

No. 1055

NEW YORK, JANUARY 5, 1923

Price 7 Cents

# WILD WEST

## WEEKLY.

### YOUNG WILD WEST'S MARKED MUSTANG.

By AN OLDSOUL  
AND OTHER STORIES



"You're just the man I want, Buck," said Wild, as he ran over and caught the cow-puncher by the leg. "Off you come!" A quick jerk and Buck was unhorsed. Charlie caught the marked mustang.



# WILD WEST WEEKLY

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## Young Wild West's Marked Mustang OR, TRAPPING THE HORSE THIEVES

By AN OLD SCOUT

### CHAPTER I.—Young Wild West Hears of the Horse Thieves.

Well, Wild, I reckon yer couldn't have got here in a better time. I'm awful glad ter see yer, blamed if I ain't."

The speaker was Hoss Thompson, the foreman of Buckhorn Ranch, on the Rio Grande River, El Paso County, Texas. His remarks were addressed to Young Wild West, the Champion Deadshot and well-known Boy Hero of the West. Buckhorn Ranch had been purchased by Young Wild West some two or three years prior to the opening of this story, and with his partners and the girls who usually traveled with them on their trips in search of excitement and adventure through the wildest parts of the West, he usually came down to enjoy a short rest three or four times a year. Sometimes the young deadshot and his friends came there oftener, for it all depended upon which way they might be traveling at the time, and if they found they were getting anywhere close to the ranch they usually kept on until they reached it, thus treating Hoss Thompson, the foreman, and his wife, Stella, to a genuine surprise. But of course, the foreman and his wife were always glad to see them. It was a very warm day, shortly before noon, when Young Wild West and his two partners, Cheyenne Charlie, the scout, and Jim Dart, with the girls and the two Chinamen they employed as servants, rode up to the pleasantly situated ranch house and were greeted by the foreman.

"I'm in a peck of trouble."

"Is that so, Hoss?" the young deadshot asked, as he dismounted from the sorrel stallion he had been riding. "Well, what's the trouble now?"

"Horse thieves, Wild. But wait, I'll tell yer about it a little later on. Here comes Stella, an' she's got sich an awful clatter when she gits talkin' ter ther gals there won't be a chance for me to make myself heard."

Right here we might as well mention that the "girls" were Arietta Murdock, the charming golden-haired sweetheart of Young Wild West, Eloise Gardner, Jim Dart's sweetheart, and Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie, the scout. The girls dismounted without assistance, and as the foreman's wife rushed up they met here, and for the next five minutes there was lots of kissing and embracing, not to speak of consider-

able in the way of conversation. Hoss Thompson shook hands with the young deadshot and his partners, and then after his wife had subsided a little he greeted the girls in the same fashion. Stella, who was a buxom, dark-eyed young woman and looked as though she had a mind of her own, was not long in conducting the girls to the house. When this happened Hoss gave a nod of approval, and placing his hand upon the shoulder of Young Wild West, he said:

"Yes, Wild, horse thieves has been at work around here for ther past two or three weeks, an' though we ain't lost but three horses, there's lots of others as has lost more. This gang has been workin' in a territory that amounts to more than fifty miles square, 'cause I heard at Short Creek yesterday that a feller named Denton, what owns a ranch considerable to ther north of here lost seventeen fine mustangs that had jest been broke ther night afore last."

"Well, if that's the case I reckon we've got here just in time. What do you say, boys?" and the young deadshot turned and smiled at his partners.

"I reckon we have, Wild." Cheyenne Charlie answered, nodding his head.

"It seems that we always strike something in the way of excitement every time we pay a visit to the ranch," Jim Dart observed.

"Tell us all about the horse thieves, Hoss," the boy said, as he nodded to the foreman and smiled.

"Well, there ain't nothin' more as I kin tell yer, Wild," was the reply, with a shake of the head. "I jest said that nobody knows who ther galoots is, an' that no clue kin be got of 'em. All's I know is that we've lost three putty good horses."

"Then you don't know for sure that they were stolen by this gang of horse thieves?"

"Not for sartin, but since almost everybody else is losin' horses it looks as though it's ther horse thieves what's responsible for it."

"That's right, Hoss. There's no doubt that the gang took the three horses. Well, I reckon we'll have to get on the trail of this bunch."

"I knowed yer would say that, Wild," and the foreman nodded and looked pleased. "But I reckon you'll have ter excuse me now, 'cause I'll have ter go an 'help Stella with ther dinner. We wasn't expectin' yer, so that means that we've got ter git a hustle on to git you somethin' that's worth while ter eat."

"Never mind about that, Hoss. We are quite willing to take what we can get. You just tell Stella to give us anything that comes handy, and then she can fix up something a little extra for supper, if she feels like it. You do that now. Tell her I say so."

"All right, Wild," was the reply, and then the foreman hastened to the house.

The two boys and the scout knew exactly where to take their horses, and as they usually cared for their animals themselves, they now turned to lead them to the stable, which was not more than a hundred yards from the house. The two Chinamen, who, by the way, were brothers named Hop Wah and Wing Wah, came right after them with the rest of the horses, including the two that were used to carry their camping outfit. It did not take long to arrange a place for the animals, and when they had seen to them properly the young deadshot and his partners walked back to the house, leaving the two Chinamen to finish their task at the stable. They all sat down on the porch now, for it was cool and shady there.

"It will be a full hour before dinner will be ready," said Arietta, "so after you have rested yourselves a bit you can go and wash up, Wild."

"Thank you for the suggestion," was the reply. "Probably I wouldn't have thought of that if you hadn't spoken, Et."

"Oh, you know better than that," and the girl laughed lightly.

"I reckon I'll go around to ther back of ther house an' make myself acquainted with soap an' water right now. Blamed if I don't feel putty sticky, an' I've got enough dust on me ter start a sand-paper mill."

As Cheyenne Charlie gave vent to this remark he arose from the bench he had been sitting upon and started for the rear of the house. It was just then that a series of yells came from the stable.

"Hip hi! Whattee mattee?"

"Misler Wild, Misler Wild! Comee velly muchee quickee."

"What's ther matter with them blamed heathens?" cried the scout, as he promptly started on a run for the stable.

Wild and Jim were not long in following him, and as they neared it the sounds of scuffling feet came to their ears. The scout was the first to get inside, and the sight he saw caused him to break into a roar of laughter. Hop and Wing were engaged in a scuffle with a big negro and an undersized Mexican. The latter was a lazy peon employed to do the chores about the ranch house, but the darky was a stranger to our friends.

"Stick ter 'em, you heathen galoots," shouted the scout. "You're on top half ther time, anyhow," and then he broke into another fit of laughter.

"Stop this," shouted Wild, as he entered the stable. "What's the trouble here, anyhow?"

Instantly the combatants ceased, and all four quickly arose to their feet.

"Hop stole de whisky what me and Jeff have hid in de stall, Senor Wild," the Mexican hastened to say, as he stepped forward and bowed. "He gave Wing a drink, and then he take a drink. Then he hand de bottle to Jeff, and dere no whisky in it. We get a-very mad, and then we fight."

"So you fellows are in the habit of hiding

whisky here in the stable, are you?" Wild asked, as he looked at the darky and the peon.

They both hung their heads and made no reply.

"You're a stranger to me," he went on, nodding to the darky. "So your name is Jeff, is it?"

"Yes, sar; Marser Thompson done hire me to work here on de ranch. I is a very honest black man, sar."

"But you like whisky so much that you have to hide it here in the stable."

"Most every colored man likes whisky, sar."

"Is that so? Well, you just come out here and I'll show you a little trick with a bottle of whisky."

The darky hesitated, but when he saw the boy was in earnest he followed him outside.

"Now then," said Wild rather sternly, "you sit down on that heap of stones over there."

Again the darky hesitated, but a quick glance from the boy told him that he had better obey. He promptly took his seat upon the stone pile, and then Wild handed the whisky bottle to the peon, saying as he did so:

"You go and stand by Mr. Jeff and hold the bottle about a foot above his head. You understand what I mean, Mike."

"Me understand, Senor Wild."

"Well, then, do as I say, and be quick about it."

It was quite evident that the Mexican knew pretty well what was going to happen. But he did not hesitate a moment. He walked over to the stone pile, and then took his position beside the darky, and held the bottle above his head and directly over it. The young deadshot gave a nod of satisfaction, and then as quick as a flash he drew a revolver that hung at his side and took a quick aim and pressed the trigger. Crack! As the report rang out the bottle was smashed into fragments, and the contents, along with some pieces of the glass, fell full upon the darky's head. Jeff gave a howl of terror, and promptly began rolling upon the ground, as though he was mortally wounded. Of course this was very amusing to the lookers-on, especially to Hop and Wing, who plainly would have got the worst of it in the scuffle if an interference had not occurred.

"Now then," said Wild sternly, addressing the culprits, "if I hear of any more whisky being brought here you will both be discharged."

The young deadshot and his two partners then left the stable and proceeded to the rear of the ranch house, where they found soap and water and towels waiting for them.

## CHAPTER II.—Wild Shows the Cowboys How to Shoot.

Though Hoss Thompson had told his wife that Young Wild West had insisted that they should eat just what was ready, and that no extra preparations would be made, Stella would not have it this way. She had plenty in the house to select from, and she worked hard to get something extra, assisted by Cheyenne Charlie's wife and the servant of the ranch house. It was nearly one o'clock when the meal was ready, and when he found that his request had not been heeded the young deadshot said nothing.

He knew pretty well what sort of a woman the foreman's wife was, and that it would be useless to chide her for having gone to so much trouble. Stella enjoyed this sort of thing, and the way her eyes sparkled when she saw her guests eating was quite enough to convince any one of this. Our friends were all quite hungry, so it is needless to say that they did full justice to the meal. When it was over with Wild turned to Hoss and said:

"Now then," said Wild, "I reckon we'll sit down on the porch for a while and enjoy the breeze that comes from the river, and then if you don't mind, you can take us around and show us anything that is new here since we were here the last time."

"Right yer are, Wild," the foreman replied, nodding his head and showing his pleasure. "That's jest what I wanted ter do. There ain't much ter show yer, an' everything is workin' jest about ther same. We've only got one new man since you was here last. Ther feller called Jimmy got a letter sayin' that his mother was dead somewhere in ther East, an' he said as how he guessed he would give up ranchin'. That made it necessary ter hire another man, which I done as soon as I could find one that I thought would do."

"Well, how is the new man, Hoss?"

"He seems to be all right. He's mighty civil an' does his work well. I never heard tell of him havin' a word with any of ther boys, though ther boys said over at Short Creek that he's a mighty bad man when he once gits started. But I've took notice that he ain't been comin' back drunk from Short Creek like some of ther other boys do. Maybe he ain't drinkin' now, an' that's why he's behavin' himself so well."

"What is the fellow's name, Hoss?"

"Buck Wheeler is ther name he goes by."

"Well, if he has been doing the right thing, the chances are that he is all right, so we won't bother our heads about him just now."

Our hero and his two partners remained upon the porch with the foreman for fully half an hour. By this time the dinner had settled and they were ready to mount their horses and take a ride around. As they went to the stable they found Hop there in the act of saddling the piebald broncho he always rode. The Chinaman had evidently not expected to be caught there, for he acted in a sheepish manner.

"What are you up to now, Hop?" demanded the young deadshot, looking at him sternly.

"Me go takee lillie lide, Misler Wild."

"Oh, I suppose you want to go over to Short Creek."

"Lat light, Misler Wild. Me gottee plenty frends over lere, so be."

"Do you intend to go alone, Hop?" Wild inquired.

"Mike allee samee go with me, so be, Misler Wild."

"Is that so? Where is Mike?"

"He allee samee here lillie while ago, so be," and Hop looked around as though he was somewhat puzzled.

But just then the peon stepped out from behind a barrel, looking as though he was rather ashamed of himself. The fact was that he had seen Wild and the rest coming before Hop did, and he had hidden himself, since he had an idea

that probably he would not be allowed to go to Short Creek if they knew about it.

"Just look at ther greaser," exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, with a laugh. "He acts worse than ther heathen did. They both seem ter be up ter somethin' that they hadn't oughter do. Are yer goin' ter let 'em go, Wild?"

"Oh, I don't care," was the reply. "If they want to ride over to Short Creek they can do so. Another thing, I don't call myself Mike's boss. Hoss has charge of him."

"Not altogether, Wild," spoke up the foreman, shaking his head. "Mike don't do nothin' but attend ter things around ther house an' outbuildin's, an' that makes Stella his boss, yer know. I reckon if he was ter ask her if he could go to Short Creek to get loaded up with tanglefoot, she would put her foot down right away. But it ain't likely he's goin' ter ask her, so I don't care what he does."

"Me no get drunk, Hoss," spoke up the Mexican. "Me want to go to de post-office."

"Well, go on, then. There ain't no one keepin' you here, as I know of."

Mike's face lighted up with joy, and he lost no time in picking up the saddle he had dropped when he saw our friends coming. In a very few minutes he had it upon the back of the horse he was going to ride, and by that time Hop was ready. The two led their horses from the stable and quickly mounted.

"Hip hi! Hoolay!" called out Hop, as he waved his hat to those standing in the doorway of the building. "Me allee samee likee Melican sport, so be."

Then away the two rode, our friends smiling in spite of themselves. The four now paid no further attention to Hop and the Mexican, but proceeded to saddle their own horses. It was not long before they rode away from the stable heading toward the big cattle range that lay to the north of the ranch house and buildings. Everything appeared to be in good shape, and as our hero looked around he could not help giving a nod of satisfaction. As the four rode over the stretch of short grass and reached the top of a rise they came in sight of quite a heard of cattle off to the left. To the right lay the big corral, where the cattle were driven whenever there was a round-up, so they might be sorted over and those fit for market be selected from the herd and sent away. They turned toward the cattle, and then it was not long before they came in sight of half a dozen cowboys, who had dismounted and were sitting in the shade of a clump of trees.

"There's our new man over there, Wild," said Hoss Thompson, jerking his thumb in the direction of the group. "If you'd like ter have a talk with him we'll ride over."

"All right," was the reply.

As they rode toward the group of trees at a gallop the cowboys were seen to rise to their feet. It was easy for our friends to pick out the new man, since they knew the others quite well. He was a big muscular fellow with a smooth-shaven face, and he appeared to be as anxious to meet them as the rest were.

"Hello, boys!" said Young Wild West, as he reined in his sorrel stallion, Spitfire, and smiled

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at the welcome he was receiving. "How have you been since I saw you the last time?"

"Fine, Wild," came the reply, and then they all insisted on shaking hands with him.

Buck Wheeler went through the performance just as though he had always known them, and not until it was over with did Hoss Thompson introduce him.

"This is Buck Wheeler, the man I hired after Jimmy left, Wild," he said.

"Glad to meet you, Buck," said the young dead-shot, looking the fellow over and coming to the conclusion that he was of a rather good type of man for the business he was engaged in.

"This is Cheyenne Charlie an' this is Jim Dart, Buck," went on Hoss with his introduction. "They're the partners of the Champion Dead-shot of the West. But you've heard all about Young Wild West an' his pards, I reckon."

"I reckon so," the cowboy replied. "I've been wishin' ter meet 'em this good while. I want ter see some of their fancy shootin' that Young Wild West kin do. I'm always lookin' for things like that, yer know. I call myself a putty good shot, but of course I don't expect I kin do anything like he kin with a gun."

"So you're a pretty good shot, are you?" asked Wild, looking at him and smiling.

"Well, I reckon I'm about up ter the average," was the reply, in a modest way.

"Well, if you can do as well as the most of the boys belonging to Buckhorn Ranch you're a pretty good shot, I reckon."

"He kin a little more than hold his own with the rest of us, Wild," spoke up one of the cowboys, nodding his head and looking serious. "Buck is sartainly a mighty quick shot, an' it's blamed seldom that he misses his mark."

