators and contestants at this ceremony are gathered from near and far.

Four miles north of Cheyenne is Fort D. A. Russell, one of the largest permanent military posts in the United States. In this army post, established in 1867 and named in honor of Major General David Allen Russell of the Union forces, are now stationed one commanding general and his staff, one regiment of artillery, cavalry, infantry, signal corps, one company of engineers, and a complete hospital corps. It is connected with Cheyenne by an electric street railway. A short distance away is located the United States Pole Mountain Maneuver Grounds, consisting of about one hundred square miles and capable of maneuvering thirty thousand men.

Cheyenne is served by three railroad systems, and the largest and most modern railroad shops on the Union Pacific are to be found here. Situated at the intersection of three national highways, the tourist is enabled to reach the national parks, forest reserves, and the countless resorts and playgrounds of the West from this city by travel over good roads. Cheyenne also has one of the best-equipped stations on the New York to San Francisco air-mail line.

The commission form of government is in effect in this Wyoming city, three commissioners giving their entire time to municipal affairs. The present mayor, who is serving a two-year term, is the Honorable Archie Allison. Cheyenne has a municipally owned water system, including filtration and chlorination plants, which supplies the finest mountain water in the West. An efficient fire department is maintained by the city.

So has Cheyenne risen from a struggling cow town to one of the most enterprising cities of the West.



Pipe the Perique

By

Paul Ellsworth Triem

Author of "The Horse with the Roman Nose," etc.



SING the keen edge of his shovel as a carpenter would use a chisel, Uncle Eddie Trippit sheered off a slice of fibrous turf from the edge of the irrigating ditch, dropped the fragment into the gopher hole beside his foot and began to tamp it in. The hole was in the bottom of the dirt ditch; and as Uncle Eddie intended to turn the water upon the alfalfa the first thing in the morning, he was working right up into the hours of darkness.

It was a mellow evening, with the crescent moon showing clearer and clearer each moment. The moon had been like a wisp of smoke or fog when the old man first looked at it, a quarter of an hour ago. Now he noticed that as the sky changed slowly from shimmering white to tan, and from tan to blue, that wisp of moon stood out solid and shining, with one big silver star close to its nether horn.

The old man felt the peacefulness of the evening sinking into his bones. He puffed away at his pipe, which he "wore" the same as shirt or shoes, thrusting it into the slit of his generously proportioned mouth when he arose in the morning, and keeping it there, with brief

lapses for meals, until he retired for the night. As he puffed at the blackened brier, he ceased fuming at the depredations of the gophers and tried to remember a poem he had read a long time ago. It was something about the end of the day, and the silver crescent, and a star—

But that was as far as he got. There came at that moment a sudden drumming of feet, like the tattoo of a pheasant's wings, and before him, in the soft and tremulous light of early evening, he saw the rushing figure of a man. There was an effect of tremendous activity about it as it drove toward him, elbows crooked, massive head thrust forward, big feet smiting the resonant earth. That all came upon Mr. Trippit, standing there in the irrigating ditch, in one flashing picture. Next moment he recognized the sinister features of the man who was racing toward him. Uncle Eddie had had more than one encounter with Yucatan Bill, before the latter's recent exploit of shooting the cashier and bookkeeper down at the Cañon City bank—shooting them dead without giving either a chance to speak or to thrust up his hands.

There is a form of thinking which is like looking at the front of a long line

of men, marching abreast. At ordinary times, thoughts come single file, or like a narrow stream, flowing through a penstock. We take up an item, mentally add it to what went before, and carry on the product to add to the next factor in the series. But once or twice in a lifetime, perhaps, if we live lives that are not too much trammelled by the iron hoops of civilization, there come moments when we see abreast. And in that way, that evening, with the silver moon and that one big star near its nether horn shining serenely down upon him, Uncle Eddie Trippit stood for the fraction of a second and saw and heard the minutest details of his environment, and more.

He remembered that Yucatan Bill had been disarmed before he escaped from the posse that captured him, soon after the killing. The outlaw had no gun now, for his big hands were empty as they beat the air, chopping up and down with a cleaverlike motion which was part of his mad sprint toward old man Trippit. He wouldn't need a gun, Uncle Eddie realized. What the outlaw counted on was his weight and strength, and on the fact that Uncle Eddie was a mere cricket of a man, at the best of times.

So Yucatan Bill rushed out of the willows which bordered the creek, his feet drumming the earth, his big fists beating up and down with a staccato motion, and rushed straight upon the little old man, standing with mouth agape in the irrigating ditch. Uncle Eddie saw that he was coming and knew that Bill meant to kill him; but he was unaware of his own reaction to all this confusion until he felt his fingers tingling from the sting of the shovel handle, and looked down to see his enemy lying prone upon the ground. Yucatan Bill was stunned for the moment. His great hands, thrust out at each side of his enormous body, were groping and twitching.

Mr. Trippit knew *that* wouldn't last long. He had nothing to tie Bill with, even if he dared run in close enough to those grappling hands to try such a move. For an instant, the space between heartbeats, he considered another blow with the shovel. But that might only bring the killer to his knees, and then to his feet. Yucatan Bill had been in too many house fights, back in the old days when Cañon County was wide open, to be easily conquered. The outlaw knew just how tough he was. He had come to believe in his invulnerability. The shock of fright and panic which has much to do with the collapse of an ordinary man, would do nothing to break down the morale of this prostrate giant, if Uncle Eddie Trippit should undertake to put him finally hors de combat.

The old man was still thinking abreast, rather than single file. Safety lay in flight, so he dropped the shovel and started for his cabin, a quarter of a mile away across the field of alfalfa. For a minute or so he sprinted along at his best gait, his old arms bent, his feet rising high at each leaping forward step. But he couldn't keep that up. He was beginning to puff, and his heart was pounding dangerously in his ears.

He looked over his shoulder. Yucatan Bill was on hands and knees, crawling about, his head swaying from side to side as if his neck had been broken by the blow from the shovel. He hadn't seen Uncle Eddie yet—and just at that moment Mr. Trippit remembered a trick the cotton-tailed rabbits back in Vermont had been wont to play, in the days of his boyhood. "Circling," it had been called.

With a last desperate bound, he threw himself into the irrigating ditch at his side. His face and hands were raked by the tangle of wild roses growing on each bank; but as he plunged down and struck solidly against the packed clay

of the bottom, he knew that he was hidden from the eyes of Yucatan Bill, when the outlaw should look up. He rested, panting and fighting for breath for a long moment, wishing that the rushing sound of the blood in his ears would stop so that he could hear his enemy's footsteps. Presently, he began to crawl along the ditch; and he had twisted his meager old body about, so that now he was working his way directly back toward the head gate, near which the encounter had recently taken place.

Soon he could hear the killer floundering along through the tough-fibered alfalfa. The threshing steps came closer, and Uncle Eddie heard Yucatan Bill talking to himself.

"Danged little hell-cat—might have knowned he'd trick me! But I'll get him——"

The growling monotone came closer, then apparently the outlaw turned and strode on beside the ditch, where the alfalfa was beaten down a trifle, for the words became a mutter, and after that died out. Even the vibration of the heavy footsteps was lost now. The old man's heart steadied down. He slid forward along the ditch, keeping his head and shoulders under the thatch of brier roses and alfalfa which roofed his alleyway. Presently he reached the head gate and for a time sat crouched and listening.

Not a sound came to him from the direction of the distant cabin; but when he ventured to thrust up his head, like one of the cotton-tailed rabbits of his youth, he saw a panel of orange-colored light which he knew was the front window. He stood up boldly, for Yucatan Bill was a quarter of a mile away—and time was precious. Three minutes later he had caught up one of the cayuses which were feeding in the wooded pasture beyond the creek, and was headed, barebacked and without even a hackamore, for town.

A posse under the sheriff had ridden into Cañon City half an hour or so before Uncle Eddie Trippit galloped up to the old stone jail. They crowded close to the old man's knees and listened. Within fifteen minutes fresh horses had been provided, and the posse was again in the saddle, headed for Beaver Creek. The sheriff was jubilant, in spite of his weariness, for at last he had the elusive outlaw cornered. A posse headed by his chief deputy was coming over the divide and into Beaver Valley from the north; and now, with the sheriff's men closing in from the south, Yucatan Bill would be caught between the jaws of the tongs.

Uncle Eddie Trippit put up at the Cañon House that night. He had had an exciting evening, and he wanted to have a good smoke, with his feet on the balcony railing and a few of his old cronies at his elbow. So he smoked half a dozen pipes of his special coarse-cut mixture, pausing as each pipe burned low to knock the ashes out upon the porch floor and then carefully to dig the loose quid from the bottom of the bowl and to put it into his right-hand pocket. Just what the old man did with this secondhand tobacco, no one had ever been able to discover.

He was up early next morning, and, by the time Frank Ruzkamp's general merchandise store was open for business, the old man had slipped a borrowed bridle on his cayuse and was ready for the homeward journey. He stopped at the store for a pail of coarse-cut—he was nearly out, he remembered, and afterward headed out through the straggling shacks at the edge of town and into the Beaver Creek trail. He met one of the posse, returning for reinforcements, and was told that the outlaw was cornered near the headwaters of the creek.

The old man was glad to get back to his spic-and-span cabin. Yucatan Bill had left traces of his presence in the

form of loose loam, tracked into the kitchen and parlor. He had evidently searched the little house for Uncle Eddie's cache of money, which wasn't there at all but down at the bank in Cañon City. And he had taken a couple of loaves of bread and the old man's deer rifle. Mr. Trippit swore a little, but reflected that he would probably get the gun back after Bill was captured. He swept and aired the cabin and carefully placed the pail of tobacco he had bought in town on the shelf above the fireplace. There were two pails there already, but one of these was nearly empty. Uncle Eddie poured the handful of coarse-cut it contained into his pocket and put the empty can in the woodshed. After that he went back to his work of repairing the irrigating ditch and turning the water into the alfalfa, and it was night before he again thought of Yucatan Bill.

The way he came to think of him then was simple enough. Mr. Trippit finished his work about dusk and returned to the cabin for supper. The moon was an hour higher than it had been the night before, and that slice of shimmering silver was a trifle thicker. Somewhere across the foothills, a coyote was yapping. Uncle Eddie whittled off a few shavings from the cut of fat pine behind the stove and soon had a fire crackling and roaring in it. He put on some slabs of salt pork and a skillet of potatoes and onions, then went into the front room for a supply of tobacco out of the new pail.

It was when he was returning to the kitchen that he first definitely became aware of something wrong. Mr. Trippit had lived all his life in the open, and his senses were as keen as those of a wild animal. Now he paused and sniffed the air critically. There was a taint in it. For an instant he remembered that when the wind was quartering from the southeast, the kitchen stove

sometimes smoked, but this wasn't a smoky smell—not as clean as that. It was man—Yucatan Bill.

"I guess I got to fumigate to get the smell of that ornery hombre out'n here!" Uncle Eddie mumbled. "Waal—"

He had passed through the open door and into the kitchen. He took a couple of steps toward the stove, then came to a frozen stop, as if he had heard the metallic whirring of a rattler. And in a way, you might say that he had.

A throaty, snarling laugh had come to him from the direction of the back door. The old man knew that voice, even before he turned slowly in his tracks and stared with the wide eyes of a sleepwalker at Yucatan Bill, standing there with the stolen deer rifle balanced over his forearm.

"Didn't expect to see me back so soon, I'll gamble!" the outlaw growled ironically. "But here I am, old-timer—and so much the worse for you!"

Old man Trippit had crossed the plains in the early days and had mushed north and south and east and west, in search of fortune. Many a time he had sat in at a game where the stakes might be death. But in spite of this training of will and nerves, for a moment to-night his heart seemed to stop beating, and he felt the room starting slowly to revolve. He knew well enough why Yucatan Bill had come back.

"Cooking grub?" the murderer asked. "That suits me fine. I'll feed, before you and me settle this little dicker of ours—now line up against the wall and don't move hand nor foot till I tell you to!"

Bill's eyes were red and glowing. He snuffled horribly, like a dog with the distemper, which probably came from his having lain hid many a night and many a day where the brush was thickest and where the ground was wettest. His wolf's face was grimy with dirt, and the clothes he wore were torn to tatters. But it was the way he attacked

the food on the stove that turned the old man sick—snatching and gobbling, not bothering to put anything on the table nor even to let it cool, but just stuffing down the steaming hot stuff out of the frying pans, with his red, murderous eyes on Uncle Eddie Trippit all the time.

"I guess this grub is all right," Yucatan Bill growled morosely as he polished out the last dish. "I can't taste nothing, nor smell nothing—along of you and the rest of them butchers having drove me like I was a coyote or a cougar, or some other wild varmint! But I'll square it all——"

He broke off, as if feeling that his rage was getting the best of him. Mopping off his crooked mouth on one frayed shirt sleeve, he stood for a moment contemplating his prisoner.

"You come out and catch me a hoss!" he said, after he had satisfied himself with looking. "I tried to get one of the devils last night, but they run from me! You can catch 'em!"

Uncle Eddie debated a point here. Should he refuse? Why not? The outlaw was fully determined to kill him in any case—why not have it over with? And if he put up his pitiful fragment of a fight before a horse was caught—but the old adage, "While there's life, there's hope," is founded on deep springs of conviction and feeling. Not much hope in his case, Uncle Eddie knew; but he couldn't quite bring himself to snap with ruthless fingers the thread that bound him to life.

He led the way out into the yard and across toward a hillside pasture, where the buckskin he had ridden into town was browsing. Mr. Trippit had no difficulty in walking up to her and slipping a halter over her head, although she would not have let Yucatan Bill come within stone's throw.

"Tie her to the fence," the killer commanded, "so's she'll be ready when you and me have finished!"

With fingers that trembled a little, in spite of his efforts to control them, Uncle Eddie did as he was ordered. Afterward he preceded the outlaw back into the house and on into the front room, carrying the lamp from the kitchen, and by Yucatan Bill's order, placing it on the center table.

They were facing each other for the last time—the old man knew that. He tried to readjust his thoughts about himself; to realize that he had come to the end of all the sunshine and the freedom. The silver moon he had seen tonight would grow thicker and thicker, till it rose round and yellow and mysterious, and then would wane till it was again a filmy crescent. Summer would blend into fall, and fall into winter; the years would swing past, serene and joyous—and he would not be here to see it all! Already he belonged with those who had crossed over—or had they just gone out, like a candle. Uncle Eddie Trippit had never thought much about this part of it, being satisfied to live one life at a time, but now he tried, in the few moments of time that were left him, to figure out what eternity would be like.

Impatiently he threw off these profitless speculations. Yucatan Bill had seated himself in the old man's easy chair and was grinning up at him. Standing with his skinny shoulders resting against the shelf above the fireplace, Mr. Trippit stared back—and for a moment he again meditated ending it all with one grand rush. The murderer still held the deer rifle balanced lazily across his knees, but even without that weapon he would easily have finished the account of his old enemy. Again Uncle Eddie hesitated. He had formed the habit of living—He couldn't bring himself to precipitate the dark rush of death. Soon enough it would come of itself.

It was about this time that the old man, standing with his back to the fire-

place, began to have an uneasy feeling that there was something near—in the room, close to him, it seemed—that he ought to notice, but hadn't. It was like the sensation with which a diminutive rose brier, embedded under the skin, brings itself by degrees to the attention. He moved restlessly and stared down at Yucatan Bill, who was snuffling and breathing through his mouth. What was it—that elusive idea? Something he ought to remember—to do—

The outlaw wasn't bothered with any elusive ideas. He was sitting back in the old man's comfortable reading chair, his little, deeply-sunken eyes glowing like those of an old she-bear that's just heard one of her cubs squeal. The lust for blood was in his wicked face, which was deeply graved with lines of cruelty and revenge.

"I've been wanting to have a talk with you for a long time, old man!" he said at last, his voice hoarse and flat. "I had it on my mind last night, but you tricked me. Now—"

His big hands, which had been lying easily in his lap, contracted slowly, as if he already had Mr. Trippit by the throat and were choking the life out of him. There was something horribly prophetic in the motion, and Uncle Eddie began to wonder if he would be able to make Yucatan Bill use the rifle. It would be a cleaner way to die—one sharp, swift shot, and then the dark!