"Don't go ter sayin' anything like that, Bird," Buck spoke up. "You know very well that you kin shoot jest as quick an' straight as I kin. Ther last time we tried it was a tie, wasn't it?"

"Suppose we have a little shooting match now?" Wild suggested, looking at the rivals.

"I'm willin', Young Wild West," Wheeler answered quickly.

"Well, I s'pose I am, too, then Wild," and Bird gave a nod of assent.

"All right. I'll make the arrangements, and I will be the judge, too. I reckon neither of you will object to that."

"You bet we won't," came the reply from both men.

"Who has got a hat that he don't care much about?" Wild asked, looking around at the cowboys.

"Here yer are, Wild," one of them answered, as he tossed a sombrero that was rather the worse for wear to the boy. "She's got a few holes in her now, so I reckon it won't hurt to put a few more in her. I've got a new hat over at the shack, an' I've been goin' ter throw this one away for ther past week or two, but somehow I didn't do it."

Wild took the hat and rode over to the limb he had selected. He was not long in fastening it to one of the branches, and having done this he rode back and said:

"Now then, boys, I suppose you think it will be an easy matter to hit that hat. It will, too, if you are both as quick as you say that you are, and

can shoot straight. What I want you to do is to ride at full speed right under that hat, and when you have gone about twenty feet the other side of it you are to turn and fire one shot at the hat. I am going to be the judge, so I will settle it as to who is the quickest."

The two cowboys looked at each other and showed signs of uneasiness. This sort of shooting was not what they had figured on. If they were to ride along at full speed with the hat in full view all the time it would be easy for them to hit it as they passed, but to ride directly under it and then turn in the saddle and fire at it quickly was another thing. But neither of them raised any objections.

"Who is going to be the first to take a shot?" asked Wild, as he smiled at the two, for he could see that they had not expected the shooting match was to be in this way. Neither of them offered to go first.

"I think Bird had oughter go first," suggested Hoss. "He was about the best shot on the ranch till Buck come, so he oughter be willin' ter show what he kin do first."

"All right, Hoss," Bird answered, nodding his head. "Jest as you say. I'll do my level best, anyhow."

"All right," said Young Wild West. "You two fellows stay right here and we'll ride up beside the hat. When I wave my hat you can start, Bird. Remember that you are to keep looking straight ahead until you have gone at least twenty feet past the hat. You can go further, if you like. But the instant you turn around you are to shoot. Do you understand?"

"I understand, Wild."

"All right, then. I reckon there is no need of saying anything further. After you have fired a shot I will wave my hat for Buck to come."

"Good enough!" exclaimed the new man, acting with an air of confidence now, for no doubt he had thought it over and had come to the conclusion that he stood as good a show as Bird did.

They all rode away from the spot but the two men who were to contest for the championship of Buckthorn Ranch with their revolvers. The old hat was hanging at a distance of about twelve feet from the ground. There was just enough breeze blowing to make the branch sway a little and keep it moving. Wild called a halt, and then while all hands remained in the saddle he took off his hat and waved it over his head. Instantly Bird started at a gallop toward the target he was to shoot at. The cowboy rode very fast, and as he neared the spot he drew his gun from the holster at his side. Under the limb he dashed, and when he was twenty or thirty feet the other side of the hat he wheeled in the saddle and fired. The lookers-on saw that the bullet cut a bunch of leaves from the branch at a distance of probably a foot to the right of the hat.

"He missed, Wild," exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie.

"I had an idea he would," was the reply. "Now we'll see what Buck can do."

Then he gave the signal, and the new cowboy came dashing forward. He did not pull his gun until he dashed under the limb to which the hat was hanging. He may have gone two or three yards further than his rival had gone before he turned and fired. A little bunch of leaves came

fluttering down from a point directly over the hat, but at a distance of three feet from it.

"Did I hit it?" Bird asked, as he came cantering back to the spot.

"No," replied the young deadshot, shaking his head. "You missed it by about a foot to the right."

"Did Buck hit it?"

"No, he shot on a line with it, but he was about a yard too high, that's all. We all saw the leaves the bullets clipped off, so there is no mistake about it."

"Well, Buck wins, then," and Bird seemed to be satisfied.

"Well, you might call it that way, boys," Wild answered, shaking his head. "But since neither of you hit the hat I must say that it is pretty near a tie. Suppose you try again."

Both were willing to do this. But the second trial resulted about the same as the first, for neither of them hit the hat.

"Boys, I reckon you need a little practice at that kind of shooting," said Wild, smiling at them. "Now, just to show you how easy it is to hit that hat, I will try it myself."

A cheer went up from the cowboys, for nothing suited them better than to see the young deadshot display his skill. Wild rode slowly back to the spot the contestants had started from, and then he turned the sorrel and came galloping at full speed toward the target. As he dashed under the limb he whipped out his revolver, and before he had gone twenty-five feet he turned quickly and pulled the trigger. Crack! As the report rang out the hat fell from the limb.

"Hooray for Young Wild West, the Champion Deadshot!" yelled Hoss Thompson, and the rest joined in and made the welkin ring with their cheering.

### CHAPTER III.—Hop Gets Into Trouble at Short Creek.

The darky called Jeff who had been employed by Hoss Thompson had not taken very kindly to the two Chinamen, more especially Hop. It grieved him considerably to think that he had lost his bottle of whisky, and though he said nothing at the time he made a resolve to get square with the Chinaman who had caused all the trouble. He happened to be watching when he saw Hop and Mike go to the stable, and thinking that something was up he made his way round to the rear of the building and found a little window to peep through at them. He was watching them when Wild and his partners, accompanied by the foreman, entered the stable, and he took in all that transpired. Of course the darky did not let himself be seen. But while he was in hiding he made up his mind that if Hop and the peon were going to Short Creek to have a good time, he might as well go, too. But he did not mean to go with them, of course, for he thought very likely his company would not be wanted.

He waited until all hands had left the stable, and then he went in and saddled a horse he usually rode when he went on an errand. Having done this, he went to the door and watched the forms of the foreman and his guests until they

had disappeared over a rise of ground in the distance. Then Jeff gave a chuckle and, leading his horse outside, mounted and started up the lane that led to the trail which went on to Short Creek. The further the black man rode the better he felt, and when he had covered two or three miles he was in a wonderfully good humor. He kept laughing and chuckling continually, no doubt thinking it was a great joke on his friend Mike and the audacious Chinee who had come to the ranch with Young Wild West, only to make trouble for him and cause the loss of a bottle of very good liquor.

Jeff did not have very much money, but he figured that he had enough to hold his own with the two who had gone ahead of him. He never once dreamed of such a thing as the Chinaman having not less than two thousand dollars in his possession at the time. But of course he did not know Hop. He was not aware that he was a very clever card sharp and that he made a great deal more money at gambling with card sharps than he did from the salary he received from Young Wild West. But Jeff was a very innocent darky, anyhow, and he had much to learn, as the sequel will prove. It was a lazy sort of steed he was riding, but that made little difference since the rider was of the same stamp.

He let the animal have its own way, however, which was probably a good point in him, since the sun was quite hot and to urge the overfed horse too much at that time would hardly be doing the right thing. Fifteen miles is not considered much down in Texas, and having been born and brought up in that region Jeff considered it but a very short distance, indeed. He knew it would take something like an hour to ride to Short Creek, so he let the horse have its own way about it.

Of course he did not overtake Hop and the peon, nor did he once come in sight of them during the journey, but at last the group of houses near the almost dry creek showed up as he rounded a bend in the trail, and then Jeff gave a nod of satisfaction. Short Creek was not a very large place, as might be supposed. It was a sort of headquarters of the surrounding country, and there was a general store located there which did a thriving business. There was one saloon, too, which was kept by a man who had received the nickname of Mexican Joe, though he was not a Mexican. He was a very good-natured, honest fellow, and the chances were that he was making considerable money from his venture. Even those opposed to the drinking of liquors were willing to admit that Mexican Joe was a very good citizen, and that he did his level best to run a decent place.

As the negro rode up to the good-sized square shanty that had a sign over the front door indicating that it was a saloon, and that it was kept by Mexican Joe, he saw as many as half a dozen horses standing under the trees. He knew the one Mike had taken, of course, and it was easy for him to recognize Hop's mount, since it was a piebald, and he had noticed him riding it when he came to the ranch that morning.

"He, he, he!" chuckled the colored man, when he was sure that the two were in the saloon. "Me done give 'em a surprise putty soon."

He brought his horse to a walk now, so he

might approach without making too much noise. Jeff did not want to let the two know he was there until he entered the barroom of Joe's place. Having come to this conclusion, the darky brought his horse to a halt and, dismounting, led him to the shade of the group of trees that was near the saloon and hitched him to one of them. Then he straightened out his clothing a bit, and pushing the broad-brimmed straw hat upon the back of his head, he entered the place with a swagger that was meant to make a great impression upon those inside. There were just six customers in the saloon at the time, and Mexican Joe, his face wreathed in smiles, was behind the bar busily waiting upon them. Two of them were Hop and Mike, the peon. The other four were a man who looked to be a wealthy ranch owner and three cowboys. They all glanced at the darky as he came in, and Mike promptly called out:

"Hello, Jeff? What you a-come here for?"

But Jeff paid no attention to the salutation. He walked up to the bar and laid a silver dollar upon it, at the same time nodding to the proprietor.

"What will you have, coon?" came the query, while a grin showed on Mexican Joe's face.

"Tanglefoot, sar," was the reply, in a respectful tone of voice, for Jeff knew very well that it was not every place a darky could go in and make a purchase. But it happened that there were a few of his race in that particular part of the country, and Mexican Joe drew no color line.

"All right, I reckon I'm ther man to sell it to yer. But how is it that you an' Mike is over here to-day? It ain't Saturday afternoon, yer know. Must be havin' a holiday at Buckhorn Ranch."

"Young Wild West come dis a-morning, Joe," spoke up Mike.

"Oh, that's it, eh?" and the saloon keeper gave a nod. "So young Wild West has come down to Buckhorn again, has he? Blamed if I wouldn't like ter see him. That boy is a real wonder. He's ther boss of all ther deadshots that was ever born an' he's ther coolest customer what ever straddled a horse or pulled a gun. There sartinly ain't no match for him. His two pards is putty nigh as good, an' I will say that I never met three better fellers in my life than they are."

"Who is that you are talking about?" asked the ranchman, looking sharply at the speaker.

"Young Wild West, ther boy what owns Buckhorn Ranch, Mr. Slocum," was the reply.

Slocum was what might be called a gentlemanly appearing ranchman. He was dressed rather neatly, and had an air about him that suggested something of education and refinement.

"I have heard of Buckhorn Ranch," he said, shaking his head, "but I can't say that I ever heard of the boy you are speaking of. I always had an idea that the ranch was owned by a man named Hoss Thompson. But I have not been in this locality but three or four months, so that's probably the reason for it."

"Hoss Thompson is only ther foreman," declared Mexican Joe. "He's a mighty good man, an' that's why Young Wild West lets him run ther ranch jest as though he owned it."

"So the boy owns the ranch, then?" and the ranchman acted as though he was talking to himself. "He is not of age, then?"

"No, I reckon Wild ain't twenty-one yet," Joe admitted.

"Well, then the property can't be in his name."

"It ain't. Cheyenne Charlie, one of his pards, has ther deed in his name; but Buckhorn Ranch belongs to Young Wild West, jest ther same."

"Oh, I see," and the speaker shot a peculiar glance at the three cowboys, who were evidently his companions. "Boys, have you ever heard of Young Wild West, who is such a wonderful boy at shooting, and the like?"

"I've heard somewhat of him, boss," one of them answered. "But I don't believe all I hear. They say he kin outshoot any man in Texas, though he's nothin' but a boy; but I don't believe that, an' I don't think you do, either."

"Well, since I have found Mexican Joe to be a truthful man, and he says so, I will not dispute his word."

"You'll have a chance to see what he kin do in ther line of shootin' afore he goes away from this part of ther country," declared the saloon keeper. "Generally when Wild an' his partners rides over to Short Creek they give a little exhibition. Ther people around here sorter looks for it, you know, an' it does 'em good to watch Wild at his clever work."

"I shall certainly be very glad to meet him," Slocum said, and then he turned and looked at the darky, while a frown showed upon his face.

"So this is one of the employees of Buckhorn Ranch, is it?" he added.

"Yes, that's Jeff. He's a putty innocent sort of a man, too," Joe retorted.

The darky had taken his position at the very end of the bar, and now acted as though he feared the ranchman did not like his presence there.

"Jeff is a very good a-nigger," observed Mike, who no doubt felt it his duty to do all he could to help his fellow worker out.

"Shut up, greaser! I didn't ask you for your opinion!" exclaimed the ranchman, wheeling around and looking fiercely at the Mexican.

"Whattee mattee, my friend?" asked Hop, speaking for the first time since the arrival of the darky. "You allee samee gottee pain?"

"What's that you say?" roared Slocum, taking a step toward him. "I want you to understand that I have no use for Chinamen, greasers, or niggers. I noticed that you have been doing a lot of talking since I came in here a few minutes ago. It may please Joe a whole lot to listen to your chatter, but it don't amuse me a bit. Now you take my advice and shut up. If you don't I may take a notion to clip off your pig-tail."

"That's Young Wild West's Clever Chinee," spoke up Mexican Joe quickly. "Everybody around here likes him a whole lot. He's a very funny feller, Hop is."

"Oh, then it must make a difference because he is Young Wild West's Chinaman, eh? Well, this Young Wild West must be a sort of power around here."

Slocum spoke in a sneering way as he said this. "You kin bet your life he's a power around here, Mr. Slocum," declared the proprietor sharply. "He's ther greatest boy that ever lived, as I said a little while ago."

"You astonish me to hear you talk that way, Joe," and the ranchman modified his tone of voice considerably now. "I am very must interested in

this boy, and I shall make it my business to see him as soon as possible."

"Well, if he don't ride over here afore sunset this afternoon I'll miss my guess. Where is Wild now, Hop?"

"He allee samee takee lide out on um lange with Misler Thompson, so be," Hop replied, at the same time smiling blandly at the ranchman and the cowboys.

"Oh, well, that means they're goin' ter take a little ride around an' look things over, an' then most likely they'll come on over here. They always do, if I know anything about it."

Hop was not only clever at performing feats of magic and gambling, but he was clever at other things. He was a close student of human nature, and he could surely tell just what a man was by his general appearance and the way he talked. By this time he had set down Slocum to be a man who had a better opinion of himself than he did of the rest of mankind in general. It occurred to Hop just then that the man should be taken down a peg or two. While he had no one there to take his part, for he did not consider that Mike was able to do much in that direction, and he knew pretty well that the darky had no love for him, the temptation to play a joke upon Slocum came so strongly upon him that he finally gave in to it and proceeded to think of something that might surprise him. The chance soon came, for one of the horses outside began snorting and kicking just then, and thinking it might be his, the ranchman quickly ran out, the three cowboys following him. He had just ordered a drink, and the bottle and glass stood upon the bar, so Hop quickly slipped over and, taking a small vial from one of the many pockets his coat contained, he dropped an almost colorless powder into the glass. Having done this, he walked over to the darky and held out his hand.

"Me likee shakee hands with you, Jeff," he said smilingly. "Me makee you allee samee losee you tanglefeet, so me buy you um bottle when you go backee. How lat stlike you, Jeff?"

"Dat will be all right, Hop," the colored man replied, a grin showing on his countenance. "If you done do dat I'll forgive yo'!"

"Misler Joe," said the clever Chinaman, nodding to the boss of the place, "you allee samee givee Jeff um bottle of tanglefoot. Me pay for it light away."

"All right, Hop," was the reply. "I know you'll pay for it, if you say you will. Here yer are, Jeff."

The bottle was handed over, and as Jeff got it into his hand, he broke into a laugh to show his delight. He quickly hid it in one of his pockets, and then he put out his hand and shook heartily with the Chinaman. It was just then that the ranchman and the cowboys re-entered the place. Their empty glasses stood upon the bar, and walking to his, Slocum said:

"Now then, boys, I reckon we'll have our drink. That horse of mine don't like to be too close to others, it seems. But he's all right now. He's a vicious sort of brute, anyhow, but I keep him because he can outrun anything I ever saw in the line of horseflesh."

He tipped the bottle and allowed some of the contents to trickle into the glass. Then it was

that a cloud of steam arose from the glass, while a sizzling sound came from it.

"What in all creation is the matter?" exclaimed Slocum, putting the bottle upon the bar and jumping back. "What are you giving me to drink, Joe?"

"Blamed if I know, Mr. Slocum," was the reply. "I don't know what ter make of it, unless—unless—"

He turned and looked at Hop as he said this, for he well knew what tricks the clever Chinee was likely to perform at any time.

"Unless what?" demanded the ranchman angrily, as he, too, looked at the Chinaman. "You don't mean to say that the heathen is responsible for this, do you?"

"I—I don't know, Mr. Slocum," faltered the proprietor, shrugging his shoulders, showing great uneasiness.

"You do know. You know very well that while I was outside that Chinaman put up some job on me. But he shall eat lead for it, as sure as my name is Slocum."

Hop realized that he was in a desperate plight. But it was not the first time he had been in such a predicament. He was quick to think and act, as the reader knows, and the moment he found that the ranchman suspected him of having put up the job on him he started to think hard. The result was that by the time Slocum turned his revolver upon him Hop was ready for him. The words had scarcely left Slocum's mouth when Hop whipped out the big, old-fashioned pistol he always carried and, turning it upon the man, he pulled the trigger. Bang! As the report rang out a stream of red fire shot from the muzzle of the weapon and almost touched Slocum. The room was filled with smoke, too, and before any one fully realized just what had happened the clever Chinee had leaped through the window. Knowing full well that it would not be safe to remain where he was, Hop ran for his horse and, mounting, rode away at a gallop.

#### CHAPTER IV.—Hop's Lucky Escape.

The cowboys were so delighted at Wild's remarkable shot that he was urged to try it again. Buck Wheeler actually insisted upon it, which told plainly that he thought it possible that the hat had been hit more by chance than anything else. The young deadshot was watching him as he spoke, and being a close student of human nature and quite able to read character from faces, he understood the thoughts of the cowboy.

"Buck," said he, "perhaps you have an idea that I can't do that again."

"Oh, no," was the reply. "But it's ther greatest shot I ever seen made, an' I would like ter see it done again."

"All right. I'll show you that I can do it again, just as easy as before. Just put the hat up there."

Buck hastened to do as he was told, and then Wild, who had dismounted, swung himself into the saddle and rode back a short distance upon the range. Presently he started forward at a mad gallop, and as he passed under the hat he waited until he was fully thirty feet away, and then

turned quickly in the saddle. Crack! His revolver spoke sharply, and again the hat dropped to the ground.

"Hooray, hooray, hooray!" yelled the cowboys, while Hoss Thompson and our hero's partners nodded with satisfaction.

"Buck, I hope you are satisfied now," said Wild, as he rode up and addressed the new man.

"Sartin I am, Young Wild West," was the reply.

"Well, suppose you and Bird have a try at the hat again."

"There wouldn't be no use in my tryin'," declared Wheeler, shaking his head. "I've got to practice a whole lot all by myself afore I kin do that."

"Well, all right, then. We'll let it go at that. But since you don't seem to be very busy around here just now, suppose we all take a ride over to Short Creek. I usually go over there the first day I strike Buckhorn Ranch. I have quite a few friends there, you know."

"Whoopee, whoopee!" shouted Bird, waving his hat. "What do yer think of that for a boss, boys? He's invitin' us ter go over an' have some refreshments at Mexican Joe's Saloon."

They all started to cheering then, and it was easy to see that at least five of the cowboys were very fond of the dashing young deadshot. Of course Buck Wheeler could hardly be supposed to have such a friendly feeling toward him, since it was the first time he had ever met Young Wild West. The fact was that he was acting as though his opinion of the boy was not exactly what his words had implied. Not only did our hero notice this, but Charlie and Jim, as well. It struck all three of them that there was something about the man that was not exactly on the level, so to speak. There was really nothing for the cowboys to do just then, and no one knew this better than Wild, for he had put in considerable time on different ranches, and he knew when cattle were in need of being looked after and when they were not.

Just now the herd was peacefully grazing, and would be all right until the next day, for that matter. The party of ten were soon riding across the range for the trail, which was not more than a couple of miles away, since they had been riding almost parallel with it since they left the ranch. If they had kept on riding and took to the trail as they now were doing without pausing to hold a shooting match, our hero and his partners would have reached Short Creek almost as soon as Hop, Mike and the darky had. But it had taken but a few minutes to go through the shooting performance, so they felt that they would not be far behind them now. Cheyenne Charlie was really eager to get there, for he knew that Hop would surely cut up some of his tricks and make a whole lot of fun.

"Who has the best horse, boys?" Wild asked, as he turned and looked at the cowboys.

"Bird has," came the reply from one of them. The boy looked at the clean-limbed mustang Bird was riding and gave a nod of his head.

"Come on," said he, "I'll give you a race for a mile or two."

"Oh, I know Spitfire kin beat my nag," Bird answered. "I've seen that sorrel go, yer know."

"Well, come on, anyhow."

The two at once started out, and were soon

leading the rest. Bird's mustang was certainly a good one, and for the first mile he kept up pretty well with the sorrel. But then Wild let Spitfire go the limit, and the result was that he rapidly left the cowboy behind him. He did not stop until he was nearly a quarter of a mile ahead, and then he dismounted and waited for the rest to come up.

"That's ther finest piece of horse flesh I've seen in many a day," declared Buck Wheeler, as he looked at the sorrel with admiring eyes. "I'd give a whole lot to own one like him—that is, if I had ther money ter give."

"Well, Buck," the boy answered with a smile, "in my opinion, you will never have money enough to buy Spitfire. The fact is that I wouldn't sell him for any amount."

"I don't blame yer, Wild," the new cowboy answered, adopting the familiar way of addressing him that was in use by all of the cowboys.

"That stallion has beat everything that ever had the name of bein' fast in Texas," declared Hoss Thompson, as they rode on toward their destination.

They were riding along at a canter as the conversation took place, and as they now came along Wild urged the sorrel to a faster pace and the rest promptly followed suit. The ground was rapidly covered now, and it was not very long before the village of Short Creek came in sight a couple of miles ahead. Just as they saw the collection of houses and shanties a horseman showed up around a bed a hundred yards ahead. He was riding as though for his life, and when our hero saw that it was no other than Hop Wah, his clever Chinaman, he was not a little surprised.

"Hip yi!" cried the Chinaman, waving his hat and showing signs of delight.

Then he turned his head and pointed behind him. Ten seconds later a cowboy appeared in view, and it was easy to guess that he was in pursuit of the Chinaman. But the moment he saw our friends approaching the cowboy reined in his horse.

"What's the matter, Hop?" Wild asked as the Chinaman joined them.

"Me alleee samee gittee in touble at Short Cleek, Misler Wild," came the reply. "Um lanchman over lere wantee killee me."

"A ranchman wants to kill you, eh? That is not the man, is it?" and he nodded toward the cowboy, who was evidently waiting for them.

"No, Misler Wild, lat um cowboy whattee with um lanchman. He alleee sameec wantee catchee poor Chinee and cuttee off um pigeee tail, so me. Me no likee."

"I reckon that galoot ain't goin' ter cut your pig-tail off, Hop," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie, as he shot an angry glance at the cowboy.

Then he started his horse forward and quickly rode up to him.

"What's the trouble here, stranger?" he asked.

"Nothin' much, as I know of," was the retort. "I jest wanted ter ketch that hathen an' give him a shakin' up, that's all."

"Did he do anything to you?" the scout queried.

"Well, he played a mean kind of a joke on my boss, an' then he ups an' shoots at ther whole crowd of us."

"Did anybody git hit?"

"No, I can't say as they did."

"Well, then, I reckon there ain't no harm done. But see here, that Chinee is all right. He's about the smartest heathen that ever lived, an' I don't want ter see him hurt."

"Oh, I reckon I wouldn't have hurt him much if I had ketched him," was the reply.

Then the cowboy turned and started back in the direction of Short Creek. When those in Mexican Joe's barroom found that the Chinaman had disappeared while the smoke filled the place they were not a little surprised, but Slocum was very angry over what had happened and he at once called upon one of his men to start in pursuit. Hop had a pretty good start, however, and it just happened that he came upon our friends in the nick of time. There is no doubt but that the cowboy would have made good his threat and severed his queue. This would have been considered a great misfortune by the Chinaman, for, like the general run of his race, he prized his pigtail highly.

"Well, Charlie," said Wild, as he rode up and joined the scout, "I reckon that fellow didn't seem pleased at our interference."

"I reckon not, Wild," was the reply. "You kin bet your life that galoot's no good. If his hoss is anything like him, there ain't no wonder that Hop got in trouble."

"Hop, did yer hear what ther name of the ranchman was?" Hoss Thompson asked.

"Alee samee Slocum, so be."

"Oh, I've met him. He's a sort of man what thinks he's a little better than ther ordinary run of human bein's. He tries ter make out that he's a regular gentleman, jest because he's got a little more book learnin' than ther most of us around here."

"So you have met, then, Hoss?" Wild asked.

"Yes, I've met him three or four times, Wild."

"Well, suppose you introduce us as soon as we get where he is."

Buck Wheeler seemed to be greatly interested in all that he saw and heard, but he made no comment whatever. The other cowboys had a lot to say about it, and all of them declared that if Slocum undertook any "funny business" with Yeung Wild West he would find that he had met more than his match. In a very few minutes the party rode into the village and halted before Mexican Joe's place. Hop was one of the first to dismount, and, with his face wreathed in smiles, he promptly stepped into the barroom.

"Hip hi! Hooray!" he yelled in a shrill, falsetto voice. "Me Young Wild West's Clever Chince! Me allee samee um bully boy with um glassee eye. Hip yi! Hooray!"

#### CHAPTER V.—The Trouble Begins.

The cowboy Slocum had sent in pursuit of the Chinaman he was so anxious to make short work of came back to the saloon in very much of a hurry.

"What's the matter, Bill?" the ranchman asked. "You seem to be in an awful hurry."

"Well, boss, I sorter met with a drawback," was the reply.

"How is that, Bill?"

"Well, jest as I was thinkin' I was goin' ter git ther blamed Chinee who should I run across but this Young Wild West an' his gang."

"Is that so? I suppose they took the Chinaman's part, of course."

"They sartinly did, hoss. I had some words with a tall galoot what's got long black hair, an' you kin bet your life that I'm goin' ter have it out with him when he gits here. I'll let him know I'm about as good as he is."

Just the vestige of a smile flitted across the face of Mexican Joe as he heard this, but he said nothing. It was not long before the Chinaman and those who had interfered in time to save him came riding up. The ranchman and his cowboys were inside the place, and all saw the party coming through a window. Slocum instantly arose to his feet and sauntered to the bar.

"Come on, hoys, we'll have a drink," he said.

As Hop entered the saloon in the manner described at the conclusion of our last chapter, all four of the men looked daggers at him. But the Chinaman paid no attention to them and danced lightly around the room, all the time waving his hat. Wild and Jim came in with the rest of the party now, and calling the young deadshot to his side, Hoss said:

"Mr. Slocum, this is Young Wild West, ther Champion Deadshot."

"Delighted to meet you," exclaimed the ranchman, smiling and putting out his hand.

Wild accepted the hand and shook with him.

"This here is Cheyenne Charlie, ther boss Indian fighter an' scout," went on Hoss, as he nodded to Charlie.

The two shook hands.

"This here is Jim Dart, Mr. Slocum."

"Pleased to meet you, young fellow."

"Young Wild West is ther owner of Buckhorn Ranch, as probably you have heard," said Hoss, with a wave of his hand.

"I didn't know that until a short time ago, when Joe happened to say that you were not the owner, and that the ranch was the property of Young Wild West," answered Slocum. "I remarked at the time that if Young Wild West was a boy under age I didn't see how he could hold the property. But he explained that it was Cheyenne Charlie who held the deed."

"Yes, I reckon that's about ther size of it," Hoss answered. "But that don't make no difference. It's Wild's ranch, jest ther same."

"Of course. Well, gentlemen, you are just in time. We are about to have a drink, as you can see. Won't you join us?"

"Oh, I'll take a little drop of tanglefoot, though I ain't much of a drinker nowadays," and the foreman of Buckhorn Ranch grinned.

"I'm about ther same as you are, Hoss," declared Cheyenne Charlie, stepping forward, "so I'll do ther same as you do."

"A little ginger pop for me, Joe," observed our hero.

"The same for me, Joe," spoke up Dart.

"Oh, the boys do not drink whisky, I see," remarked Slocum, as he looked at Thompson questioningly.

"No, they don't, Mr. Slocum. They're both strictly temperance, which is about right, I think. If I'd been that way in my younger days I'd have a whole lot more money than I've got to-day."

"No doubt, no doubt."

The cowboys were all invited, too, so they quickly drained their glasses and Joe's face wore a

benevolent smile as he received the money from Slocum to pay the bill. Hop had not stepped forward to get his drink, as he usually did under such circumstances.

"Wonderful fellow, that," said Slocum, suddenly turning to our hero.

"Yes, Hop is a remarkable Chinaman," was the reply.

"There is no doubt about that, after what he has just done. A sort of magician, I suppose."

"Yes, that's right, Mr. Slocum."

"Well, while we are on that subject, I may as well ask your opinion about a certain thing that happened a little while before you came here."

"All right, go ahead."

"That Chinaman played a very mean trick upon me. He put something in my glass that caused a big comotion in it when I poured out my drink. Of course it angered me somewhat, and when I found that he was the culprit I threatened to shoot him. Then he drew a pistol and fired it off to kill me, but I was lucky enough to miss the bullet. As soon as we found that he had gone I sent Bill, one of my men, to catch him. Don't you think that I did about right?"

"Well, yes, if what you say is correct. But I wouldn't have thought it quite right if your man had caught him and cut off his queue, as he threatened to do."

"Well, the truth is I haven't much use for a Chinaman, Young Wild West."

"Is that so? Well, I'll see to it that our clever Chinee does not interfere with you again."

"Do so, please, for if he does happen to it might go a little hard with him."

"Hop," and the young deadshot directed his gaze upon the Chinaman, "you will understand that you are not to do any joking with this man again. Do you hear what I say?"

"Me hear whattayou say, Misler Wild," was the quick reply. "Alee light, me velly solly me makee Misler Slocum allee samee mad. He velly nicee man, so be, and me no wantee hurnee him feelings."

"That will do, you yellow-faced dog!" exclaimed Slocum, turning angrily to the speaker.

"See here," said Wild, touching the ranchman upon the shoulder, "you don't seem to be willing to accept an apology, even, Mr. Slocum."

"Not from him," was the quick reply.

"Well, if you can't accept it from him you certainly can't from any one else. He is the person who offended you, isn't he?"

"Pshaw!". and Slocum turned away as though he was disgusted with the whole proceeding.

It was not difficult for our hero to see that the man was looking for trouble. The arrival of the Champion Deadshot of the West had been observed by several of the residents of Short Creek, and some of them now came crowding into the saloon, eager to give him an old-fashioned greeting. In less than ten minutes the barroom was completely filled, and the hand shaking that took place was quite enough to convince the casual observer that the young deadshot and his partners held warm places in the hearts of the citizens of the village. When Wild had spoken to all of them he turned and left the place, followed by Charlie and Jim. He first went to the blacksmith shop and shook hands with the smith and those who were loitering about his place. Then he went

over to the store and found several there who were glad to see him. This done, he went back to Mexican Joe's, his partners keeping right with him all the time. Our three friends had no sooner entered than the rascally cowboy called Bill arose to his feet and walked over to them. Looking at Cheyenne Charlie, he said:

"You spoke a little sharp ter me out on ther trail, I reckon. Now then, I'd like ter know what you meant by it."