"I remember the first time I set eyes on your ugly old face," the murderer resumed, licking his lips and nodding, as if keeping time to his words. "Ten years ago, it was. I was a young fellow then, and I'd just been pinched in Cañon City for sticking a knife into a man I didn't like. When the thing came to trial, I saw you sitting up in the jury box looking down at me like I was a snake you had a mind to set your heel on. But I was pretty well known for a person that would pay his debts, even in those days, and so eleven

of the twelve jurymen voted for an acquittal. They didn't want no knives stuck between *their* ribs. There was just one man stuck for conviction, and he hung the jury for three days. He give in, at last, and I was turned loose. It didn't take me long to find out who he was. You remember that horse of yours that got hurt, up in the hills, so's you had to shoot it? That was my work! It was me cut him up, and not no barbed-wire fence! I was paying you for that three extra days you kept me stuck in jail, down at Cañon City!"

Uncle Eddie Trippit was standing with his hands clasped behind his back, his lean shoulders against the mantel shelf. He made no move now, as he listened to his declaration, but his faded blue eyes seemed to grow darker and a look of scorn came about his mouth and nostrils. After a minute, Yucatan Bill laughed lazily and resumed.

"I got *under* your hide that time! Well, that was the first collision you and me had. The next was when me and Dan Cruise got into that shooting scrape. You were the only person that saw just what happened, and what did you do? Did you wait for the sheriff to hunt you up, and ask you questions? Answer it, you didn't—and dang you for it! You chased over to the district attorney's office and told him you was ready to swear in court that I had started the row, and kept it going; and that I never gave Cruise a chance to reach for his gun, but shot him down while he was trying to explain! And you'd have done it, too, if the thing had come to trial. I took to the hills, and the posse that set out after me knewed they better not get too close. They didn't want to catch me, you ~~better~~ believe! And in time the business blowed over."

Yucatan Bill stopped when he reached this point, and fumbled about in his pockets. He hauled out an old pipe and thrust it between his crooked lips

and puffed at it. Old man Trippit could hear the whistling noise that came from the empty bowl, but Bill was staring unwinkingly at him, with his red, murderous eyes, and didn't seem to know what he had done.

"But that wasn't your fault!" he said broodingly, as if thinking aloud. "You meant to land me in the pen, or maybe with a rope round my neck and nothing to stand on but air. And I—"

Uncle Eddie had moved his shoulders along the mantel behind him; and his hands, clasped behind the small of his back, were gripping each other so hard that they hurt. For a moment that uneasy feeling about something that he ought to notice but hadn't, had returned with almost sickening intensity, and his mind had been so stirred that he could not keep something of the emotion from showing in his face. It was the sight of the empty pipe in the outlaw's mouth that had aroused him, he realized, and now, at last, he knew what it was that had been trying to bring itself to his attention.

"What you staring at, old pop-eyes?" Yucatan Bill growled out. He laid his massive hands on the rifle balanced across his knees, and partly straightened from his chair. "What—"

Mr. Trippit had turned and for a long, silent moment peered toward the cabin window. From the outer darkness had come a pawing of hoofs; and, as he stood there, apparently listening and looking, there sounded the whinny of a horse. Uncle Eddie knew that it was the cayuse Yucatan Bill had made him catch and tie, but the killer himself was on his feet in an instant and was striding across toward the door.

"Stand still, you!" he grated, with a murderous look over his shoulder. "If you move from where you're standing, I'll twist your neck off directly!"

He raised the wooden latch cautiously, drew the door open, and for a moment stood with his ugly head thrust

into the night. There was nothing of any importance out there in the ranch yard, but Yucatan Bill couldn't be expected to know that. The old man's realistic acting, combined with the whinny of the horse, had stirred his suspicion. By the time he turned back into the room, old man Trippit had swiftly removed one of the tobacco pails from the shelf above the fireplace, and had thrust it between his knees and among the loose ashes covering the grate.

The outlaw came back and sat down. He was breathing through his mouth, and for a few minutes he just sat there, rifle across knees, pipe in hand, staring at Uncle Eddie. He seemed to have forgotten what he had been talking about.

Slowly the brooding look went out of his sunken eyes, and he stared with a question in them at his companion.

"What was I saying?" he demanded. Then he seemed for the first time to notice the pipe in his hand, and looked round the room impatiently. There was nothing on the center table but the lamp and some dog-eared magazines, but on the mantel he saw a tin tobacco pail.

"Gi'me that!" he commanded, pointing with his pipe. "Set it here, where I can reach it without getting up. Now, let's see—I was telling you about the time you tried to get me hung. Well, I didn't get a chance to do nothing about that little dicker. I thought some of burning your house down, but things didn't shape up right. You had turned folks agin' me so that I had to keep on the move. I knowed that warrant was still in the sheriff's hands, though he wasn't nowise anxious to risk his life serving it. But I was pretty busy, so I just made a kind of note of what I owed you that time. Put it down to your account, as you might say!"

Bill had the little pail in his lap now, but he hardly glanced at it. With his pipe in the pail, he began to fill the bowl with tobacco.

Uncle Eddie Trippit spoke casually, the ghost of a smile about his old lips.

"You can't smoke that, Bill," said he. "It's way too strong for a young fellow like you—I been smoking fifty years, and it's most too strong for me! Black tobacco, that is—mostly perique!"

Yucatan Bill stared, his fingers arrested.

Then he drew back his lips in a snarl.

"Why, you little bag of bones!" he sneered, "do you think you can do anything I can't do? Or are you trying to save your tobacco? Don't fret yourself—you won't want it no more!"

He struck a match, lighted the pipe, and drew a few puffs, looking smolderingly all the while at the old man. His thick forefinger crooked itself over the edge of the bowl, and he thrust down the swelling tobacco.

"Might be corn silk or dynamite, so far as I can taste!" he grumbled. "I can't taste nothing, nor yet smell nothing. Let's see—what was I saying? I remember—you meant to get me hung, and I never had no chance to pay you for it!"

"And that brings us up to last night. When I got in this muss a while back, I took to the hills, as soon as I had busted loose from the posse, and stayed hid out pretty near within gunshot of town till they got wind of it some way. This here new sheriff is a young smart Alec that I'll let daylight into, afore I'm through with him. He don't know the kind of man he's up against, when he tackles me. Howsomever, that's got nothing to do with your part of it. I watched till things begun to get too hot, close to town; and then I begun to work my way out into the hills, this a way. I was after two things: a gun, and you!"

The killer paused, mechanically tamping down the tobacco in his pipe. There was a double line of smoldering rage between his small, deeply sunken eyes; and a fine mist of perspiration was coming out over his face.

He nodded somberly.

"I got the gun last night. But you kind of outplayed me—that rap you give me over the head with the pan of your shovel made me dizzy. It took me close to half an hour, after I'd come over here to this shack, to figure out just how you'd got away. Of course I knew that by then you'd be on your way to town, so there was only one thing for me to do. I had to grab what I could find and make tracks again. No rest for me, thanks to you! Oh, I cussed you hearty enough, but that didn't do no good. I was tired, and my feet was sore, and this damnation cold was giving me chills and fever, like I had the malaria. But I had to go on, and I was worried considerable. With you telling the sheriff just where I'd been, he'd take up a hot trail. So I drove myself like I'd been a horse till early morning, and then way back down the valley I could hear men talking. It looked mighty bad, with daylight coming on!"

Yucatan Bill had been smoking steadily while he talked, and as he came to this part of his story and became excited, he smoked more vigorously, exhaling the little gray smoke clouds with explosive energy into the still air of the room. He had begun to expectorate steadily, too, and the sweat was standing in beads on his forehead. Through the tangle of his lanky beard, a white ribbon showed about his mouth.

Mechanically he glanced down at his pipe, knocked out the ashes and the remnant of charred tobacco, and refilled it.

"Do you know how I got past them man hunters, you old devil?" he demanded, his tongue thick and stumbling but his eyes ablaze. "No? Well, I'll tell you. You helped me past! That hits you hard, don't it? But it's the truth. When I see that I was cornered, for there was more men beginning to come down across the ridge ahead and I knowed they'd soon have me atween

them, with no chance to shoot it out and get away, I remembered the trick you'd played me the night before. It was a slick trick, for you always was an old fox. I helped myself to it. I dug down under the roots of an overturned pine, close to the trail. And I stuck right there till they begun riding past. Some of them hossmen was close enough so's I could have reached out with my gun and poked them, but they never looked for me dug in like a wood-chuck. And the minute they passed, I headed back down the trail. I was near dead by this time——"

A shudder ran over the massive figure of the man in the armchair. He puffed hard and fast at his pipe, staring with dilated pupils up at Uncle Eddie Trippit.

And then, very gradually, the old man could see Yucatan Bill's eyes turn sidewise, with little jerking adjustments, as if they were following the progress of some moving body. The killer's voice sounded harsh and quavering.

"You—you!" he cried. "I was saying—stand still, you old coyote!"

He was on his feet, the rifle in his hands, his ugly jaw outthrust, his blanched lips drawn back from his teeth. His cheeks had turned suddenly the color of putty, and sweat stood in great drops on his face, so that he seemed to have been standing in a rain wind.

Mr. Trippit had waited for that moment. He hadn't really moved till Yucatan Bill started from his chair, but Bill thought he had. The tobacco in that second pail on the mantel had poisoned his stomach, and his brain, and his eyes. With a yell of rage and despair, he threw up the rifle and fired. But old Mr. Trippit had ducked and had snatched a billet of firewood. With an answering yell, he struck straight and hard.

The blow was a substantial one, but it is doubtful if it would have been needed. The murderer was on the floor,

his face blanched, his big body wrenched by violent spasms.

"Blind!" he whispered between paroxysms of nausea. "Or did—that old fox—blow out the—light?"

Uncle Eddie wasn't answering any questions just at that time. He picked up the pail of black, oily tobacco that Yucatan Bill had let slip to the floor and put it on the table. Then he ran nimbly into the woodshed for a coil of galvanized wire. When he came back into his little parlor, he thought for a moment that the outlaw was dying. He was gasping and trembling, with long gasps between breaths. His face lay sidewise on the floor.

"Am I—am I—a—dying?" he whispered, struggling to raise his head and to direct his blind eyes in the direction where he seemed to imagine Uncle Eddie was still standing.

"Search me, Bill!" the old man replied. "You might be, and then again you mightn't. But I'm not taking no chances."

So saying, he proceeded to make his prisoner fast, with the wire he had fetched from the woodshed, and by the time he had finished, Yucatan Bill was breathing a little more easily and had sunk into a torpid sleep.

He was wide enough awake by the time Uncle Eddie Trippit and the sheriff and a posse of six men tramped into the cabin, many hours later. Obviously Yucatan Bill had tried desperately to free himself, but the twists of fence wire had only bitten the deeper into wrists and ankles. He lay staring with bloodshot eyes at the men in the doorway.

"You murdering devil!" he said, all the hatred of his venomous spirit showing in the glare he directed upon Mr. Trippit. "You put poison into that tobacco!"

Uncle Eddie shook his head.

"Not me, Bill," he replied. "Nature

put it there—I told you it was too strong for you! As a matter of fact, it would be too strong for me, old and tough as I be. There was a siwash boy working around here for me, onct, and he stole some of the bedanged stuff and went out behind the barn and smoked it. When I found him, he was most as bad as you. He come to, by and by, but he didn't steal nothing more of mine. That's how come I got the notion of setting it ~~out~~ for you to-night, and hiding the pail I keep my smoking in. Hid the new pail in the fireplace——"

"But what was it Bill got hold of?" the sheriff demanded, his face surely showing his mystification. "Was it dynamite?"

"Perty near," said Uncle Eddie. "It's

the quids from the bottom of my pipe—I always knock out the ashes and save the wet tobacco, to put around the roots of my fruit trees. It kills the woolly aphis.

"I reckon to a fellow that don't know better, especially if he's been sleeping out nights till he's got the distemper like Bill, here, and can't smell nothing—I reckon a party like that might think it was a heavy perique mixture. It's sure black enough, but that's just the oil and nicotine that's got sucked down into the bottom of the pipe. They ain't no man walking on two legs that can smoke the stuff and keep a going, that's certain sure. That siwash boy couldn't! I can't! And you can see for yourselves what it done to Yucatan Bill!"



MEXICAN RANGES SHORT OF STOCK

THE States of Zacatecas and Durango, Mexico, have fine acreages of sheep range on which there is little stock grazing. These grazing lands can be bought outright very cheaply in almost any sized tracts, or they can be leased for nominal sums. Land owners will also take over herds on shares. The land owners were almost ruined by the long period of revolutions and have been unable to restock their ranges. The few herds that escaped the marauding bands deteriorated to such an extent that they are not fit to depend on as a nucleus for new flocks. The Mexican authorities are at present trying to encourage sheep-herders from across the border to bring their flocks on to the Mexican ranges for grazing, and are even offering guarantees to aid in the reestablishment of the sheep industry in the border States.



KIT CARSON'S GRANDCHILDREN

MRS. ROBERT BEACH, a granddaughter of Kit Carson, has recently taken up her residence in Los Angeles, California, moving there from La Junta, Colorado. Her father, Kit Carson, Jr., sixty-seven years of age, still lives at La Junta. Six other grandchildren of the famous pioneer scout and Indian fighter also live at La Junta. Mrs. Beach claims to be the only grandchild of Kit Carson living in California. She was led to take up her residence in that State because of its historic associations with some of the events of her famous grandfather's career. Kit Carson went to California with a party of trappers from Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1829, and returned in 1842 with Fremont.



Riding the Galloping Goose

By

Kenneth Gilbert

Author of "Chance?" etc.



HE owner of the Port Douglas Logging Company looked up from the writing desk in his office as a clamor smote his ears. Putting aside the bothersome figures over which he had been worrying, he stepped to the door. Tom Sanderson was his own woods boss in cutting the lash "show" of fir that he had acquired by mortgaging everything he possessed.

The sounds came from behind the cook shack. Without pausing to put on his hat, Sanderson walked swiftly across the open space between the office and the cook shack, and rounded the corner of the latter building, just as the outcries, mixed with delighted yells and laughter, grew louder.

What he saw was a crowd of his men, and in the center a bulky fellow with a mop of red hair who held a little man, a stranger, by the shirt collar. It was plain that the big red-headed man was attempting a feat of strength; he was literally trying to lift the little fellow off the ground with one arm.

The little man, swarthy, and with tears of anger streaming down his cheeks, struggled to get loose. The red-headed logger, seemingly slightly drunk,

for he swayed, giggled as his hairy right hand, knotted like a stunted cedar, tightened in the little fellow's collar. Although the crowd watching did so without open enjoyment, nevertheless, no one remonstrated with the would-be strong man.

"Keep your eyes peeled now!" cried the red-headed logger. "You'll see me do it this time!"

Gurgles came from the little man's throat as the grip on his neck tightened, and he writhed with pain, at the same time flailing helplessly with his fists.

"That's enough, Shannon!"

The crowd had moved back a pace. The red head, his grip relaxing somewhat, turned slowly. Tom Sanderson stood there, scowling.

"You're a fine hunk of a man, you are, picking on a little fellow like that." Sanderson's voice had a cutting edge to it. "Drunk again, too."

Shannon's lips twisted into a snarl.

"Gettin' kinda tough, ain't you?" Sanderson went on as though he had not heard. "Come up to the office and get your time. You've done nothing but stir up trouble of some kind ever since you've been in camp!"

The red-headed logger, face working

with fury, took a step toward the boss. He snarled a word which has made men fight since the dawn of time; or, rather, he opened his mouth and began it, and the next fleeting fraction of a second his lips closed under the impact of Sanderson's fist.

Shannon went down, but came up roaring like a wounded bull. He outweighed Sanderson a good thirty pounds, and had youth to go with his magnificent strength—a brawler, accustomed to win his fights by fair means or foul. But he lacked what the older man possessed; the keen brain which directed muscles tempered to the resiliency of steel springs. Head down, Shannon lunged forward, and caught it again.

After that it was merely a matter of how long the red-headed logger wanted punishment. He was never driven, never set upon; always the big boss, cool and possessed, waited. Another man in Sanderson's place could, by pushing his advantage, have cut Shannon to ribbons, but the elder man forebore the opportunity. He merely fought a battle of self-defense; he met Shannon's onslaughts with well-timed blows which registered full value.

For the sixth time Shannon went down, and was slower about struggling to his feet.

"Had about enough, haven't you?" asked the boss. "I don't want to hurt you any more."

Shannon mumbled something unintelligible, but did not attack. Then he turned and stumbled for the bunk house.

"I'll be back for my pay later!" he flung over his shoulder. "I'll get you yet, Sanderson!"

Back in his office once more, Tom Sanderson took up the accusing rows of figures, and with his pipe going, tried to get a grain of comfort out of them. There was little to be had, how-

ever; the situation was as clear as though cut in stone—and seemingly as cold. If luck favored him, he'd pull through; but a relatively small adversity might tip the scales in the opposite direction.