The scout was not a little surprised, for he had not expected anything of the sort. But his quick temper arose instantly.

"Did yer hear what I said out on ther trail, you sneakin' coyote?" he demanded, his eyes flashing.

"Yes, I heard what yer said."

"Well, I meant jest what I said, then. That oughter be enough. If it ain't you kin git anything more yer want."

"That's all right," said Mill, apparently quite cool. "I reckon I'm as good as you, an' don't you forget it."

"I'll bet yer a hundred dollars that yer ain't."

"If I had ther money I'd take ther bet, but I don't happen ter have that much. But I'll tell you what you do, Mr. Cheyenne Charlie. You jest walk out of that door, an' you kin bet your life that I'll follow yer mighty quick."

"Come on, then," cried Charlie, whose blood was now up, and he quickly went outside.

Of course the crowd rushed out when they found Bill followed the scout. It was not a new thing to see a fight take place at Short Creek, but when Young Wild West or his partners were any way mixed up in one the crowd grew much interested. As Charlie left the saloon he was keeping a watch behind him, for he was not going to let the man get the drop on him if he could help it. He now backed his way to the center of the dusty street, and then stood waiting for anything that might happen. Bill came forward slowly, and not far behind him walked Slocum and the other two men. But neither Wild nor Jim offered to come out into the road.

"Now then," said Charlie as he took a step or two toward the cowboy, "how are yer goin' ter settle this? It don't make no difference to me whether yer want ter pull your gun or fight it out with fists. If you feel as though you kin handle your bowie, why that will suit me, too. I'm jest itchin' ter give you a good wallopin', an' you kin bet your life that I'm goin' ter do it, too."

"There ain't no galoot within a hundred miles of here as kin do that, you black-muzzled sneak," retorted Bill, who seemed to be as eager to fight as the scout was.

This so enraged Charlie that he leaped toward the man and swung his left fist with all his might. But Bill managed to dodge the blow, and as Charlie went past him he put out his left foot and tripped him. The scout went to the ground with a thud, but was upon his feet in a twinkling. But he was too late to get out of the way from the blow that was aimed at him, and he received it full upon the forehead. He staggered back a few paces, and then recovering himself he put up his hands in a boxing attitude. Elated with the success he had met with so far Bill struck out with both hands.

But the scout was now ready for him and dodging the blows he quickly swung around his

left and caught the man upon the ear. As the man staggered to keep from falling Charlie sent in his right fist and caught him on the other side. This was more than the man could stand, and he went to the ground in a heap. Though Charlie knew a little about boxing, he did not fight by any of the rules of the game just then. He had his man down, and without waiting a second he pounced upon him and began pummeling him with both fists.

"Hold on there!" called out Slocum, laying his hand upon the butt of a revolver. "Fight fair, or I'll take a hand in this."

"You take your hand off that gun or I'll take a hand in it, too," cried Wild, as he stepped forward and pointed a finger at the ranchman.

Instead of obeying the boy, Slocum pulled the revolver from the holster. As quick as he was in doing this Young Wild West was quicker. The boy's hand fairly flew to his right side, and then—Crack! The revolver dropped from the ranchman's hand, and with a cry of pain he jumped back and placed the back of his hand to his mouth.

#### CHAPTER VI.—Young Wild West on Top, as Usual.

As the shot was fired by Young Wild West Cheyenne Charlie instantly sprang to his feet and drew his revolver. At first he thought one of the cowboys had fired at him, but when his quick eye took in the situation he gave a nod of satisfaction and exclaimed:

"What's that, Wild! You got him, all right. That measly coyote is no good. I'll bet a five-dollar gold piece to a silver quarter that he set this galoot up ter pick a row with me, jest so he could git a chance himself in ther game."

"Take it easy, Charlie," Wild retorted, in his cool and easy way. "If the fellow is satisfied with the thrashing you have given him we'll let it go at that. But if he or any of his friends want any more, all they've got to do is to say the word. I'll look after Mr. Slocum myself."

As quickly as the young deadshot had fired he knew just where the bullet would strike, and when he found that it had simply grazed the back of the ranchman's hand he was well satisfied, for he had not intended to kill, or even injure him. Bill was a badly defeated man, for the scout had certainly pounded him pretty hard during the brief time he had him at his mercy. But he was not unconscious, and he now got upon his feet and staggered away toward the pump that was near at hand. The other two cowboys, who were in the employ of Slocum, hastened to assist him, and soon they were washing the blood from his face and trying to allay his aches and pains. Meanwhile Slocum did not attempt to walk away from the spot he had been standing upon when the revolver had been shot from his hand. He noticed that Young Wild West still held the weapon ready to fire another shot, and this was probably his reason for remaining there. It took him a full minute to realize that he had not been hurt much, and when he had wiped the blood from the back of his hand he turned and fixed his eyes upon the boy, but did not say a word.

"Well," said Wild, after a rather lengthy

pause, "how about it, Mr. Slocum? Are you satisfied at the way things have turned out, or do you want to go ahead?"

"I am satisfied to let it go as it is—for the present, anyhow," came the reply in a rather low tone of voice.

"Oh, all right, then. We'll let it go for the present. But mark my words, Mr. Slocum; if you or your hired men attempt to do anything to get even for what has happened here this afternoon you will make the mistake of your lives. That's all I care to say just now."

The ranchman muttered something that was not intelligible and started toward the door of the saloon.

"Hold on!" called out Wild. "You may as well take that gun with you. I have an idea that it must have cost fifteen or twenty dollars, and as it is no doubt your property, you had better take care of it. I don't want it, anyhow."

Slocum hesitated a moment, and then turned back and walked slowly over to the spot where the weapon lay and picked it up. Then as he walked inside the saloon Wild and his partners followed him, for they were all satisfied now that the rascals had had quite enough of it. The way he acted did not go unnoticed by Young Wild West, and the boy now put him down as being a man who is engaged in some kind of unlawful business, and does not let it be known. But it never once occurred to Wild that he might be connected with the gang of horse thieves. But such was the case, nevertheless, for Slocum was really the leader of the gang of men who had been stealing horses from the ranchman in that section of Texas for the past month or so. In a few minutes the three cowboys came in.

"Well, boys, I guess we'll go home," he said, after a pause. "Just fill those demijohns, Joe."

"All right, Mr. Slocum," the proprietor of the saloon answered quickly. "I'll have 'em ready in a jiffy."

Evidently the ranchman and his three cowboys had come over for the purpose of taking quite a stock of liquor back with them, for there were four two-gallon demijohns to be filled. Joe was not long in filling the order, and as soon as Slocum had paid the bill he nodded for his companions to come on and left the place without saying another word. As they mounted their horses and rode away the cowboy called Bird took off his hat, and waving it over his head, called out:

"Three cheers for Slocum and his gang. Now then, boys, all together. Hip, hip!"

"Hooray, hooray, hooray!" went up from all hands, save one of the party.

That one was Buck Wheeler. He stood inside the building, his eyes turned toward the floor, acting very much as though he felt down-hearted over something. No one noticed this but Hop Wah, who had raised his voice in giving the cheer. He and the proprietor were the only ones who had remained inside, with the exception of Wheeler, so the Chinaman could not help noticing the way the cowboy acted. Among the first to enter after the ranchman and his cowboys had departed from the village were Mike, the peon, and Jeff, the darky.

They came in by the rear door, for both had gone outside that way when the first signs of the trouble began. Jeff knew quite well that he had

nothing to fear from any one there now, so his dusky face wore a broad grin as he walked up to Hop and joined him at the bar. Mike was smiling, too, just as though he was trying to show that he felt all the time things were going to turn out jest as they had. It happened that Hoss Thompson had not taken notice of the darky before, and seeing him standing there now showing his white teeth in a broad grin, he exclaimed:

"What in thunder are you doin' here, coon?"

"I done take a little ride over here, de same as Mike and de Chinee, boss," was the reply.

"Yer did, eh? Well, who told yer yer could come?"

"Nobody, sar. But I seen Mike go, so I tink I can go, too."

"Well, all right," and the foreman laughed good-naturedly. "I s'pose this is a sort of holiday, anyhow. Joe, jest set 'em up for all hands. I reckon I've got enough money with me to pay ther bill. If I ain't I'll give it to yer the next time I come over."

After that there came a lull in that sort of thing, and then it was that Hop walked over to where our hero was standing, and in a low tone of voice he said:

"Misler Wild, me wantee tellee you somethling. You comee outside and me tellee you velly muchee quickee."

"All right, Hop," was the reply.

A couple of minutes later the two stood outside near the pump.

"What is it, Hop?" the boy asked, for he was satisfied that it was something of importance.

"You know um cowboy ley allee samee calleee Buck, Misler Wild?"

"Yes, what about him, Hop?"

"Well, he no likee whattee happen here to Misler Slocum."

"That's right, Hop. I have an idea that he didn't like it much. But how do you know?"

"When eveybody holler hoolay he allee samee keepee velly muchee still and lookee at um floor."

"Oh, I see. Well, I'll tell you what you do, Hop. You just keep your eyes on Buck Wheeler, and if he should happen to go away before the rest of us do you follow him up and see where he goes."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," and the Chinaman's eyes danced with delight. "Lat whattee me wantee do. Me allee samee thlinkee 'boutee lat."

The young deadshot knew by experience that he could hardly entrust such a mission to a better one than the clever Chinee. He walked back into the saloon and soon got the opportunity to tell Charlie and Jim what he had learned from the Chinaman.

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised if that galoot of a Buck is some way connected with Slocum an' his gang," declared the scout, looking rather grave.

"Well, he certainly did not like what happened here to Slocum and his cowboys, anyhow," Wild answered. "But never mind. We'll let it drop for the present. Hop will take care of Buck, all right."

A few minutes later our hero and his companions went outside, and then it was not long before others living in the village came forward to extend the greeting to them. The women and children came also, for the young deadshot was

very popular at Short Creek, and for the next hour a very pleasant time was spent. It was about this time that Hop suddenly left the scene without saying anything to any one. The fact was that the clever Chinee had seen Buck Wheeler mount his horse and start to ride away, and true to his promise to the young deadshot, he meant to follow him. Wild was not long in seeing what he was up to, but he said nothing, and let Hop go on. Hop was missed shortly after that, for some one suggested that it would be a good idea to have him give a little magic performance. Then Wild explained to them that he had sent him back to the ranch, as there was something of importance for him to do there. Mike, the peon, and the darky were not a little surprised at this, and when they began to ask questions Wild advised them to go back, too.

"We may as well all go now," he said, "since it will be supper time when we get there," and he turned to his partners and the cowboys.

They were all quite willing to this arrangement, so a few minutes later they mounted their horses and started back for the ranch.

## CHAPTER VII.—Young Wild West Marks the Mustang.

The ranch Slocum had recently purchased lay about twenty miles to the southeast of Short Creek, and as he left the town to ride to it with his three rascally cowboys he was in anything but a pleasant frame of mind. He fully realized that he had made a mistake in acting the way he had done to Young Wild West. But the fact was that he had not exactly believed all that had been told of the young deadshot. Now he knew, to his sorrow. He looked down at the scratch upon the back of his hand that had been caused by the young deadshot's bullet, and a muttered oath came from his lips as a consequence. He next turned his eyes to the battered face of Bill.

"By jingo, boys!" he exclaimed aloud. "This is what I call the worst thing that has ever happened. Who would have thought it would have turned out this way?"

"Well, I was a little afraid ter pick a row with Young Wild West an' his pards," spoke up one of the cowboys, whose name was Hockey. "I've heard considerable about them there, an' I knowed that if half of it was true they wasn't ther sort that's ter be fooled with."

"None of you need fear but that we'll get square for what has happened," observed the ranchman, after a short silence. "I managed to give Buck Wheeler a tip to follow us, and since he is working at Buckhorn Ranch I feel quite sure that it will not be hard for us to square things. But come on. There is no use talking about it now. We'll wait till we get home."

The four now let their horses go at a sharp gallop, and mile after mile of the prairie land was covered. They followed the trail that passed Buckhorn Ranch until about half way to it. Then they turned to the left on another trail, which led to Slocum's Ranch, and so on to others that lay in that part of the county. The afternoon was pretty well advanced when they arrived at the ranch, which was a rather small affair, since

the cattle that grazed upon the range were few indeed. The big corral a short distance from the house contained as many as two or three hundred mustangs, however, so it was evident that Slocum dealt more in horse flesh than he did in cattle. But two men had been left at the ranch, and these, with the three Slocums had with him, constituted all the help. There was no woman there to do the cooking even, so one of the men acted that part. As there was nothing to keep them out on the range at the time, the two were at the house when the new arrivals halted and dismounted.

"Get supper ready as soon as possible," said the ranchman to one of the men who had been there upon their arrival. "I have made up my mind that we've got to do some business this very night."

"Yer ain't goin' ter take a trip over to Buckhorn Ranch to-night, are yer, boss?" Bill asked.

"I certainly am," was the reply. "We have not done much business over there yet. I believe it is only three that we have got from there, isn't that right?"

"That's right, boss," Hocked spoke up. "Three mustangs that don't amount ter much, either. You know that, 'cause they only turned out a hundred an' eighty dollars for ther three."

"Yes, I remember," and the ranchman nodded his head. "But we're going to get more than three to-night, you can bet on that. We are working this business in a very clever way, I think. No one has the least suspicion that we are responsible for the loss of so many horses around these parts. But that's due to my way of conducting things. I don't believe in keeping stolen things here, you know, so as soon as we get a few together I send them off to El Paso."

"That's ther way ter do it, boss."

The rest of the cowboys nodded approvingly as Bill said this. Bill was now busy in doctoring up his face, for he had found what he required to do it with. He was in a much better humor, too, now, and he seemed to be rather talkative. Slocum listened to him and nodded when he made suggestions that were favorable, and after a while it was decided that they would wait until Buck Wheeler showed up before they decided just what they would do that night.

"Buck Wheeler will surely be here," declared the ranchman, "for he knew what I meant when I gave him a nod as we were leaving. Probably he won't start out right away. It may be that he will go back to the ranch with the rest of the gang before he comes here. But, anyhow, he will be here. You can depend on that."

In a little over half an hour the supper was ready, and the cowboys sat down with the boss in the largest room in the house and ate heartily. While the man who acted as cook and house-keeper was clearing away the remains of the repast the rest went out upon the porch, some of them smoking pipes, and others cigarettes. The sun was close to the line of the western horizon now, and from where they sat they could look in the direction they expected Buck Wheeler to appear from when he came. But it was fully two hours after their arrival at the ranch before they saw a horseman coming over the trail at a gallop. The cowboy rode up, his horse covered with foam, which told that he had been riding hard.

"Well, so you're here, Buck?" queried Slocum, as the cowboy dismounted and stepped upon the porch.

"Yes, boss. I would have been here much sooner, but on my way back I come across two of ther boys from Buckhorn. I couldn't git away from them very quick, but I finally told 'em that I had ter go back to ther stables of ther ranch on an erand, an' then I got away, though I had ter go a big part out of my way. But here I am, all right. Now then, what's goin' ter be done?"

"You ought to be able to guess that, Buck," and the ranchman smiled as he rolled a cigarette.

"Yes, I s'pose I oughter," was the reply. "You ain't got very friendly feelin's toward ther owner of Buckhorn Ranch, I reckon. An' you have made up your mind ter git away with a lot of horses from there as soon as possible, I s'pose."

"That's right. But I've made up my mind to something more than that. I want to get away with Young Wild West, too."

"I s'posed as much," and the cowboy smiled, though he shrugged his shoulders in an uneasy way at the same time.

"When I told you to take the job with Hoss Thompson I did so because I happened to know that there were more good horses belonging to Buckhorn Ranch than any other ranch in these parts," said Slocum, nodding his head. "We've got three measly mustangs from there since you have been there, however. But that's all right. To-night is the time we are going to make a good haul."