Sanderson, with a groan, thought of how ill he could afford to lose. He was alone in the world, except for a motherless daughter who had never been well. Every cent he could spare had gone toward the costly care she was being given, and for months now he had believed that with his help, she was winning her battle; she'd get well. It took money, lots of it, more than he could have made by working for some one else, hence he was compelled to gamble everything on this timber venture.

So far he had held his own, according to the cutting schedule he had mapped out. But the drain on his resources to keep his daughter properly cared for, was being felt. To be sure, he delivered the logs, but the buyers exercised their privilege of delaying payment for as long as possible; he couldn't force them to pay cash on the spot. Consequently, he had more than once been hard-pressed to meet the running expenses of the camp.

At last he laid down the papers and leisurely knocked the ashes out of his pipe.

"I can borrow ten thousand dollars from old Simonsen, and I'll have to do it, to meet the pay roll. The men have waited long enough as it is. Maybe by that time the mills will come through with what they owe me. But it's going to be a close squeak!"

At that instant he heard a footstep at the door, and he turned. Standing there on the sill, hat in his hand, and bowing obsequiously, was the little man Sanderson had rescued from the clutches of Shannon. The newcomer flashed a smile that showed teeth white as ivory. Then he stepped forward,

sank on one knee, and embraced Sanderson's legs.

"*Merci, m'sieu!*" he cried. "Ze grand fight w'at you make. 'Phonse Ducett, he shall always remembaire. So strong, so *magnifique!*"

Sanderson smiled, and gently lifted the other to his feet. A little French-Canadian, the boss decided; probably one of the wanderers of the Northwest woods, who drift here and there much as their *voyageur* forefathers did in earlier days.

"He was a little too big and tough for you, Ducett—that's what you said your name is?"

The little man nodded vigorously. Then he launched into an excitable account of what had happened. He, Ducett, had come to the camp looking for work. He had inquired at the bunk house where the boss was, and some one, probably knowing that Shannon, drunk, was in a hilarious, braggart mood and addressing a crowd back of the cook shack, had sent him there. He, Ducett, had naively inquired of the red-headed logger if his name was M'sieu Sanderson. Shannon, angered, for he had always hated the boss, had retaliated by torturing the innocent questioner. And then M'sieu Sanderson himself had arrived. And with what glorious results!

Again Sanderson smiled, but he shook his head when the little man mentioned work.

"You're too small for almost any job in the woods," he said, not unkindly. "This is work for big, strong men. You might help the cook, but I reckon he's got all the assistance he needs. Besides, he's a terrible-tempered individual who might cram you into one of his own stew kettles if you tramped on his toes hard enough."

Suddenly Sanderson laughed, and slapped his thigh. "Why, say, I have a real job for you!" he cried. "Lord, you're just the man I want, and it's

just the kind of a job you can handle. I'll make you 'engineer' of the Gallopin' Goose!"

The little Frenchman's brow wrinkled. "Ze—ze 'gallopin' goose?" he queried. "W'at kind of animal she be, m'sieu? Ba gar, I go t'reu woods all my life; nevair I meet heem!"

Sanderson roared. Then he led the way across the camp clearing to the loading platform.

"Here's the Gallopin' Goose," he announced.

It was a car perhaps twenty feet long, and with trucks eight feet wide. It had four wheels, each double flanged, to hold it on the track that was made of barked fir logs laid end to end. Heavy wooden "bubks" at each end were used to support the huge logs it carried. The track ran from the camp to tidewater, nearly two miles away, and a gradual slope all the distance. A steel cable wound over the drum of a donkey engine at the camp, allowed the car, with its enormous load, to be eased down gradually to tidewater and the dumping platform, and likewise pulled it back when empty.

The Galloping Goose, or "Walking Dudley," as the piece of equipment is known in Western logging camps, is a substitute for a regular logging railway with its steam engine, and is employed by logging operators who, like Tom Sanderson, could not afford the investment in an engine. It serves its purpose, if the logging operations are near to tidewater; if the cut is a greater distance than two miles, it is necessary to have an engine, or a road on which logging trucks can run, for the Galloping Goose is limited by the length of cable a donkey engine can handle.

Sanderson explained: "You'll ride the logs down to the dumping platform, and when they're unloaded, you'll ride back. Your job is largely to watch for broken pieces of track, so that you can signal

the engineer to stop before the whole rig is ditched."

The little man's eyes shone. It was, as the big boss had said, a good job.

"I take eet!" exclaimed Ducett. "It is ver' good of you, m'sieu. Some tam I will show you zat 'Phonse Ducett can remembaire!"

So it was that with Sanderson starting on the last big cut on his timber "show," 'Phonse Ducett came to ride the Galloping Goose, relieving Hillyard, who had held the job previously, and who preferred to go back to his regular job as a "faller."

Every trip of the Galloping Goose was to the little man as important as the launching of a great ship. On top of the big log which rode at the apex of the triangular load, 'Phonse Ducett would stand with arms folded, like the captain of a great ocean liner getting underway. As the Galloping Goose creakingly began its descent, Ducett would break into a wild chanson of his forefathers who conquered the white-water streams of the North in their big canoes. On the return trip, long before the Galloping Goose hove in sight, they could hear 'Phonse's paeans of triumph. Altogether, it was amusing to the big and busy camp, and Sanderson, who had taken a liking to the little man, was not displeased. Things were going along better with the logging operator. He had already arranged to borrow the ten thousand dollars necessary to pay the men the accumulated back wages, and to run the camp for a few weeks longer, until he could receive payment for his logs. If his luck still held, he would pull through, with a neat profit on the job that might warrant a bigger operation in the near future.

It was early Sunday morning that Sanderson, who had gone to Port Douglas the previous day, returned with the cash for the men. The horse and buggy which he drove, was left on the

road which ran along tidewater past the dumping platform, and the boss, carrying the money in a satchel, and with a gun strapped on his hip, walked up the track of the Galloping Goose to the camp. The track, which was literally carved through the wild tangle of underbrush that is found everywhere in the wooded regions of the North Pacific coast, was the only trail from the camp to civilization, and because it was used frequently by the men, it had become hard-packed, and good walking.

Sanderson was in a good humor, and the men, with a day of rest before them, and money in sight, were in high spirits. Save for the cook and his helpers, whose work never seemed to end, the camp was at an industrial standstill. The boss walked to the office, deposited the money on his desk, and, with the pay roll before him, began apportioning bills in neat little piles, to facilitate handling, when the men lined up and filed by the office. As he worked, he thought he heard the thudding of a horse's hoofs, but he paid no attention.

He did look up, however, when he heard a脚步 at the door. As he did so, he gave an involuntary gasp. In the doorway stood a masked man with a serviceable-looking automatic pistol, and its muzzle was held unwaveringly on Sanderson's breast.

"Back up against the wall, and keep your hands above your head!"

There was no mistaking the earnestness of the words; plainly the robber meant them. Sanderson, with a gun on his hip, had been given no opportunity to draw it; there was nothing for him to do but obey.

He scanned the bandit as closely as he could. A big man, but his hat was jammed down on his head and a red bandanna handkerchief covered his face below the eyes. Sanderson, almost desperate to the point of taking a wild chance by reaching for his gun, and defying the robber to shoot, licked his

lips nervously. It was not the ordinary value of the money that counted so much, as what its loss would mean at this time.

"You've been laying for me, haven't you?" remarked Sanderson, after a pause. "Doubtless you know how much money is there. If it were any other time than this, I could almost stand the loss with a cheerful whistle, but, man, you'll break me, if you take that money now! Not only will you ruin me, but you'll ruin the life of a little girl who is trying to win back her health. And on top of that, you'll be robbing nearly three hundred hard-working men who haven't been paid for nearly two months. You'll break me, and they'll never get their money. What is worse, the camp will have to be abandoned; you'll throw all of these men out of work. Have a heart, man!"

A contemptuous grunt came from beneath the bandanna mask. The bandit, still holding his gun, advanced, and with his left hand swept the piles of bills back into the satchel. Sanderson watched him, sick. Suddenly the robber tensed.

"Face the wall!" he ordered Sanderson.

As he complied, Sanderson caught a glimpse of another face at the door—the face of 'Phonse Ducett—wondering, puzzled. Then, as the boss turned, the bandit struck Sanderson on the back of the head with the muzzle of the gun. Sanderson slumped down quietly without a sound.

As the bandit leaped out of the door, clutching the currency-laden grip in one hand, while he flourished the gun in the other, a pathetically small figure lunged at him. Easily he evaded the little Frenchman, who tripped and fell. With a laugh, the robber raised the gun and pulled the trigger.

There was a dull snap, but no explosion. The robber ripped out an oath, startled, but without waiting to try

again, he swiftly mounted the black horse that had stood as if tethered at the corner of the office. Then, while 'Phonse Ducett was on his feet, crying the alarm, the bandit was gone in a thunder of hoof beats.

Practically the entire camp saw him, but the sudden daring of the coup left them moveless. Then they sprang into action, but it was too late. From the cook shack ran a man with a rifle, and took hasty aim at the flying horse and its rider. The rifle cracked, but the rider waved his hand derisively. The next moment he had vanished down the track.

But now the astonished men saw something else. They saw the diminutive figure of 'Phonse Ducett running as though in pursuit of the robber. But instead of following the vanished bandit down the track, the little Frenchman sprang to the shackles that held the Galloping Goose in place. The donkey engine was dead, for there was no work to be done on Sunday. The oddly named car, with its wide bunks, stood there empty from its last trip to tide-water.

They saw him drive out the pin of the shackle that anchored it. Then, as it began to move slowly, they saw him catch up a peavey, and climb aboard. On the forward bunk he stood, and waved the cant hook, as a shrill yell of triumph came from his throat. As the realization of his daring attempt struck them, they cheered. Then they sobered. 'Phonse would die.

The Galloping Goose lurched a little, as it struck a curve; then its pace quickened markedly as the ground began to slope downward more steeply. Half a mile away down the track, 'Phonse could descry the flying figure of the horse and bandit. He shouted a malediction, and broke into a wild dance, urging the car to go faster.

Seemingly it heard. A straight stretch of track was before it, and it

gained momentum rapidly. Its speed mounted until it began to sway from side to side. Faster and faster it went, as the pull of gravity grew. Now its flanged wheels ground sickeningly against the curves, splintering the cunningly laid log rails. 'Phonse found himself hanging on with both legs locked around the bunk, to keep from being hurled from the wildly careening car. The car was gaining; horse and rider were nearer!

Up and up mounted the speed of the Galloping Goose. Never had it been constructed for such velocity as this. Under the pull of the donkey engine, it climbed these grades at a relatively slow pace; when, loaded with logs, it was eased down to the dumping platform, it had moved even slower. Now, freed of its restraining cable, it had become a mad, reckless thing that plunged on its way to almost certain destruction.

'Phonse Ducett, seemingly as mad as his wild chariot, talked to it, and urged it to greater effort.

Nearer it swept to the speeding horse and rider in front. The bandit turned, as he saw that awful thing bearing down upon him. There was no escape; either he must beat the Galloping Goose in a straightaway race, or be ground beneath its trucks. The brush on either side was so thick, and filled with windfalls that had been cleared from the right of way, that there was no chance for the horse to spring aside. Once he tried it, but lost many precious yards of distance.

Now they were passing through a cut in a small hogback, with steep, gravelly banks on both sides. No chance here, either. The Galloping Goose seemed now to be roaring at the heels of the bandit and his horse. Nothing to do but run for it.

Back on the car, 'Phonse Ducett set himself for the critical test. The dumping platform, and tidewater, were but an eighth of a mile ahead, and the end

of the track seemed to be leaping at him. He caught up the peavey, and, at the risk of his life, sprang to the rear truck of the swaying monster. The point of the peavey he jammed between the flanged wheel and the wooden rail, not hard enough to throw the car off the track, but enough to act as a brake, the first restraint the Galloping Goose had known.

The speed of the car diminished, but the horse and rider were scarcely twenty feet ahead of it. 'Phonse saw the masked man turn, and even at that distance, the rider of the Galloping Goose could see the look of horror in the man's eyes. He had clutched the money satchel throughout the ride, but now he flung it from him, as though to be unencumbered during the last moment.

The horse staggered, and instantly the Galloping Goose ate up the distance. 'Phonse Ducett had no wish to kill the horse, but the man must not escape.

Suddenly the little Frenchman threw his strength against the brake. At the same instant, the rider, in a last desperate chance, spun about and flung himself at the forward truck. His hands caught; he held fast. The horse, relieved of his weight, and terrified by that thundering presence so close behind, sprang ahead faster. The Galloping Goose slowed, while the man, clinging so grimly to the forward end, struggled to keep from being torn loose.

Slower and slower went the car. Now the road which crossed the track just before the dumping platform was reached, was at hand. The horse, glad of an opportunity to escape, turned aside. The Galloping Goose rolled out on the trestle above the water, into which logs were dumped. The bandit's heels dragged on the ties. He cried out, but 'Phonse was bringing the car to a stop. Almost at the very end of the dumping platform, so that the bandit was in imminent danger of being

crushed against the buffer that prevented the car from going off, the Galloping Goose shuddered to a stop.

Instantly the little man on the rear truck wrenched loose his peavey and sprang forward. The bandit still clung there, dazed, all fight gone out of him.

"I am small man, and you are ver' big," declared 'Phonse, "but ze peavey, she even it up. If you move, I'm goin' to pin you wit' ze point of ze peavey, against ze log! Ze men will be here soon."

They were. Sanderson, head bandedgaged hastily, and the others, all mounted on camp horses, clattered up. Sanderson himself carried the retrieved

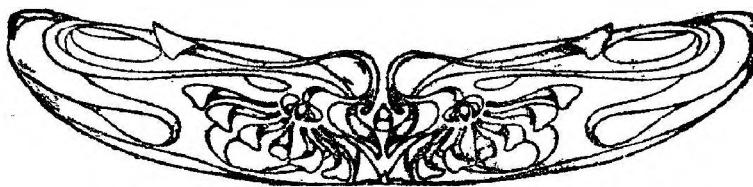
money satchel. He dropped off and picked up little 'Phonse Ducett, swinging him clear of the ground.

"You little runt!" he cried, a choke in his voice. "You've saved more than my life to-day. You nervy little dare-devil!"

He turned to the hapless bandit, and tore off the bandanna mask.

"Shannon!"

'Phonse Ducett chuckled happily. "I knew it! I see hees red hair, just before he hit you, M'sieu Sanderson. So I want to get him." He patted the thick bunks of the car. He laughed again at a sudden thought. "Shannon, he t'eenk ze Gallopin' Goose can only run. He don't know she can fly!"



SECRETARY JARDINE SPEAKS AT RODEO

ONE of the features of this year's round-up at Mandan, North Dakota, was an address by Secretary of Agriculture William M. Jardine. More than two hundred cowboys, in variocolored shirts, high-heeled boots, and five-gallon hats listened with interest to the secretary's speech.

He urged the farmers of the country to adopt business methods in their work and stated that the chief problem in efficient farming is fitting the production to the needs of the market and raising only high-quality products. He further expressed the opinion that farmers ought to adjust their production so as to receive the full benefits of the tariff law.



FOREST FIRE BELIEVED INCENDIARY

THE first forest fire of the season in Butte County, California, is suspected of having been of incendiary origin. This was a large brush and timber fire burning between Mud Creek and Chico Creek on the Thomasson and Bidwell ranges. One person who saw the fire shortly after it started, reported that the blaze apparently sprang up in several places at once, and seemed to have at least eight different heads, giving rise to the theory that it was deliberately set.

The fire starting at about nine o'clock in the morning, swept over the ranges, destroying valuable winter grazing land. By nightfall it had reached the timber and was rapidly gaining headway in the face of a strong breeze.

When Ma and Me Came West

By JAMES EDWARD HUNTERFORD

WE settled here, did ma an' me,
When things were woolly, wild;
Two newlyweds from Tennessee,
An' on a claim we filed;
Our fortune we had come to seek,
An' so we pioneered,
An' pitched our camp beside a creek,
Until the land was cleared.

We worked fer weeks with ax an' saw—
A happy groom an' bride;
I did my share, an' so did ma,
T'gether, side by side;
She played her part jest like a man,
An' seldom stopped to rest,
An' that is how we two began
Out here in this ol' West!

At last, when we had cleared the land,
We took our saw an' ax
An' hewed some pine an' spruce, by hand,
An' piled the boards in stacks;
We got some stones down by the creek—
A firm foundation laid,
An' at the end o' one hard week
Our start in life was made.

We built our shack, an' furnished it—
A work o' love an' art,
An' got the whole thing, ev'ry bit,
Right out o' nature's heart!
We dug a well, an' struck a stream
O' water crystal clear,
An' started in to make our dream
O' life come true right here.

An' now we've got a ranch house fine,
An' flocks an' herds an' sick;
That little start o' hers an' mine
Has made us rollin' rich.
We're mighty proud, too, ma an' me,
An' deep down in our breast
We're prouder still in knowin' we
Helped build the golden West!



Too Much Injun

By

Ray Humphreys

Author of "The Horse with the Roman Nose," etc.



PERHAPS it was the fact that the day was blistering hot and that Ignacio offered the only chance for food and drink and shelter in eighty miles of Colorado desert between "here" and "there" on the Ute Trail, that "Ace" Allen, on a weary cayuse, decided to stop there. A Mexican lad on another dusty mustang, who, in turn, led a spare horse, trailed along behind.

Perhaps it was the fact that two thousand Indians—chiefs, sub-chiefs, braves, bucks, squaws, and papooses, of seven Ute tribes—were trekking in for an annual powwow at the Consolidated Ute agency in Ignacio, that led Ace to Ignacio in the first place, but at any rate Ace arrived, weary but jubilant, with a lot of talk on tap, two crow-bait mustangs, the greaser kid, and the spare horse—but, that horse!

Black as the proverbial bag of black cats, long-barreled, lean head with snapping, intelligent eyes, deep shoulders, dainty legs but powerfully muscled, this "spare" horse attracted more attention than Ace Allen did himself, until Ace became so loud that he could no longer be ignored. Then—and only then—did the gang in front of the Del Norte switch eyes from horse to man.

"Look him over, look him over!" insisted Ace, with the nasal bark of the professional, as soon as he saw that

he had diverted attention from the black horse. "He's all wool an' a yard wide; lookin' a little glum now 'cause he ain't used to eatin' dust. Boys, yuh're all standin' in the presence o' Black Knight—the bestest Kentuck' bluegrasser ever crossed the Coloraday line!"

The crowd was impressed, and eyes widened and mouths opened and there was a general edging toward the black, but Ace roared them back quickly.

"No crowdin', boys—give that Southern gentleman air—ef thar is any in this town; race hosses breathe same as ordinary broncs—give 'im room, I tell yuh; we're layin' over here fer rest an' eats—goin' inter Denver an' to Cheyenne—fer the frontier-day races up thar. Anybody ever see a cleaner-cut hoss?"

"All mouth," said a townsman, turning disgustedly to Matt Bramer, the sheriff, but Matt shook his head.

"Oh no! Mebbe yuh don't read brand on that baby, eh? Waal, I happen to know who he is—that's Ace Allen, cold-deck gambler an' sharper in general, but I never knowed him to be interested in race hosses."

"He has got a good hoss," said the townsman.

"Tol'able," admitted the sheriff, stroking his chin. "Las' time I heard o' Ace, he was in Provo——"

Meanwhile, Ace had asked for and

obtained the information as to the whereabouts of the best feed stable and the main hotel, and he let it be known, generally, then, where he and Black Knight were to quarter. He finally strode away, leading his tired saddler, with the Mexican boy following with the black racer and the other pony. The citizenry broke up into little knots of enthusiastic race-horse fans.

"That is a good hoss!"

"Yuh're shoutin', Sim, that is!"

"Like to see him show his stuff!"

Ace, however, appeared bored by the flattering comments that he chanced to overhear. He made a great fuss at the feed stable, ordering accommodations for the black, and then, after telling the stableman to "turn the broncs in the corral," he departed for his hotel. The Mexican lad, it appeared, was to sleep with the race horse. The stableman stroked the black's neck and waxed enthusiastic—Ignacio wasn't used to seeing blue-blooded equines. The Mexican youth fanned the stableman's admiration to flames with a timely remark.

"Him," said the Mexican, offhand, "he win mucho dinero my boss—all the time win!"

At the Del Norte, however, the discussion was taking a more substantial turn. It was to be expected that when race horses were under discussion, some one would mention Chico, the Apache-bred running pony that belonged to Chief Buckskin of the Uintah Utes. Eddie Owens mentioned the "Injun hoss," and instantly every one present was alertly listening, for there was not a white man, nor a red, between the Sangre de Cristos and the Continental ranges, who did not know Chico, the little gray bolt of lightning that had so far proven unbeatable in Ignacio races. He was the pride of Chief Buckskin, the idol of the Uintahs, and the envy of all Ignacio. Although Chico's past was clouded in

mystery, it was generally believed that Chief Buckskin had taken him up, some years before, with a drift of Apache ponies that had wandered too far from the tepees of their rightful owners.

"I was thinkin'," said Eddie Owens, "that the black hoss might be matched agin' Chico if—"

"It sure would make the powwow interesting," admitted Joe Loren, a quarter-breed Ute. "The Utes would go wild over a hoss race like that, provided—"

"What yuh two gents mean," interrupted Floyd Penny, "is that it would be some race pervised thar was enough money backin' the hosses up."

"Sure," said Joe, "an' thar'll be Injun money—"

"As fer me personally," said Penny, "I'd stack my roll on the black—he's a thoroughbred—an'—"

The upshot of it was that a committee trudged up the hill to the American House and sought out Ace Allen. At first Ace pretended to be against any delay in his trip to Denver and Cheyenne, but gradually the committee won him over when it was pointed out that there'd be plenty of red money and that the Indians would be taken to a real cleaning.

"'Course this Chico hoss can run," explained Penny, "but he's nuthin'—his folks have been roamin' the plains fer centuries—an' some Apache trained him proper, that's all. He gits away to a crackin' good start, an' has a lot o' nerve—that's all. I'm willin' to lay down plenty on yuhr black, stranger, if—"

"I'll stay over," said Ace.

When the news was brought to Chief Buckskin, who was already in town for the powwow, the Ute leader grinned broadly. He had expected it. He had heard of the black running horse and had already been to the feed stable to look him over. So when the committee approached him on the matter of a

matched race for the following day, the old chief was open to negotiations, of course. He agreed to all conditions, and then sprung one of his own.

"Sure, me race um Chico hoss—send runner back for him pronto. But weather very hot—very bad—very hard on hoss. Me see weather dark and cool in feed barn, where black horse is. Me wantum Chico hoss in feed barn, too, to-night—to-morrow—until race—so?"

"Sure, chief, that's agreeable," cried the committee. "We'll put yuhr hoss up thar fer yuh, chief—good idea, too, seein' it is hot as blazes in the sun. All righto, chief; send for the gray—an' ef yuh wanna lay a bet or two—"

The town was all for the black horse, it developed, soon after the announcement of the race was made, but that didn't cut much ice, for the Utes, naturally, were for the gray pony. There might be a lot of dissension and animosity between the seven tribes of the Utes, but when it came to backing a Ute horse against a white man's horse, the tribes united as a single man. All available cash went up; then followed hunting rifles, saddle horses of varied hues—with paints predominating—blankets, pottery, and anything of value the reds could pledge. But every cent of Indian money was covered by the Ignacio folks and Ace Allen, and there was still a surplus of "white" cash awaiting takers.

The news of the race traveled like a prairie fire, and the word of the match race at Ignacio spread to distant ranches as freighters, cowboys, and Indian stragglers could carry it. And right then various outfits saddled up and started, intending to participate in the matter as far as possible. "Big Bill" Malone, foreman of the Bar O Bee cattle outfit on the Troublesome River, got his riders together in a twinkling.

"Ain't aimin' to miss no hoss race that is only thirty-two miles away," said Big Bill as they saddled. "I ain't

seen a good race since I was to Tia Juana las' spring. Them races at Craig makes me sick. All framed, an' everything; just a bunch o' sellin' platers, that's all. But now this race may be something. They say the black is a thoroughbred Kentuck', an' we all know what that Chico hoss is!"

"Let's go, boss!" sang out the riders.

Meanwhile Chico had appeared in town, in a marvelously short time after the old chief had sent for him. The chief sought out the committee and the gray pony was comfortably installed in the feed barn, in a stall next to the resting black. The Mexican boy was still in the black's stall, so old Chief Buckskin duly appointed two Indian youths to attend the gray. Ace, wandering over to see his own animal, took a critical look at the gray pony.

"Too much plain Injun in that pony fer him to win," said Ace, in judgment, and turned away, to find the crowd that had followed him to the stable nodding in agreement. While nobody except the sheriff seemed to know Ace, the whole town was for him and his black. They had bet liberally and were still willing, and it was in this mood that Big Bill Malone and his riders found them. Big Bill arrived at the feed barn and eyed both horses, nodded to old Chief Buckskin, and cast a wary glance at Ace Allen. On emerging from the barn, Big Bill went into confab with his boys and soon it became noised about that there was more Injun money in town, waiting to be covered.

"Reckon mebbe that Running Elk chief and his band from Cottonwood Creek has arrived an' wishes to become poverty struck," said Jodey Bennett, but Jodey gasped when he was informed that the new backers of Chico were not Indians but Big Bill Malone and his men. The whole town grunted in surprise, as a matter of fact, but dug down in the old sock and Malone's dough was covered in no time.

Hardly had the money been bet, however, before a sensation broke. Old Chief Buckskin, foaming words in rapid Ute, came paddling up the street with the gray pony in tow and the two Indian "swipes" at the pony's heels. The committee, scenting trouble, demanded an explanation, and the old chief explained that he was taking the gray out of the "blankety-blank" feed barns for reasons, but that anyway he had to put the gray through some training.

"An' after we went to all the trouble o' getting him put up thar in the feed barn!" protested Penny.

"No matter! Me take um. My hoss!" said the Ute, and nobody had a comeback for that remark.

Meantime Big Bill Malone was taking an awful guying from the townsfolk and other ranchers, who made no bones of the fact that they thought he should have stuck with his own kind and bet on the Allen horse instead of throwing his lot in with the Utes, but Big Bill had weathered too much of life to mind the taunts thrown at him.

"When it comes to a hoss race," said Big Bill, to a group of kidders, "sentiment steps out an' hoss sense takes the reins. I'm thinkin' the gray pony is the best hoss in this race an' playin' my dinero accordin'. I don't care who owns him. As to stickin' with my own kind, I might do that ef this was a race between an Injun an' a white man, an' the Injun had a tomahawk—but this is a hoss race!"

Before noon, the next day, the town was chock-full of folk, all in because of the race. When you get Ignacio jammed with two hundred additional whites, and then camp two thousand odd Utes all around it, you've got a crowd. And everybody was talking horse. Ace Allen hadn't taken his black from the stable, maintaining that the horse needed rest more than exercise, which seemed a bit odd, but old

Chief Buckskin was apparently putting his entry through a grueling training, out in the sand, away from prying eyes.

"I sneaked up on 'im just after sunrise," said Johnny McLaughlin, "an', gents, mebbe yuh think that gray ain't catchin' heck. Them redskins is runnin' him down through a lane o' braves, with an Injun kid up, an' every dog-gone brave is whoopin' an' shriekin' an' wavin' arms and blankets an' scarin' that pore hoss seven ways from Sunday! They'll tire him out afore afternoon, an' it'll be a walk-away fer the black. I'm glad I got my dough on the black!"

"Ef them Utes is actin' that way, they're scared," said Eddie Owens, "an' they see the handwritin' on the wall. Guess they figger that black is gonna be a tough nut to crack. Malone will sure have the happiness o' seein' his dough come in second in this here race, I'm thinkin'."

Excitement ran high, as the day advanced, and at noon every one was on pins and needles. The Utes had turned out in their finest regalia, and had come grunting up toward the town mesa where the race was to be run. It was to be a mile straightaway race, and the course had already been marked off by the committee. A flag designated the start, and a wire, strung between two high lodge poles, marked the finish. The narrow path in which the horses were to travel had been bordered at intervals, with whitewashed rocks, so that the Indians, particularly, would not crowd too close on the racers. All Ignacio was on the mesa an hour before the race was to start.

It was right then that Ace and the Mexican youth got the black out of the stable and saddled him—but what a black! Instead of the mild-mannered, wise racer that he had appeared to be on his arrival in town, he was now a fighting outlaw. He squealed and tugged and lashed out with his hind

hoofs and made an awful rumpus. Eventually the Mexican boy got up, however, and then the black quieted down, and Ace led him to the mesa, where the kid warmed him up with a couple of short spurts that set the crowd on edge. The Utes, for some strange reason, greeted the black racer with broad grins and much merriment, and the hilarity in the Indian ranks was so great that some of the smart whites began to wonder.

"Them Utes don't look very scared," commented Jodey Bennett. "They seem to take the black as a joke."

"Don't worry over that," said Floyd Penny. "They ain't smart enough to be scared. That Chico hoss has never lost a race, an' they figger he can't, but—well, I got a hundred and twenty dollars up that says he's gonna lose today!"

"I got some o' Malone's money," commented Jodey, laughing.

Then the Indian pony appeared on the mesa. He looked rested and content, despite the training he had undergone as reported by Johnny McLaughlin. The Utes set up a roar as their favorite approached, and a few mingled "Ee-yahs" among the Ute whoops indicated that Big Bill Malone and his riders were not afraid to yell for the gray, too. The race committee motioned for the two horses and started for the starting point. Then a great hush settled over the flat. A large number of the whites rode down toward the start, but the Utes remained along the racing path. A number of the braves were mounted, and even the squaws and children pressed as close to the marked path as possible, gaudy in colors.

There followed a few moments of suspense, and then came the crack of a revolver. The race was on! In a second thousands of heads, red and white, were turned down the flat, where the two straining horses could be seen, coming like the wind itself. Appar-

ently they were neck and neck. The Mexican boy, up on Ace's black, was already plying the stick, but the Indian kid on the gray was riding easily.

"C'mon, yuh Chico!" whooped Big Bill Malone, standing up in his stirrups to watch. "C'mon, yuh 'Pache! Ee-yah! C'mon; yuh can do it, baby—c'mon home!"

"Black Knight!" yowled Eddie Owens. "Stretch them long laigs o' yuhrs—stretch 'em! Yuh ain't gonna let no Injun hoss lick yuh—I got money up on yuh, an' 'baccy, too—c'mon—stretch them laigs!"

"Black Knight's ahead—half a head!" came a shout. "By gar—he's increasin' his lead."

Then, like a leaf bobbing on the swift current of a mountain stream, a single word leaped down the race course, from Ute to Ute, skipping the white faces here and there. Instantly the Indians galvanized into action. It was time. The gray pony was half a length behind. With a mighty roar of shrill cries and rumbling grunts the Utes seemed to rise up, as a man, and whip their flashing headdresses and multi-hued blankets into the air, screaming savagely the while. The Indian boy on the gray smiled faintly and crouched lower as the gray, with his quivering nostrils within a foot of the flaunting tail of the black thoroughbred, sought to gain a stride. Now both horses were halfway down the stretch, and just entering the area where the majority of the Utes had parked themselves to view the race. Now the uproar was ear splitting.

"Ee-yah! Ee-yah!" whooped Big Bill Malone. "Yuh Chico—close up thar—go on—go on—yuh're carryin' my bacon fer six months to come—beat it—Chico!"

And then, aside, to one of his riders, Malone made a terse remark.

"The Injun pony is gonna win, all right!"

Hardly had the pair of straining horses passed Big Bill before the Utes broke out into a second spasm of enthusiasm. Feathered headgear and scarlet and blue and yellow blankets whipped the air, to the accompaniment of weird cries and chants. The inevitable was bound to happen right there. The black thoroughbred, now only about a quarter length in the lead, shied violently, lost his step, ran wide, and before the Mexican boy could get him going again, the gray pony was three lengths ahead and running smoothly, despite the Indian pandemonium.

Down the remainder of the course thundered the gray, unmindful of the racket and the flashing colors that made the air hideous, but the black, worried by the Indians, shied again and again, and he came under the finish wire at a lopé, ten yards behind Chico, the winner.

And if pandemonium had reigned during the race, it broke loose in double volume now! By this victory over the thoroughbred Kentuckian, the little gray Apache horse had stocked the seven villages of the Consolidated Ute agency with bacon, flour, meat, and tobacco for the whole winter to come. And of all the white faces that were to be seen only the faces of Big Bill Malone and his riders wore grins. But every red face wore a smile.

Then, quite naturally, an argument flared up, at the finish tape, and Big Bill and his men pushed through the mêlée at the first signs of trouble. So did Sheriff Matt Bramer, who had been sitting back and saying nothing.

"I demand that the gray hoss be declared out, an' my black hoss winner, on the grounds that these pesky Injuns framed me!" roared Ace Allen, his face almost black with rage. "My hoss was goin' purty when these red devils started throwing blankets under his nose, scaring him. If that's fair—"

"He's right!" yelled a dozen unhappy

losers, who had placed their money on the black.