"You don't want ter take that sorrel stallion of Young Wild West's, do yer?"

"No," was the quick reply. "That horse is altogether too well known. It wouldn't do to take him. All we want to get to-night is about twenty of the broken mustangs from the corral. They will fetch all the way from Sixty to a hundred and fifty dollars apiece in El Paso. I have got a man there to buy them, and he knows what to do with them as soon as he gets them. Now then, when you go back to Buckhorn you just fix things so it won't take the boys long to get the horses and get away with them."

"All right, boss; you kin bet I'll do my part."

One of the men led Buck's horse away and gave it a good rubbing down. Then it was not long before the villain was eating a substantial supper that had been quickly prepared for him. But he was in no hurry to go after he had finished, for he had decided to give his horse a pretty good rest.

"The horse thieves have certainly worked up this part of the country, boys," remarked Slocum, as Buck came out and took his seat upon the porch. "Let me see, Bill. How many horses have we lost?"

"Eight," was the reply, and then all hands broke into a laugh, as though it was a very good joke.

"Well, I'll give it out to-morrow morning that we've lost eight more, which ought to make the thing appear all right. I suppose we'll hear if we happen to go over to Short Creek that Young Wild West has lost a score of good mustangs."

"You sartinly will, boss," declared Buck Wheeler with a grin. "There's one horse over there that I'd like ter have a whole lot. It's a fine bay, an' I'm juttin' sartin that by trimmin' up his tail

an' mane a little nobody would ever know him again. He's in ther bunch with ther rest of 'em, an' I'm dead sartin that as there are so many what looks a lot like him, that ther horse won't be recognized by Hoss Thompson or any of ther rest. I've sorter made up my mind ter keep him for my own use."

The villains kept on talking in this way until it came time for Buck to set out for Buckhorn Ranch. By this time his horse was rested enough, though it was not a long journey for a Texas mustang to make, anyhow.

"What time will I be ready, boss?" Buck asked, as he mounted and sat waiting near the porch of the house.

"Well, I'll send three of the boys over so they'll arrive at your corral at about two o'clock. How will that do?"

"That will suit me fine. I'm one of ther three what s'posed ter be on duty to-night, anyhow. Since ther horse thieves have been around Hoss Thompson has seen ter it that somebody takes a ride around ther corral a few times durin' ther night."

"Well, I shan't tell you what to do in this case, Buck; I'll leave it to your own judgment. You're a pretty sharp fellow, anyhow. If you fix it so we can get away with about twenty of Young Wild West's mustangs you can have the horse you have picked out and get your share in the profits at the same time. How does that strike you?"

"Fine," Wheeler answered, his face lighting up with satisfaction.

"All right, then. Two o'clock is the time."

Buck gave a nod, and then waving his hand to his villainous friends, he rode away. He had not got more than a mile away from the house when a horseman suddenly rode from out of a clump of trees that dotted the trail like an oasis on a desert and rode after him. It was Hop Wah, the clever Chinkee. Hop had followed Buck Wheeler to Slocum's ranch, but in the daylight he had not dared to venture close to the house. Thus it was that he had been unable to hear anything that was said, but he was satisfied that Wheeler was a traitor, and he meant to follow him wherever he went until he got evidence of it.

Buck kept on at the easy lope so common to mustangs and bronchos, and at length the lights of Buckhorn Ranch showed up before him. He rode straight to the corral, where the mustangs the horse thieves intended to steal that night were kept. There happened to be no one there just then, so he dismounted and leaned over the bars. It seemed that he had made friends with one particular mustang, for when he uttered a low whistle it came trotting up to the bars and permitted him to pat its glossy neck.

"You're my meat," said the villain, in a low tone of voice. "I've got ter let Slocum fix you up so you won't be recognized, for I think you're the best piece of horse flesh there is for miles around."

This was the horse he had spoken of, and though there were many other bays in the corral, it was easy for Buck to distinguish this one from them. He patted the horse and talked to it for fully five or ten minutes, and then he turned and, mounting, rode on to the ranch. He had not got far when another was at the bars making friends with the same bay. It was Hop, of course. He

had dismounted when the villain stopped at the corral, and by creeping forward he had been in time to hear what Buck said to the horse and to himself as well. The clever Chinkee produced a thin piece of string from one of his pockets and tied it about the horse's neck, so he would know it again in the dark. This done, he turned and rode for the house to make his report to Young Wild West. Hop found our friends there and when he rode up and dismounted Wild hurried to meet him.

"What has kept you so long, Hop?" the boy asked.

"Me havee be velly caleful, Misler Wild," was the reply. "Me follee Buck allee timee, so be."

"Well, did you learn anything?"

"Me findee outtee lat Buck allee samee likee um bay horse in un collal velly muchee. He say he havee Misler Slocum fixee uppee um horse so nobody know him. Len he keeppee for himself, so be."

This was quite enough to satisfy the young deadshot that something was wrong, not only with Buck but with Slocum and his cowboys.

"By jingo!" he added, as he turned to Charlie and Jim, who had heard what the Chinaman said, "here's a chance to set a trap for the horse thieves."

"Right yer are, Wild!" exclaimed the scout. "Great gimlets! Them galoots is ther horse thieves, as sure as guns."

"I am quite positive of it, Charlie, though I didn't think anything like that at first. Now then, the best thing we can do is to mark that mustang. I think we had better lose no time about it, either."

"How are you going to do that so the mark won't be seen?" Jim Dart inquired.

Hop then explained to them that he had tied a string about the animal's neck, so Wild quickly told Jim to keep a watch upon Buck Wheeler and see to it that he did not come out to the corral for a while, and then quickly procured the necessary implements and started for the corral with Charlie and the Chinaman. Though Hop had not eaten his supper he was perfectly satisfied to go with him, since he felt that he had accomplished a whole lot by following the rascally cowboy. They soon reached the corral and it was not difficult to find the mustang that Hop had tied the string upon. A fire was kindled in the pot, and one of the irons heated as quickly as possible. Then Wild told the scout and the Chinaman to hold the head of the animal, and brushing back the hair upon the left flank he marked out two letters, W. W., by simply burning off the short hair and scarcely hurting the animal a particle. This done, he brushed back the long hair again, and lighting a match, took a view of his work. The letters could not be seen. But when he brushed the hair the wrong way they showed out in bold relief.

"There you are, Charlie," the young deadshot exclaimed, nodding his head with satisfaction. "There is my marked mustang. Now then, the trap is set for the horse thieves. Come on back to the house."

#### CHAPTER VIII.—The Trap Is Sprung.

When Young Wild West got back to the house he sent Charlie to find Jim and tell him that

everything was all right. As the girls had been inside when the Chinaman arrived they knew nothing of what had happened, and it was not until Jim came back and reported that Buck was at the shack where the cowboys made their quarters that he informed him of what they had done. Hoss Thompson happened to come upon the porch at the same time, so turning to him, the young deadshot said:

"Well, Hoss, I guess we are in a fit way to catch the horse thieves."

"What?" exclaimed the foreman, showing great surprise.

"I think so, anyway. It has come rather unexpected, too."

"Have yer got an idea who they are, Wild?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I think that we have a man working here on the ranch who is one of them."

"Yer don't mean Buck Wheeler, do yer?"

"That's just who I mean, Hoss. But don't talk so loud. Some one might be listening, you know."

"Thunder!" exclaimed the foreman, as he moved up closer to the boy. "I took that feller ter be a mighty honest galoot, I did."

"Well, you can't always tell about such things, Hoss. But what would you think if I should tell you that I believe Slocum, the ranchman, is one of the horse thieves—the leader of them in fact."

"Yer don't mean that, Wild."

"Yes, I do. I sent Hop to follow Wheeler, you know, and he kept by him until he reached the ranch that Slocum owns. It was daylight then, so he dared not go near the house and try to hear anything that was said. But he waited until after it got dark, and then Buck came from the house and headed straight for here. Hop followed him, and when Buck reached the corral he managed to hear him talking to a particular mustang there and that gave the whole thing away."

Wild then told just what Hop had related.

Hoss Thompson was certainly a surprised man.

"Why, blame it all!" he exclaimed. "This man Slocum has been makin' a big time about ther horses he's lost. Nobody would ever have believed that he knowed anything about ther stealin'."

"Well, he's a pretty shrewd sort of a man, and that's how it is that it has not been discovered who the thieves were. But I have set a trap now, and you can bet all you're worth that before sunset to-morrow we will have the horse thieves dead to rights."

"Well," said Jim Dart, after a pause, "I was pretty well satisfied that Slocum and his cowboys were crooks. I also felt that Buck Wheeler was not just what he represented himself to be. But I did not think they were the horses thieves. The fact is I never gave a thought about the horse thieves at all."

"Well, I am about the same way as you, Jim," Wild admitted. "I certainly was not thinking about horse thieves when we were over at Short Creek this afternoon. I thought that Slocum was a very pretentious sort of man, and that he had an idea that he was a little bit above the general run of people in this vicinity. But thoughts of the horse thieves never came in my mind at the time. But now it is different. I can see it all as plainly as if it were written down for me."

The girls came out upon the porch a little later, so Wild did not hesitate to tell them all about the discovery they had made through the agency of the clever Chinaman.

"Well," said Arietta, not showing a great deal of surprise, "after hearing you tell about what happened at Short Creek I could not help thinking that those men might be the horse thieves. I said nothing about it because I knew if you thought anything like that you would mention it. I didn't want to make myself appear foolish, you know."

"I wish you had spoken about it, Et," her lover answered, with a smile. "You are a pretty shrewd one, anyhow, and if you had just mentioned your suspicion it would have struck me right away that you were right. But as I said before, I had forgotten all about the horse thieves."

Then Hoss Thompson told them that he remembered that Buck Wheeler was to be one of the three men who were to keep a watch upon the corral that night.

"That's all right," said Wild. "That makes it all the better. Just let him have his own way about things. It may be that his gang won't come here at all to-night, but if they don't come to-night they will come some other night, that's sure. Just say nothing about this, and don't let the rascal think that he is suspected. He and the other two men can go ahead and keep their watch, just the same, but you can bet that I will be watching, too, though they won't know anything about it."

"If they should come we mean ter nail 'em right on ther spot, then, Wild, I s'pose?" spoke up the scout.

"No," was the reply. "If the horse thieves come to make a raid on our corral to-night I am going to let them take as many of the mustangs as they see fit."

"They might git away with 'em, Wild," said Hoss Thompson, uneasily.

"Oh, they won't get very far, you can bet on that. I have set the trap, you know. If our suspicions are correct Buck will surely take the marked mustang."

"That's so."

"Well, as soon as they go away we will get four or five of the cowboys and we will follow them. There is an old saying that a fellow can't swear to his own horse—he can swear to it, of course, but I reckon if there are others who will swear that it is not his, the majority rules. But the mark on the mustang will prove the property quickly enough."

"That's right," and the foreman nodded his head approvingly.

The matter was talked over thoroughly, but Wild did not signify his intentions any further. When it came nine o'clock he arose from his seat on the porch and said:

"I am going to go to bed now and sleep until twelve o'clock. I am satisfied that horse thieves don't usually come around until that hour. I am well satisfied now that the villains mean to pay us a visit to-night. At midnight I will get my horse and go out to the corral. Charlie, I want you to go with me, so you had better turn in and get two or three hours sleep, too."

"All right, Wild; I'll be right with yer, you kin bet," the scout replied.

"Hoss," and our hero now turned to the foreman, "I may arouse you in a hurry some time during the night. If I do I want you to get a hustle on you and get three or four of the men ready to start out with us."

"All right, Wild, I'll only be too glad ter do it," was the reply.

The young deadshot then bade all hands good night, as did the scout, and then they went to bed. It was not necessary for them to tell anyone to arouse them at twelve o'clock, for they were so used to getting up at any time they wanted to that they seldom if ever made a mistake. It was a few minutes before the hour of midnight when Wild awoke. He struck a match and looking at his watch gave a nod of satisfaction. Charlie heard him moving, and he was quickly out of bed. Then the two quickly dressed themselves and left the house without making enough noise to arouse the rest of the inmates. They went directly to the stable where they found a lantern, and holding this they were not long in saddling their horses. Both had their rifles with them, for they knew they might be needed before they got through, in case the horse thieves did pay a visit to the corral.

Mounting them, they rode away to the right, and then gradually worked their way around until they reached the corral. There was a good sized shack built at one end of the inclosure to store the grain that was occasionally fed to the animals kept there. Dismounting behind this they sat down to wait. Knowing that the three cowboys appointed to do duty for the night must be somewhere about, they remained silent, and in the shadow of the building they were not likely to be observed, unless the cowboys should happen to come there. But this did not happen, though after they had been there perhaps half an hour they heard hoof-beats off to the left. Wild arose and crept along the corral. The stars were shining brightly, and it was not long before he could see three horsemen riding about. These were the watchers, no doubt, so he let them go and came back and joined the scout. For over an hour nothing broke the silence but the occasional movements of some of the horses in the corral. Wild struck a match and looked at his watch. It was twenty minutes of two.

"Charlie," said he, "it looks as though nothing is going to happen to-night, but I reckon we'll stay here till three o'clock, anyhow."

"We may as well stay till daylight," was the reply. "I don't mind it. I'm willin' ter wait for ther sake of havin' a little excitement. If we happen ter git ther horse thieves in ther trap you have set it will be a great thing, an' it sartinly will pay us for waitin'."

"That's right, Charlie. All right, then. We'll stick it out to-night, if nothing happens."

It must have been just about ten minutes of two when the clatter of hoofs sounded, and then they knew the watchers were riding toward the shack. This proved to be the case, for a couple of minutes later they heard voices, and then the horses came to a halt, just around the corner from where they were hiding.

"Boys," said a voice, which they instantly

recognized as that of Buck Wheeler, "I'm sartin I seen a party of horsemen ridin' to ther right over there. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if it's ther horse thieves. Now then, if you two take a ride over that way I'll stay here an' keep on ther watc'n till they come back. Maybe I was wrong, but I don't think I was."

"All right, Buck," one of the men answered. "I didn't see nothin' when you pointed out that way. But maybe your eyes is better than mine. We'll do jest as you say. I'd jest like ter git sight of them galoots, blamed if I wouldn't."

The scout gave Wild a nudge, but the boy simply laid his hand on his shoulder, which meant for him to keep perfectly silent. After a few more words had passed between the three men, two of them rode on. They had scarcely got out of hearing when the sounds of approaching horses' hoofs were heard from a direction that was opposite to that in which they had gone.

"Keep cool, Charlie," whispered the young deadshot. "We have not waited for nothing."

"Right yer are, Wild; I'll do ict as you say," was the reply.

Two minutes later they peered around the corner of the shack and saw that Buck Wheeler had company, for three men had come to a halt near him.

"Everything's all right, boys," they heard Buck say, in a voice that showed how elated he felt at his ruse in getting his two companions away from the spot. "We've got ter hurry a little, though, 'cause they'll be back in ten or fifteen minutes."

The three men who had come to the corral were Bill, Hockey and Sam, as might be supposed. They had lariats and halters with them sufficient to lead away the twenty horses they had planned to take, and when Buck quietly let down the bars they all rode in and started in their work of catching the animals they wanted. The four rode about the corral for fully ten minutes, but the mustangs had been well broken, and were not hard to catch, and at the end of that time they had those they thought they wanted, though they could not make a good selection in the darkness. But Buck got his favorite mustang, our hero and the scout knew. They heard him say that, and when they saw him change the saddle from the horse he had been riding to the mustang it was easy to understand that he meant to take formal possession right then and there. The other horse was turned into the corral, and after the stolen mustangs had been led forth the bars were put up and then the thieves rode away with their booty.