"I'm a fair shooter," screamed Ace, working up sentiment, "an' I played fair and square, but the Injuns didn't; I claim the race, an' furthermore I suggests that we lynch this here Chief Buckskin, fer framin'—"

"Whoa thar!" cried Big Bill Malone, and he lurched off his roan right into Allen's face. "Yuh're usin' too much mouth around here, Allen! Talkin' about lynchin' when the Injuns outnumber us three to one—but ef we hafta lynch anybody, I'm fer lynchin' yuh, yuh crook."

There were murmurs from the crowd at that, for, after all, Ace Allen's claims for a forfeited race meant money in the pockets of the losers, and Malone's stand wasn't liked, but the Malone riders circled in, and Sheriff Matt Bramer shouldered through, and the situation became suddenly less tense.

"Let's hear what the chief has to say," cried Malone. "Mebbe he's got a word or two he would like to announce!"

In a minute the old chief, flanked by his two Ute helpers, was inside the circle of whites.

"Chief," said Big Bill, and his voice trembled, "this white man is callin' names. Now it's yuhr turn to call names—why did yuh put yuhr Chico hoss in the feed stable yesterday an' then take him away so suddenly—eh? Yuh told me las' night; now tell these folks!"

The chief's face hardened. "Before race talked about me see black horse," said the chief simply, "an' me catch Mex boy shootin' white stuff into hoss with doctor's squirt gun. So! Me know that bad! Then white boys say to have race! Me 'fraid to say 'no,' so me ask to have hoss Chico in stable where my boys can watch black hoss. Sure, they see Mex boy shoot more dope into black hoss—bad—very bad—me take um my

hoss away—'fraid mebbe somebody dope him, too!"

Ace's face had gone white, but Eddie Owens, who had lost plenty on the race, spoke up. "Then, chief, yuh framed to gentle yuhr hoss to all this blanket wavin', knowin' yuh'd scare the black into losin'?"

The old chief's face was childlike. "No! Injuns always wave blankets an' yell like um crazy man at hoss race."

"He lies about that dope!" screamed Ace, recovering his breath. "It's a lie; I claim the race."

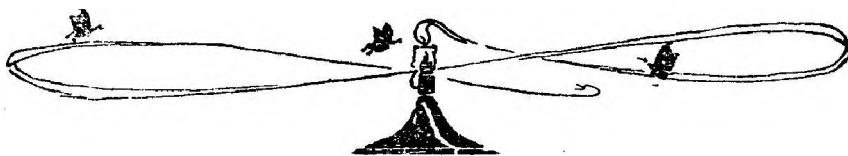
"No, it ain't a lie, Allen," spoke up Big Bill Malone. "I know yuh; saw yuh perform in Craig—know that black, too—know yuh was caught dopin' him up thar—an' besides—snoopin' through

yuhr packs in the stable a while back I finds this bottle an' this hypo gun."

Malone held out the objects, and Ace slumped.

"We like fair play in this country," went on Big Bill loudly, "and' the gray hoss is entitled to this race, blankets or no blankets; as fer yuh, Allen, the sheriff is entitled to yuh, an' he'll see yuh outa town pronto—ain't that right, Sheriff Bramer, an' ain't that right, boys? We don't want no crook among us, do we, gents?"

And the roar of approval that answered Big Bill, ratifying his remarks, showed not only that Ignacio had no room for such crooks as Allen, but also that the horse-race enthusiasts of Ignacio were blamed good losers.



CALIFORNIANS SUBJECT TO FOREST FIRE DUTY

ATTORNEY GENERAL U. S. WEBB, of California, has recently ruled that the State has a right under the law to summon all able-bodied male residents to assist the authorities, with or without pay, in suppressing forest fires, as well as in the protection of life, should the emergency arise. In other words, every able-bodied man within the boundaries of the State is a potential fire fighter, subject to draft if needed.

The ruling was made in answer to the following question which was submitted to the attorney general by State Forester M. B. Pratt: "Can a person who is summoned by a State fire warden to fight fire, demand and collect pay for such services?"

The opinion points out that Section thirty-seven of the political code provides that the State has the following right over persons within its limits: "To require services of persons, with or without compensation, in protecting life and property." While it is the policy of the State to pay for such services when funds are available, the lack of funds, the opinion explains, would not prevent the proper authorities from summoning able-bodied men to serve without compensation.

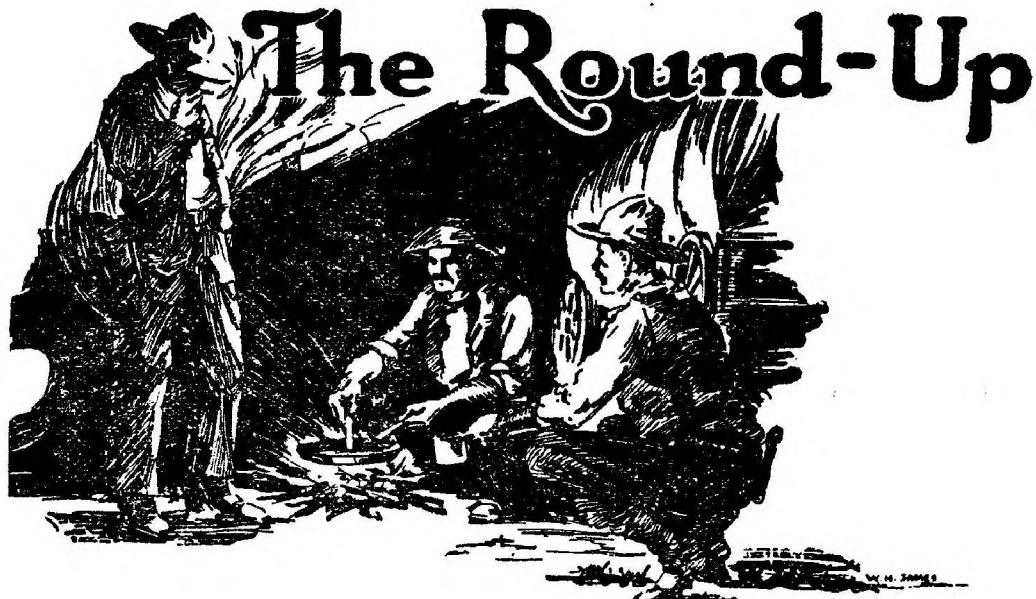
Much importance is attached to this ruling by representatives of the State board of Forestry. At times it becomes necessary to gather a force of fire fighters hastily, and it may be costly to delay such action because of lack of funds and quibbling over matters of compensation. The action of a few fire fighters in placing in the hands of attorneys, pay claims on which payment had been unavoidably delayed, was one of the reasons which prompted State Forester Platt to ask the attorney general to make a ruling on the point.

Navajo Sleep Song

By HARRISON CONRAD

I AM the cottonwood in the dusk,
And you are the baby moon;
I swing you high, I swing you low,
To the time of the dusk-wind's croon.
I fold you close to my mother heart
And weave you in my hair;
And I swing you high, O baby moon,
To and fro to the dusk-wind's tune:
Cling close, my baby, close! Too soon
The coyote calls to the desert dune
Where growls the hungry bear.

I am the cottonwood in the dark,
And you are the baby moon;
I swing you low, I swing you low,
To the time of the night-wind's croon.
Oh, let me fold you in my heart
And weave you in my hair!
But you laugh and hide, my baby moon,
As I bend and dance to the night-wind's tune,
And you run away from my arms too soon
To follow the stars to the shadowy dune
Where prowls the hungry bear.



The Round-Up

FOLKS, we sure got a grand treat for you all this evenin'. A couple of the boys have got one of them there author fellers—none other than George Gilbert—argin' out there behind the chuck wagon, and they be a-goin' to get said author gent over here and make him tell it to us. And say, it's *some* triumph, to get an author talkin' free, gratis, for nothin', seein' as how he can sell all his words at so much per, even countin' the "I's" and "a's."

Here he is now. Come on, go it, George:

"BOSS OF THE ROUND-UP AND FOLKS: In a recent number, in the Round-up, Aubrey Vaughn's query about that sixty-mile hoss is answered by that writin' Geezer, Bob Case.

"Of course a great deal depends upon what the author and his critic mean by the word lope. There is the high lope, at top speed, only for emergencies, the trail lope, a good, nice, steady clip, and there's the fox trot, and so forth, which slower gaits wouldn't be called 'lopes.' It is nothing for a horse to go sixty miles in a night or day. No horse could

gallop, top speed, that far. He might go a long way, but he'd bog down before he got that far, at top speed, or on the high lope. It wouldn't be necessary for a horse to go fast to cover sixty miles in a night. Say the night lasted from eight thirty p. m. till four a. m., or eight hours. That would call for a little over seven miles an hour, on the average, and leave over eight, almost nine, minutes to the mile, not a fast gait, compared with what a horse *can do at top speed*.

"Let me tell of a personal experience with an enduring horse. As a boy I cared for a black Morgan mare, a trotter, a road horse, as we called them in those days. The man I worked for had a section to keep in repair on a turnpike telegraph line. This mare he used to cover the section. In doing this she always had to cover from twenty-five to thirty miles in a day, according to the way we went. We made the trip on an average about ten times a month. We drove her to a light sidebar buggy, with quite a weight of tools. Well, one time we were ordered to another section to help out in an emergency. Another man and I drove this

mare eighty miles between six a. m. and nine p. m., to the buggy, with the tools. We made no great speed at any time, but the mare kept a steady jog, sometimes breaking into a moderate trot. Figure it up: Fifteen hours into eighty miles doesn't give much per hour, but the steady clip does it. This mare hardly turned a hair all day. She was gaunted and tired at the end, but a week later, on a holiday, she took that same buggy, without tools, but with a man and boy in it, around a half-mile track, twice, in 3.01. Of course the cow pony is another horse entirely, fitted to go under saddle, not to sulky or buggy. I believe Case's story, too.

"In that same issue, F. R. Buckley says that he passes the question of the gun-rolling and 'surrenderin' the gun butt first and then reversing it to shoot, to some old-timer. I was not born when the hills were made, but have seen it done and I give warning that it is safest done with an empty gun. Many a man has been killed by his own gun—trying the trick. With an empty gun hung—balanced—on the forefinger by the trigger guard and trigger, the gun is spun as on a pivot and the thumb held so that it will catch the hammer as it thus turns, thus cocking the weapon, the thumb releasing the hammer when the muzzle is away from the person of the man doing the "roll," otherwise the discharge will take place into the "turner," instead of into the "turnee." When you've mastered it with one gun, try two, one on each forefinger. It is a trick and a hard one. It was used by gun specialists in fights where many shots were to be fired, but where one shot was called for quick, the quick draw, the gun either in the belt, left side, butt to the front or stuck under the belt right over the stomach, was relied upon by many, as Buckley says. Men who habitually carried their guns—when riding—low-hung in leg holsters, put their gun in front, in the belt, with

the butt right under their right hand. Sometimes, when they expected trouble, they kept their arms folded, the right hand under the left elbow, and drew from the left holster. Yet these same men would make a snap draw—hip—from the low holster, right side, when needed. Pat Garrett killed Billy, The Kid, with such a draw, for, in his own story, he says that he was seated in a dark room by Pete Maxwell's bed, with his right side—where his gun was, to the bed—when The Kid came in, gun in hand, and asked Maxwell: *'Quienes?'* having seen Pat's deputies outside and not knowing who they were. He had his own self-cocking gun in hand, a .41. He pointed it at Pat and asked who he was. Pat fell over to the left, jerked his gun, and caught The Kid near the heart, all in one motion, and The Kid shot, but his shot went wild, because Pat's bullet struck before The Kid could shoot. The old frontier six of Pat out-sped The Kid's dude gun.

"As for 'surrendering' a gun and then reversing it, it is done by drawing the gun, which must be a hammer gun, with your thumb on the hammer, index finger on the trigger, other three fingers back of the trigger guard rather lightly. The gun is extended, butt foremost, trigger up, in such a way that the muzzle is toward you. Then with a quick flip, the gun is spun on the forefinger as on a pivot, the thumb engaging the hammer and the weight of the gun raising the hammer. The thumb flies off at the right time and the hammer goes down. This trick, also, leads to punctured 'tummies,' if practiced with a loaded gun by a tyro. Personally, I never either 'rolled' or 'reversed' a gun.

"I note that Buckley says that 'the mysterious part of the quick-draw business has been and is, very greatly exaggerated.' No, it has, and is, not. The 'mystery' was there, but it was just this: practice, practice, practice. Those

old-time gunmen practiced draws from all positions, from all angles, until they were letter perfect. They practiced draws, as the duelist with the rapier practices, or as the boxer shadow boxes or uses the punching bag and boxes with a training partner. They used good shells when they had plenty of them; when they did not, they put empties in, so they would not hurt their guns, and drew and 'fired' with them in the gun. Some used one gun, some

two, some one kind, some another. Each had his preference.

"In the talk on guns above, I am referring to the old-time frontier models, .44 or .45 Colt, of course.

"Lastly, which I hope will save some lives: Don't try to 'roll' or 'reverse' a gun that is loaded, unless you are expert on the trick you covet using and probably you'd better not try it, anyway, with shells in the gun. If you do—well, adios!"

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE:

THE UNBRANDED 30

By JOHNSTON McCULLEY

A few unbranded mavericks caused no end of trouble—and then—when somebody ran an iron on 'em, there was still more

A DIP IN THE DESERT

By HUGH F. GRINSTEAD

Here is where trustfulness was worth a sack of gold

"FLAPJACK" MEEHAN'S LAST LAUGH

By FRANK RICHARDSON PIERCE

Depend upon this old sour dough to make it a hearty one.

AND OTHER STORIES

Order Your Copy Now



Our Gang's fine. Come on in.

Twenty-five cents in stamps or coin sent to The Hollow Tree, Western Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, will bring you either the button style for your coat lapel, or a pin. In ordering be sure to state which you wish.



Miss Helen Rivers, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Rivers will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. Letters will be forwarded direct when correspondents so wish; otherwise they will be answered here. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Hollow Tree.

ALTHOUGH the main purpose of the old Hollow is to help those who gather beneath its branches find congenial pen friends of their own sex, and although the Owl gets very cross and ruffled indeed at any attempt to transact business through The Tree, he approves of our helping folks who really need homes to find them. That's only being kind and friendly, he says, and living up to our motto. Some very happy homes have been found through The Tree, too. Now here's a sister who needs one.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: I am sixty-seven years old, in fair health, can do a good bit of work yet, love children, and have an average good disposition. I would love to find a home with some one where I could help and not feel in the way. Maybe some one would like to "adopt" me. I don't believe they would regret it; I would do my best to please. If you can help me out I would be grateful to you, for I've no home.

GRANDMA FLORENCE.

Care of The Tree.

A sister who was raised on a ranch and knows all about bucking horses writes:

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE TREE: I am an old cowgirl from eastern Oregon, learned to ride when I was six years old, and rode until I was married twelve years later. My father was a big stockman and I had to help do all the beef gathering, calf branding, horse herding, et cetera. If any one thinks it is funny to be a cowgirl she surely is mistaken. I have ridden hard from six in the morning to long after dark with no dinner but maybe a sandwich until I came in at night; I would be lying on the saddle horn then sometimes asleep.

I have never seen any real bucking horses since I left Oregon. I have seen men ride a horse until blood flowed from ears and mouth, get off and rest, and ride him some more. I have been thrown seven or eight times in one day, as I helped my father gentle saddle horses to sell to ladies after he had taken the rough off them.

We came to Montana in 1896 and lived there twenty years; have been in Wyoming three years. I just hate town, and my two grown boys, husband and I want to move out of the city. Will some readers from eastern Oregon and Arizona write me? Isn't there a very large dam being built in Arizona? I will answer all letters to the best of my ability and can sure give some information about Montana and Wyoming. Hoping to get a bunch of letters.

MRS. NORA V. LONG.
Box 552, Lovell, Wyo.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: I am a Canadian but have lived in the States a little and liked it fine. At present I am on a farm in Saskatchewan four miles from town, have been here just a little over a month and haven't had one visitor yet. But if you could see how my little girls love it! We go exploring the sloughs and search for flowers and see how many kinds of birds we can find and look for their nests, although not to rob them. We watch the different colors of the clouds and their shapes and then they tell their daddy all about it when he comes in to supper. I want to teach them to value beauty in nature and feel it will expand their little souls, so their lives when they grow older will be beautiful too.

Will those of you who live near the mountains with their lovely springs and trees be sure to write, although I hope for letters from everywhere. I think all places have their own beauty.

MRS. NELLIE.

Care of The Tree.

If you want information about California or about the life of a forest ranger drop a line to Lonesome Ranger, in care of The Tree.

Pensive is another lonely brother who'll welcome letters, especially from sailors and marines. I'll forward his mail to him.

Carl Carrico, Post Library, Langley Field, Virginia, says he hasn't had a letter in about five years. I think it's about time he received a shower of 'em. How about it?

"I am a concert pianist now on tour. I would like to correspond with or meet members of The Gang; can answer questions about any State in the Union, and also about Canada, Alaska, and Mexico," writes Gene Rolston, 786 Eleventh Street, Oakland, California. Gene says the address given is his home one, so mail sent there ought to reach him.

Canadian would like to hear from brothers who're interested in physical culture. Address him in my care, folks.

Florence Powell, P. O. Box 139, Council Bluffs, Iowa, has lots of old songs to exchange. Who will send her the words to these: "Fair Charlotte,"

"The Soldier from Missouri," "The Orphan Girl," "La Paloma?"

Here are three British tommies who want to correspond with some of their American cousins: Privates E. Gallagher, T. Dixon, and W. R. Moore, all of the First Battalion, King's Regiment, Mandora Bks., Aldershot, Hants, England.

Charles W. Creamer, L. Box 462, Belle Fourche, South Dakota, who is fifteen and lives on a ranch, would like to exchange letters and pictures with Gangsters his age. He can tell about herding cattle and the tri-State Round-up, which is held at Belle Fourche every year.

Peggy Travers, 355 Broadway, Union Hill, New Jersey, says she can handle lots of letters, sisters.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: I am a student in the Normal College here; I am planning a trip covering most of the Western States and would like some letters from that part of the country.

Our city is a small residential place of about eight thousand. It has many long streets, over which huge green trees spread their beauty, and are cool and sweet. Many fine homes make Ypsilanti a good place to live in. If any of The Gang would like me to tell them more about this part of Michigan, will be glad to do so. A reply guaranteed if you write to THOMAS R. LAWRENCE, 321 E. Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti, Mich.

DEAR HOLLOW TREE: I would like to hear from any one who is interested in the West and I will answer every letter. I have lived here in this valley for four years, and it surely is the only place for me. I came down from Canada where I worked with the Canadian surveyors. Have been nearly to the shores of Hudson Bay and have met and known quite a lot of the Mounted Police. Have been all over the West, in Mexico, and lived in Havana, Cuba. I am twenty-four years old, Scotch, and served with the Scotch Highlanders.

Just now I'm studying forestry and in the summer months I go up in the mountains around Lake Tahoe. I'll try to answer all questions asked me, even to the movies, for I've worked in Hollywood and some studios in San Francisco. GORDON MACKENZIE, 2661 Donner Way, Sacramento, Calif.

DEAR GANGSTERS: Have spent the greater part of five years in Haiti, only returned to the States a few months ago, so I'm hardly civilized as yet. I brought back quite a collection of photos from the negro republic that may be of interest to The Gang.

While in Haiti I learned the language, which is principally French, but, oh how it's shattered! To one who speaks pure French it would be a crime. I lived with the natives and studied them first-hand and attended several of their religious ceremonies which were weird, to say the least; also I gathered a knowledge of their folk tales. If any of you are interested, write me and your letter will be answered. RUSSELL E. NALL.

1602 W. Kentucky Street, Louisville, Ky.

George T. Mann, U. S. S. *Preble*, Asiatic Station, via Seattle, Washington, will gladly exchange letters and cards with Hollow Tree brothers.

Frank Seaton is a stranger in a city and lonely. Will brother Gangsters write him at 143 W. Newton Street, Boston, Massachusetts?

"Just a line to ask the wise Old Owl for a few letters from any man in any State," says I. G. Hildebrand, Julesburg, Colorado.

James L. Scott, 1021 Ninth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., is lonely and blue and complains that the mail man has forgotten him.

Will Western sisters write to Mrs. Clara Smith, Room 444, Baltimore Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri? She is fifty years old and works in the linen room of that hotel.

"I am a country girl working as a cook in the city, and I get awfully lonesome. I would like very much to make friends. I am nineteen years old and my ambitions are to ride a horse and own one; have plenty of time to answer letters and promise to tell all about

this part of the country, West Virginia. Address Only a Cook, in care of The Tree."

DEAR MISS RIVERS AND GANGSTERS: I am wondering if somewhere in this good old U. S. A. or elsewhere there isn't some single sister in the thirties who, like myself, would like a few more pen friends, some one who would not grow weary in well-doing.

True-hearted women, who for various reasons have been placed in rather narrow and limited environments, whose minds, nevertheless, are wide awake and reaching around the world, we have a peculiar problem to solve that is all our own. So why can't we reach out and join hands? I see so few letters in The Tree from women of this class, and there must be plenty of them who read the department with as keen an interest as I do, so please let me hear from some of you.

MISS L. M. KAPPELER.

136 So. 10th Street, New Philadelphia, Ohio.

DEAR GANG: This is from an inveterate wanderer. I served in the army when sixteen, but was discharged in less than a year, owing to injuries received therein. Next I sailed as ordinary seaman to Buenos Aires from San Francisco via the Straits of Magellan. Since returning, in 1920, I have worked in lumber camps in the Northwest, railroad construction in the Mojave Desert, as surveyor in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Coos Bay, Oregon, and above the clouds in the highest range of the Sierras in California.

I've ridden the range on my uncle's cattle ranch in New Mexico, and was shipwrecked last year on Cano Island, Costa Rica, Central America, where I was at the wheel when the Pacific Mail passenger liner went on the rocks with a full passenger list.

I am spending my last hours on board the U. S. S. *President Harrison* in the capacity of quartermaster. We sailed from San Francisco last December, and have just completed a voyage around the world. I'll be at home in Frisco until my next adventure. Will be glad to hear from Gangsters interested in travel or outdoor life.

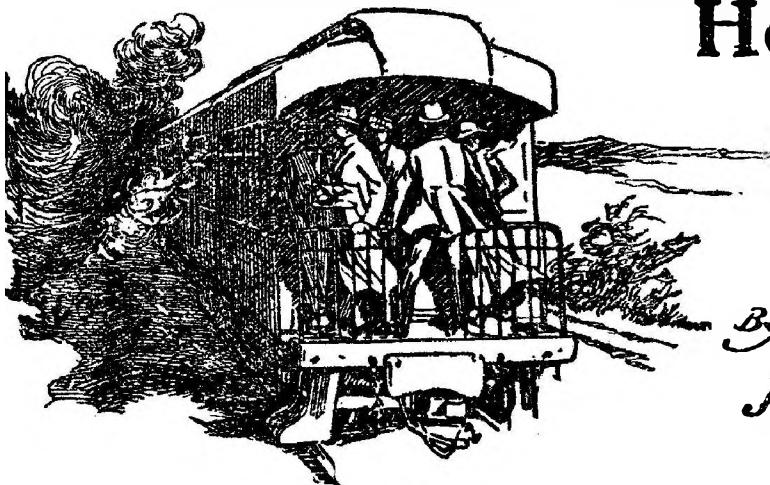
GEORGE H. OSBORNE.

1504 Franklin Street, San Francisco, Calif.

OUTLAW'S CABIN BECOMES RADIO CHURCH

IN the hills, near the new gold camp of Gilbert, Nevada, about thirty miles from Tonopah, there is an old stone structure known as the Outlaw's Cabin. It has stood there for fifty years or more. A few weeks ago, the name of the cabin was changed to the Radio Church. Every Sunday it is filled with those who listen in on a sermon delivered several hundred miles away.

Where To Go and How To Get There



By

John North

It is our aim in this department to be of genuine practical help and service to those who wish to make use of it. Don't hesitate to write to us and give us the opportunity of assisting you to the best of our ability.

Address all communications to John North, care of WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

WENATCHEE NATIONAL FOREST

AT a rough calculation the Wenatchee National Forest is seventy miles long by fifty miles wide, and extends from the summit of the Cascade Mountains to the break of the Columbia River, and from the Glacier Peak to the Yakima River. Within this territory, situated on the eastern slope of the Cascade Range in the State of Washington, there are mountainous ranges that provide summer pasture for thousands of sheep and cattle, while the water from the forest streams irrigates about half a million acres of land in the Wenatchee, Kittitas, and Yakima Valleys.

The scenery in this forest is marvelous, and many beautiful views over immense stretches of country may be seen from the fire lookout stations on mountain summits, which can be reached by trail. Tumwater Mountain, about four miles north of Leavenworth, being more easy of access than the others. A climb to these lookout posts is always

an enjoyable experience, and many visitors go up in batches of from ten to twenty persons. A well-developed system of trails gives every one a chance to explore all parts of the forest, foot or pack horse trips being permitted in any direction.

There are good automobile roads leading to the Wenatchee Forest, including the Blewett Pass, which has a maximum grade of five per cent, and is one of the most beautiful drives in the Northwest. It was built by the forest service in coöperation with the bureau of public roads, the State of Washington, and Chelan and Kittitas Counties. The trip from Seattle to Wenatchee by way of Snoqualmie Pass and Blewett Pass can be made easily by automobile in twelve hours.

Another good automobile road runs from Leavenworth to Lake Wenatchee, about thirty miles, where there are hotels and camping grounds. Some cottages have been erected on the shores

of the lake, and a regular summer colony is growing up near this beautiful stretch of water. The fishing here is good, and berries are plentiful.

Icicle Creek, which enters the Wenatchee River at Leavenworth, is a good trout stream, and a forest service trail extends from its mouth to its head. This creek flows out of the heart of the forest, and its trout-fishing grounds have to be reached by a foot trail, which is also one of the approaches to Mount Stuart, a jagged snow cap standing to the east of the main Cascades.

Besides Wenatchee, there are three other large lakes within the forest boundaries skirted by the Sunset Highway, just east of the Cascade divide, which are included in a great national irrigation project, making possible the immense orchard districts of the Ellensburg and Yakima region; these are Keechelus, Kachess, and Cle Elum. On the shores of these lakes summer-home tracts and forest camp sites have been laid out and are occupied by numerous visitors. There are also hotels operating under forest service permits, where good meals and lodging may be obtained, as well as supplies and repairs for automobiles.

Excellent hunting, fishing, and camping may be enjoyed in the Wenatchee Forest. Its many lovely lakes and streams, sheltered glens and deep solitudes, glaciers and meadows, hills and valleys, rugged peaks and steep cañons offer the widest variety from which to choose vacation spots, and its hundreds of small lakes invite summer home seekers to erect their cottages or pitch their tents on their banks.

The government spends immense sums of money each year to protect the timber and other resources of the forest. Any one may use the camping places, fish in the waters, and hunt in the mountains, as permitted by the fish and game laws of the State. Wood needed for camp fires is free, as is also

grass for saddle and pack horses. The forest-service telephone lines may be used by visitors in the event of sickness or accident, or for reporting fires or other dangers to the nearest ranger. Nothing whatever is required of the traveler except that he secure a campfire permit, be careful with fire, and observe the rules of the forest.

Information regarding camp and home sites, permits, licenses, and all matters pertaining to the forest may be obtained by writing to Mr. A. H. Sylvester, Forest Supervisor, Wenatchee, Washington.

WHERE TO SEE INDIANS

DEAR MR. NORTH: Please let me know where I can find Indians as nearly as possible in their wild state. This isn't just a foolish idea, but I really want to see the most primitive Indians that there are. E. M. T.

East St. Louis, Illinois.

The educational and civilizing influences which the United States government, through the medium of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is bringing to bear on the different tribes on the reservations scattered throughout the West, have done a great deal toward lifting them from a "primitive" state. The best field, in my opinion, for the study of Indian life at first hand is in northern New Mexico and northeastern Arizona, where the Navajo reservations are situated. From there it is an easy step to the Four Corners Country, where the Utes represent about the "wildest" Indians of the present day. This territory is also within a short journey from the interesting Pueblo villages of New Mexico. With Gallup, New Mexico, say, for a starting point, and a few pointers from one of the guides you would meet there, you could take a mighty interesting trip through the Indian country, visiting a number of different tribes and studying the varied types. I think you'd find enough of the wild and the primitive, too, to

suit your fancy. It would be a good idea to read up all you can on this country before going there.

ADVICE TO THE ADVENTUROUS

DEAR MR. NORTH: I have read numerous letters in your department of WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, in regard to the advantages and disadvantages of coming West, and will try to express what I think is a broad-minded solution.

I have made a trip across this continent twice; once with my father in a Pullman, and the second time just five years ago, when I grabbed a handful of box cars in Baltimore and arrived in Los Angeles twenty-five days later. The trip cost me twelve dollars and forty cents, and I never begged a meal. It may be considered rather degrading, but it was an adventurous experience which I shall never forget or regret.

I was thoughtful enough before leaving Baltimore to send my fortune, which consisted of a few clothes and seventy-five dollars, on to Los Angeles. Therefore the day of my arrival I was able to clean the cinders out of my hair, and get into clean clothes.

Work was not easy to find, but after the second week I found employment in a department store. I lived in Los Angeles about six months, and then went into the mining game.

In this line I have made a fair success—that is, I have at least my umbrella for a rainy day. I own a mining property which nets me a very nice income, and am sure that it would have taken a great many years to equal this back East, if I were compelled to start without capital.

I am twenty-five years old, have been in several foreign countries, and have not seen anywhere such opportunities as exist in California. Many people knock the West, but that is because they try to get into the same rut out here that they left back home. If they cannot make the change advantageous both for themselves and for the West, it would be better for them to stay back East.

I would be glad to receive letters from readers and would try to explain any phase of life in California that I am familiar with.

J. B.

There you are, fellows! If any of you feel like profiting by J. B.'s kind

offer I shall be glad to send on your letters. And, of course, you will not forget to send him a stamp if you really want to hear from him.

DON'T BURN YOUR BRIDGES!

DEAR MR. NORTH: I want to go up to the Northwest and settle around Seattle or thereabouts. I shall have to sell up my home here and make a new start out West. Kindly let me know what my chances out there will be, and if you think this a good move.

L. WISE.

Richmond, Va.

I judge from the fact that you have a home to sell that you are a man of family responsibilities and that you would have to reestablish a residence for yourself and your family in Seattle or wherever you finally settle in the Northwest. It is proverbially bad policy to burn your bridges behind you—no matter where you may be. In the first place, you don't know whether you would like it in Seattle or anywhere near there. It is a live, flourishing part of the country to be sure, but there might be something about it that you would not like at all.

The best plan, in a case such as yours, is to hold on to your present home until you feel reasonably certain that the new location is a desirable one for you and your family. Get a bit of money in hand and take a trip of investigation to the place you have in mind. Study working conditions. Try to get a job and see how you make out. You should be prepared to finance yourself for several months before making such an experiment. It is only by actually trying to live in a place that you learn whether you will like it. Then when you are satisfied that all is well, you may arrange to dispose of your old home and send for the rest of the family to come on and join you. Think this over before you risk burning your bridges.

MISSING

This department is conducted in both WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE and DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, thus giving readers double service, is offered free of charge to our readers. Its purpose is to aid them in getting in touch with persons of whom they have lost track.

While it will be better to use your name in the notice, we will print your request "blown" if you prefer. In sending "blown" notices, you must, of course, give us your right name and address, so that we can forward promptly any letters that may come for you. We reserve the right to reject any notice that seems to us unsuitable.

If it can be avoided, please do not send us a "General Delivery" post-office address, for experience has proved that these persons who are not specific as to address often have mail that we send them returned to us marked "not found." It would be well, also, to notify us of any change in your address.

Now, readers, help those whose friends or relatives are missing, as you would like to be helped if you were in a similar position.

WARNING.—Do not forward money to any one who sends you a letter or telegram, asking for money "to get home," etc., until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

ATTENTION.—Am trying to locate the descendants of Garret Smith, who served in the Civil War in an Iowa Division. His first wife had two sons and a daughter and his second wife had three sons and a daughter. It will be of interest to the family of this party if any one knowing them will ask them to write to J. W. Smith, Lake Valley Store, Gotebo, Okla.

McNEE, ARCHIBALD HARROLD.—His home was in Penshurst, Australia, but he was last heard from at Seattle, Wash., sixteen years ago. He is forty-one now, and has brown eyes and hair. Please send any information to Mrs. W. Newport, Claremont, Tasmania, Penshurst, Victoria, Australia.

MILLER, WAYNE.—Any one knowing his present whereabouts will confer a favor upon an old pal by writing to Dick Yeager, Camino, Calif.