It was just about this time that the two cowboys came back after finding they had been on a wild goose chase, so to speak. When they found Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie waiting at the corral for them they were not a little surprised. But the young deadshot quickly explained matters to them, and then said:

"Now then, you ride straight to the house and wake Hoss Thompson. Tell him to get a couple more of the boys and then you follow the trail that leads to Slocum's ranch. We'll go on ahead. We've got the horse thieves this time, boys. I have set a trap for them, so there will be no mistake about it."

The surprised cowboys waited to hear no more, but set out to do our hero's bidding. They were not long in reaching the house, for it was less than a mile distant, and when the foreman was aroused they started to tell what they knew about it to him.

"I know all about it, boys," Thompson declared. "If you two fellers want ter go along, jest say ther word."

"You bet we do," they declared.

"Well, all right. Jes git a couple more of ther boys, an' then we'll be off jest as soon as we kin git ther saddles on our mags. Wild has set a trap by markin' a mustang that Buck Wheeler has fell in love with, an' he's goin' ter let 'em git ther horses somewhere, an' then catch 'em red handed."

It was not long before two more of the men were aroused, and then a little later the foreman set out with the four in the direction Wild had told them to follow.

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#### CHAPTER IX.—All But Buck Wheeler Are Caught.

Hop Wah had heard Wild tell Hoss Thompson that he might expect to be called during any time in the night, and the clever Chinaman made up his mind that if such a thing happened, he was going to be on hand. He was a pretty sound sleeper, as a rule, but it happened that since he set his mind upon it he was able to awaken when the cowboys called Hoss Thompson and told him to get up in a hurry. The clever Chinaman did not wait an instant. He occupied a little building in the rear of the house with Wing and the two men servants, and it was easy for him to hurriedly dress and get outside without disturbing the sleepers. While he did not intend to ride away with those who were going after the horse thieves, he meant to be pretty close behind them, so that he could follow and not be observed. He reached the barn before they had saddled their horses and started off, and waiting until they had done so, he quickly got his piebald mustang out of the stall and was not long in throwing the saddle on the animal's back and putting the bridle on his head.

"Now len," said Hop, as he mounted and started after the party of five, who were hastening to join Young Wild West and the scout, "me allee samee see how Misler Wild's trap workee. He catchee um horse thieves velly muchee quickee, so he."

The Chinaman rode on, keeping pretty close to the foreman and the cowboys. But they never once turned around to look for anyone coming that way, nor did they hear him, since the sounds made by their own horses' hoofs drowned everything else. They all knew the way to Slocum's Ranch, and as Wild had told them to come there it was not necessary that they should search for a trial. The ground was covered rapidly and in less than an hour and a half the ranch and buildings came in sight. Hoss Thompson at once slackened his pace, and his companions did the same. But Hop, thinking it about time to let them know he was there, came right on and soon joined them.

"Who's this?" demanded Hoss, looking at the Chinaman in surprise.

"Me allee samee Hop Wah; comee from China," was the bland retort.

"Thunderation!" exclaimed the foreman. "What are you doin' here, Hop?"

"Me wantee see whatee happen, so be, Misler Hoss," was the reply.

"No, but lat allee light; me comee, anyhow, so be. Me velly smartee Chinee. Me findees outtee 'bouttee Buck Wheeler, allee samee."

"Yes, that's right. Well, I reckon Wild won't say nothin' cause you come. Maybe it's all right that you did come, 'cause we don't know jest what ter do."

"Me know whatee do, so he," and Hop acted just as though he did. "We ride over to um cooil and len we findees Misler Wild and Misler Charlie."

The Chinaman had seen the corral near the house before darkness set in, so there was no fear of his making a mistake as to where it was located. Thompson and the cowboys seemed to think this was a good idea, so they decided to do as Hop said. The Chinaman now acted as though he was the leader of the party, and telling the others to come on, he rode with his horse at a walk in the direction of the corral. Near it were two or three dilapidated buildings, which had no doubt been used to store hay once upon a time, but were now not used for anything much, since neither Slocum nor the man who had owned the place before him had taken pains to cultivate much grain. As they rode up to one of these buildings the figure of a man suddenly appeared before them in the darkness.

"Hello there!" came the call, in a low tone of voice. "Is that you, Hoss?"

"You bet your life it is, Charlie," was the quick reply.

"All right, then. Come on. We've got everything dead ter rights."

The foreman was much relieved when he found it was Cheyenne Charlie, so he quickly rode up to the old barn and dismounted. When the scout saw that Hop was with them he gave a nod of satisfaction.

"So you had ter come along, too, did yer, heathen?" he observed, in a whisper.

"Lat light, Misler Charlie."

"How in thunder did you wake up?"

"Well, me allee samee say me wakee uppee when me go to sleep, so me wakee uppee, Misler Charlie. Me velly smartee Chinee."

"Well, it's a wonder yer did wake up, 'cause I always thought you was a mighty sound sleeper."

"Well, you said everything was all right, Charlie. Does that mean that you've got ther horses?"

"No," was the reply. "But they're fenced in ther corner of ther corral right here. I reckon ther galoots must mean ter leave 'em there until morning."

"Where's Wild?"

"He's gone over to ther house to do a little spiyin' on ther galoots. He wants ter find out all he kin, even though he knows jest who ther horse thieves is now."

As Hop heard this he pricked up his ears. Then he suddenly walked away in the darkness.

"Where are yer gun', heathen?" the scout called out, quickly.

"Me go over to um house, too, so be. Me findee outtee whatee go on leere."

"Well, don't you dare ter do a thing until you see Wild."

"Allee light, Misler Charlie."

Hop moved on through the darkness and soon reached the house. There was no light in it, which showed that the horse thieves must have retired. When the Chinaman had gone half way around the building a hand suddenly gripped his throat and the muzzle of a revolver was pressed against his forehead.

"One little sound from you and you will be a dead man," a voice whispered in his ear.

"Lat allee light, Misler Wild," he answered, faintly.

"Oh! It's you, eh? All right, then."

Though the clever Chinaman had been watching sharply as he crept around the house he had not seen the crouching form of Young Wild West, who had mistaken him for someone belonging to the premises.

"Did Hoss and the cowboys come with you?" Wild asked, as he let go his hold upon the Chinaman.

"Yes, Misler Wild," was the reply. "Ley over leere with Misler Charlie. He say you here, so me come, too."

"Well, ali right. I'm rather glad that you came, since I want to work a scheme that will get the scoundrels to come out of the house. They're all here but one, and that is Buck Wheeler."

"Where he go, Misler Wild?"

"He has gone to Short Creek on some errand, so he will be there when the store opens up in the morning. Then he intends to come back here and then go down to our ranch, just as though nothing had happened. The scoundrel had the nerve to ride the marked mustang away, too, Hop. I could easily have caught him, of course, but that is not what I wanted to do. When I found where he was going, which was an easy thing to do, since all I had to do was to listen and hear what they said before he left, I made up my mind that I'd catch him in daylight at Short Creek and give him the surprise of his life. While I have no good feelings toward any of the horses thieves, I fairly detest that man, for the deceit he has shown in this game. He simply hired with Hoss so he could work a scheme to get hold of all the best horses that belong to Buckhorn Ranch."

"Lat light, Misler Wild," nodded the Chinaman.

This conversation was carried on in whispers, and as there was not a window on that side of the building, it is doubtful if they could have been heard, even though anyone had been listening on the inside.

"Whatee you want me do, Misler Wild?" asked Hop, after a pause.

"Well, I was thinking about that, Hop. Have you got any firecrackers with you?"

"Me gottee two, Misler Wild."

"Good! I'll tell you what you can do, then. When I get the rest here at the house I'll divide them into two parties, one at the front door, and one at the back. Then you can climb upon the

roof and make a hole somewhere and drop a cracker down inside the building, after lighting the fuse, of course. When it explodes the chances are the horse thieves will hurry to get outside to see what has happened. Then we will nail them. I reckon we might as well get them now as to wait any longer."

"Lat velly goodee, Misler Wild. Me go tellee Misler Charlie and Misler Hoss to come \_alleep saunce velly muchee quickee."

"Go, Hop. Tell them to lead their horses right up to the house, too, for I am satisfied that the scoundrels are asleep. If they are not it will make no difference, anyhow."

Hop slipped away around the corner of the house and hastened away on his errand. It was not long before he returned, followed by Charlie and Bird, the cowboy, who was one of the party, stationed themselves near the front door, while Charlie and the other two cowboys took their places near the door of the kitchen at the back. Then Hop quickly climbed a tree that had a limb reaching almost over the roof of the house, and got ready to do his part. He got upon the roof without delay, and found it to be in a rather bad state of decay. It creaked a little under his weight, but that did not matter just then, for he had heard Wild say that it made little difference if the inmates of the house discovered that they were there.

The clever Chinaman crept along the roof until he came to about the center of the building. Then he drew his hunting knife and proceeded to make a hole through it. This was quite an easy task for him to do, and in less than five minutes he had accomplished his purpose. But in making the hole he had weakened that part of the roof near it, and just as he was getting his big homemade firecracker ready to throw the roof gave way beneath his weight and he went downward with a crash. He did not drop the cracker, however, and when he brought up upon the shaky board floor of the attic, he quickly recovered from his surprise. The noise had of course aroused Slocum and his companions. Voices and hurrying feet were heard below, and a light soon showed through the cracks in the floor.

This gave Hop a chance to do what he had started to perform, for he found that two of the boards were far enough apart to permit him to drop the firecracker into the room where the men were. He quickly struck a match and applied it to the fuse of the cracker. Then he leaned over and let it drop through the crack. It had scarcely struck the floor when it exploded with a terrific noise. A cloud of dust and smoke came through the cracks in the ceiling, and then Hop hurriedly thrust his head and shoulders through the opening in the roof and pulled himself out. It must have been that some of the horse thieves were terror stricken at what had happened, for their yells made an awfu! din. The clever Chinee uttered a laugh and then crept hurriedly to the tree. Having got there, he decided to wait until the thing was over with. It was but natural that the men in the house should hasten outside, for to have an explosion take place in their midst at such a time was

quite enough to make them think the house was doomed to destruction, and that it was best to get out as quickly as possible.

Slocum was one of the first to reach the front door and unbar it. He dashed out, followed by Bill, Hockey and Sam. The other two men chose the rear way to get out of the awful danger that seemed to threaten them. As Slocum ran out into the darkness Wild quickly confronted him, and grasping him by the shoulder he pressed his revolver against his face.

"You are my prisoner, Mr. Horse Thief," the boy said, coolly. "If you make any resistance I will pull the trigger of this piece of hardware I have got in my hand."

"Hold up your hands, you sneakin' galoots," called out Hoss Thompson to the others. "I reckon ther jig is up. We've found ther horse thieves, all right."

Taken completely by surprise, the four villains did not offer to move a step.

"Whoopee, whoopee! Wow, wow! Yip, yip, yip!" rang out Cheyenne Charlie's cowboy call from the rear of the house.

"Have you got your men, Charlie?" Wild shouted.

"You bet your life we have, Wild," was the reply.

"How many have you got?"

"Two of 'em."

"Well, just fetch them around here, and leave one of the men there to guard the door. There might be more inside; you know."

The scout quickly came around, he leading one of the prisoners, and a cowboy the other.

"Hop," called Wild, "get a lantern from inside the house. Hurry up!"

"Allel light, Misler Wild," came the reply, and then the clever Chinee dropped from the tree and ran to the house. He lighted a match and was not long in finding what he wanted, and a couple of minutes later he came outside with a lighted lantern.

"What do you mean by this outrage, Young Wild West?" Slocum demanded, speaking for the first time since he had been captured.

"Why, don't you know?"

"If I did I wouldn't ask. I consider this an outrage, and you can bet that you will suffer for it."

"Well, I will take my chances on the suffering part of it. But since you don't seem to know why we have come here and routed you out of your house, I will tell you. The fact is that I saw your men take twenty horses from the corral over at Buckhorn Ranch and fetch them here. I could easily have wiped them out before they left, but I did not chose to do that. I thought I would let them go the full limit, so I followed them here."

"You will suffer for this," was all the ranchman said, though he spoke in a tone of voice that showed that he knew very well it was all up with him.

"Well, if I do suffer for it it will not be from your hands, Slocum. You know what you will get before very long, I suppose."

As the boy spoke he touched him upon the throat with his finger.

"Mercy!" gasped Slocum, losing all the courage

he had heretofore possessed. "I will pay you well, Young Wild West, if you will let me go."

"You have not got sufficient money to do that, Slocum," came the retort. "You never saw enough money to buy me, I might add. No, you have got to take the consequences. You have been pursuing your villainy in these parts for some little time. But that's done and past, Slocum. You have reached the end of your rope."

"Have mercy on me. I belong to a highly respected family," pleaded the man.

"You will have to ask the judge for mercy, not me. Tie him up, boys."

Hop had already found two or three lariats, and he now assisted Cheyenne Charlie in tying the hands of the horse thieves securely behind them. They tied them all to one lariat, keeping them at a distance of about three feet apart and when this was accomplished the scout took the lantern of the Chinaman, and holding it before the face of the villains he gave a chuckle, and exclaimed:

"A fine lookin' lot, ain't they, boys?"

"They certainly are," Wild answered, nodding his head approvingly. "But it may be that there are more of them in the house. We had better make a search, I reckon."

"There ain't no more," declared Bill, who was fairly trembling with fear. "Buck has gone over to Short Creek to git some whisky an' a few things at ther store. You'll catch him over there, I s'pose."

In spite of what had been told them a search was made through the house, but they found no one, since they had really caught the entire gang with the exception of Buck. Wild decided to take them all to Short Creek, and as it was not such an awful lot out of their way back to the ranch he told his companions to get the stolen horses from the corral and fetch them along, too. Fifteen minutes later they left the house, the prisoners having been tied to their own horses.

## CHAPTER X.—Conclusion.

Buck Wheeler never once seemed to think that he was taking a desperate chance in riding the stolen mustang to Short Creek. The villainous cow-puncher, as he preferred to be called in lieu of a cowboy, rode along at an easy lope, as much pleased as though the horse had been made a present to him by some friend. He meant to get a few things at the store, and a jug of whisky at Mexican Joe's as soon as the two places opened for business. Then he was going to ride back to Slocum's, deliver the goods, and then take another horse and go over to Buckhorn, so as to make him appear innocent of anything that had happened during the night.

It was a very nice scheme, but the cow-puncher never once thought that it might not work. It was getting daylight when he reached Short Creek, and as he rode up to Mexican Joe's it occurred to him that he might as well rout the proprietor out of his bed, since it would not be long before he would get up, anyhow. Dismounting, he went to the door and pounded upon it with his clenched fist. Joe was always ready

to wait on a customer, and he was not surprised at being awakened at that early hour. He quickly made his appearance and opened the door.

"Hello, Buck!" he said, in a cheery tone of voice. "What's ther matter? Is there anything wrong over at Buckhorn?"

"Yes, I reckon there is, Joe," was the reply. "Ther horse thieves was there again last night. I've been ridin' for putty night three hours on their trail, but they managed ter git away from me, after all. It seems that there trail led this way, so I thought I might as well stop here."

Buck had taken his time in coming over to the village because he knew he would have to wait until the store was opened. As Young Wild West and his friends were less than half an hour behind him in the start, and rode pretty fast, they reached the village, just as the villainous cow-puncher was coming out of the store. By this time many of the residents of Short Creek were up and stirring, and when they saw a party riding up the narrow street leading several horses, they at once hurried to meet them. But when they made the discovery that Young Wild West was the leader of the party it occurred to them that something out of the ordinary had happened. Buck noticed the dozen or more men who were hurrying to meet the party, but he did not happen to see anyone coming. He walked over to Mexican's Joe's place, where he had left the mustang, and as he paused to get the demijohn that was waiting for him he suddenly saw the riders approaching at a swift gallop.

Wild had caught sight of the villain, and seeing that he was about to ride away, he had started forward at a swift pace. Buck's face turned as pale as death, for it struck him right away that Young Wild West was after him. Leaving the articles he had bought from the store and the demijohn upon the ground, he quickly vaulted into the saddle. But it was too late, for Young Wild West and his partners came riding up and headed him off.

"You're just the man I want, Buck," said Wild, as he ran over and caught the cow-puncher by the leg. "Off you come."

A quick jerk and Buck was unhorsed. Charlie caught the marked mustang. As the boy pulled the horse thief from the animal's back he brushed the hair upon the flank the wrong way and the two letters, W. W., became visible.

"There you are, boys," said the young deadshot. "There is my mark. I reckon that's all the proof we want. Buck Wheeler stands proven a horse thief before everyone here."

But Buck was not standing, in the literal sense of the word. He was lying in the dust, grovelling with terror. At a motion from our hero a couple of the cowboys at once took charge of him, disarming and tying his hands behind his back. The stolen horses were then led up, after which Wild mounted a barrel that someone was kind enough to bring out for him, and addressed the crowd, which had now largely increased. He related the whole story of how he had set the trap to catch the horse thieves, not forgetting the part Hop Wah had played in it. There was not a man there who was not greatly surprised to find that Slocum was a horse thief. Some-

one in the crowd suggested that such a proceeding take place now.

The cry was taken up, and for a few minutes it looked as though the angry crowd would carry out the threat of hanging the horse thieves. But Wild talked to them in his cool and easy way, and soon persuaded them that such a course would not show credit to the quiet little village of Short Creek. The result was that a justice of the peace was found, and a formal charge was made against the villains. Everything might have gone right then, had not half a dozen cowboys from a neighboring ranch arrived upon the scene. They began whooping it up for fair as soon as they found that the horse thieves had been caught at last. They wanted to lynch them, of course, but Wild quieted them after a while and saw that the prisoners were safely in the lock-up. This done, he called his followers together, and they set out with the recovered horses for Buckhorn Ranch.

But they had scarcely gone a mile when the cowboys broke out again, and it did not take them five minutes to arouse the crowd to such a pitch of anger that they felt bent upon executing the horse thieves. When they once got started nothing stopped them, and the result was that the door of the lock-up was smashed in and the prisoners brought forth. It was not until that afternoon that our friends at Buckhorn Ranch learned what had happened.

"Well, it can't be helped now," said Wild, shaking his head. "But that's what we get for not having a larger town near at hand where the law can be carried out in proper shape. However, there is no use in objecting to that, for big towns are scarce in this part of the country. We'll have to let things go as they are, I suppose. Anyhow, I am well satisfied with the way our trap worked. While it was not necessary to mark the mustang it has shown conclusively that Buck Wheeler was a horse thief."

"That's right, Wild," spoke up Arietta. "There are always some who have their doubts about a thing of this kind. The mere fact that you said the horses belonged at Buckhorn Ranch was hardly enough to convince everyone that it was so. The man was alone with the horse, and not with the rest of the gang when you caught him. That made it more in his favor. But the W. W. on the mustang's flank surely settled the case."

There is really nothing more to add to this story. Young Wild West and his friends had come down to Buckhorn Ranch for the purpose of taking a rest, and since the horse thieves had been so quickly disposed of, they would have ample time to do it. Suffice it to say that they remained there for a full week, and then the young deadshot and his partners became restless again, and the result was that early one morning they bade adieu to Hoss Thompson and his wife and the cowboys at Buckhorn Ranch, and set out in search of further adventures.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST AND 'PUNCHER PETE'; or, ARIETTA AND THE DYNAMITE."

## CURRENT NEWS

## RAT CAUGHT AND ATE FLIES

A rat trapping flies and dining off them in a store window was the novel sight that attracted the attention of Ed Disney when he came uptown the other morning. Mr. Rat had the window all to himself and was so busy catching flies that he disregarded the spectators outside on the walk. Standing on his hind feet he jumped nimbly about, sometimes catching two flies at a time and eating them with apparent gusto. The owner of this useful rat would probably loan him to any curious friend who would catch him.

## BURGLAR WAS OPOSSUM

The family of F. M. Hill of Lynchburg Va., was disturbed several nights by a noise which appeared to be made by some one walking lightly on the veranda roof. A night or two ago Hill, who is a traveling salesman, was at home when the noise recurred. Getting a flashlight to investigate, Hill found a large opossum in a pear tree near the house and the limb of the tree on which the animal was was making the noise. Before Mr. Hill could get out of the house the opossum had disappeared. The animal, it was discovered later, was in the tree after pears.

## COSTUME THAT DEFIES COLD.

The most novel dress in the world is that of the Laplander.

He wears two or three of the same garments, one over the other, including two pairs of shoes filled with dried grass, and two pairs of gloves stuffed with hay.

In addition, his cap is filled with an eiderdown pillow, and a long woolen scarf is wound several times around the neck and over the head.

The most difficult part of his toilet is the preparation of his shoes. The dried grass is made ready by warming it before a fire, and pulling it out and rubbing it well together in order to render it soft and pliable. A quantity is then made into a ball and placed within the shoe, leaving a cavity for the foot, which reposes safely and warmly in the middle. Laplanders never wear stockings or socks.

Talking of his visit to Lapland, Frank Hedges Butler, one of the pioneers of aviation and motor-ing, says: "All told, I put on no fewer than 25 separate articles of clothing! The style of the costume is hundreds of years old, and it is emi-nently practical, because one never feels cold once this novel and curious outfit has been adopted."

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# Charlie, the Chauffeur

— OR —

## THE LUCK OF A WORKING LAD'

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER XXIII.

Up Against Judge Gladwin.

"Humph! I know that already," growled the judge, looking hard at Charlie, who inwardly trembled for the success of his bluff.

For a moment there was silence, and the judge continued to stare.

"What's the matter with the machine?" he then asked.

Charlie explained, adding that he had almost completed his work.

"Do you know Mr. Barnes?" the judge then inquired.

"You mean Mr. Barnes at the Hiawatha, sir?"

"Yes. You can leave the car in his charge. Tell him I said so."

And to the great relief of both Charlie and Jen, the judge then got into his own car and told the chauffeur to drive on.

"A narrow escape," said Jen. "Charlie, you were just splendid."

"I hated to lie," replied Charlie, "but of course there was no help for it. If only he don't come back again. I'm sure he suspected me."

"Better hurry up, then," said Jen, and Charlie crawled back under the car, where he was pounding away, when a few minutes later strong hands suddenly seized his legs and gave them a violent pull.

"Come out of that, you young cub!" a stern voice cried.

Charlie came from under the car all right.

He was pulled out without ceremony and lifted to his feet by Jim Flanders, and with the chauffeur was Judge Gladwin and the young man who had driven his car.

Charlie's first thought was for Jen and he peered into the tonneau, but he could not see her.

"Is this the boy, Jim?" demanded the judge.

"Sure," was the reply. "Tom Noakes's girl should be with him. I don't see her."

"She was here a few moments ago, then, as I told you. Where is she now, boy?"

"I don't know," replied Charlie, striving to appear cool.

"That was a slick trick you played on us," began Jim Flanders, but the judge cut him short.

"Cut it out."

"O. K., boss."

"Young man, are you the son of Nathan Hippolyte Brown?"

"That was my father's name," replied Charlie. "But I am not proud of the connection, I assure you," he added.

"It would be useless to deny it."

"Enough," retorted the judge. "We have to prove your words. Strip him if he can't undress himself. Flanders, have you a revolver?"

"Sure, judge."

"Out with it, then. Put a ball through the boy's head if he tries to give us the slip."

Out came the revolver and the chauffeur let go his clutch on Charlie's collar.

"What do you want me to strip for?" demanded the boy, who now really began to be alarmed for himself. "Is it on account of the big birthmark on my back?"

"You admit that you have such a mark?"

"'Yes' and 'no' are good enough answers to my questions. Confine yourself to that. Now strip, for I must see the mark."

And as there seemed to be no help for it Charlie obeyed.

The judge merely glanced at the boy's naked back and then ordered him to put on his clothes. While Charlie was dressing he lighted a cigar and paced up and down with his hands behind him, seemingly deep in thought.

And Charlie watched his face. It seemed to him that it was the coldest, hardest countenance he had ever laid eyes on.

"This man means to kill me," he thought.

But Jen? What of her?

There seemed but one explanation, and that was that the girl hearing the approach of this interesting trio had slipped into the woods which skirted the road on the left, while on the right a perpendicular cliff rose to a great height.

"How is this car? Ready for business?" demanded the judge, when Charlie had finished dressing.

"Just about."

"Finish your job. Don't try to slip away now. We shall be watching on both sides of the car."

Charlie obeyed and in about ten minutes announced that his work was completed.

"Come out," said the judge. "Jim, you get in under there and see if it's all right."

Flanders obeyed and reported that the work had been properly done.

"Get into the tonneau, boy," ordered Judge Gladwin then.

"Where are you going to take me?" demanded Charlie, boldly.

"Flanders!" cried the judge.

"Yes, judge."

"If this boy asks another question or makes another remark except in answer to a question of mine, shoot him."

"Certainly, sir."

"Brown, get into the car."

Charlie obeyed and Judge Gladwin got in after him and closed the door.

"Now then, young man," he said, lowering his voice, "a word with you. I am a man accustomed to being obeyed. I have in my pocket certain papers which I propose to have you sign. If you will write your name where I show you without delay or question I will give you one thousand dollars and let you go your way unharmed. If you refuse, I propose to take you back where you came from and I will only add that when tomorrow's sun rises there will be no Charlie Brown nor will his fate ever be known. It is up to you."

(To be continued.)

## ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

## MOST CORKS COME FROM ALGERIA

It is, perhaps, not generally known that in addition to exercising a fairly complete control over the contents of perfume bottles France likewise provides a goodly proportion of the corks. Algeria, which is becoming an increasingly valuable asset to France, is a factor in cork production and in the region of the port of Phillippeville there are more than 200,000 hectares of cork forests, providing an almost inexhaustible supply on which a growing export trade is based, according to *Ungere's Bulletin*.

In 1921, despite poor trade conditions, nearly 20,000 tons of cork were shipped, while in 1920 the total exports reached 30,000 tons.

On account of depression and low prices it is understood that a considerable stock of cork is being held by producers and exporters awaiting better market conditions.

## FURS BECOMING SCARCE

According to Dr. William T. Hornaday it takes 80 skins to make the average mink wrap, 200 for a squirrel coat, and 200 for a black mole coat; 90 skins may go to the making of a striped skunk jacket, and 300 to a Siberian ermine wrap. Before many years, if the present rate of slaughter continues, many of our most interesting animals will be practically extinct; even now the trapper is forced farther afield, and the skins once unmarketable are being used to supply the deficiency; nearer home, the fur of the fireside sphinx appears as trimming for milady's apparel, disguised under the name of "genet." Very little of this murder is excusable on the grounds of necessity, and mere self-interest should lead the sex mainly responsible for it to ponder this truth: No more fur-bearing animals, no furs.

## HORSE 36 HOURS IN RIVER

A Boston horse whose usual task is to draw a newspaper delivery wagon, qualified as a long distance swimmer when it was rescued from the Charles River last one day recently after spending thirty-six hours in the water. The horse still was swimming when found, but later went to an animal hospital to recover from a bad chill.

Early one morning, as its wagon was standing at the North Station, the horse made its dash for freedom. Its course lay through the train yards, over tracks and culverts. Finally the horse dived through a drawbridge over the Charles River, leaving the wagon and cargo jammed between the rails. For hours the harbor police searched for the animal in vain.

At last a watchman saw the horse swim out from under the pier and make for the open sea. A stern chase in a dory followed, and the swimmer was roped and towed to shore.

## HINDUS BATHE IN RIVER WHERE CORPSES FLOAT

Of course I had read about Benares, but I should think the average American of healthy

tastes and decent impulses would be content with a fleeting glance at the sacred city, for that goes on at Benares revo'ts every modern idea, not only of religion, but of even common sense.

How any people can be called enlightened or even half-civilized, whose religion teaches them to practice the things for which Benares is famous, I cannot understand. For they do bathe in and drink the water of the Ganges, and that is only the beginning of the disgusting, horrifying performance.

We saw it all one morning from a little boat; we arrived at 6:30 o'clock, and by 9 we were unable longer to endure the sights, they were so revolting. First there were the ablutions, which were not merely washing the body outwardly, but were accompanied by gargling and blowing of noses, to the accompaniment of throwing garlands of marigolds and jasmine into the water. Past us floated numerous sacks containing corpses.

As we watched, the carcass of a big sacred bull was brought down to the river bank and thrown in. The steps leading to the river and the banks were in a condition of filth impossible even to mention.

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## The Coiner's Wife

By JOHN SHERMAN.

I shall never forget the 13th of December, 1879. The streets of the great city of Manchester had grown depressingly desolate, and a dense black fog prevailed over all the town.

I was hurrying, as fast as the night would allow, from Victoria railway station along the then old and dingy Deansgate, in the direction of my office, just as the cathedral bells were chiming the hour of twelve.

Benumbed with cold, I found, to my great joy, a cheerful fire blazing in my room, which, thanks to my comrade, who had retired for the night, was considerably prepared for me.

I took off my great-coat and muffler, drew a chair close to the fender, and began thinking over the incidents of a case I had that afternoon brought to a successful issue, when, with the suddenness of a startled night-bird's scream, I heard a piteous and prolonged shriek issuing from beneath the unshuttered window.

I sprang to my feet, and gazing in the direction of the sound, saw a sight I shall never forget while memory holds a seat in my brain.

A wild, white face, with long dishevelled hair hanging over an ill-clad form, was gesticulating in a beseeching manner close to the fire-lit panes. Cool and collected as I usually am under extraordinary circumstances, I must confess to a feeling of terror taking possession of my whole frame at that instant, and I sat there rooted to the spot.

It was only for a moment, though—or, perhaps, as long as it would take one to count ten—before the apparition, as it seemed to be, vanished as suddenly from my transfixed gaze as it had in coming upon me with all its ghastly whiteness.

"This is very strange," I involuntarily exclaimed, "and puzzles me not a little. What can it mean?"

Then, striding toward the door, I flung it wide open; but there was nothing before me—only the black, choking fog, and the dead silence of the street.

For a little while I stood like one bewildered. I strained my ears in the anxious hope of catching the sound of some one's footfall; but it was all in vain—the quiet remained unbroken.

Pushing back the door, I turned to re-enter the room, when my eyes caught sight of a piece of white paper that lay upon the wide sill of the window.

"Ah," I thought, "here, then, is the explanation of this deep mystery."

I took it to the light, opened it, and, much to my astonishment, found a message of deep anguish, addressed to me, in almost undeciphered characters.

The note was wet in places as if with tears, and it bore indubitable evidence of having been hurriedly written. This is what it said:

"If you would stop more crime, perhaps murder, come at once to No. 13 Tomson's Court. Am

followed. Heaven save me and my child! What shall I do? Rescue us, and Heaven bless you. Be careful. Conceal yourself. Watch. Top room at back. Lizzie Thornley."

Thornley—Thornley! The name appeared familiar to me. I went to my diary, turned to letter T, and found the following entry:

November 24, 1878.—Bill Thornley, alias Springer, alias Saxley, coiner—wanted.

Could this, then, be the man, who, for nearly eighteen months, had successfully eluded our most vigilant pursuit? It seemed more than probable.

Was the information, however, contained in that mysterious message of a genuine character? Or was it meant to lead me into a trap? The promptings of my heart answered me, and that answer was: Bill Thornley, desperado, you are in Tomson's Court, and I'll have you, my slippery beauty, before another day is over.

It was very late, or, rather, I ought to say, the day was young, when I put out the office lights; for the bell of St. Peter's had just rung out the hour of one.

I had decided, whatever might be the consequences to my unknown visitor, to go home and sleep over the matter, and then report the circumstances to the inspector, so as to receive his sanction to the step, before putting my plans into execution.