DARE, CHARLES.—Formerly of Co. H, 2d Inf., Fort Sheridan, Ill. Your brother and family are anxious to hear from you. Please write to 215 E. 29th St., Tacoma, Wash.

McCLURE, JESSE.—Last heard of at Marine Barracks, Brooklyn, N. Y. Your old buddy would like to hear from you. 215 E. 28th St., Tacoma, Wash.

KLEIN, E.—He speaks English with a Dutch accent, is fifty years old, five feet four inches tall, has dark hair, fair complexion, and blue eyes. It is thought he was in Fort Smith, Ark., last April. Any information regarding his present whereabouts will be helpful to G. D., care of this magazine.

LEADER, R. O.—Dick, please write, as I am very much concerned about you. Do not come back before you write. Lois L., North Bend, Ore.

ATTENTION.—I would like to hear from or about Mrs. Mabel Evans, as I am anxious to get in touch with her mother, Mrs. LaCount. C. V. L. S., 7 Chestnut Ave., Plainfield, N. J.

SOMAN, FRANK.—Last heard from near Amherst, Ohio, in 1910. He is thirty-three years old, and has dark hair and dark eyes. Please send any information to W. J. E., care of the magazine.

MAY, WILL.—He was last seen in New Orleans, La., and is thought to have gone to Washington about twelve years ago. He is about five feet six inches tall and weighs between one hundred and fifty and one hundred and seventy pounds. Any one knowing anything of his present whereabouts will confer a favor upon his family by writing to his brother, Dan Evans, 402 S. Myrtle St., McComb, Miss.

McBRIDE, JAMES E.—Ida and I both are anxious to see you or at least hear from you. Please write to your Brother Frank, Box 384, Healdton, Okla.

CREIGHTON, EARL.—He is five feet seven inches tall, has blue eyes, is nineteen years old, and is sometimes dressed in cowboy fashion. Any one who now knows this young man please write to his sister, Annie Creighton, Petaluma, Sonoma Co., Calif.

HUDSON, MRS. FREDERICA.—Any one knowing the whereabouts of this lady or her relatives—her husband was a British officer—please notify Mrs. Joseph V. Horn, care of this magazine.

MYERS, LOUIS WALTER.—He was born in Coleridge, Neb., in 1890, and was taken away by his father two years later. He has an uncle by the name of Chris Myers in the State of Kan. Any information regarding him will be appreciated by a relative, Mrs. Jessie Thorpe, 303 W. 6th St., Sioux City, Idaho.

PORTLOCK, GLEN.—The folks all worry about you and you are needed at home. Mother.

SILAS, NORBY L.—He was formerly an engineer connected with the Frisco Railroad Co. and working out of Birmingham, Ala. Any one knowing his present address please advise his wife, Mrs. Lillie Silas, 1631 S. Maple St., Memphis, Tenn.

DONALDSON, GROVER.—He is tall and slender, has dark hair, and has two or three fingers off each hand. His son is anxious to get in touch with him. Write to Delbert C. Donaldson, 915 S. Poinsettia St., W. Palm Beach, Fla.

COOPER, CHARLES.—He is of Irish birth, twenty-seven years old, five feet three inches tall, has gray eyes, brown hair, a fresh complexion, and the third finger of his right hand is missing. His mother is anxiously awaiting any news from or about him. Mrs. Hanlen, 72 Duke St., Kearny, N. J.

WILLIAMS, RAMON.—Father paid "Sunshine" what you owed him. Mother is seriously ill and looking for you. Write to us. Bob.

CALIFORNIA STIFFS.—W. D. O'Shannessy, who formerly worked for the Farmers' Garage, Calipatria, Calif., left last winter and has not been heard from since. He is six feet one, weighs about one hundred and sixty-five pounds, has dark hair and brown eyes, and is an auto mechanic by trade. His father is seriously ill and not expected to live. Please write to his brother, Clyde R. Williams, Electrical School, U. S. Naval Training Station, San Diego, Calif.

HOENSTIEN, ARTHUR B.—Formerly of Sidney, Neb.—Would like to correspond with you or see you. Curley, Myrtle, Box 494, Oak Creek, Colo.

SAASTAD, SIGURED M.—He was in Spokane, Wash., in 1924, but has not been heard of since, although he is believed to be in Minnesota at the present time. He is tall, very fair, and speaks with a Swedish accent. If any one knows of his present whereabouts please write to Elizabeth van Trojen, Gen. Del., Port Angeles, Wash.

EMMET, GEORGE.—Who once lived at Kelvin, Ariz., has been anxiously sought for many years by his son George Emmet, Jr., R. 2, Box 370, Phoenix, Ariz.

HARBRECHT, CHARLES.—Last heard from in 1909 from Denver, Colo. If any one can supply any information regarding him it will be appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Marie Cahill, Lincoln, N. J.

DOKE, BEN.—Formerly of Richards, Colo., moved to Kansas City last fall. It will be considered a favor if any one knowing his present address will communicate with his nephew, Ledru Hilton, Box 121, Sedalia, Mo.

WILHOIT, EDWARD LAWRENCE.—He was known to have been in San Luis, Obispo, Calif., ten years ago, but has not been heard from since. He is five feet six inches tall, weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds, and is very dark. If known, please write to Mrs. N. L. Howland, 879 Junior St., Portland, Ore.

TEMPLIN, DWIGHT.—Everything will be all right. Your absence is causing me much sadness and worry. Please write. Mother.

ATTENTION.—My five children—Eva, John, William, Nellie, and Martha Ann—were placed out by the Childs' Home of St. Paul, Minn., where they were taken on Mar. 4, 1916. If any one knows of any trace of them please write to Thomas R. D. Vaughan, 734 W. State St., Rockford, Ill.

WOODWARD, MRS. J. H.—She was last heard from in Indianapolis, Ind., six years ago. Any information regarding her will be appreciated by her brother, Wm. M. Crawford, 605 Bellevue Ave., Galena, Kan.

TINTLE, CHESTER.—Was last heard of at Mt. Tabor, N. J. Any information regarding his present whereabouts will be appreciated if sent to Yeoman, care of this magazine.

PANKOWSKI, ADAM or "MIKE."—He formerly lived in Toronto, Can., and when last heard of was working in the office of the "Detroit News," Detroit, Mich. An old friend would like to hear from or about him. Paul J. Wilson, Broadalbin, N. Y.

COOK, S. W.—He disappeared from home on May 29th, and his wife is very anxious to get some word from or about him. He is forty-five years old, five feet six inches tall, has gray eyes and brown hair, and has a heavy tubercular cough. Any one who can enlighten me as to his whereabouts please write to Mrs. S. W. Cook, 809 Adams St., Williamsport, Pa.

BAKER, RAY A.—Formerly of Pine Buff.—Please let me know where you are, so I may write you. Jean C., care of this magazine.

LOOMIS, RALPH E.—Please write home. Mary.

MCQUEEN, LESTER C.—I have not heard from him since he was discharged from the army in 1921 and would like very much to find him. John Fletcher, 246 LaFitte St., San Antonio, Tex.

F. J. H.—Am asking you to forgive the past and write to me through your friend, Bill G., care of the K and N Club, Joe.

GRIFFEN, G. C.—Before the World War I worked with him at the State University of Ill., but lost trace of him when I came East during the war. He is now about forty years old. Any one knowing him please communicate with C. C. Johnson, Hebron, Md.

HENRY, MONTE.—Write to me, I have news for you. Am leaving with a show again in Aug., and would like to hear from you before I go. Nell Adams, 3505 Morgan St., St. Louis, Mo.

KABER, REBB. of Gagetown, Mich., left Detroit in Sept., 1920, and is thought to have gone to Philadelphia, but has not been heard from since. His mother is dead three years, and his father and sisters would like to receive some word from or about him. Write to Mrs. Anna Kaprilian, 5816 Harvey St., Detroit, Mich.

WADE, JAMES HENRY.—He was divorced about two years after his daughter Alice was born in Los Angeles, Calif., in 1909. Any one knowing his present address please write to A. W., care of this magazine.

LAND, EDDIE. whose home was in Macon, Ga., has not been heard from for some time. His mother died since his disappearance. Send any information about him to E. C. Neal, 1310 Jefferson St., Newberry, S. C.

WELCH, "DAD."—Sis has very important news for you. Please write and send your address. E. T.

PENDLETON, ROBERT.—Mother and I understand and forgive. Please write home. Evelyn.

COX, R. R. (BOB).—He is five feet seven inches tall, thirty-four years old, has black hair and brown eyes, and wears glasses. His wife would like any information about him. Ethel Cox, 3340 E. Atlantic St., Los Angeles, Calif.

KELLY, ROY W., was last heard of in Los Angeles. I am anxious to get in touch with him and will appreciate it if any one knowing his address will please write to Mickey, care of this magazine.

MARTIN, EDWARD.—I have some news of advantage to you and can explain our misunderstanding. Please write. Ballistic.

FLETCHER.—My last hope was in you; am broken-hearted over this. Please come back. Mother.

HARRY H.—Mother, Alma, Ella Lee, and Althea are well, and we are all anxious to see you. Write to Alma Dudley Barnes, 310 N. Broome St., Wilmington, Del.

C. L. F.—Mother and father are separated and R. F. is in the navy. Send me your address, so I can write you particulars. Altie Dyer, Box 255, Mancos, Colo.

ANDERSON, CHARLES.—He is thirty-eight years old, six feet tall, has blue eyes, and a fair complexion. He came from England in 1913 and is thought to have gone to Detroit, Mich. Any one knowing anything about him please notify his mother, Mrs. W. J. Pope, 9 Simpson Ave., Toronto, Can.

JOVAL, NELL BONNETT. formerly of Grand Forks, N. D.—I was taken from my mother when very young, and authorities in Minneapolis, Minn., sent me to the Hennepin Co. Home. I earnestly desire to hear from my people, and will be thankful for any news. Alvina Joyal, 821 Birks Bldg., Hawaiian Music Studio, Winnipeg, Man., Can.

SMITH, JOHN THOMAS.—About twenty-four years ago he left his home to go to Montana, and has not been heard from since. He is now fifty years old. His father and brother are dead. Any information about him will be gratefully received by his niece, Mrs. Beulah A. Dunn, Gen. Del., Glendale, Calif.

ATTENTION.—My own people died when I was very young and I am anxious to get in touch with people by the name of Harris, who brought me up. They are living somewhere in the West now, probably Oakland, Calif. Please send any information to Wm. Howard Harris, Neskowin, Tillamook Co., Ore.

LAIRD, ALBERT E.—He was a cook in the army during the war. Any one who has any information regarding him please write to his niece, Mrs. Bertha Triplett, Star R., Box 33, Brawley, Calif.

BLACK, MRS. CHRISTY.—Her maiden name was Heflin. She is five feet four inches tall, about twenty-three years old, and has very fair complexion. Please forward any information to Josephine McDowell, Gen. Del., Duluth, Minn.

VEHUS, ROBERT. was last heard from at Queen Charlotte Islands in 1919. He is twenty-five years old, tall and large boned, and had his left wrist broken. If any one knows of his present address please write same to his mother, Mrs. A. Greensides, 237 4th Ave., N. W., Calgary, Alta., Can.

JACK, W. M.—Please communicate with Joe H., care of Zegoda Mfg. Co., Inchelium, Wash.

SCHULTE, W. E.—His mother and sister are anxious about him. He is twenty-nine years old, and has dark hair and blue eyes. He is thought to be in the State of Wash. Please send information to Mrs. Faye Mohr, Box 234, Deep Water, Mo.

DEMICK, R. C.—Last heard from in Frederick, Okla. Any one knowing him now please ask him to write to "Brown Eyes," care of this magazine.

HENSLEY, JACK. left his home in Blossom, Tex., six years ago. His sister is worried about him and wants him to write. Mrs. Bud Kincaid, R. 2, Blossom, Tex.

COLOMBO, RITA.—She lived on 39th St. in New York City in 1920, but has since changed her address. An old friend, M. Bartone, would like to hear from her at Belas-coim, 32 Vichiers, Havana, Cuba.

HOARD, W. P. was last heard from in N. C. His son, J. J. Hoard, is anxious to hear from him at 580 N. 16th St., Richmond, Va.

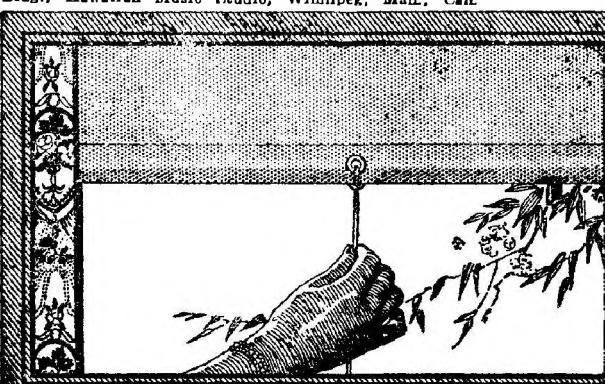
SCOTT, ELIZABETH MAY. left Jackson, Mich., thirty-four years ago, and was last heard of in Detroit, where she married a man whose home was in Buffalo, N. Y. If any one knows of her present whereabouts please write to her sister, Mrs. Alice Scott Hawkins, Route 2, Jackson, Mich.

HEARN, H. M.—Please write to your brother, H. V. Hearn, 36 E. Central Ave., Sierra Madre, Calif.

HAMMONDS, AUBREY.—He is five feet eight inches tall, has black hair, a dark complexion, and blue eyes, slightly crossed. He is twenty-four years old and has a very pleasant disposition. Send information regarding him to a friend, at Box 84, Woodville, Tex.

WARD, J. ALVIN.—Please write to your pal, W. M. S., 22 W. 3d St., Faribault, Minn.

SAFFER, BILL.—Mail addressed to W. at New Orleans returned. Would like to hear from you, as I expect to visit in New Orleans soon. Please write to "Goldie."