With this resolution strong upon me I started upon my journey home. My way lay in the direction of Greengate, and several times ere I reached Blackfriars Bridge I saw the vision of that white face, with its look of unutterable terror, fixed unmovably on me.

Late in the forenoon of the same day I returned to the office and duly reported my experience of the previous night.

"This looks like a serious job for you, Lomax," said Inspector Jones, as soon as I had finished my report. "Just turn to the album there and look at S. and T. for a portrait of 'Springer,' or 'Saxley,' or 'Thornley.' He has done seven years, but not accounted for himself for a long time past. Is that it? Ah, good! Take it with you, and if you get a chance of comparing it with the original, and you find they agree, nab him—that's all. Would you like Schofield with you?"

"No," I answered.

"Well, in any case, be quite prepared to face rough work, for if your man should turn out to be the one I suspect, look sharp, I advise you."

After these and other timely hints I retired to the wardrobe adjoining Jones's room. I went in a clean-shaven, good-looking man of twenty-seven, and in half an hour afterward came out again in the character of a middle-aged woman, dressed in a rather seedy suit of black.

I had on a faded dress of cashmere, a long circular cloak of the same material, and a matronly-looking bonnet, from beneath which hung longish locks of iron-gray hair, while a thick vail drooping down in front completed the transformation. I must not forget to mention, though, that I took with me a small wallet of pins, needles and tape, under the pretext of having them for sale. My get-up was perfect. I looked to all the world like one who had seen better days, but was reduced now to a state of genteel poverty.

It was close upon three o'clock in the afternoon when I sallied out of Albert street, and a drizzling rain was making matters most uncheerful.

I had no difficulty in finding Tomson's Court. It was situated in Little Peter street, and in that direction I turned my footsteps. I must confess my mind was not without some misgivings as to the successful accomplishment of my plans. Still I had before played two or three bold games as a detective with considerable credit, and why should I fail in this?

Proceeding along the dark and narrow yard of Tomson's Court, I noticed a knot of unkempt women of most repulsive appearance standing talking together, and by their earnest demeanor I knew that they had some serious business at hand.

Sudden as thought my wallet was out, and I stood before them cringingly beseeching them to buy my wares. But of course it was all to no purpose. I neither sold anything nor heard a word that would give me the faintest clue.

Watching my opportunity, I got away from them, and passed into No. 13 unseen by any one. The room was situated at the end of a long, dark and winding lobby, and the stench that met me was almost overpowering.

I paused a moment listening, but not a sound did I hear. Then I knocked at the door, very feebly at first, then louder and louder, and yet there came no response to me.

I knocked again, so as to be certain there was no one in the room, and still received no answer. My curiosity was now aroused. I took from my pocket a small bunch of skeleton keys—I never went out without them—and noiselessly opened the door. As soon as I entered I stood aghast at the sight that met my eyes.

In one corner of the room, stretched upon a heap of straw, I saw the form of a woman, half naked and motionless, with her eyes closed, as if in death.

I staggered toward her, turned her face to the light, and, merciful heavens, recognized in her the mysterious midnight visitor whose wild look had so possessed me!

I turned her head more to the light, and was horrified to see a thin stream of blood oozing from her snow-white brow upon the face and hands of a little babe that nestled at her breast.

A few moments afterward she fixed a steady, wondering gaze on me, then tried to speak.

"Pray, do not, for the present, agitate yourself," I exclaimed, in a well-assumed female voice.

Three chairs, an old deal box and a dilapidated table formed the principal articles in the room. Two other things, however, attracted my attention more than all besides. They were a long wooden bench, such as is used by carpenters, and from the nature of the tools I saw lying about—with dies and models of various sizes—my suspicions became fully confirmed.

The other object which arrested my attention was a strong, capacious wardrobe in the opposite corner, facing the bench. Its folding doors stood a little ajar, and I grew curious to know the character of its contents.

I was just rising from my seat, with the intention of making a closer inspection, when the woman opened her eyes again and beckoned me

to her side. Then, in a voice just raised above a whisper, she said:

"Who are you that have found your way into this miserable dwelling?"

"I am a woman peddling a few simple wares," I answered; "but how I managed to find myself here is more than I can tell; yet I am thankful I have reached you, if it is only that I may be of some simple service to you, for I see you need a helping hand."

"Ah, 'tis true—'tis true," she replied; "but I fear your kind assistance has come too late—yes, too late!"

"I hope not. Tell me, though, how you have come by that wound in your temple. Is it the result of a fall?"

"No, no; it was done by him—my husband. He struck me with a hammer because I would not consent to his taking away my child."

"Merciful heavens, can such things be? Where is he now?" I somewhat eagerly inquired.

"Last night, a little before twelve, he came home in a terrible temper. I saw murder lurking in his eyes, and after listening to his fearful oaths, I ran to the police station, pursued by him. I could not attract attention. He overtook me just as I re-entered this room, and—Hark! What is that?"

I motioned to the woman to be silent, while I crept noiselessly into the open wardrobe.

I closed the folding doors from within, and, as good fortune would have it, discovered a large crevice through which I could see the movements of any one who might choose to enter the apartment.

The minutes elapsed seemed hours to me, and I was beginning to think that, after all, my ears had deceived me, when, very slowly, and without the faintest sound, the door opened, and the figure of a short, stout, bushy-bearded man crept in. It was Thornley.

He stole to where Lizzie Thornley lay; he bent over her, as if to assure himself that she was unaware of his presence.

Slipping his fingers in his waistcoat pocket, he drew forth a small key. With this he opened a secret panel in the wainscot of the wall, and there I saw great piles of glittering coin, which my practical eyes told me were spurious all.

With the rapidity of a panther springing on its prey I flung open the wardrobe doors and sprang on him. The suddenness of my appearance struck him motionless and dumb. He could but glare at me, while I held him in a vise-like grip, and his lips trembled and grew ashy pale.

At such a moment as this a detective needs all the coolness he can command, for then it is that his victim is almost powerless of resistance. The latter becomes semi-paralyzed with surprise, and before he knows the meaning of it finds the bracelets on his wrists. At least such was the case with the ruffian Thornley. I made short work of him. As for his wife and child (for such they proved to be), I had them tenderly conveyed to the Royal Infirmary, where for ten long days and nights of suffering she and her baby lay, and then their spirits crossed the confines of a better world.

Thornley was found guilty of manslaughter, and I had the satisfaction of hearing him sentenced to a long term of penal servitude.

## WILD WEST WEEKLY

NEW YORK, JANUARY 5, 1923

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## DAKOTA FARMER SHOOTS VULTURE

An American vulture, or "turkey buzzard," a large carrion bird rarely seen in this region now, but a familiar object on the Dakota plains in pioneer days, has been shot in Yankton County by F. J. Kullish, farmer. The bird is a fine specimen, measuring five feet two inches from tip to tip of wings. It is reddish brown and has the usual bald head characteristic of the vulture family. The bird has been given to the biology department of Yankton College for mounting.

## KINDNESS TO WIDOW WINS HIM \$1,000

Because Edgar Witcher, cashier of the Martin County Bank, Ind., was kind of Mrs. Martha Mercer, and, as she expresses it in her will, provided an easy chair for her to sit in while transacting business in the bank, he received approximately \$1,000 by the terms of her will.

Mrs. Mercer was a widow without relatives. In the will she makes a specific bequest of \$200 to Mr. Witcher and then makes him one of the five residuary legatees.

The estate will amount to about \$7,000.

## CHEMIST BIRD BUILDS NEST 14 FEET HIGH

There is a bird found in Australia, known as the Magapodius, that is not only a chemist, but also a builder of nests that in proportion to its size, when compared with man, make the efforts of the latter seem pygmy-like.

This bird, about the size of a partridge, and weighing about two pounds, builds a nest fourteen feet high, with a circumference of 150 feet.

A man weighs on an average 130 pounds, and in order to build a structure corresponding to the nest of the bird he would have to accumulate a mountain of earth which would be almost double the height and bulk of one of the great pyramids of Egypt.

The mighty task completed, the workman confides its eggs to it. The female usually lays eight, which she disposes in a circle in the centre of the nest among the herbs and leaves which lie

heaped up at this spot. The eggs are placed at exactly equal distances from each other and in a vertical position.

When the laying is completed the Magapodius abandons its masterpiece and its offspring, nature having revealed to it that it is no longer useful to them.

Endowed with a marvelous chemical instinct, this bird only collects such a mass of vegetable matter that it may safely commit the hatching of the eggs to the fermentation they produce. It is, in fact, on the heat so engendered that the bird relies for supplying her place, the mother thus substituting a chemical process for her own cares.

## LAUGHS

"Why don't you try to get damages out of the railroad company for running over your wife's poor old mother?" "Oh, I don't believe in pushing my luck too far."

Ted—I'm trying to find some one who knows me, to go security on my note. Ned—Don't you think, my boy, you'd better look for some one who doesn't know you?

Very Young Man—You wouldn't think it, but I've just paid \$5,000 in cash for a house, all made by my own pluck and perseverance. Young Lady—Really? What business are you in? Very Young Man—I'm a son-in-law.

"Now," said the warden to the forger, who had just arrived at the prison, "we'll set you to work. What can you do best?" "Well, if you'll give me a week's practice on your signature, I'll sign your official papers for you," said the prisoner.

New Yorker (at box office window)—Have you two orchestra seats in the fourth row, centre, for to-night? Ticket Seller—Yes, sir. New Yorker (after recovering from the shock)—I guess I don't want them—the show can't be any good!

Giles met an acquaintance on the street the other day, although he artfully tried to avoid him. "Hello, Giles, deah boy!" exclaimed the other. "So glad to see you. I'm going to London next week; can I do anything faw you?" "No, going's enough, thanks," replied Giles, moving on.

A teacher in a lower grade was instructing her pupils in the use of a hyphen. Among the examples given by the children was "bird-cage." "That's right," encouragingly remarked the teacher. "Now, Paul, tell me why we put a hyphen in 'bird-cage!'" "It's for the bird to sit on," was the startling rejoinder.

The street car gave a sudden lurch in rounding a curve, and the charming young girl who was clinging to a strap nearly sat down in the lap of the man who was sitting in the corner. "I beg your pardon, sir," she exclaimed hastily. "Not at all," he replied encouragingly. "Try it again. I don't mind it at all."

## GOOD READING

## MEXICO'S BIG PYRAMID LARGEST IN THE WORLD

Not only are the two great pyramids, those of the sun and the moon, situated near San Juan de Teotihuacan, Mexico, to be restored to their original lines, but the Mexican Government has made an appropriation for excavating and reconstructing the ruins of the great buried city surrounding the pyramids, which flourished more than 4,000 years ago.

During the last few years immediately preceding the revolutionary period, considerable work had been done in the matter of clearing away the accumulation of debris that covered the pyramid of the sun, and it stands forth to-day as one of the greatest wonders of the world, according to archaeologists.

This pyramid is three times as large as the great Cheops pyramid near Cairo, Egypt, and in its construction great blocks of stone were used.

It is 1,400 feet square at the bottom. In height it is only 200 feet, and but for this fact would be one of the most imposing structures ever made by man, it is stated. The pyramid of the sun is smaller than the one of the moon.

## MOUNTAIN DEMOLISHED TO IMPROVE BIG CITY

In order to permit the extension of the City of Rio de Janeiro a mountain has been cut down and the debris dumped into the sea, making hundreds of acres of new land.

Incidentally, it is expected that conditions in the city will be improved by permitting a better circulation of air by the removal of the mountain, which formerly sheltered it from the prevailing winds of summer.

The work is being done by American engineers, and in the course of a year and a half new parks, boulevards and avenues will be established and ready for handsome residences which will be built.

The work is being done largely by hydraulic machinery, which washes the dirt away from the rocks and carries it down to the water. This same work was started by native workers some time ago and the effort made to move the mountain by means of mule carts, but was abandoned because of the great expense and time required.

The removal of debris by mule cart cost 75 cents per cubic yard and the work would require eight years, whereas the work is being done by modern machinery at a cost of 25 cents per cubic yard in eighteen months.

## BRAVED BEAR IN DEN

If you had tracked a big bear to his den among mountain rocks and Bruin laughed at you and refused to come out and be killed, what would you do? Leave him to himself and look for him another day? Or would you crawl in after him as Old Put crawled in on one memorable occasion and bearded a wolf in his lair. That is just what A. M. Johnson, a Chateaugay hunter did the other day, and he got his bear.

Johnson, with Ed Cooke, Jerry Mahoney and other Chateaugay men, was stalking deer in the woods near Chateaugay Lake, N. Y. Coming

upon tracks of a bear they abandoned their deer hunt to follow him. After a long trail they arrived at a naturally formed den in a rocky ledge. As the bear's tracks had ended there, they knew that the beast had taken refuge in the cave. How to get at the animal was the question. He showed no willingness to come out and let the hunters shoot him, nor did he promise to be a cordial host.

But Johnson was unwilling to leave without at least a sight of his game. So, holding his rifle in position for instant use, the hunter entered the den. He had not penetrated far before he caught sight of the animal. Recognition probably was mutual in the dim light of the cave, and Johnson took no chances of a warm welcome from the den's owner. He fired two shots in quick succession. One of them broke the bear's jaw.

Maddened with pain and rage the beast made a rush for the hunter, who backed out of the den as quickly as possible with the bear close upon him. As the animal appeared in the open the other hunters fired upon it, and a fusillade of bullets soon put it out of power to fight. The animal weighed 300 pounds.

## OBSERVES FALL OF DAYLIGHT METEORITE

Norman MacL. Harris of the Canadian Department of Health writes to *Science* the following account of a phenomenon he observed while travelling by canoe on Lake Kipawa, Que., on Aug. 31 last:

"The day was particularly bright and cloudless, with a southerly wind blowing at about eight miles an hour. The time of the observation was 9.50 A.M., and the course of the canoe was almost directly south. The meteorite was suddenly seen to shoot across the course of the canoe from east to west, about 50 degrees above the horizon, and, as far as could be judged, between 200 and 300 feet above the surface of the lake. Its passage lasted approximately three seconds from the time that it was first noted a little to the left of the bow of the canoe. The general impression received was that of a brilliant Roman candle shooting across the sky, of a vivid copper-green color. The size of the incandescent head of the body appeared to be a trifle larger than a golf ball nearly three feet in length behind it and of a like color. In the wake of the body trailed a curling wreath of white vapor of considerable length which became quickly dissipated.

The flight of the meteor was accompanied by no detectable noise whatever, so that the other occupant of the canoe, whose gaze was directed elsewhere at the time, failed to see the occurrence. The body suddenly vanished about a hundred yards to the west about the original altitude, leaving a small cloud of white vapor behind that dissolved rapidly away. Although watch was kept on the surface of the lake beyond, no trace of a body falling into the water was noted. It is possible that either it was completely combusted at that moment, or it passed out of sight rapidly along its westerly course."

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## **SWEDEN HAS RICH FIND OF COPPER**

A discovery of new mineral wealth in Sweden is announced by Director Axel Gavelin, head of the Government Geological Research Department, who has asked the Riksdag for an appropriation to cover the investigation of the newly found ore deposits.

These lie in Central Sweden, and consist of iron, zinc and copper ore. Mr. Gavelin does not give exact details as to the total size of these deposits, but he considers them extremely promising, and says that if further research fulfills his expectations, the copper find especially is valuable and will form a national asset.

The total iron ore deposits of Sweden already known are calculated to be nearly 1,400,000,000 tons, running an average of 60 per cent. iron, which is said to be over 23 per cent. more than the average for all iron ore mined in the rest of Europe, and is 16 per cent. more than the average for the world as a whole.

Although much of Sweden's iron ore is used for the domestic manufacture of iron and steel, the export is considerable.

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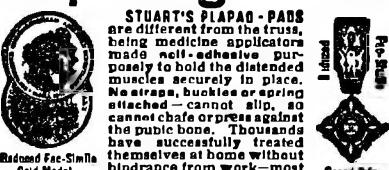
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