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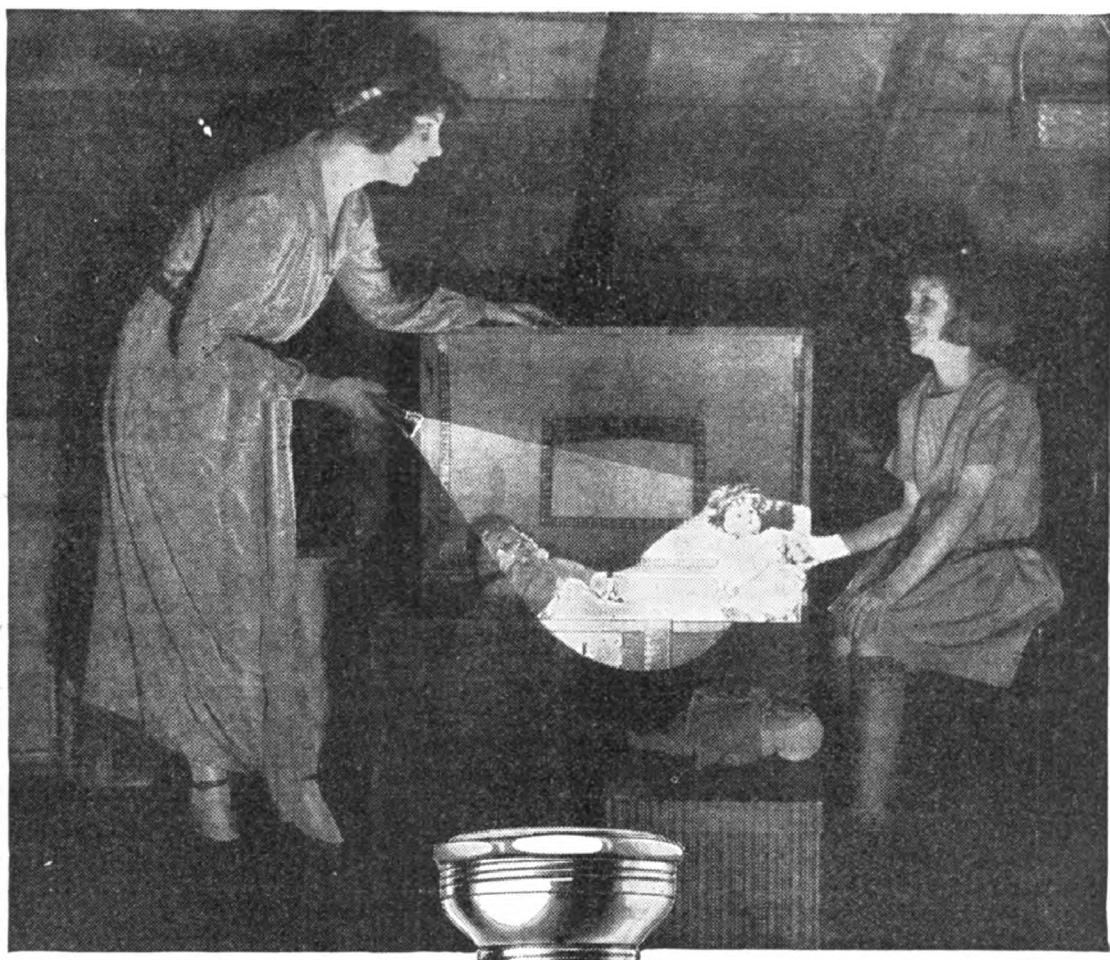
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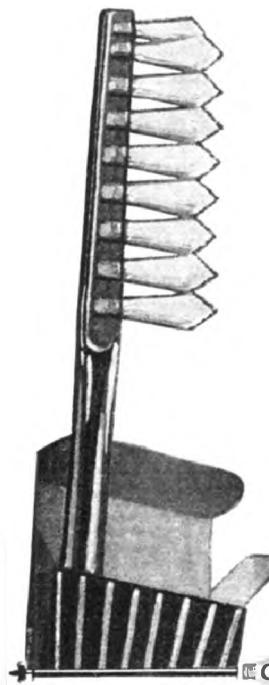
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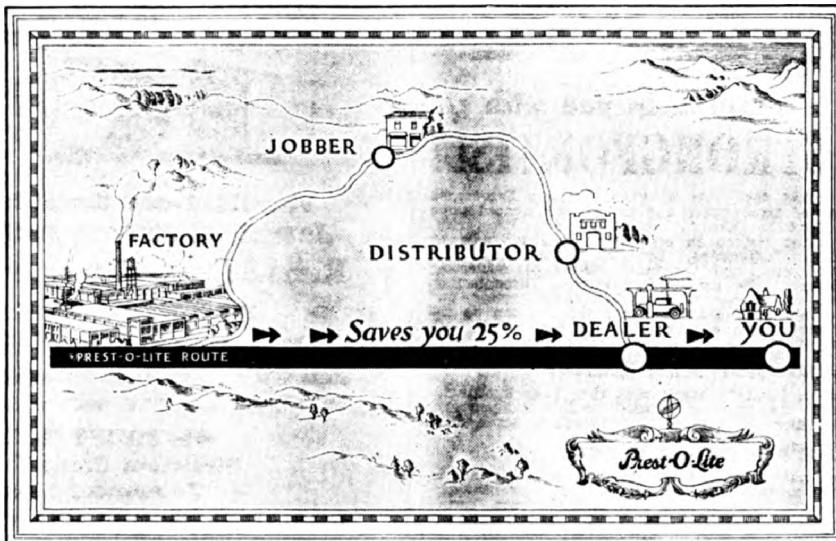


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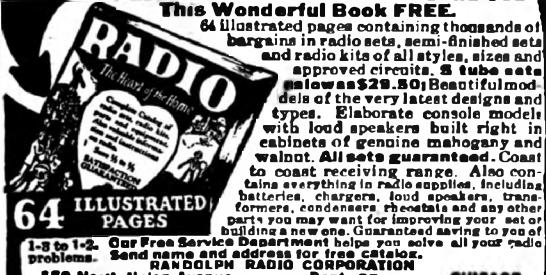
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when answering advertisements



It was a lesson to her

SHE certainly learned something that evening. And that was: Never to accept an evening's invitation to dance unless she had danced *before* with the man who asked her.

He seemed very fond of her and almost monopolized her dance program.

By the end of the evening she not only disliked him cordially but he was almost revolting to her.

* * *

You, yourself, rarely know when you have halitosis (unpleasant breath). That's the insidious thing about it. And even your closest friends won't tell you.

Sometimes, of course, halitosis comes from some deep-seated organic disorder that requires professional advice. But usually—and fortunately—halitosis is only a local condition that yields to the regular use of Listerine as a mouth wash and gargle. It is an interesting thing that this well-known antiseptic that has been in use for years for surgical dressings, possesses these unusual properties as a breath deodorant. It puts you on the safe and polite side.

Listerine halts food fermentation in the mouth and leaves the breath sweet, fresh and clean. Not by substituting some other odor but by really removing the old one. The Listerine odor itself quickly disappears.

This safe and long-trusted antiseptic has dozens of different uses: note the little circular that comes with every bottle. Your druggist sells Listerine in the original brown package only—never in bulk. There are four sizes: 14 ounce, 7 ounce, 3 ounce and 1½ ounce. Buy the large size for economy.—Lambert Pharmacal Company, Saint Louis, U. S. A.

A CHALLENGE

We'll make a little wager with you that if you try one tube of Listerine Tooth Paste, you'll come back for more.

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A corn razor in the hands of a layman is a dangerous instrument. A slip of the blade often means infection. And infection many times leads to serious results.

Corn-paring should be done by a skilled chiropodist—never by an amateur.

The best way to end a corn at home is to use Blue-jay.

Blue-jay is, indeed, the sure, safe and easy way to end a corn at home.

A tiny cushion, cool as velvet, fits over the corn—relieving the pressure. The pain stops at once. Soon the corn goes.

Blue-jay leaves nothing to guess-work. You do not have to decide how much or how little to put on. Each downy plaster is a complete standardized treatment, with just the right amount of the magic medication to end the corn.

Blue-jay

THE QUICK AND GENTLE WAY TO END A CORN

• 1926

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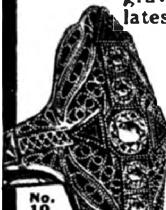
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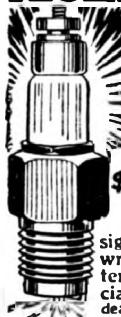
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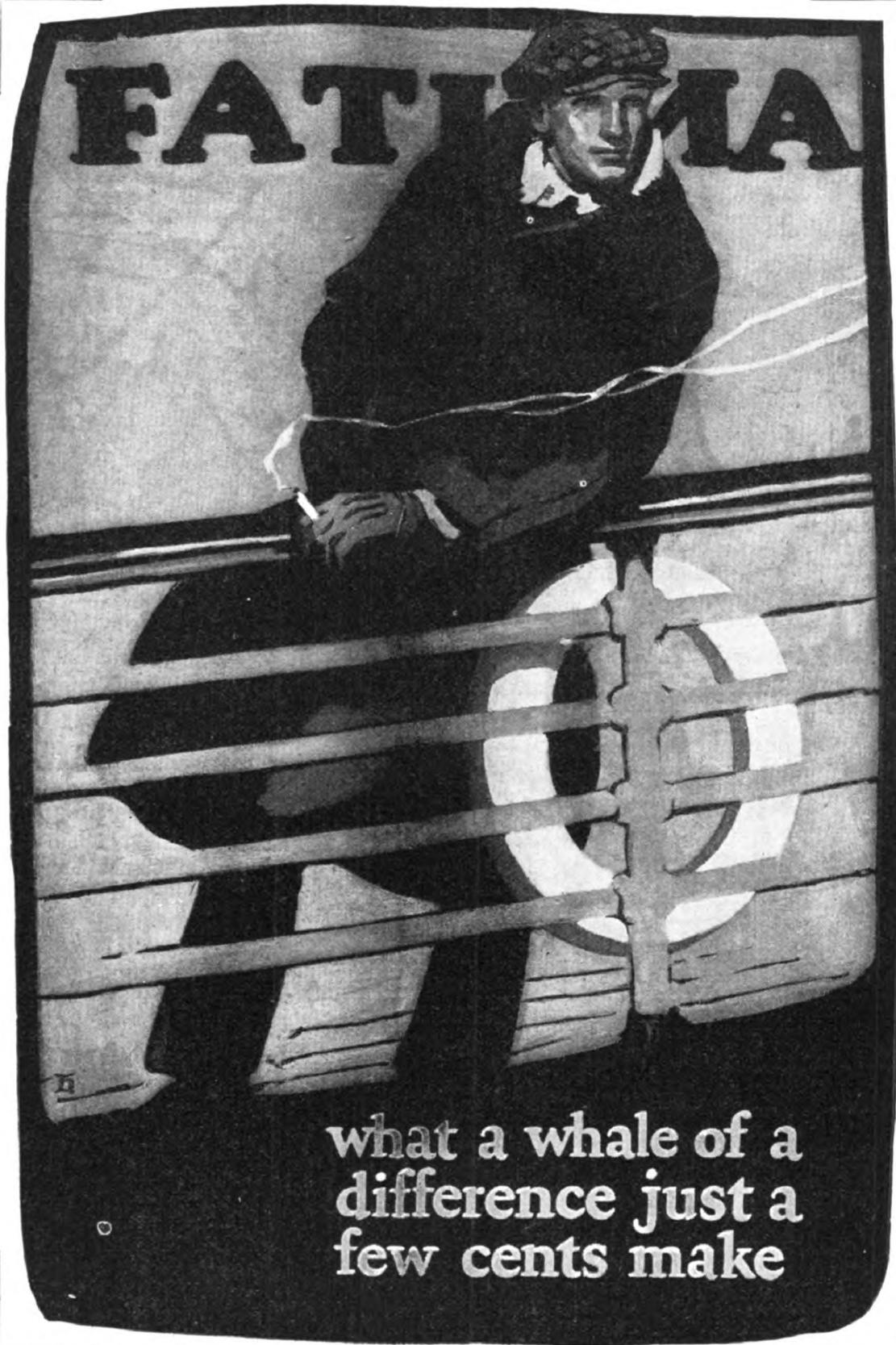
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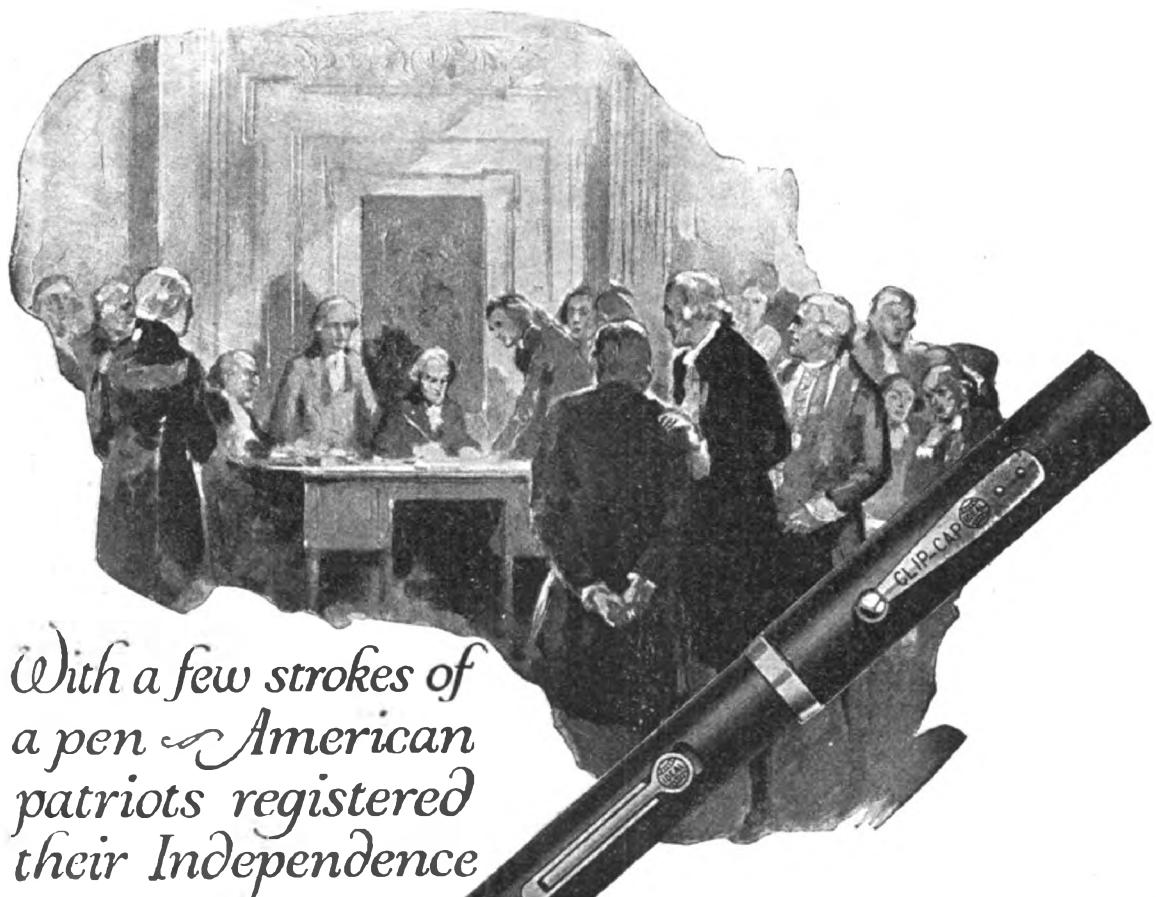
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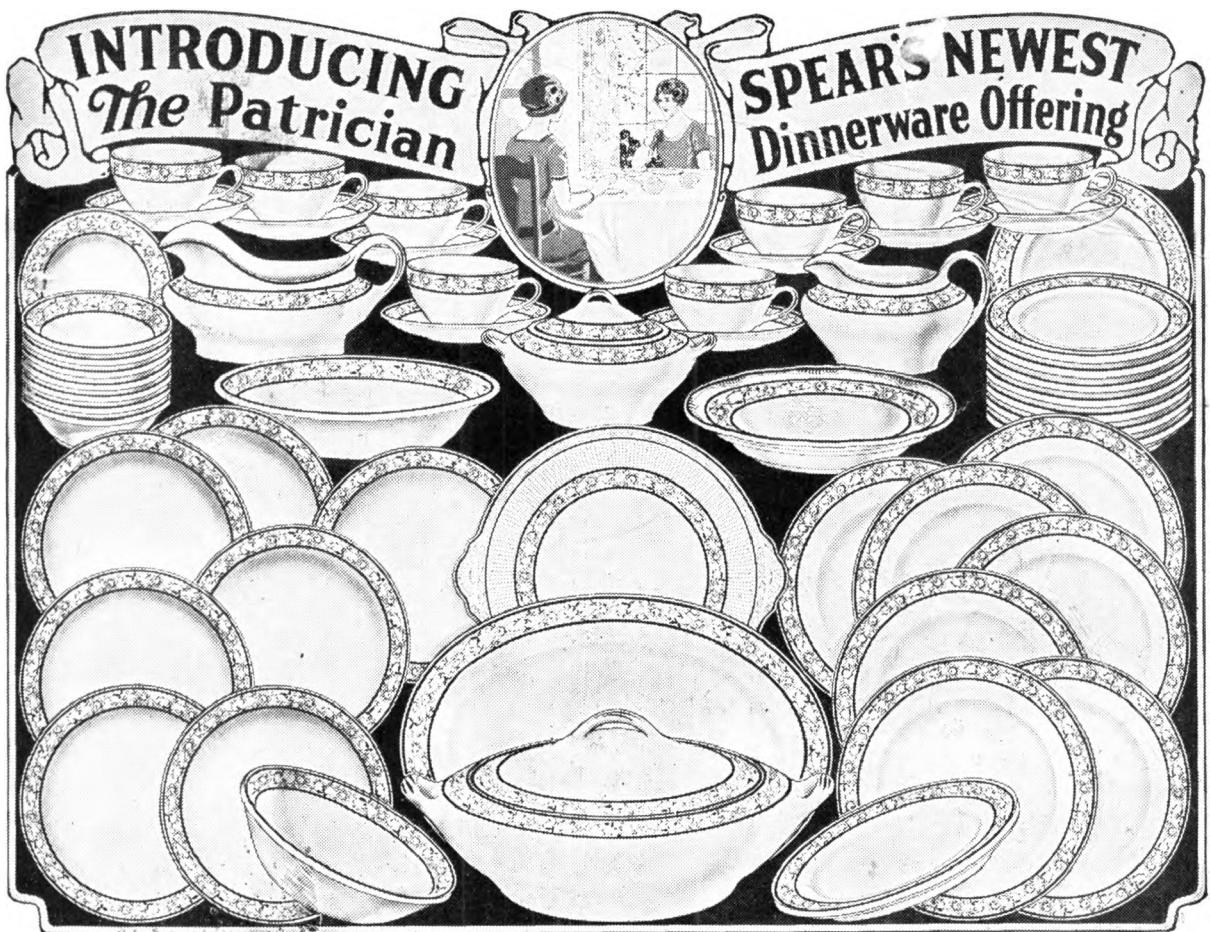
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